

1988

Conferences

various authors

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CONFERENCES

GDR: Individual and Society

The seventeen papers that were presented at the fourth International Conference on the GDR, entitled "The Individual and Society" on September 11-13 1987 at Ealing College of Higher Education, have now been published together in the volume:

GDR: Individual and Society
edited by Ingrid K.J. Williams
Conference Proceedings, 1987

One can order this volume from:

Ingrid K.J. Williams
Ealing College of Higher Education
Division of German Studies
St. Marys Rd., London W5 5RF

Scholarship and Recreation Mix Well Amid the Mountains of New Hampshire

On June 22, 1988, the World Fellowship Center in Conway, N.H., opened its annual season for the fourteenth year hosting the NEW HAMPSHIRE SYMPOSIUM ON THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC. The interdisciplinary event attracted some sixty-six economists, German scholars, journalists, political scientists, and sociologists from Austria, Canada, the two Germanies, Great Britain and the United States. Newcomers and oldtimers, they all had one thing in common: their manifest interest in the German Democratic Republic, described by one participating scholar as the "most closely watched and analysed country in the world." The vastness of the beautiful and unspoiled scenery, the purity of the air and lakes of New Hampshire prompted many a participant to combine the useful with the enjoyable by planning this year's vacation around this event.

The focus of this year's symposium was on technological change and the economic and social implications. Like in most industrialized countries, technological progress has not only raised the living standard for every citizen in the GDR, but it challenges the leadership forever anew to deal with newly arising issues and problems ranging from demographics to environmental pollution, from high tech transfer to international competitiveness, from the concept of a life-long learning process to the creation of more interesting working places. The opening presentations and subsequent discussions provided both an overview and analysis of the country's present economic condition within the framework of socialist policies.

Under "Social Theory and Changing Social Values," the general topic for day two, the results of several research projects dealing with the stereotyping of sex roles were presented. The scholars' aim was to determine to what degree socialist theory and educational efforts had been successful in eliminating the traditional bourgeois notion of gender-specific societal functions. All participants came to the conclusion that while considerable progress had been made in legislating equality for the sexes, forty years of educational efforts had not sufficed to uproot millenia-old thought

patterns (and hence traditional male/female stereotyping), which continue to surface not only in daily life around family and home, but also most blatantly in films, magazines and literature.

Since the economic and political well-being of the GDR is heavily dependent on international developments, the third day's sessions addressing "Change in the USSR and Eastern Europe and the Political and Economic Implications for the GDR" were eagerly anticipated. One of the more pertinent questions raised, "Can Soviet economic reform be a model for the GDR?", was coolly analysed and hotly debated. The general consensus was that GDR economic conditions are in no way comparable to those of the USSR and hence the envisioned measures and their anticipated positive effects on the USSR economy would be ineffective in a country which can proudly point to its substantial per capita productivity and -- despite its diminutive size and population -- its respectable place on the international economic scale.

Subsequent days were devoted to presentations and discussions on topics ranging from new issues and aspects of youth culture and youth policy to music, the performing and visual arts, language, literature and methodology as well as aesthetic theory. Most of the sessions dealt with changing official attitudes and the observable societal reactions to these changes, be they in language and literature, on programs on public broadcasts, toward the church, within the family or on the job. Most presenters demonstrated not only thorough familiarity with their subject areas, but above all up-to-date data on current developments.

The seven days were not exclusively spent in the crowded conference room, however. Frequently an animated discussion was continued on one of the swim decks or during a leisurely boat ride around the nearby lake. A swim in the crystal-clear water granted respite from the heated discussions. Mt. Chocorua and Mt. Washington enticed climbers (and would-be climbers) and the forest trails beckoned those hardy hikers among us who were either innocent enough or totally oblivious to the ferocious appetite of New Hampshire mosquitos. Some of the latest DEFA productions provided entertainment, and portions of the Tenth Congress of the Writers Union were aired in the evenings

which led to more leisurely conversations and discussions. The week passed all too quickly and when the participants bid farewell to their hosts and Directors of the World Fellowship Center, Christoph and Kathryn Schmauch, it was with a definite sense of accomplishment and gratitude. The informal setting of the symposium had contributed greatly to an open exchange of ideas and to free and often animated discussions of what were at times radically opposed viewpoints. After one week, this exchange and the rustic simplicity of a life style most participants knew only from tales of days gone by had brought together in mutual respect and friendship sixty-six individuals with basically different interests and of vastly differing political persuasions.

