

1979

Journal Notes

various authors

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JOURNAL NOTES

temperamente. Verlag Neues Leben. DDR 108
Berlin, Behrenstr. 40/41

Up to 1976 there were only two literary journals in the GDR. But both Neue Deutsche Literatur and Sinn und Form were more or less restricted to contributions by well-known writers. Thus, the 1975 Cultural Congress of the official youth organization FDJ decided to publish a periodical called temperamente. "wo Jugendliche erste literarische Diskussionsbeiträge veröffentlichen können, ohne gleich den Anspruch 'neuer deutscher Literatur' erfüllen zu müssen" (Petra Werner). The fate of this journal seems to be a little bit strange.

The first number was printed in the autumn of 1976, a short time before Biermann's expatriation. It never reached the general public, perhaps because some articles were written by signers of the famous protest letter of November 17. Although the journal was originally planned to be a bi-monthly, and from 1977 a quarterly, only four copies (instead of nine) were edited from 1977 to the spring of 1979. So far the last copy is number 2 (1978), which was sold in February, 1979. Between Nos. 1 and 2 (1978) the complete editorial board changed - without a word of explanation. The first three numbers included poetry, literary essays and some very interesting aphorisms. Regarding the contents these numbers concentrated on the literary traditions of Soviet Russia in the twenties (especially Mayakovsky), the German heritage (e.g. Kleist) and new documentary literature on everyday life in the GDR (both work and leisure). The editorials and aphorisms were comparatively astonishing. From my point of view they showed a steady decline in optimism about the GDR. The first editorial in 1977 began with the sentence: "Die Kunst braucht Raum, die Kunst schafft Raum." The last edition made by the original editorial board ended: "Es gibt einige wenige (Bücher), die auf geheimnisvolle Weise als Mitteilungsträger gezeichnet sind. Ich fühle mich angenehm entdeckt und schweige zumeist. Aber wir denken gemeinsam. Sie formulieren und sprechen die Sätze aus. Aber seit gestern abend ist alles beängstigend anders."

temperamente 2(1978) - the first made by the new editorial board - expressed "confessions of love to our socialist fatherland" and "solidarity with the revolutionary

Cuban culture." Nevertheless, there were some criticism and "socialist feminism", facts which indicate that there is some continuity and no complete break. Bearing in mind the development of Sinn und Form despite the pessimistic predictions after the dismissal of Peter Huchel there may be some hope that temperamente has not been deprived of all its temperament.

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Sinn und Form. Beiträge zur Literatur. published six times a year by the Deutsche Akademie der Künste (Berlin/DDR).
Nr.1, Januar 1979

In recent years, particularly in the last five, Sinn und Form has tended to remain international in scope. Besides the usual list of GDR authors - both "old guard" and contemporary - included in its pages, one continues to encounter writers from around the world, with Spanish and Latin American authors particularly conspicuous: Neruda, Márquez, Hierro, Amado, Pacheco, and Fuentes to name but a few.

Furthermore, there is still the tendency to focus on short prose works - of either a fictional or essayistic nature - though on occasion poetry too is included.

If the first issue of 1979 is any indication, then Sinn und Form promises to continue the above policy, with works in those categories mentioned well represented. For example, we find such well established writers as Erik Neutsch, whose essay on Georg Forster's "Reise um die Welt" (1777) interprets this work in its significance for socialist systems. Given such statements by Forster as "Die Revolution ist ein Orkan, wer kann ihn hemmen?" the critical reader quickly becomes aware of the very socio-political reason for the inclusion of this particular essay on an otherwise obscure author, of whom Neutsch concludes: "Wir aber ehren ihn endlich, indem wir ihn zu unserem Vorfahr erklären."

In addition, there are two essays, which deal openly with the question of revolution: "Revolution und Literatur bei Marx", by Claus Träger and "In revolutionärer Sicht", by Klaus Höpcke.

As in the past Brecht remains a popular subject; indeed, this first issue of 1979 contains two essays which deal with him: The first is a review of Ernst und Renate Schumacher's book, Das Leben Brechts, by Hermann Kähler.

The second is an update on Brecht research in the GDR by the director of the Brecht archive, Gerhard Seidel.

