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## **Communications from the International Brecht Society. Vol. II, No. 1 November, 1972**

[s.l.]: International Brecht Society, November, 1972

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COMMUNICATIONS

from the

INTERNATIONAL BRECHT SOCIETY

November, 1972

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FROM THE EDITOR

After a long summer pause: Welcome to the second round of Communications. Since the newsletter goes where the editor does, this issue is being put together in Munich but produced in Milwaukee, hence its different appearance. Similarly, the emphasis on German, specifically East German news, is a reflexion of the many months I spent in Berlin.

With another Brecht anniversary coming up in February, we can be sure of one thing: a new flood of Brecht literature. It remains to be seen what the theaters will be doing - will they, too, produce more Brecht plays than usual? And if so, will they merely celebrate the Old Man, or will they perhaps select plays and ways of staging them that reach out to new audiences and/or social and political situations, as was done, for instance, in Madison last summer? There will be a "Brecht Week" organized in East Berlin, which could provide new impulses, and other such events may be taking place elsewhere that we will try to follow up.

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## ON BERNHARD REICH

by Marjorie Hoover

Bernhard Reich (1892-1972) has given up the race with time--and only shortly before the publication in Russian of his memoirs. He died last spring. His book, Im Wettlauf mit der Zeit (Berlin: Henschel, 1970), originally published in German, tells much more of others than of Reich's own achievement. After his youth in Moravia and first years in Viennese theater, he became director for Max Reinhardt in Berlin and then, in 1923, head director at the Munich Kammerspiele. There his wife, Anna Lacis, and he encountered Brecht, who was staging Das Leben Eduards II. von England. Lacis, who had herself trained as a director in Moscow, served as assistant director, besides playing a small part. In the process she became Brecht's first immediate informant on Soviet theater. After Reich went to live in the Soviet Union, taking Russian citizenship in 1925, Lacis and he became Brecht's oldest friends there. They helped receive Brecht on each of his four trips to Moscow (though only briefly in 1941, when Reich had just been released from internment).

However important the introduction into Russian intellectual and artistic life which the couple helped give to Brecht himself, the part Reich played in the introduction of Brecht's work into the Soviet Union is undoubtedly still more significant. On Brecht's final visit to receive the Lenin Prize (1955) Reich found a translator for Brecht's acceptance speech, none other than Pasternak. Further, Reich advised on the first post-war translation of Brecht's work into Russian (1956). Most important, Reich wrote the basic critical explanation of Brecht's plays and ideas of theater; though Reich's book, entitled simply Brecht (Moscow, 1960), has since been followed by those of others, it still remains the first milestone of Brecht's now classic reputation in the USSR.

With Reich gone, this able, gentle, honorable and idealistic man of the theater, his writings, many of which appeared in periodicals in the thirties and again in the sixties, should be collected and re-published in the West. Certainly they merit as much for their own interest, if not as inevitable accessory to an understanding of Brecht.

Oberlin College

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## Report

"THE MOTHER" IN MADISON, WISCONSIN

by David R. Bathrick

Does Bertolt Brecht belong exclusively to the pallid paladins of American academe? Can Brecht's theater - in particular his agitational plays - be of significance as a part of an emerging struggle within the United States against American Imperialism?

These and similar questions lay at the conceptual base of an extremely lively and successful production of The Mother put on last May in Madison, Wisconsin. Directed by Denny Stevens of the San Francisco Mime Troupe and played by local amateur actors, the play pushed out from the University both spiritually and physically, with agit-prop performances on Madison's East and South sides.

Stevens chose to preface the play with the Mime Troupe's now famous "Carrot speech" based on Scene 3 of Turandot, in which a Ph.D. orals candidate is rewarded for her insights concerning BB:

"So in conclusion, let us seek in Brecht the artist, the man of the theater, the humanist; and take with a grain of salt the philosopher, the politician, the revolutionary. In this way we will provide our audiences with an enjoyable evening in the theater and food for thought, if they wish to think. And with a skillfully placed nude sequence, we may even provide ourselves with a modest fortune."

Even without a nude sequence the play was held over an extra two weeks due to its popularity, and would have probably played longer were it not for the end of the semester.