Professor Margy Gerber (Bowling Green State University), coordinator of the annual symposium program and Editor-in-Chief of Studies in GDR Culture and Society, Vol. 1-8 (selected papers from the different symposia), is to be congratulated on yet another successful symposium. Prof. Gerber deserves a wealth of gratitude for her long-standing commitment to GDR studies and her untiring efforts to encourage research and to facilitate the dissemination of GDR-related scholarly information.

Heidi I. Stull
John Carroll University

XV. New Hampshire Symposium on the German Democratic Republic

The Fifteenth New Hampshire Symposium on the German Democratic Republic will take place at the World Fellowship Center, Conway, New Hampshire, from June 20 till June 27, 1989. The theme of the 1989 Symposium will be "The GDR at Forty: Taking Stock of the Past and Thinking about the Future."

The seminars will consider - from a multi-disciplinary point of view - where the GDR has come from and where it is going and will thus have both an historical and a contemporary focus. As in past years, economists, political scientists, sociologists, and other social scientists, as well as Germanists and specialists in the

areas of art, music, theater and the media are invited to participate. Papers are being solicited for the following topics:

Seminar I: Legitimacy and Legitimization of the GDR in the National and International Context - Eckart Förtsch, Institut für Gesellschaft und Wissenschaft an der Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Äußere Brucker Straße 33, D 8520 Erlangen; Anita Mallinckrodt, 2937 Macomb St. NW, Washington, DC 20008

Seminar II: Ideology, Everyday Life, and "Alltagsbewußtsein" in the GDR - Christiane Lemke, Dept. of Political Science, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27514; Manfred Lötsch, Akademie für Gesellschaftswissenschaften beim ZK der SED, Johannes-Dieckmann-Str. 19/23, DDR 1086 Berlin; Denis Sweet, Dept. of Foreign Languages, Bates College, Lewiston, Maine 04240

Seminar III: The Role of Heritage in GDR Culture and Society - Christiane Bohnert, Dept. of German, Washington Univ., St. Louis, MO 63130; Klaus Berghahn, Dept. of German, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison, WI 53706

Seminar IV: History of the GDR and GDR Perceptions of Its History - Margy Gerber, Institut für Anglistik, Akademiestr. 24, A 5020 Salzburg, Austria

Seminar V: Trends and Issues in Literature and the Arts: Looking Back, Looking Ahead - Nancy A. Lauckner, Dept. of Germanic and Slavic Languages, Univ. of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996-0470; Christiane Zehl Romero, Dept. of German and Russian, Tufts Univ., Medford, MA 02155

Call for papers: Detailed proposals (title plus 1-2 pages) must be submitted to the appropriate seminar or workshop organizers - one copy to each - by December 15, 1988. Complete papers are due April 1. Papers should not exceed 30 minutes. The preferred language is English, although papers may also be given in German. For more information on the program, contact Margy Gerber (Seminar IV). For information on the symposium location, travel arrangements, costs, etc., contact W. Christoph Schmauch, World Fellowship Center, Conway, NH 03818, tel. (603) 356-5208.

10th Annual Conference on the Fantastic

Professor David B. Dickens is organizing a section entitled "The Fantastic in GDR Literature" for the 10th Annual Conference on the Fantastic in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida (March 1989). Abstracts due by August 1, 1988; paper by the end of October. For information on this section contact:

David B. Dickens
307 Tucker Hall
Washington and Lee University
Lexington, VA 24450

Concepts of History in German Cinema

This four day conference provides a forum for interdisciplinary debate on German cinema's portrayal of history. It will focus on the cinematic institution, attitudes towards national heritage, public opinion about contemporary issues, and other factors that have influenced the selection and treatment of topics from history. The conference will run from 9am to 5pm, Thursday, October 27, through Saturday, October 29, and from 9am to 12pm on Sunday, October 30. The program will consist of paper presentations, film screenings, open discussions, and social activities.

