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[s.l.]: International Brecht Society, May, 1974

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COMMUNICATIONS

from the

INTERNATIONAL BRECHT SOCIETY

May, 1974

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University of Illinois  
at Urbana-Champaign

FROM THE EDITOR

This has been the strangest and most frustrating year in the short history of the International Brecht Society. Athenäum, the Brecht Heute publisher, is going out of business. As a result, volume III scheduled for last fall still is not ready for distribution. As soon as the books become available, all members will be notified and their copies sent out to them. It is our hope that by that time a new publishing contract will have been negotiated, and that volume IV will not be delayed as much.

On the positive side: The Third Brecht Congress to be held in Montreal on October 2-6, 1974, promises to be an exciting event, according to the tentative program (see pages 3, 4, 13). Hope to see you there!

geb

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## BB IN NEW YORK - WHO HAS INFORMATION?

(This inquiry was sent to Eric Bentley who passed it on to us)

"I am working on a literary guide to New York for Houghton Mifflin and turn to you for corroboration of a Bertolt Brecht address. We are describing each neighborhood in terms of the writers who lived there, attempting also to relate them to the literary history of the time.

In our research we have found a rather cryptic reference to 34 West 73rd Street as a Brecht address. I say cryptic because none of the several biographies of Brecht that I have looked at mention him as having lived anywhere but California. It would be nice to be able to mention that he did live in New York, I imagine for a brief time when he first arrived. I do need to have a date for his stay here and some idea of the circumstances. Was this a borrowed apartment? Did he live there alone? Who were his New York friends? Did he have favorite restaurants or bars in the city?

Are you able to help me out with any of these questions? Are there any photographs of Brecht in New York? Please let me know what you can about Brecht in New York."

Linda D. Cirino

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Tel. (201) 944-3393

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COMMUNICATIONS - THE BRECHT NEWSLETTER - Vol. III No. 3 (1974)

Published by The International Brecht Society  
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THIRD CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL BRECHT SOCIETY, MONTREAL  
Tentative Program

October 2-6, 1974

Wednesday, October 2nd: at McGill University

All day Arrival of delegates; registration

8:00 p.m. Reception by McGill University

Thursday, October 3rd: at McGill University

9:00 a.m. Chairman: Armin Arnold (Montreal)

Welcome

Siegfried Unseld (Frankfurt): "Brechts Beziehungen zu seinen Verlegern" (40 min)

Manfred Wekwerth (Potsdam): "Brecht heute" (40 min)

Coffee

11:00 a.m. Chairman: Benno Besson (Berlin)

Iring Fetscher (Frankfurt): "Charaktermaske und Person in Brechts Theater" (20 min)

Ulrich Weisstein (Bloomington): "Dramatic Adaptation" (20 min); Discussant: E.L. Thomas (Los Angeles)

Gilbert Badia (Paris-Vincennes): "Probleme der Brechtübertragung am Beispiel der Heiligen Johanna der Schlachthöfe" (20 min)

3:00 p.m. McGill Theatre Group (M.D. Bristol): Performance of a "Lehrstück" followed by a general discussion led by B. Besson, W. Hecht, M. Wekwerth

8:00 p.m. Performance: "Renate Richter singt Brecht und andere" - accompanied by the Günther-Fischer-Quintet (Berlin, DDR). Direction: M. Wekwerth

Friday, October 4th: at McGill University

9:00 a.m. Chairman: Ernst Schumacher (Berlin)

Alfred Andersch (Berzona): "Beruht die Wirkung Brechts auf der Einheit oder auf dem Widerspruch von Ästhetik und Engagement in seinem Werk?" (40 min)

Werner Mittenzwei (Berlin): "Current Brecht Research" (20 min)

Sander Gilman (Ithaca, NY): "The FBI Files on Bertolt Brecht" (20 min)

Coffee

Friday, October 4th (cont'd from preceding page)

## 11:00 a.m. Round-Table I

Brecht and the American  
 Chairman: Left  
 Lee Baxandall (New York)  
 With:  
 R. Conard (Dayton)  
 L.J. Lehrman (Ithaca, NY)  
 J.K. Lyon (San Diego)  
 K.-B. Vollmar (Bochum)

## Round-Table II

Brecht and East Asia  
 Chairman:  
 Adrian Hsia (Montreal)  
 With:  
 A. Hoffmann (Bochum)  
 Y. Ota (Tokyo)  
 A. Tatlow (Hong Kong)  
 G. Tracy (London, Ont.)

3:15 p.m. Performance: "Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti"  
 Performed in German by the Deutsche Theater-  
 gruppe Montreal at the International Theatre  
 "La Poudrière" on St. Helen's Island

## 8:30 p.m. Brecht and Poetry

Chairman: John Willett (London)  
 Ingo Seidler (Ann Arbor): "Die 'Studien'-Sonnette"  
 (20 min)  
 Hans H. Schulte (Dundas, Ont.): "Die 'Kinderlieder'  
 der Svendborger Gedichte" (20 min)  
 Peter von Matt (Zurich): "Der Kälteschock: ein  
 geburtstraumatisches Phänomen als Struktur-  
 prinzip des Brechtschen Dramas" (20 min);  
 Discussant: Sammy McLean (Seattle)

Saturday, October 5th: at McGill (a.m.), Université de Montréal  
(p.m.)