(Ed. note: Experiments as interesting as this one are probably being done quite often, but they are seldom heard of outside their immediate area. Won't you report such events to Communications so that we all can share in such experiences?)

## OTHER BRECHT PLAYS IN PRODUCTION

David Bathrick is presently working on a production of Das Badener Lehrstück vom Einverständnis with the same group.

Andrzej Wirth is preparing a production of The Measures Taken at Lehman College, CUNY, New York City, for the spring term, 1973.

John Bettenbender, Chairman of the Drama Department of Rutgers University-Douglass College, New Brunswick, New Jersey, has scheduled a production of The Commune, also for the spring term, 1973.



## BRECHT MEETINGS

Members have been inquiring as to when and where the next Brecht Symposium will be held. At long last, some advance information can be given on upcoming meetings.

Brechtwoche der DDR 1973

A week of important events, to celebrate Brecht's 75th birthday, is being planned to take place in East Berlin. Werner Hecht, Chefdramaturg of the Berlin Ensemble and coordinator of the "Brecht Week", sent the following preliminary announcement to Communications:

"Zum 75. Geburtstag von Bertolt Brecht findet vom 9. bis 15. Februar 1973 eine Brechtwoche der DDR 1973 statt.

Das Berliner Ensemble, Theater der DDR sowie Bühnen aus dem Ausland werden Brechtstücke aufführen. In verschiedenen künstlerischen und wissenschaftlichen Institutionen werden Colloquien und Diskussionen über die Methode und Wirksamkeit Brechts stattfinden. Zur gleichen Zeit werden in einer Brecht-Filmwoche interessante Verfilmungen Brechtscher Werke aufgeführt.

Nähere Auskünfte durch das

Sekretariat der Brechtwoche der DDR 1973

104 Berlin

Bertolt-Brecht-Platz 1 / Tel. 422 58 71 App. 39"

Mr. Hecht kindly promised to send us the complete program as soon as it is printed. If possible, this will be available at the MLA Brecht Seminar. But any member interested in attending the meeting would be well advised to get in touch with the organizers directly, and without delay, to secure all necessary information and reservations.

Brecht Symposium 1974

Things now look very promising as far as holding a Brecht Symposium in Montreal in 1974. A formal offer has been tendered to the IBS, and a tentative acceptance of this invitation has already been sent.

(Ed. note: Communications would like to cover the Berlin meeting in as much details as possible, and would therefore appreciate learning from members who will be attending, so that arrangements for reporting can be made in advance.)



## EAST BERLIN - REVISITED

by Gisela E. Bahr

Going back to the Brecht Archive at Chausseestraße 125, is like revisiting good old friends. The expected merger with the Deutsche Akademie der Künste has not yet taken place but will eventually be effected. In the meantime, Mrs. Ramthun, Miss Kiel, and Mr. Gläser are still running the place in their well-known, helpful way, sharing their knowledge and experience with all the visiting scholars. I was particularly happy to see Miss Kiel who had been on sick leave for many months, back on the job and as active as ever.

Once again the archive was a meeting place for fellow Brechtians from many parts of the world, such as USA, Canada, Australia, England, France, Sweden, Finland, and, of course, both Germanys.

All those who have been using, and are going to use, material from the archive in their research, are urgently asked by the archive

- 1- please not to quote from unpublished materials without first securing permission to do so, from Mrs. Barbara Schall, 104 Berlin, Chausseestr. 125, DDR;
- 2- please to remember to send one or two copies of each publication, dissertation, M.S. Thesis, etc. to the archive (and perhaps to advise Miss Kiel by letter that this has been done).

Elisabeth Hauptmann celebrated her 75th birthday last June, and members of the Berliner Ensemble presented a mixed bag of songs and skits on the occasion. The film company DEFA (Karl-Heinz Mundt and others) made a film portrait of Mrs. Hauptmann, scheduled to be shown on television on October 29th (which I was sorry to miss). She also received the "Patriotic Order of Merit in Gold" ("Vaterländischer Verdienstorden in Gold").

