

1975

## GDR Courses

various authors

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# VISITING LECTURERS GDR COURSES

## WITHOLD TULASIEWICZ

Professor Withold Tulasiewicz, Lecturer and chief examiner in German at Cambridge University, will be available for lectures in this country in late November and December, 1975. Professor Tulasiewicz has published many studies on literature of the GDR and is also well-known as a medievalist. Persons interested in inviting him should write directly to him, 32 Halifax Road, Cambridge, England or to Professor Marion E. Wiley, Department of Languages and Literature, University of Delaware, Newark, Del. 19711.

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## HEINER MÜLLER

The dramatist Heiner Müller will be visiting professor of German this semester at the University of Texas, Austin. He is willing to accept invitations for lectures and discussions at colleges and universities and has expressed interest in contact with non-Germanists, too. Persons wishing to extend such invitations should write to him at the Department of Germanic Languages, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas, 78712.

It is expected that he will participate in discussions at the SCMLA and MLA meetings (see p. 2) and at the Wisconsin Workshop, at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Nov. 21-22, 1975. Plans are being made for English-language productions of some of his major plays in conjunction with his appearance at several places. More details on this should be available in the next Bulletin when arrangements are finalized.

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## STEPHAN HERMLIN

The visit of Stephan Hermlin to the University of Cincinnati, which was announced in the last issue of the Bulletin, has been cancelled.

In the first issue, it was suggested that this section should serve as much more than a mere catalog of GDR courses, past and present. It can be a forum for exchange between those with experience in the pedagogy and content of such courses and those who contemplate offering a GDR-course. To this end, the entries in this issue are less uniform than those in the original issue in order to communicate bibliographical tips and requests for information. It is hoped that Robert Schulz' comments will be the beginning of a lively debate in this column on the nature of GDR courses. Your responses are invited!

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## COURSES TAUGHT

"A Cultural Analysis of the GDR" (Summer, 1975, Seminar for teachers of German); "Literature of the GDR" (Fall, 1975, graduate course and undergraduate honors course), Frank Hirschbach, Department of German, 219 Folwell Hall, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn., 55455.

"Women in Contemporary German Literature" (Summer seminar, 1975), Christiane E. Keck, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Stanley Coulter Hall, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Ind., 47907. Included Christa Wolf, Anna Seghers, Gabriele Wohmann and Ingeborg Bachmann.

"Contemporary Germany East and West: Literature in the Social and Political Context" (Fall, 1975), Valerie Greenberg, Department of Germanic Languages and Literature, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, 27706.

"The Socialist World View in the GDR" (Fall, 1975). Alan Weiss, John Abbott College, 16821 Hymus Blvd., Kirkland, P.Q., Canada. (Involves students' developing position papers on various political and cultural topics; ties in with planned summer 1976 trip to the GDR).

## COURSES PLANNED

"Literature of the GDR" (Spring, 1976), Tony Niesz, Department of Germanic Languages, 101 W.L. Harkness Hall, Yale University, New Haven, Conn. 06520

"Literature of the GDR" (Spring, 1976), Dr. Basil Mogridge, Department of German, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. Texts to be used are: H. Walwei-Wiegelmann (ed.): *Neuere DDR-Literatur, Texte und Materialien für den Deutschunterricht* (Schöningh, Paderborn) M. Hamburger (ed.): *East German Poetry, An Anthology* (Carcanet, Cheadle Hulme, England) L.-W. Wolff (ed.): *Fahrt mit der S-Bahn, Erzähler der DDR* (dtv) U. Plenzdorf: *Die neuen Leiden des jungen W.* (Suhrkamp).

"Literature of the GDR" (Spring, 1976), Margareta Deschner, Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, 75275. (Requests bibliographies from GDR courses of colleagues who might be willing to share them.

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COMMENTARY: SHOULD GDR LITERATURE BE TREATED SEPARATELY FROM THAT OF OTHER POSTWAR GERMAN LITERATURE?

Certainly some scholars would advocate such a view, due to the establishment in 1949 of a separate socialist German state with a social order which is diametrically opposed (officially, at least) to that of the Federal Republic.

On the other hand, however, much of post-1945 German literature deals with either the inter-war (1918-39) period or with World War II and its aftermath. Those events were shared by the German people as a whole. The deprivation, horror and suffering experienced by Germans are dealt with in a similar manner by authors in both East and West who treat common themes of war guilt, national division and materialism.

Even with two German states, the German nation still exists (in the legal sense) and, despite occupation, division and the like, most citizens of these states still consider themselves "German" first. In addition, the legislation, politics and achievements of the Federal Republic are closely watched in the GDR, more so than vice-versa. Personal experience suggests that one tends to find more evidence of the "ultra-German"

in the GDR than in the Federal Republic. Even the young people, although they may appear different superficially, share the basic values of their ancestors. It was for these reasons that this author treated GDR literature as part of the overall postwar German literature.

The seminar which I taught at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro explored post-war German literature as it reflects many of the historical events which had been treated in a previous seminar: "Political and Social Contrasts in the Two Germanies." Thus it was stimulating to analyse the effects of two differing social systems upon a literature rooted in the same past. Not only were the literary selections able to bring into a more personal focus many of the events previously studied within an historical frame of reference, but they also portrayed everyday life of Germans in both states.

Works selected were: Brecht's Three Penny Opera (although written in 1928, it was chosen for its "socialist" element and the fact that it is one of the major works of an individual who played such an important role in the GDR in the 1950's); Grass' Dog Years, Cat and Mouse; Hochhuth's Soldiers and The Deputy; M. Hamburger's East German Poetry; P. Weiss' The Investigation; Hesse's Narcissus and Goldmund; Uwe Johnson's Speculations about Jacob; Rolf Schneider's Deep Waters and Christa Wolf's Divided Heaven.

Through discussions of these works, students were presented with significant questions regarding their own behavior, were they to find themselves in similar situations. Morality versus expediency, caring for others as well as for oneself, the eternal quest for "happiness"--these questions exemplify some of the themes in the required texts. It goes without saying that, given the concerns and interests of today's university youth, such topics served as stimuli for lively discussions.

Some of the presentations growing out of this seminar were: "Bob Dylan and Wolf Biermann: The Revolutionaries," "Nazi Germany and Recent German Literature," and "The Theatrical Innovations of Constantine Stanislavski and Bertolt Brecht."

The majority of students who took both seminars found that their cultural and literary horizons had expanded in view of the in-depth analysis of the subject matter. One student remarked that he was tired of concluding his Euro-