## 9:00 a.m. Brecht in a Comparative Context - Part I

Chairman: Eric Bentley (New York)  
 R. Friedrich (Halifax): "Brecht, Platon, Artaud:  
 Zum Ritualcharakter der dramatischen Form"  
 (40 min)  
 R. Gray (Cambridge): "Brecht, Arden and the  
 British Theatre" (20 min); Discussant: Claude  
 Hill (New Brunswick)

Coffee

## 11:00 a.m. Chairman: F. Lach (Montreal)

Bernard Dort (Paris): "Brecht en France" (40 min)

Transfer to Université de Montréal

(cont'd on p.13)

## FORUM

Dear Friends:

When I first became aware of the Brecht Society I thought where had I been that this wonderful thing was growing, and I who had produced, directed and acted in plays by Brecht and took great inspiration from Brecht's work had never heard of this society?

As I read the material in the two volumes of Brecht Heute and some notes in the newsletters and most recently news that the Brecht Society is looking to move all its communications into German and perhaps find its audience in Germany, not the U.S., I understood why I who was not an academic until a year ago, had never heard of this thing called Brecht Society.

Perhaps I can run that reasoning in another direction: Having worked in the theatrical field, on the grass, on the streets, in gymnasiums, auditoriums et al., and one of the exponents of a political theatre that had reflections in Brecht's work, I was surprised to find that the only way one could possibly find the Brecht Society was through academic channels.

Now I do not mean to say that academic channels are narrow, however, if they become accessible only through the German language, then the small group of scholars who will be able to "discuss" and "dispute" Brecht's work and thought will be a clique of (German) private property owners.

It would be a terrible distortion to turn Brecht into an object of private ownership owned and operated for the advancement of a few "insiders" who used to sit with the old man and scrape ashes off his knees.

In the last few years I have stopped running with the New Left and began to study Marx and of course catch up on some things I skipped in Brecht. What has become clearer and more precise is that Brecht was not a mere dialectician or a good playwright, he was also a person who could, with the rest of his crew (Ensemble), turn Marxism into theatre, culture, and practice.

In my reading of Brecht Heute and viewing some productions in Chicago and in the Bay Area of Brecht's plays, I have seen all sorts of crap used to figure out what was going on - everything but what might help - Grotowsky, Surrealism, Melodramatic Idealism and so on. In only a few articles in Brecht Heute is there a clear call to look at the politics (Marxism) in order to understand how to produce Brecht or Brechtian

(cont'd next page)

(cont'd from p. 5)

plays. (I couldn't read what the East Germans were saying but presume from their past writings in English that they don't exclude Marx, politics, political economy, social conditions, class analysis, etc. etc.) However, most Americans trying to keep up with the emptiness of history in this country, and in some cases trying to protect their jobs (reasonable effort), hide the socialism in Brecht's work, not only in the content but in the forming of the work for comprehension on the stage.

Others have explained the necessity of understanding Marxism in order to present Brecht intelligibly. My point here is to match up the absence of a political attitude towards performing Brecht and the politics (conservative politics) of the Brecht Society. With a Marxist approach to Brecht one could not, would not consider narrowing communications, rather one would try to expand communication from German to English and through to French and Spanish.

Brecht's idea of the Diderot Society has been politically warped by the founders of this American Brecht Society. Despite that, there is no reason that a number of us politically motivated students, scholars, teachers, producers, actors, and activists should not insist that this society maintain its English and US connection. The need to influence US culture is apparent to those of us who have seen so many bad plays, have had to introduce Brecht where he was never heard of, and so on. This work is far more important than establishing scholarship rights, and selling more books in West Germany.

If there are others who feel as I do, that this society should critically explore the ideas of Brecht for this country taking inspiration, of course, from Germany East and West and providing the widest possible dissemination of Brecht's practice for the academic community and beyond, then I would ask that they write to Gisela Bahr, objecting to the sole means of communication of the Montreal conference in German and the extension of what this indicates for the society of Brecht scholars in this country.

R. G. Davis

(Mr. Davis is the founder and former director (1960-70) of the San Francisco Mime Troupe; author of essays on Guerrilla Theatre and Brecht; and now a student of German. Comments to Mr. Davis' points are indeed welcome. geb)

## PUBLICATIONS

Brecht 73. Brecht-Woche der DDR 9. bis 15. Februar 1973.  
Dokumentation. Berlin: Henschelverlag 1973

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Bentley, Eric. The Recantation of Galileo Galilei. Scenes  
from History Perhaps. Harper Paperback CN/286

Morley, Michael. "'The Light that Shineth More and More':  
Another Look at Kipling's Influence on Brecht." Modern  
Language Notes, April 1973

\_\_\_\_\_. "Brecht and The Strange Case of Mr. L." The German  
Quarterly XLVI, 4 (1973), 540-547

Fuegi, John B. "Russian Epic Theatre Experiment and the  
American Stage." Minnesota Review, New Series 1 (fall  
1973), 102-112

## BREAD AND ROSES THEATER

The Bread and Roses Theater takes its name from the slogan raised by striking millworkers in Lawrence, Mass. in 1912. These workers, comprising twenty-seven different language groups, included many women and children. Despite the overwhelming obstacles to unity - age, sex, race, language - they joined in a long and bitter struggle against the mill owners who were cutting wages. Striking women raised the slogan "Bread and Roses", demanding justice in both the economic and social realms.