Another film is in the preparatory stage, this one on Helene Weigel, to be done by Mr. and Mrs. Werner Hecht. Details will follow at a later time.

The Berliner Ensemble, now "Staatstheater", went to Munich with Arturo Ui and Galileo, to perform during the olympics. Their latest productions are Büchner's Woyzeck (with Ekkehard Schall), Omphale by Peter Hacks, and still in rehearsals when I left in October, a revival of Strittmatter's Katzgraben. In preparation, as DDR premiere, is Brecht's Turandot oder Der Kongreß der Weißwäscher.

Brecht research will soon get a boost when a team of scholars will go to work at the Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften under the guidance of Werner Mittenzwei. A Regular Member (Ordentliches Mitglied) of the Academy since last summer, Professor Mittenzwei plans to return to Brecht research himself; first to be taken up: the Brecht-Lukács controversy. He, as well as Ernst Schumacher and many other scholars expect to be engaged in the events during the "Brechtwoche der DDR 1973" next February. (See report on this).



## MORE EMPHASIS ON PERFORMING ARTS

An exchange program has been set up between the editors of Performance, Erika Munk, and Brecht Heute/Brecht Today, John Fuegi, to the effect that suitable contributions from Performance will be reprinted in Brecht Heute, and vice versa.

On the basis of a "strictly informal relationship" (Fuegi) this arrangement, clearly, will benefit both publications by enlarging their audiences. Brecht Heute will certainly be enriched with contributions dealing with the physical theater and the film - areas that have not been represented very well in the first two volumes. In taking this step to provide, in the yearbook, a forum for the kind of vital social experimentation that goes on in these media, John Fuegi again emphasized that the IBS has no intention of "running a Brecht museum" but tries to "take Brecht's original idea for a Diderot-Gesellschaft very seriously indeed."

(Editorial, cont'd from p.1)

As for the IBS, after last year was used mainly to get organized and to elect officers, this might be the year of action to shape and promote the kind of organization we want to have. I can't imagine we want to be just another academic society. If we believe in the objectives set down in Article II,1 of the constitution, "to encourage the international study of all aspects of the life and work of Bertolt Brecht and [...] the interdisciplinary study of the interrelationship of the modern arts and society at large", it seems to me we ought to give high priority to becoming truly international and truly interdisciplinary. My suggestion, therefore, would be that a comprehensive drive be undertaken to expand the membership to other countries and other disciplines.

In addition, we might think of ways to stimulate more active participation of the members. During my talks in recent months when I have been trying individually to spread the word about the IBS over here, the question came up: what exactly would be the benefit of joining the IBS since the yearbook could be bought anyway? The answer to this, I think, can come only from the membership as a whole and their coordinated activities.

In conclusion, may I again invite you all to make use of this newsletter, to communicate with other members. Please continue to send in your reports about your research, dissertations, forthcoming publications, and do the same with regard to theater productions, lectures, and other projects. If you let us know of your activities well in advance, you would give others a chance to respond, attend, or otherwise participate. Also, all kinds of news items are welcome.

g.B.



## WORK IN PROGRESS

Neureuther, H. (Ed.) Bertolt Brecht. Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti. Critical edition. Ed. Suhrkamp. Probably 1973.

Obermeier, Karl Walter u. Werner Frisch. Dokumentation über den Augsburger Brecht (working title). Spring, 1974. (See Report)

Olsson, Jan (Ed.) Bertolt Brecht. Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder. Critical edition, of a larger format. Suhrkamp V. Probably 1974.

## DISSERTATIONS

Baum, Ute. Bertolt Brechts Verhältnis zu Shakespeare. Gesellschaftswiss. Fakultät des Wissenschaftlichen Rates der Humboldt-Univ. zu Berlin. 1971

El-Amari, Lamis. Bertolt Brecht und das neue englische Drama 1956-1965. Der Einfluß Brechts auf die Werke von Arden, Bolt u.a. Gesellschaftswiss. Fakultät des Wissenschaftl. Rates der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. 1971

Ferran, Peter W. Brecht and Farquhar: Dramatic Adaptation As A Critical-Creative Activity. A Comparative Dramatic Analysis of Pauken und Trompeten and The Recruiting Officer. English Dept., University of Michigan. Fall, 1972

## RECENT AND FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

Hecht, Werner. Sieben Studien über Brecht. Frankfurt/M: Edition Suhrkamp 570. 1972

(Ed.) Bertolt Brecht. Tagebücher. Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp V. Febr. 1973

Hennenberg, Fritz. "Zur Dialektik des Schließens in Liedern von Hanns Eisler". In: Sammelbände zur Musikgeschichte der DDR, Band II. Berlin: Verlag Neue Musik. 1971. 181-226.

