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PR

communications

from the

international brecht society

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U12, #1
September 1982

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from the editor

This issue is the present editor's swan song. Just like in great opera there is no end to it.

Quite some effort has gone into putting out Communications and into updating the mailing list. Both tasks could be made easier for my successor if members needed less prodding 1) to send in their news and 2) to notify the editor or secretary of their change of address (see slips on pp. 20 and 27). And if the address labels were stored in a word processor or computer, the editor's labors could be considerably reduced.

What has been accomplished over the last two years? Communications appears again on a regular basis three times a year; it has more interesting contributions and it reaches a larger variety of people since the IBS membership has grown. At the 6th International Brecht Symposium plans were formulated to continue this trend (see p. 17).

Hopefully Communications will soon carry announcements of forthcoming contributions in its East German counterpart, notate. Werner Hecht suggested this and details of a closer co-operation are being worked out.

I would like to end on a personal note. It has given me great satisfaction to work with IBS members and to get to know so many of you in person. That 6 issues of Communications could come out under my editorship was only possible grace to the help of overworked secretarial staff at Portland State University and to the unstinting support of my husband, Rudi Nussbaum, who often abandoned his physics in order to render technical and moral assistance.

I am confident that my successor, Marc Silberman, will do an excellent job. He is young and eager and in touch with what is going on in a wide field of interest. The IBS will benefit from his editorship.

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COMMUNICATIONS -- THE BRECHT NEWSLETTER -- Vol. XII, No. 1 (September 1982)
Published by the International Brecht Society. President: Antony Tatlow
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b.

elections

Not surprisingly the result of last spring's election was the following:

PRESIDENT	Antony Tatlow (U. of Hong Kong)
VICE-PRESIDENT	David Bathrick (U. of Wisconsin)
SECRETARY-TREASURER	Karl-Heinz Schoeps (U. of Illinois)
EDITOR NEWSLETTER	Marc Silberman (U. of Texas)

All officers will serve for two years.

This is as good an opportunity as any to thank the former officers, particularly the former IBS President, Gisela Bahr, for (her) many years of service to the Society. As to the new thrust of the IBS in the 1980's, see Antony Tatlow's statement in Communications XI, 2, p.8 and the report on the business meeting below.

upcoming events

At the MLA meeting in Los Angeles later this year there will be two IBS sponsored sessions:

Dec. 30, at 8:30 am

BRECHT AND WOMEN

with the following contributions:

"Inszenierte Ehrlichkeit: Bertolt Brecht 'Weibergeschichten,'" Renate Voris (U. of Virginia)

"Brecht's Ambivalence Towards Clichés About Women," Sieglinde Lug (U. of Denver)

"A Feminist Reading of Pirate Jenny," Renate Fischetti (U. of Maryland)

The session will be chaired by Gisela Bahr (Miami U.) and E. Lew Thomas (U. of California, L.A.). Anyone wanting to read the papers ahead of time can acquire copies by sending a self-addressed and stamped envelope and \$ 2 to:
E. Lew Thomas, Dance Dept. U. of California, Los Angeles, CA 90024

Back to back with the above session will be a session on:

BRECHT AND SOCIALISM

So far only two contributions have been announced:

"Brecht and the Soviet Union," David Pike (U. of North Carolina)

"The Measure Taken: A Reconsideration," John Fuegi (U. of Maryland)

There would be time for a third paper, that could still be announced in the MLA program addendum of Dec. 1. Interested parties should send their proposals poste haste to David Pike, German Department, University of N. Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514.

business meeting

There was a one-hour business meeting during the 6th Internat. Brecht Symposium.

1) The names of the new IBS officers were announced (see above).

2) Before passing the presidency on to Antony Tatlow, Gisela Bahr, out-going president, gave a brief resumé of the history of the IBS, its academic beginnings and its present outreach to theater people and community activists.

3) Laureen Nussbaum suggested a more efficient labeling/ mailing system for Communications and for the Yearbook. Either a word-processor or a computerized system should be used.

Continued on p. 17

symposium

POST FESTUM

6. INTERNATIONALES BRECHT SYMPOSIUM

Sie kauten auf ihren Wörtern herum,
die vielen Brecht-Experten
auf diesem Brechtschen Symposium -
auch noch in den Reedschen Parkanlagen und Gärten.