Finally, the issue includes a number of international authors, among whom are the Soviet writers, Valentin Katajew and Juri Olescha, the French publisher, Vladimir Pozner, the African writer and politician, Henri Lopes, and the Czech author, Jan Martinec.

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Neue Deutsche Literatur. Published monthly by the Deutscher Schriftstellerverband (Berlin/DDR). Vol. 27 Nr. 1 through Vol. 27 Nr. 6., 1979.

The United Nations Organization has declared 1979 the International Year of the Child and the GDR journal Neue Deutsche Literatur celebrates it with its January, 1979 issue (Vol. 27, Nr. 1), which pertains to Kinder- und Jugendliteratur. The issue opens with an excerpt from a forthcoming book entitled Um Sechs Uhr steh ich auf which contains one-page descriptions of daily life by 12 and 13 year olds in the GDR, introduced by Benno Pludra.

This issue of NDL also contains an interesting interview with Hannes Hüttner (Generalsekretär des Kuratoriums Sozialistischer Kinderliteratur der DDR), with the heading "Literatur für den jungen Leser," in which Mr. Hüttner describes the sorts of activities which will be undertaken during the International Year of the Child, the future direction of the Kuratorium, and what Kinderliteratur is and should be.

The remaining selections in the January, 1979 NDL issue are all excerpts from imminent publications by the Kinderbuchverlag, either from anthologies celebrating the Year of the Child as well as the 30th anniversary of the Kinderbuchverlag or from books by individual authors. The stories have children as their subject, or they show the relationship of the author to the life of the child. Contributors include Hannes Hüttner, Uwe Kant, Gerti Tetzner, Joachim Nowotny, and Jürgen Rennert (poetry).

The February, 1979 issue of Neue Deutsche Literatur (Vol. 27, Nr. 2), is a general issue with excerpts from new or soon-to-be-published books, a section introducing young, new authors, reviews of new works, and a list of some of the most recent publications in the GDR.

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The first literary offering is an excerpt from Peter Edel's autobiography Wenn es ans Leben geht in which he discusses the writing of an autobiography. The selection by Jürgen Lehmann, "Der letzte Termin" is preceded by an interview with Lehmann about literature in general.

Walter Kaufmann provides a further excerpt from his Israel-Reportage (cf. NDL, Sept. 1977), entitled "Der Apotheker". Bernd Wagner is represented by a story from his forthcoming book of prose works. The issue also contains poetry selections by Bruno Apitz, Wolfgang Tilgner and Volker Ebersbach.

Volume 27, number 3 of Neue Deutsche Literatur (March, 1979), in addition to presenting, as usual, previously unpublished literary works, contains several interesting essays. John Erpenbeck, who is a poet and novelist as well as a physicist, offers an excerpt from a soon-to-be-published essay entitled "Was kann Kunst?" Erpenbeck seeks to use scientific means in the essay to analyse art, since, as he states, in his work he has already approached science with artistic means. In the section printed in NDL Erpenbeck discusses Lewis Carroll, who also combined literature with his scientific endeavors, and discusses the question, "wie unterscheiden sich wissenschaftliche und künstlerische Widerspiegelung?"

In an essay entitled "Trost und Trostlosigkeit des Dichtens" Jürgen Engler analyses Johannes R. Becher's poem "Melancholie".

For those interested in translation theory the last section of March 1979 NDL issue reprints a paper which was given by Werner Creutziger at the 15th Belgrade "Oktobertreffen" addressing the question "Die Kommunikation zwischen den Literaturen". The paper is entitled "Schwierigkeiten mit der Theorie".

In addition to these essays NDL presents prose by Eberhard Panitz and Ludwig Renn and poetry by Peter Gosse, Hans-Jörg Rother, Uwe Grüning, and Klaus Wolf. New works by Max Walter Schulz, Horst Bastian, Fritz Meyer-Scharffenberg, Joachim Walther, Martin Stephan, and Jean Villain are reviewed in the section "Neue Werke". "Junge Literatur" is the title of the April, 1979 issue of NDL, (Vol. 27, Nr. 4). The issue opens with a reprint of a speech by Joachim Nowotny entitled "Forderungen an uns", which served as the basis for discussion at the March, 1979, meeting of the central directorate of the Schriftstellerverband, concerning questions of promotion of the younger generation. From Nowotny's speech one gets the impression that literary policies and/or practices in the GDR may soon be allowing for more variety.