The preliminary list of speakers includes Thomas Elsaesser (University of East Anglia), Michael Geisler (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Jan-Christopher Horak (George Eastman House), Anton Kaes (University of California-Berkley), Gertrud Koch (Frankfurt), Hans-Helmut Prinzler (Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek Berlin), Eric Rentschler (University of California-Irvine), and Marc Silberman (University of Texas-San Antonio).

Sessions on periods in German film history will include presentations by Roger F. Cook (University of Missouri-Columbia), David Culbert (Louisiana State University), Wolfgang Gast (Universität Giessen), Sabine Hake (University of Pittsburgh), Sheila Johnson (University of Texas-San Antonio), Wolfgang Natter (University of Kentucky), Eric L. Santner (Princeton University), Tom J. Saunders (University of Victoria) and Gabriele Weinberger (Cornell University).

Presentations will address the following topics:

- + concepts of agency
- + cinema as agent in history
- + individual/national identity information and historical subjects
- + the influence of modernity and post-modernity on the portrayal of history
- + history as metaphor for the present

In cooperation with the Chicago International Film Festival, the Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Goethe Institute of Chicago, film screenings will be held before and during the conference. The conference is scheduled to coincide with the first week of the 24th Chicago International Film Festival.

The conference will be held on the campus of the University of Illinois at Chicago. Located just west of downtown, the campus is easily accessible by public and private transportation.

Advance registration is required! The registration fee is \$10, \$5 for students with a copy of current student ID.

To register or for further information contact:

The University of Illinois at Chicago
Conferences and Institutes (M/C 607)
912 South Wood Street
Chicago, Illinois 60612

Conference Registrar: (312) 996-5225.

The conference is sponsored by the Department of German, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Illinois at Chicago.

VISITING LECTURERS

Hermann Axen Gives Lecture at Johns Hopkins University

Hermann Axen, the highest ranking East German political figure (Politbüro member and Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany) to visit the United

States, gave, in May of 1988, an Institute Lecture at Johns Hopkins University entitled: "The GDR's Policies for Securing Peace and Promoting Disarmament in Europe."

Heinz-Uwe Haus in Portland

From January to April of this year, GDR stage director Heinz-Uwe Haus was the soul of a major Galileo project in Portland, Oregon. In 1986 Haus had been a guest speaker at several universities and colleges here. During that brief stay two years ago, he impressed the local theater people with his know-how and flair. Subsequently, The New Rose Theatre Company, supported by a grant from the Metropolitan Arts Commission, invited Dr. Haus to direct their first production in the Dolores Winningstad Theatre of the new Centre of the Performing Arts.

The city-wide Galileo project opened with an exhibition of Brecht posters which Haus had brought from the GDR in celebration of the 90th anniversary of Brecht's birthday. A series of symposia at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry focused on the historical Galileo, the social responsibility of the scientist and on Brecht's Life of Galileo. For several months, the planetarium of the museum has been showing the sky the way Galileo observed it. Moreover, Haus conducted a series of workshops for actors in which Brecht's ideas of interpretation and acting were explored.

The highlight of the Galileo project was the production of The Life of Galileo with Shabaka of the San Francisco Mime Troupe in the title role. This Galileo was not a Renaissance Faust-type but rather a modern scientist-engineer caught in a bind between indulging himself in what he likes to do best and the social consequences of his discoveries and actions. The play was thus open-ended and invited the members of the audience to draw their own conclusions.

Despite the local theater critic, who vented his bias against Brecht, all eighteen performances of the play were sold out. Haus had extended the Elizabethan stage both forward into the auditorium and upward to the second gallery. The additional acting space, the clever use of the steps leading from the upper to the