Wir hörten von Fosen, den Brechtschen Erben,
von Urheberrecht, Briefen und Dramaturgie,
vom Lustprinzip, Minimalangebot und seinem Werben
in Hollywood, von Walser und von Valentins Anarchie.

Wir sahen den Ozeanflug und Szenen der Mutter,
Mahagonny, einen lateinamerikanischen Kreidekreis,
den Menschen von Sezuan - und es wär alles in Butter,
gäb's bloß den Streit nicht, von dem keiner was weiß.

Die einen, die meinten, der Brecht wär tot,
die anderen wollten ihn adaptieren,
die einen suchten den echten und der war rot,
die anderen fanden in der Praxis nur ihren.

Und so wurde der BB zerkaut und verdaut
und so wird er weltweit exkrementiert;
solangs um die Rüben ging und nicht nur ums Kraut,
wurde er von allen noch sanktioniert.

Nun fliegt der Bertolt als Dung durch die Welt
von Hollywood über Afrika nach China,
doch dafür, daß er auch auf die Erde fällt,
sorgen DeVina und Ina.

Ich frage mich nur, wo bleibt er,
der produktive Schmerz?
Ich wünschte mir gerne viel mehr
der fruchtbaren Verbindung von Gehirn und Herz!

Arnold Blumer, Juni 1982

The 6th International Brecht Symposium in Portland, OR, inspired one of our newer members, who came all the way from the Republic of South Africa, to the above poetic outburst. For those IBS members who do not read German there is comfort. The next pages carry a summary of the Symposium events by the same author in English prose.

reports

A Glance from Outside

I had to travel 26 hours by plane to the other end of the world to find out that Brecht was dead and that he wasn't Brecht anyway, but rather what we made of him. This is the conclusion the new president of the IBS, Antony Tatlow, arrived at in his incredibly witty satire presented at the 6th International Brecht Symposium which was held at the end of May in Portland/Oregon.

In spite of formidable odds like for example, insufficient financial assistance by the authorities, the organisers and especially Laureen Nussbaum managed to get quite a number of people from all over the world together to exchange their views on Brecht, dead or alive. At times the discussions got so lively that one could swear it wasn't a corpse we were debating about - maybe BB isn't dead after all. The main reasons, however, for the liveliness at times was the organisers' ingenious move to invite not only academics, but also practical theatre-people. Purely academic events do have the tendency to kill their subject matter, even corpses, with a barrage of academic rhetoric which serves no other purpose than to send the speaker on an ego-trip. In Portland, on the other hand, there were always the down-to-earth practical approaches which prevented us all from waking up in a philological ivory-tower.

There were, e.g., Richard Meyer's Video-Screening of Brecht/Weill's Ocean Flight, a major production, scenes from the Mother presented by Sharon Lockwood and Arthur Holden from the San Francisco Mime Troupe and a different interpretation put forward by Ann MacGregor and members of the City of Portland Firehouse Theatre. There were scenes from The Good Woman of Setzuan staged by members of the New Rose Theatre, Portland, slide-presentations by William Tate on his Chalk Circle production set in Latin America and by Jules Aaron on his fascinating Mahagonny production, the former at Portland State University, the latter at the California Institute of the Arts. In addition, Gitta Sacha Honegger and Richard Reineccius of the Julian Theatre in San Francisco gave a reading centering around mother figures in Brecht's plays. Many participants in the Symposium availed themselves of the chance to attend a sparkling performance of The Threepenny Opera, directed by Edgar Reynolds at Lewis & Clark College and last, but by no means least, there were Ina Wittich and DeVina Barajas who gave us samples of their rendering of Brecht songs.

Some of these performances were criticized for being politically too naïve, others for having technical and interpretative defaults here and there, but what struck me most was, that many of the performers had immense difficulties fighting bureaucratic barriers called estates and copyright-holders apparently erected for the sole purpose of preventing them from performing anything by Brecht. This is incredibly ironic in connection with one of the few German authors who, in theory at least, tried to be as non-national as he could. It is here that the IBS as an international organization could make itself useful by for example publishing on a regular basis the names and addresses of people and institutions responsible for dishing out the relevant go-ahead-permits. This indeed was suggested at the General Business

Meeting by Ron Davis. In addition to that the IBS could also publish some of the tricks of the trade which for example can make it possible that almost all of Brecht's plays have been performed in a country like South Africa. On the 12th of August Brecht's Galileo appeared even on the South African television screen.

