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"In der Sache Heinar Kipphardt"

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"In der Sache Heinar Kipphardt." *Marbacher Magazin* 60/1992. Marbach am Neckar: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 1992. 95pp.

This issue of the prominent *Marbacher Magazin* celebrating the life and work of Heinar Kipphardt was prepared to appear in conjunction with the exhibits in 1992 at the *Schiller-Nationalmuseum*, Marbach, the *Gasteig* in Munich, and the *Literaturhaus* in Berlin.

The exhibit of almost 200 items was prepared by Nicolai Riedel, a Kipphardt bibliographer, in collaboration with Pia-Maria Kipphardt, the author's widow, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the writer's death. Included in the display cases were photographs, letters, personal documents, newspaper clippings, manuscripts, and printed editions of his works, theater programs, and various other paraphernalia belonging to the playwright.

The bibliography of 229 items, written by Nicolai Riedel, includes references to all editions of Kipphardt's books, collected and annotated works, books he edited; translations of his plays; Kipphardt's essayistic writings published in newspapers, magazines, theater programs and anthologies; and interviews he gave to the media. Not included in the bibliography is the secondary and scholarly literature, which by now must undoubtedly number in the thousands.

The co-authors of the biography, Uwe Naumann and Michael Töteberg, devote almost half of their account to Kipphardt's life in the GDR, from June 1949 to October 1959. Not unlike other young men who had experienced the horrors of the fascist Nazi regime—his father had been interned in various concentration camps—Heinar Kipphardt voluntarily moved to East Berlin after he had completed his medical degree. Though not a member of the Communist Party, he believed at that time that the East offered a new and better form of life. And despite his years of conflict with the SED Party functionaries, he never lost his early idealistic views, not even after he had moved back to West Germany.

Of considerable interest to gaining a better understanding of Kipphardt are the numerous references and quotations from the archive documents of the *Deutsches Theater* in Berlin where he worked for a decade as a dramaturge, the protocol of his meetings and confrontations with the cultural commission of the politburo of the SED just prior to his leaving the GDR, and the documents from the SED party archives relating directly to his expulsion.

Life was not much easier for Heinar Kipphardt in the Federal Republic. Indeed, in the meantime, his play *In der Sache J. Robert Oppenheimer* had made

him a world-famous playwright. But shortly thereafter, when he was engaged as dramaturge at the Munich *Kammerspiele*, he experienced the wrath of the West German political machine, including a vicious attack on him by Günter Grass, which led to his being fired from that position. Kipphardt was at that time quite disillusioned with the theater—he had always seen it as a battleground for exposing the truth—and he withdrew to his retreat in the Bavarian mountains, Angelsbruck.

A final example, out of many, of Kipphardt's life-long conviction that the theater functions as an educational and enlightening institution could be his last play, *Bruder Eichmann*. The project, based on the 3564 pages of the protocol of the trial, presents in the character of Adolf Eichmann the normal person who is capable of committing inhuman crimes. The playwright presents, by means of interspersed scenes, a thesis suggestion that everyone is perhaps capable of being an Eichmann. *Bruder Eichmann* was completed three weeks before Kipphardt died and was staged for the first time two months thereafter.

This brief account of Kipphardt's life and work serves as a fine introduction to a major German author and, perhaps, deserves a much wider circulation than this fine journal normally enjoys.

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