Bread and Roses Theater aims at bringing together social struggle and art, learning and entertainment. Started in 1972 as a theater collective, the group performed agit-prop skits at demonstrations, factories and pickets, including demonstrations protesting President Nixon's election and the military coup in Chile. They picketed in the Farah Pants boycott and the United Farm Workers boycott, and they performed at a rally for International Women's Day.

For the past year, Bread and Roses has performed a play by Bertolt Brecht, "The Mother" which tells how the efforts of a working class woman to support and protect her son lead her to join the Bolshevik Revolution. Members of Bread and Roses have also helped to form and sustain a music group specializing in workers' songs and progressive popular music, and are currently working with circus performers developing juggling acrobatic and clown routines for performances in parks throughout the city of Chicago.

Bread and Roses is a traveling company of sixteen people which takes its wooden stage to community centers, churches, workers' centers, parks, factories - wherever people are. The Theater is supported by its audiences - the individuals and groups who sponsor them and see them. The performers support themselves by working as waitresses, cab drivers, teachers, factory workers, cooks, and a variety of similar jobs. The company provides training for its members in acting, music, juggling and acrobatics.

Bread and Roses Theater's address: 2680 N. Burling, Chicago, Illinois 60614. Tel. 871-2129, 248-6690.

(The above is the company's own announcement, reprinted here for the benefit of the membership of IBS.)

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Saturday, October 5th (cont'd from p. 4)

Transfer to Université de Montréal

2:30 p.m. Brecht in a Comparative Context - Part II

Chairman: John B. Fuegi (Milwaukee)

Siegfried Mews (Chapel Hill): "The Horse Trader  
Revisited. Brecht's Adaptation of Michael  
Kohlhaas" (20 min)

Betty N. Weber (Austin): "The Heroic and the  
Consensus: From Homburg to Azdak" (20 min)

Walther Hinck (Köln): "Zola, Brecht, Hacks" (20 min)

Janet King (Austin): "The Ethics of Exploitation"  
(20 min)

Coffee

4:30 p.m. Round-Table I

Utopian Thinking in Brecht

Chairman:

Jost Hermand (Madison)

With:

I. Fetscher (Frankfurt)

W. Hinck (Köln)

R. Grimm (Madison)

W. Mittenzwei (Berlin)

Round-Table II

Brecht Reception

Chairman:

T. Goldsmith-Reber (Montreal)

With:

G. Badia (Paris)

D. Suvin (Montreal)

R. Tarot (Zurich)

M. Yousseff (Bochum)

6:30 p.m. Reception at Université de Montréal

8:00 p.m. R. Badenhausen (Munich) introduces a showing of  
early films with Karl Valentin

Sunday, October 6th

Delegates may wish to take part in an excursion to Québec or  
to the Laurentian Mountains

THE PROGRAM IS TENTATIVE. THERE WILL DEFINITELY BE SOME CHANGES

Please note:

A number of delegates whose names appear on the program  
have not yet sent in their application form; only a few have  
sent in the registration fee (\$15.) Since the registration fee  
includes admission to the two receptions, the Renate Richter  
concert and the Puntilla performance, it is requested that it  
be paid without delay.

## FOR MEMBERS

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A reminder: If you plan to do research in the Brecht-Archiv, you have to write to them in advance because seating space is limited. Therefore they need to know not only when but also for how long you want to be there. Even if you only want to visit or look around, it is requested that you let them know ahead of time.

The address: Bertolt-Brecht-Archiv, 104 Berlin, Chausseestrasse 125, DDR. Tel.: 442-8042

Women in Germanistik

An organization tentatively called "Women in Germanistik" is in the process of being formed. The aim is to stimulate research in German literature related to women's studies, and to trade experiences and/or advice regarding the status of women in the field of Germanistik.

An organizational meeting will be held in conjunction with the Midwest MLA (German Section) meeting in St. Louis, Mo. on October 31 - November 2, 1974. A weekend of workshops is planned for the spring of 1975, the date and place to be determined on the basis of suggestions received.

For further information, particularly if you cannot attend the St. Louis meeting, write to Evelyn Beck (Chairperson of the MMLA German Section), German Department, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wis 53706, or to Gisela Bahr, Dept. of GREAL, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio 45056.

Change of Address

If you change your affiliation and/or your address, please notify the office of Brecht Heute, Department of Comparative Lit., University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wis 53201.

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