The hassles trying to get hold of the performing and publishing rights of Brecht's work were highlighted again by some of the people delivering papers, for example by James Lyon (University of California, San Diego), when he talked about Brecht's Letters on Theatre as showing the process of evolution of Brecht's theory, and by John Fuegi (University of Maryland), who spoke on Brecht as director. James Lyon also gave an informative lecture on the time Brecht spent in Hollywood.

Michael Morley (Flinders University, South Australia), spoke of Brecht's feel for melody and rhythm and of Brecht's direct influence on the scores his composers (Brunier, Weill, Eisler and Dessau) wrote for his lyrics in a most productive co-operative process. Klaus Völker, dramaturge at the Schiller Theater in Berlin and co-editor of the werkausgabe, read some unpublished poems by Brecht and in his comments again referred to the difficult copyright-situation. He also gave a historical survey on the approaches towards Brecht productions in West Germany. As a practical theatre-man he stressed the necessity of performing these plays in such a way that they become meaningful to today's audiences. After all, many of the plays were written about half a century ago. But in this process the "productive pain" should not be lost. To achieve this a dramaturge is absolutely essential, as Carl Weber of New York University pointed out, because the director alone is not able to introduce into his production those elements necessary for the audience to become aware of the historical process which has taken place between the time the play was written and the time they are seeing it produced on stage. And the audiences would also have to become conscious of the fact that they are part of this historical process in order to realise what Völker has called the "productive pain".

It is, however, not only the historical, but also the cultural distance which has to be kept in mind. John Rouse (Tulane University), spelled it out when he said: "It is our situation which interests us," while he was talking about the necessity of adapting the adaptor. This theme was taken up in variations by Wal Cherry (Temple University), who spoke on the difficulty of staging Brecht in English, by Sue-Ellen Case (University of Washington), who investigated Karl Valentin's relationship to Brecht and quite rightly pointed out during a discussion how difficult it was for feminists to identify with Brecht's women figures and by myself looking at Brecht as a cultural mediator. Antony Tatlow's paper dealt with the force of contradiction in Brecht's work, with his aesthetics of "grace and claw" and with his affinity to Chinese thought, which is both pragmatic and synthetic and always relational, i.e., in social context. Unfortunately much of this highly complex talk got lost in the commotion created by the crowds trying to find a seat for the following performance of Brecht(ian) scenes by the Portland Labor Players.

All in all at least 500 people attended events connected with the Symposium either at Portland State University or at Reed College. At some presentations the audience numbered up to 200, amongst them a group of political activists whose publication, Revolutionary Worker, has been carrying a series of articles and letters responding to a "Call to Evaluate the Role of Bertolt Brecht" all through the year 1981.

During the discussion I sometimes got the impression that there were two distinctive camps present: the one apparently consisted of people who were trying desperately to reconstruct the "true" Brecht not realising that this kind of Brecht never existed. In the other camp were people who didn't give a hoot about what Brecht "really" meant when he said or wrote this or that, but who were more interested in finding out ways and means of confronting present-day and mostly non-German audiences with his plays. If one realises that meaning is not something which falls out of a text like a ripe fruit off a tree, but rather the result of a dialectical communicative process set in motion by the recipient, then this controversy possibly would not have taken place. And that would have been a great pity. Because the sparkle and success of the symposium resulted from this tension.

It was Michael Morley who aptly wrapped up the symposium by saying that a man with only one theory is lost. By referring to Brecht's fondness for paradoxes he urged us all to keep contradictions in our heads all the time at the same time, and thus regard them as productive challenges. I could not agree with him more, but I would like to include the whole human being and therefore add: we should start thinking with our guts too.

Arnold Blumer, University of Stellenbosch

The following text consists of the major part of James Lyon's press release to a number of theater arts periodicals. It is reprinted here with the author's permission.

Never the Twain?

