

13TH CONFERENCE ON BALTIC STUDIES IN EUROPE, GDAŃSK, JUNE 26–29, 2019

The 13th Conference on Baltic Studies in Europe was held in Gdańsk, Poland, on June 26–29, 2019, organized by the University of Gdańsk in cooperation with the European Solidarity Center. Baltic Studies as a subject of humanities and social sciences emerged first in Northern America (since 1968 organized by the «Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies» in Northern America), then followed by a series of Baltic Conferences in Scandinavia until 1991. Since 1995, bi-annual Conferences on Baltic Studies in Europe alternate with the AABS Baltic Studies Conferences. In the course of time the meaning of «Baltic» broadened from an exile perspective and a focus on the territory of the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania or the linguistic Baltic region towards a broader notion of the Baltic Sea Region. This was also the case with the 2019 Conference on Baltic Studies, which for the first time was held in Poland. Gdańsk in particular embodies the Polish connections to the Baltic on various levels throughout its history: as a medieval and early-modern economic hub, as a prism of the conflicts after the First World War, as the site where the Second World War was started, and as the place where the Solidarność movement started in 1980, which had a major impact on the peaceful revolutions from 1989 to 1991 and thus also on the new political shape of the Baltic Sea region.

The conference programme under the heading «Baltic Solidarity» comprised more than 150 presentations in 50 panels and roundtables. The topics of the presentations were divided in three conference sections: «History and Memory», «Media, Language and Arts», and «Politics and Society». Besides, three special streams comprised panels on: the Baltic Region in 1918–1921 (organized by Mart Kuldkepp, London); Baltic national song and dance traditions 150 (remembering the 150th anniversary of the first Estonian song festival, organized by Guntis Smidchens, Seattle); and Baltic Sea regional security (organized by Olevs Nikers and Otto Tabuns, Riga).

Similar to previous Baltic conferences, papers focusing on historical issues made up the largest conference section, and among them topics connected to 20th century history dominated. Among the topics intensively discussed were the First World War and its aftermath with presentations among others by Tomas Balkelis (Vilnius) on the logic of violence in the Polish-Lithuanian conflict, Tim Buchen (Dresden) on settlement projects and military imaginations of agriculture in North Eastern Europe, Klaus Richter (Birmingham) on the erosion of norms of property ownership in Poland and the Baltics, Vasilijus Safronovas (Klaipėda) on the representation of the «national experience» of the First World War in Interwar Lithuania. Another major field referred to aspects of collective memory and of dealing with the soviet

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period as for instance by Eva-Clarita Pettai (Jena) on post-transitional justice thirty years after Latvia's re-independence, Linara Dovydaitytė (Vilnius) on displaying the history of labour and industry in post-soviet museums, by Kirsti Jõesalu and Ene Kõresaar (Tartu) on the presentation of the soviet period at the «Museum of Occupations and Freedom» in Tallinn, and by Epp Annus (Tartu) on «vestigial Sovietness» in Estonia.

Among those presentations that focused on issues of earlier Baltic history, two panels shall be mentioned, one on pre-modern Baltic history and one on historiography, collective memory and cultural identity, 1300–1700. Paper presented dealt with the role of family solidarity in the Livonian branch of the Teutonic Order (Dmitriy Weber, St. Petersburg); solidarity and Baltic German family politics in Livonia (Anja Wilhelmi, Lüneburg); the image of Poland in late medieval and early-modern Prussian historiography (Adam Szweda, Toruń), Poland as a «mirror of the self» in the historiography of the Teutonic Order (Grischa Vercaemer, Passau); the Prussian myth of origin as a political statement in 16th century Gdańsk (Ansgar Holtmann, Berlin); and on how the Slavic ancestors of the Pomeranians became Germans in late medieval and early-modern myths of origins (Paweł Migdalski, Szczecin).

The general programme of the conference comprised various book and project presentations, among them the Polish edition of Michael North's «The Baltic. A History», a source publication on Polish Livonia, and new publications on the First World War and its aftermath in the Baltic region. At the beginning of the conference, former Polish president Lech Wałęsa gave a welcome address which discussed the meaning and the legacy of Solidarność. A keynote talk by Pertti Joenniemi (Joensuu) and a final discussion with Basil Kerski, Kazimierz Musiał, Krystyna Wróblewska (Gdańsk) addressed the scholarly prospects of Baltic Sea regionalism.

The next Conference on Baltic Studies in Europe will be held in Uppsala in 2021.

Jörg Hackmann

Информация о статье

Автор: Хакманн, Йорг — профессор, Университет Щецина, Щецин, Польша, Scopus ID 25924958200, Orcid 0000-0002-1765-505X, e-mail: jorg.hackmann@usz.edu.pl

Заголовок: 13th conference on Baltic studies in Europe, Gdansk, June 26–29, 2019

Резюме: 26–29 июня 2019 г. в польском городе Гданьске прошла крупная международная конференция — 13-я конференция балтийских исследований в Европе. Было представлено более 150 докладов в 50 панелях и круглых столах. Тематика была разнообразной, от секции «История и память» до «Политика и общество», и даже проблемы безопасности Балтийского региона. В исторических секциях приняли участие ученые из Польши, Эстонии, Латвии, Литвы, Великобритании, Германии, России и т.д. Следующая конференция состоится в 2021 г. в Упсале.

Ключевые слова: Балтийский мир, история Балтийского региона, международная конференция

Information about the article

Author: Hackmann, Jörg — Professor, University of Szczecin, Szczecin, Poland, Scopus ID 25924958200, Orcid 0000-0002-1765-505X, e-mail: jorg.hackmann@usz.edu.pl

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Abstract: On June 26–29, 2019, a large international conference was held in the Polish city of Gdansk — the 13th Baltic Research Conference in Europe. More than 150 reports were presented in 50 panels and round tables. The subjects were diverse, from the “History and Memory” section to “Politics and Society”, and even the problems of security in the Baltic region. Scientists from Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Great Britain, Germany, Russia, etc. took part in the historical sections. The next conference will be held in 2021 in Uppsala.

Keywords: Baltic world, history of the Baltic region, international conference