

GDR BULLETIN

NEWSLETTER FOR LITERATURE AND CULTURE IN THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Vol. I No. 3

September, 1975

GDR BULLETIN

Published four times a year. Correspondence should be addressed to: Patricia Herminghouse, editor, Dept. of Germanic Languages and Literatures, Box 1104, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.

or to

Regional Contributing Editors:

David Bathrick, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Helen Fehervary, Ohio State University

Louis Helbig, Indiana University

Frank Hirschbach, University of Minnesota

Theodor Langenbruch, Georgia Inst. of Technology

Kay LaBahn, Washington University

Edith Waldstein, Washington University

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

GDR SEMINAR AT SCMLA

"Literature of the GDR" is the topic of the German III section of the South Central Modern Language Association meeting, Dec. 11-13 in New Orleans. There will be no reading of papers at the section meeting, which takes place Friday, Dec. 12, 2:30 to 4 p. m. Papers to be discussed include:

1. "Zur Dialektik von historischem Optimismus und literarischer Selbstkritik: Der Beginn einer Entmythologisierung des Sozialismus?" Theodor Langenbruch (Georgia Institute of Technology).

2. "Formtendenzen Brechts in der DDR-Lyrik" Hubert Heinen (University of Texas at Austin).

3. "Günter de Bruyn's 'Preisverleihung': the GDR Citizen in the Seventies" Ted Frank (University of Texas at Arlington).

4. "Dramatists in the GDR: Their Positive Critique" Betty Nance Weber (University of Texas at Austin).

Heiner Müller, the playwright whose Zement is the center of Professor Weber's analysis, will also attend the session. Persons wishing to receive a copy of the papers for this session should send a check for \$1.50 to cover costs to Professor Margareta Deschner, Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas 75275

GDR SEMINARS AT MLA

Plans have been completed for the two GDR seminars scheduled for the 1975 MLA meeting in San Francisco:

Seminar 125: "The Contemporary Novel in GDR Literature" will meet on Dec. 27 from 12:30-3:45 p. m. in the Potrero Room of the Hyatt-on-Union-Square. Attendance will be limited to 30 persons. Copies of papers are available in advance from the discussion leader, Dr. Ilmars Birznieks, CPO Box 63, Berea College, Berea, Ky. 40403 or from Professor Theodor Langenbruch, Dept. of Modern Languages, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Ga. 30332. Papers will include the following presentations:

1. "Conflict Patterns in Recent GDR Novels," Margret Eifler, (Rice Univ.).

2. "Scherz, Satire, Ideologie und tiefere Bedeutung in Karl-Heinz Jakobs Roman Die Interviewer," Frank D. Hirschbach (Univ. of Minnesota).

3. "Lebensläufe in aufsteigender Linie. Zur Heldenwahl und Konfliktgestaltung in Kants Imprimis," Theodor Langenbruch (Georgia Institute of Technology).

4. "The Concept of the Artist in Kunert's Gast aus England," Robert W. Acker (Univ. Of Missouri-Columbia).

Seminar 169: "Drama in the GDR: The Plays of Heiner Müller" will meet on Dec. 27 from 9 to 10:15 p. m. in the Oxford Room of the St. Francis Hotel. No papers will be read. The seminar will take the form of a panel discussion of a short example of Müller's work, for which participants are urged to prepare themselves by reading the three currently available volumes of the Rotbuch edition of Müller's work. Volume 4, Theaterpraxis, which will appear very soon contains, in addition to the play Weiberkomödie, short essays and comments by Müller on drama theory and theater. A good insight into Müller's work is contained in the 1973 panel discussion among Müller, Karl Mickel, Helmut Baierl, Volker Braun, und Rainer Kerndl published as "DDR-Dramatiker über Brecht" in Brecht 73. Brecht-Woche der DDR 9-15 Februar 1973. Dokumentation, hrsg. Werner Hecht (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1973). The 1974 / 75 Sonderheft of Theater heute contains a significant section devoted to Müller, including a printing of Die Schlacht, from which the material for the panel discussion will be taken.

Panelists will include Helen Fehervary (Ohio State University), Gunner Huettich (Southern California University) and Marc Silberman (Indiana University). It is planned that Heiner Müller will also participate in the discussion. Persons wishing to receive a copy of the selection chosen for discussion should send a stamped self-addressed envelope to the discussion leader, Patricia Herminghouse, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, Box 1104, Washington University, St. Louis, Mo. 63130. Materials will be mailed in early December.