Schulz, Gudrun. Die Schillerbearbeitungen Bertolt Brechts. Eine Untersuchung literarisch-historischer Bezüge im Hinblick auf Brechts Traditionsbegriff. Studien zur deutschen Literatur 28. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer. 1972

Theater in der Zeitenwende. Zur Geschichte des Dramas und des Schauspieltheaters in der DDR 1945-1968. (By Manfred Berger, Manfred Nössig, Fritz Rödel u. Liane Pfelling, Volker Kurzweg, Inge Münz-Koenen, Christel Hoffmann) 2 vols. Berlin: Henschel-Verlag. 1972 (See Report)



## DOKUMENTATION ÜBER DEN AUGSBURGER BRECHT

This publication project, jointly done by K.W. Obermeier and Werner Frisch and scheduled for publication in the spring of 1974, will bring a detailed coverage of the years 1898 to 1920, based on a great variety of documentary material, interviews of many contemporaries, unknown photographs, as well as 27 newly discovered pieces of writing by the young Brecht: poems, stories, notes, and seven "Augsburg Letters" written in 1914.

Following are excerpts from K.W. Obermeier's own, unpublished account of their project entitled "Anmerkungen zum Leben des jungen Brecht", dealing specifically with those newly found pieces by Brecht.

"Aufmerksamkeit dürfte [...] Brechts Entwicklung als Gymnasiast beanspruchen. Wird doch hier erstmals der den Brecht-klassen (von 1908 bis 1917) eigene gymnasiale Lehrstoff belegt und so der Weg des Dichters aus den Zwängen der wilhelminischen Pädagogik - jenem eifernden Oberlehrernationalismus vierer Kriegsjahre - zum Künstler der sozialistischen Denk- und Verhaltensweise in seiner ganzen Distanz einsehbar. [...]"

Nach Ausbruch des ersten Weltkrieges, am 1. August 1914, gelang es dem gerade Sechzehnjährigen, seine ersten Publikationen in einer Augsburger Tageszeitung unterzubringen. So erschien am 8. August 1914 der "Bericht eines Augsburger Mittelschülers" unter dem Titel "Turmwacht", am 10. August eine Skizze "Der Untergang der 'Viktoria Luise'", unterzeichnet mit dem Pseudonym "Berthold Eugen" und am 17. August die bekannten "Notizen über unsere Zeit".

Trotz Verwendung gewisser Vorstellungen aus dem gängigen Zeitvokabular zeichnen sich bereits die allerersten Arbeiten des jungen Brecht durch eine bemerkenswerte Ambivalenz aus. Und im ersten in der Tageszeitung publizierten Gedicht, "Der heilige Gewinn" vom 24. August 1914, vermerkt er in untertönig mit-schwingender Angst, "daß Mütter klagelos die Söhne sterben sehn". Die "Augsburger Kriegsbriefe" zeigen den Gymnasiasten als einen für sein Alter erstaunlich kritischen Beobachter, der die sozialen Gebrechen und die Not in seiner Heimatstadt nach Ausbruch des Krieges schärfer registrierte als die professionellen Zeitungsschreiber des damaligen Augsburgs. Weiter resümierte er angesichts des Leidens, das im Volke wuchs, am 5. September 1914 in dem Gedicht "Die Toten vom 3. Regiment" : "Nun gehn der Trauer Boten / durchs ganze Land / und melden von den Toten / die nach dem Sieg man fand ..." [...]