When the International Brecht Society held its sixth bi-annual symposium at Reed College between May 28-31, it succeeded for the first time in bringing together a significant number of practicing theater people with scholars working on Brecht. In another "first," productions by theatrical troupes, presentations by directors and actors who had worked with Brecht plays, and panel discussions on Brechtian theater by practitioners of theater outnumbered the conventional scholarly papers on Brecht's theater that had dominated earlier symposia.

Live productions by members of the San Francisco Mime Troupe, the Portland New Rose Theater, the Portland Labor Players, and the Portland Fire House Theater triggered lively exchanges that signaled a reorientation in a society that has previously taken a more academic approach to Brecht's Theater. Carl Weber of New York University's Drama Department, who had been an assistant director under Brecht at the Berliner Ensemble in the early 1950's, discussed the relationship between theory and theatrical practice in Brecht's own theater. According to him, Brecht never talked about theory in rehearsals. Other theater people, among them Ron Davis (freelance director), Sue-Ellen Case (University of Washington), Wal Cherry (Temple University), Richard Reineccius (Julian Theater, San Francisco), Klaus Völker (dramaturge, Schiller Theater, Berlin), and others, added a practical dimension to discussions that did not exclude Brecht's theories, but that always focused on how theory actually worked in praxis.

Anyone who came to the Symposium thinking that Brechtian scholarship and Brechtian theater were mutually exclusive worlds quickly surrendered this notion. The live productions, a stunning television performance of Brecht's Ocean Flight (The Flight of the Lindberghs), directed by Richard Meyer (KERA, Dallas, Texas), the first full-scale English language production of that work done in the USA in half a century, the reading of unknown Brecht poems by Klaus Völker, a paper by Michael Morley on unknown songs for the theater that Brecht himself composed, and a fascinating report on the production of Brechtian theater in South Africa reinforced how much Brechtian scholars can learn from practicing theater people and how much theater people can draw from those who interpret and analyze Brechtian drama, music, and production.

At the business meeting the Society made plans to compile a directory of its members that lists their specific scholarly and/or theatrical skills and areas of interest. This would provide theater people with a resource booklet to determine the scholarly "experts" in various areas of Brecht (e.g., authenticity of text, translations of given plays, variant readings, background, history of performances, Brecht's own interpretations of plays available only in German, etc.). Just as theater people preparing productions might draw on these scholars, they in turn could consult theater people who stage and interpret given works of Brecht that might be of use or interest to their research. The next Newsletter of the International Brecht Society will solicit contributions to this directory, . . . (see p. 20).

James K. Lyon, University of Cal., San Diego

brecht—jahrbuch \ yearbook

The 11th yearbook of the IBS (1981-82) is presently in press at Wayne State University Press. The volume will be titled BEYOND BRECHT/UBER BRECHT HINAUS. It will be mailed to paid up IBS members at the end of the year. The volume will run circa 200 pp. and will be very international in scope. Contributions include: Erwin Leiser, "Truth is Concrete: A Film-Maker's Remarks on Brecht and Film;" Joel Schechter, "Beyond Brecht. New Authors. New Audiences;" Vittorio Felaco, "New Teeth for an Old Shark;" Rustom Bharucha, "Beyond Brecht: Political Theatre in Calcutta;" and several other essays. The next two volumes will be thematic volumes: 1) Brecht and Women (1982-83) and 2) Brecht and Socialism (1983-84). Essays on these subjects can be sent to any of the editors by Jan. 1, 1983 for theme 1) and Jan. 1, 1984 for theme 2). The editors are Gisela Bahr, John Fuegi and John Willett. For addresses see IBS mailing list.

