



**Call for Papers**  
**International Conference**  
***The International Debt Crisis Revisited, 1979-1991***

**Part I**

***The Superpowers and the International Debt Crisis, 1979-1991***  
**16-17 March 2020, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy**

**Part II**

***The Global Financial System and the International Debt Crisis, 1979-1991***  
**18-19 March 2020, University of Florence, Italy**

The “debt crisis” was one of the major global processes shaping the evolution of the international system of the 1980s. It involved governments, central and commercial banks, and international institutions. Following the significant rise in official and private loans to sovereign borrowers during the 1970s, and the increase in international interest rates after 1979, the 1980s were marked by a long series of defaults, moratoria on repayment, rescheduling and negotiations on new loans. Since the second half of the decade, these complex phenomena were subsumed under the label of the “international debt crisis”. A wide-ranging literature has dealt with the subject, with renewed interest since the beginning of the “great recession” in 2008. Most of this literature, however, suffers from two main (interrelated) flaws: on the one hand, there are only very few case studies based on archival research; on the other, there appears to be a bias in perspective, for it is often assumed that creditor-debtor negotiations necessarily had to end with the creditors' gaining the upper hand. It is thus necessary to investigate the crisis empirically and to reassess on this basis the actual interplay of the strengths and weaknesses of creditors and debtors in the specific conditions of the 1980s. The conference will therefore historicize the 1980s “international debt crisis”, highlighting its broader implications for the international system in the twilight of the bipolar order.

This conference is funded by the Italian ministry of Research and University within the framework of the PRIN 2015 research program “[The Making of the Washington Consensus. International Assets, Debts and Power \(1979-1991\)](#)” at the universities of Bologna, Florence and Venice. It is divided into two parts, the first taking place in Venice on 16-17 March, and the second in Florence on 18-19 March 2020.

In Venice the emphasis will be on US and Soviet attitudes towards the debt crisis. This part of the conference seeks to shed new light on how the challenge of the debt crisis – and the ensuing negotiations between creditors and debtors – shaped the superpowers’ bilateral relations and their respective foreign policy initiatives vis-à-vis the indebted countries. We encourage submissions of research papers on the following topics (while remaining open to other proposals):

- The US and the debt crisis in Eastern Europe
- The US and the debt crisis in the developing world
- The USSR and the debt crisis in Eastern Europe
- The USSR and the debt crisis in the developing world
- The debt crisis and the evolution of US/USSR relations
- Debtor countries’ relations with the superpowers
- US and Soviet narratives of the debt crisis



In Florence the emphasis will be on how key players of the global financial system (including international economic institutions, private and central banks, and national finance ministries) approached the debt crisis and shaped its outcomes. We encourage submissions of research papers on the following topics (though, again, we are open to other suggestions):

- The International Financial Institutions and the debt crisis
- The International Organizations and the debt crisis
- The Paris and London clubs and the debt crisis
- Debtor countries' relations with the International Financial Institutions
- Cases studies on commercial banks and international debts in the 1980s

### **How to apply**

Scholars wishing to present their work at the conference are requested to submit an abstract of no more than 500 words and a short biographical note to [debtconference2020@gmail.com](mailto:debtconference2020@gmail.com) no later than **3 November 2019**, indicating which part of the conference they are applying for (including the possibility to indicate both). Selected applicants will be informed by **15 November 2019**. A paper of no more than 8000 words should be submitted by **15 February 2020**.

### **Expenses**

Reasonable (economy fare) travel costs will be covered by the organizers, as well as accommodation costs in Venice and Florence.

### **Scientific Committee**

Duccio Basosi, Ca' Foscari University of Venice  
Mauro Campus, University of Florence  
Francesco Saverio Leopardi, University of Bologna  
Massimiliano Trentin, University of Bologna  
Benedetto Zaccaria, Ca' Foscari University of Venice

### **Contact**

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