Nowotny argues that the different views, perceptions, and developments of the young writers are not reasons for fear or criticism, but represent the present phase of the developed socialistic society, and he hopes that the GDR society has reached a certain maturity which will allow it to accept literature which may be uncomfortable to it.

Following the Nowotny speech, the April issue of NDL presents literary excerpts by and/or information about some of the "Debütanten", (who average 39 years of age), either through interviews with those authors or introductions to the authors by themselves or someone else. Information on how, when, and why these people began writing is usually discussed. Short biographies of all the authors presented in the issue can be found in the back.

Erik Neutsch's story "Zwei leere Stühle" opens the May, 1979 issue of NDL, (Vol. 27, Nr. 5). It is a lengthy story dealing with the development of a friendship set within the educational system, and will be published at the end of the year. The most interesting aspect of the issue is the conversation with Erik Neutsch which follows his story. In the interview, Neutsch talks about his novel Friede im Osten, the third volume of which has yet to be written, and discusses in detail "Zwei leere Stühle". The remaining literary selections in the issue present poetry by Eva Strittmatter and Arno Pielenz and short stories by Karl Mundstock and Eva Lippold. This issue also contains a children's story by Gerhard Holz-Baumert. In the "Lesarten" section Hans Richter discusses Louis Fünberg's poem "Abendgang". Books by Eberhard Panitz, Franz Fühmann, Hasso Mager and others are reviewed in this issue as well as Dieter Noll's Kippenberg. In addition to these regular sections, on the inside front cover is a tribute to Bruno Apitz who died on April 7, 1979.

As is the case with most NDL issues, the June 1979 issue (Vol. 27 Nr. 6), primarily presents excerpts of new literary works and reviews of recent publications. Prose by Stephan Hermlin, Helmut Hauptmann and Heinz Kamnitzer, poetry by Hartmut Zenker and Andreas Reimann, and an excerpt from Victor Klemperer's autobiography are contained in this issue.

In addition to the GDR literature, a section entitled "Stimmen aus der BRD" is included in the June issue. This section contains prose and poetry selections by such authors as F.C. Delius, Angelika Mechtel and Martin Walser, among others, dealing with the subject "Recht auf Arbeit".

Periodically NDL solicits a number of reviews of a recent GDR literary work. In this issue six different authors and literary scholars discuss Max Walter Schulz's novel Der Soldat und die Frau. Three other works are also reviewed and Dieter Noll's Kippenberg is discussed by Jürgen Kuczynski in the section "Ich habe gelesen".

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RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

AUTHORS

Forschungsbericht: Hermann Kant. Work-in-progress. Peter Wesollek (Univ. Karlsruhe, BRD). See Forschungsberichte...

Forschungsbericht: Johannes Bobrowski. Work-in-progress. Siegfried Hoefert (Univ. of Waterloo, Ontario, CANADA). See Forschungsberichte...

LITERARY THEMES

Classicism and Marxist Orthodoxy in the Works of Volker Braun and Peter Hacks. Paper at the Kentucky FLC, 1979. Duncan Smith (Dept. of German, Brown U., Providence, R.I. 02912).

Forschungsberichte zur DDR-Literatur. Ed. Gerd Labrousse. Amsterdam: Rodopi. A series of 2 - 3 reports per year. See other entries.

Forschungsbericht: Sozialistischer Realismus der 70er Jahre. Work-in-progress. Jos Hoogeveen (FU Amsterdam, Netherlands). See Forschungsberichte...

Roleplaying of the Sexes: Günter de Bruyn's "Geschlechtertausch" and Christa Wolf's "Selbstversuch". Paper at Pacific Northwest CFLC. Bianca Rosenthal (California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo).

Der Roman in der Literaturgesellschaft DDR. An ongoing project of the German Dept. of the FU Amsterdam. Studies of Hermann Kant, Christ Wolf, Abenteuerliteratur, etc., to appear in Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik, vol. 11, 1980. Further topics: Böll-reception in the GDR, Heftreihen-Literatur. For information contact Jos Hoogeveen or Gerd Labrousse. The reception-oriented methodological concept behind the project was presented in Vol. 7 (1978) of Amsterdamer Beiträge.