NEMLA CALL FOR PAPERS

Persons wishing to submit papers to the GDR section of the Northeast Modern Language Association annual meeting at the University of Vermont, April 8-10, 1976, are reminded of the October 31 deadline for doing so. Only NEMLA members are eligible to read

papers at the annual meeting and papers should be limited to 7 or 8 pages. Authors are to retain a copy of the submitted paper and should include an abstract of 100 words or less. Send contributions to Professor Irmgard C. Taylor, Department of Foreign Languages, SUNY College at Cortland, Cortland, N. Y. 13045

Another section of the NEMLA meeting will deal with "The German Literary Tradition: East and West". Papers treating any aspect of German literature within the context of bourgeois or socialist humanism may be submitted to Professor Katherine M. Littell, RD 2, Box 71, Lewisburg, Pa. 17837.

WORLD FELLOWSHIP SEMINAR

A GDR literature seminar was held in the World Fellowship Center, Conway, New Hampshire, from June 20-27. The discussions centered around the work of Stefan Heym, Hermann Kant, Ulrich Plenzdorf, and Christa Wolf. Introductory papers were given by the host and seminar director, Rev. Christoph Schmauch, and by Professors Nancy Lauckner, Theodor Langenbruch, and Duncan Smith. Students and non-academic participants joined in the discussions, which tried to assess the relevance and significance of literary themes and structures within the framework of the GDR's socio-cultural conditions.

It is planned to hold a GDR-seminar each year during the last week of June at this convention center, which offers excellent facilities, among them good food and lodging, family accommodations including child-care, recreational facilities in the surrounding White Mountains with their unspoiled lakes, and a low all-inclusive rate of \$85 for this year's seminar--all of which promises to add to the attraction of future seminars. The themes of those seminars may go beyond literary topics to include other aspects of GDR culture. Suggestions and inquiries should be directed to: Rev. Christoph Schmauch, Box 156, Kerhonkson, N. Y. 12446 (Tel. 914-626-7974).

(T. L.)

DDR- FORSCHUNG-TAGUNG

From May 20-23 the BRD journal Deutschland Archiv sponsored its eighth annual "DDR-Forschung-Tagung," at the Akademie für Politische Bildung in Tutzing on the Starnberger See. The subject of this year's conference was "Sozialstruktur und Sozialplanung in der DDR." Papers and discussions were devoted to such subjects as "Wechselwirkung von ökonomischer und sozialer Planung in der Landwirtschaft der DDR," "Frauenförderung und Frauenpolitik in der DDR," "Einkommensverteilung als Instrument der Sozialpolitik in der DDR," and other similar topics of both informational and methodological value for those doing work in the field. Of particular significance and perhaps as a sign of the changing times was the fact that this year's program included for the first time papers dealing with cultural policy. Liliane Crips of Besancon, France gave an excellent detailed and historical treatment of social conflicts in the novel of the GDR, attempting to answer the question: "Inwiefern gelingt es der Literatur als der künstlerischen Form, die die Vermittlung zwischen sozialem Rahmen und Bewusstsein der Individuen behandelt, über die Staatliche Funktionszuweisung hinaus Probleme einzufangen und bewusst zu machen, die etwa aus der Phasenverschiebung von sozialem Wandlungsprozess und gesellschaftlich-individuellem Bewusstsein resultieren oder die aus fehlerhaften sozialen und politischen Massnahmen der Zentralgewalt im individuellen Bereich nachzuweisen sind?"

Less historical and for that reason less successful was Manfred Jäger's discussion of "Kulturpolitik in der DDR nach dem VIII. Parteitag der SED." According to Jäger, the important recent developments include a) "eine Stabilisierung der führenden Rolle der Partei durch Erweiterung des Rahmens für die Eigengesetzlichkeit der Kunstentwicklung;" b) "eine Abgrenzung zum Westen und Kooperation der RWG Staaten im Kulturbereich;" c) "ein neues Partnerverhältnis zwischen Arbeiterklasse und Intelligenzschicht-eine Bündnispolitik mit Interessenausgleich." Jäger's failure to link these developments to larger questions of social and economic planning within the society as a whole opened up a number of questions which only began to be answered in the discussion session which followed.

Bernhard Greiner's paper "Möglichkeiten soziologischer Interpretation der DDR Literatur, dargestellt an Heiner Müllers Geschichten aus der Produktion" began with a critique of prevailing methodological approaches to GDR literature for having limited themselves to exclusively to questions of content and references extraneous to the text. In ignoring aesthetic and formal problems of literary communication, says Greiner, such a sociology of literature unwittingly relegates it to the realm of "Trivallliteratur." Greiner's own attempt to construct a "sociological interpretation" of GDR literature focused on Heiner Müller's plays Der Lohndrucker and Der Bau as examples of how an author does not merely reflect reality, but in the act of writing partakes in the building of society as "Mitautor der Wirklichkeit." While certainly not an original approach to Müller, Greiner's discussion of these two plays does offer good examples of a sociological treatment of literary form. All of these essays will be printed in Deutschland Archiv.