Die Reihe neuentdeckter Gedichte zeugen nicht nur vom Arbeitseifer des jungen Brecht, sie ermöglichen auch einen Einblick in die Haltung des Heranwachsenden inmitten des ersten Weltkrieges, lassen feinspüriger sein spannungsgeladenes Verhalten in dieser ungewöhnlichen Zeit nachempfinden."

(cont'd p. 10)



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Re: Brecht Heute-Brecht Today I

I feel compelled to correct Edward M. Berckman's apparently wilful misreading of my report in TDR (Fall, 1967) on Soviet Brecht productions in Moscow 1966-67. To be sure, the Mayakovsky Theater productions of Mother Courage and The Caucasian Chalk Circle were marked by a conventional socialist-realist approach. However, even a cursory reading of my report should have made it clear that this was not true of all Brecht productions. Yu. Lyubimov's fresh and exciting stagings of Brecht's plays are among the best in the world, yet his productions could hardly be classified as socialist-realist in the narrowly dogmatic sense of the term.

Henry Glade

Responding to Reviews

Ulrich Weisstein, review editor of Brecht Heute-Brecht Today, suggested that anyone wanting to comment on one of the reviews published in the yearbook - authors of books reviewed, as well as anybody else - might submit his response to Communications rather than to him, as the newsletter can publish such reactions more easily, and more speedily.

Brecht and Freud?

Für eine im Gange befindliche Untersuchung über Beziehungen zwischen Bertolt Brecht und der Psychoanalyse (Sigmund Freud) werden sachdienliche Hinweise, Briefstellen, Äußerungen jeder Art sowie Informationen über bereits zu diesem Thema vorliegende Abhandlungen, z.B. Dissertationen, gesucht von

Professor Dr. J. Cremerius, 78 Freiburg/Br., Hauptstr. 5, BRD

Presentational Theater

Anthony Tatlow, University of Hong Kong, would like information on the genesis of the term "presentational theater".

Lecture Tour

With a lecture "Brecht und die Musik" Fritz Hennenberg, Leipzig, went to Austria in March 1971, to present it at the Austrian Society of Music, Vienna, and at the "Mozarteum" (Hochschule für Musik), Salzburg; and to England in April 1972, to deliver it, in English, at the Universities of Liverpool, Leeds, and York.



(cont'd from p. 8)

Gedichte wie "Mutter sein", "Der Kaiser", "Die Schneetruppe", "Christus vor dem Hohen Rat", "Der Geist der Emden", "Frühling", "Französische Bauern", "Dankgottesdienst"-Novelle u.a. sind Neuentdeckungen, die die Beurteilung des frühen Brecht abermals relevant machen und zwar nicht nur, was die dem jungen Lyriker eigenen handwerklichen Fähigkeiten bzw. künstlerischen Bindungen betrifft, mehr noch, um seiner der familiären Willfährigkeit rapid entwachsenden geistigen Emanzipationsspur zu folgen."

#### THEATER IN DER ZEITENWENDE

This publication brought out by Henschelverlag last summer in a printing of only 3000, deserves attention. A treatment of the history of the drama and the theater in the German Democratic Republic from 1945 to 1968, i.e. during the first two decades of this new state but much more than a historical survey: The book illustrates how, along with the development of a socialist society, new concepts of the function of the theater and its interrelationship with society take shape and are being realized.

Interesting also because it was done as a collective dissertation by a group of seven students under the direction of Werner Mittenzwei.

#### ERROR CORRECTED

In their catalog, the publishing firm of Hennessey & Ingalls, Inc., Los Angeles, asserted with regard to The Essential Brecht by John Fuegi that the Brecht Archive had been closed after Helene Weigel's death, and that the materials on which the book is based were no longer accessible. John Fuegi explains as follows:

"The mistake on the brochure of Hennessey and Ingalls came about when a member of the publicity department misread some speculation as to what might happen to the Archive after Helene Weigel's death. The publicity agent who made up the brochure misread statements in the West German press and printed them up before consulting me. I have since complained very forcefully and have received an apology from the firm that was responsible for the original error. The statements are, of course, completely unfounded but have now been cleared up at the source."



TO: GISELA E. BAHR, GERMAN DEPT. DOUGLASS COLLEGE, NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. 08903

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