What will not be reflected in the publications is the growing and heated methodological differences between a younger group of Marxist scholars (dubbed the "Scholastiker") and the older established experts (the "Empiriker") of a more "pluralist" persuasion. For the former, an independent and critical Marxist method offers the only viable means to grasp historically the contradictions and problems of a Socialist society. The "Empiricists" counter this by emphasizing that a Marxist approach merely deals with the GDR within the framework of its own self-understanding and hence is unable to be truly critical. The intensity and obviously generational character of this struggle suggested that it is a debate fundamental to the future of DDR-Forschung in the BRD for some years to come.

The ninth annual DDR-Forschung-Tagung will take place in Tutzing next spring.

(D. B.)

GDR COLLOQUIUM IN NEW ZEALAND

Too late to include in the last issue, but per-

haps of historical interest to readers who have watched the growth of scholarly concern with GDR topics is a note from Professor Gerhardt Träbing of the University of Otago, New Zealand, reporting that the Eighth Annual Colloquium of New Zealand Germanists was devoted to "Kurzprosa in der DDR". Eight papers were presented in what appears to have been a session marked by heated debates.

TRAVEL AND EXCHANGE

HOCHSCHULFERIENKURSE 1976

Termine der Hochschulferienkurse 1976 für Germanistik in der DDR sind schon festgesetzt worden. Zum Inhalt der Kurse gehören Vorträge und Seminare über die Kultur und Politik der DDR, über Probleme der Literaturwissenschaft, der Sprach- und Übersetzungstheorie, der Fremdsprachenmethodik sowie der DDR-Landeskunde; Konversations- und Sprachübungen sowie Phonetikunterricht; Exkursionen und Betriebsbesichtigungen. Folgende Kurse finden im kommenden Jahr statt:

Germanistenkurse:

- Berlin 2.7.-25.7.
Humboldt-Universität, Sektion Fremdsprachen, DDR-104 Berlin, Reinhardtstr. 7
- Weimar I 4.7.-27.7.
Friedrich-Schiller-Universität, DDR-69 Jena, Goetheallee 13
- Weimar II 29.7.-21.8.
Friedrich-Schiller-Universität, DDR-69 Jena, Goetheallee 13
- Leipzig I 6.7.-29.7.
Karl-Marx-Universität, Herder-Institut, DDR-7022 Leipzig, Lumumbastr. 4
- Leipzig II 6.7.-29.7.
Karl-Marx-Universität, Herder-Institut, DDR-7022 Leipzig, Lumumbastr. 4
- Dresden 6.7.-31.7.
Technische Universität Dresden, Inst. f. Angewandte Sprachwissenschaft, DDR-8027 Dresden, Mommsenstr. 13
- Karl-Marx-Stadt 1.7.-28.7.
Technische Hochsch. Karl-Marx-Stadt, IHFK-Germanistik, DDR-901 Karl-Marx-Stadt, Straße der Nationen 62

Kurse für Germanistik-Studenten:

- Halle 11.7 -1.8
Martin-Luther-Universität, Sektion Germanistik, DDR-400 Halle, Universitätsring 4
- Rostock 2.7-23.7
Universität Rostock, IHFK-Germanistik, DDR-25 Rostock, Kröpelinstraße 26
- Greifswald 5.7- 25.7
Kursbüro IHFK-Germanistik, DDR-22 Greifswald, Bahnhofstraße 46/47
- Berlin 2.7-25.7
Humboldt Universität, Sektion Germanistik, DDR 108-Berlin, Unter den Linden 6

Die Teilnehmergebühren betragen: für Germanistenkurse, 450,--Mark; für Studentenkurse, 300,--Mark. Gebühren schließen Einschreibegebühr, Unterkunft, Verpflegung, Lehrmaterial, Exkursionen sowie kulturelle und wissenschaftliche Veranstaltungen ein. Anmeldeschluß für alle Kurse ist der 30. April 1976, aber eine rechtzeitige Anmeldung wird wegen der großen Nachfrage sehr empfohlen. Anmeldungen erfolgen direkt über die oben angegebenen Leitungen der Hochschulferienkurse. Ein neuer Prospekt mit Einzelheiten über die Kurse 1976 soll ab Mitte November durch die Herausgeberin dieses Bulletins erhältlich sein.

IREX EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

The International Research and Exchanges Board has announced its 1976-77 program for research in the GDR. Twenty man-months have been allotted for participants wishing to work in the GDR. Participation is normally for a semester or an academic year, with longer or shorter periods possible by special arrangement. For the GDR, the minimum period is three months and the maximum ten months.

IREX provides domestic and international transportation and an internal travel allowance for the participant as well as a stipend and partial support for family members. The program appears to be open to graduate students as well. The host country normally provides a stipend in local currency, book and microfilm allowances, housing, medical and dental care. The GDR Exchange Partner is the Ministry for Higher and Technical Education. Exact details of the GDR program and application forms may be obtained from IREX, 110 East Fifty-ninth St., New York, N.Y. 10022. Application deadline is November 10, 1975.