forum

The International Brecht Society Funeral Parlor Game

- Did you hear the news?
- What news?
- Somebody just said Brecht is dead.
- What was that?
- Brecht is dead. Somebody just said Brecht is dead.
- Who said Brecht is dead?
- Nietzsche said Brecht is dead.
- Anyone else die recently?
- Somebody said Karl Marx has just died as well.
- Did Nietzsche say that too?
- I'm not sure, we have people working on it right now.
- Anyone else see Karl Marx die?
- Sure, lots of people.
- Well who? Give me some names.
- Ronald Reagan said Karl Marx is dead.
- What did Ronald Reagan say about Brecht?
- He said, Give him a bag of jelly beans, that will keep his mouth shut.
- Anybody know when Brecht died?
- There is somebody here who says he knows when Brecht died.
- Can you tell us when Brecht died?
- We're just checking the FBI files. Up to now it looks as if he was a Communist and that means he's got to die sometime.
- All right, anybody else say Brecht is dead?
- Yes, Rischbieter says Brecht is dead.
- Who is Rischbieter?
- Rischbieter is the man who says Brecht is dead.
- Anyone else?
- Yes. Lots of others.
- Where does this leave us?
- Leave who?
- The International Brecht Society.
- What has that got to do with Brecht?
- Don't be rude.
- It really seems somebody called Brecht just died.
- Might be a mix-up.
- No, it seems everybody says so.
- When did he die?
- We're not absolutely sure yet.
- I thought he died in 56.
- No, no, no, he died in 78.
- How do you mean he died in 78? He and who else?
- He and everyone else who thought he hadn't died in 56.
- That must have cleared the street.
- Where did he die?
- Who, Nietzsche?

- No, Brecht.
- Some people now say Brecht died in 33. Others say it wasn't 1933 either. Just 33.
- Seems kind of early.
- It could have happened sooner.
- You haven't answered my question.
- Which question?
- I asked where did Brecht die?
- What does it matter where he died? The important question is, when? We have to settle that first.
- Nietzsche said Brecht died in 88. 1888, that is.
- You mean he died in 33 and Nietzsche didn't notice it till 1888.
- Apparently not.
- How strange!
- You think that's strange. There are stranger things to come.
- What has Nietzsche got to do with Brecht anyway?
- Better ask Grimm.
- Now, if we can't tell when, we ought to be able to tell where he died.
- You think that's simple?
- We can find out where he's buried and work backwards. So where did he die?
- Who, Brecht?
- Yes.
- Which time?
- For goodness sake, start with 78.
- In 78 he died in Frankfurt.
- That doesn't make sense.
- Why not? He can die in Frankfurt if he wants to.
- Unsel'd would never allow it.
- Unsel'd wasn't asked. What has Unsel'd got to do with it?
- It must have been a blow for Suhrkamp culture.
- Aren't we straying from the topic again?
- Not as far as I can see.
- So he died in Frankfurt in 78, and in Berlin in 56.
- What do you mean, Berlin in 56? I thought you said he died in Berlin in 33.
- Berlin didn't exist in 33.
- What are they doing in Berlin then?
- They're waiting for the Second Coming.
- What was the funeral like, well attended?
- Which one?
- The last one.
- The last one has been going on for some time.
- Seems he keeps popping up again. You can't keep a good man down.
- Well, they buried him properly that time.
- Who did?
- Everyone who was there. You can't blame them. They did their best.
- How did they bury him?
- The usual tasteful ceremony, with words.
- Who? The scholars? You mean that's news?
- No, the others: the directors, the producers, the critics, the journalists.
- What about the audiences?

- The audiences didn't say very much.
- They're not paid to talk.
- They're paid to keep quiet.
- Who said so?
- Somebody who argued with Brecht.
- Sounds as if he won the argument.
- Maybe that's the problem.
- It's more complicated than that.
- It's always more complicated.
- No, I mean it's different this time.
- This time, they think they've finally buried him - in his own words.
- That's nice. He'll have somebody to talk to.
- You haven't grasped the problem. When nobody uses the words anymore, when they aren't in people's mouths or handed around, they grow so heavy. Then you can't escape the weight. There are so many of them.
- Sounds too lyrically lugubrious to me. They probably buried their own Brecht. Everyone should be encouraged to. What about a personalized Brecht burial kit. That should sell well. A sharp spade, a coffin-shaped bookcase, polished mahogany of course, movable shelves for different-sized expectations. I believe he doesn't need a gravestone. That will keep the price down. We'll need an instruction manual - 'What you need to know when burying Brecht'.
- No problem. There are plenty of Brechtians who need a job now.
- The main question is, after they have buried their own Brecht, what is left?
- Was there a sermon?
- There is always a sermon.
- Who gave it, Lukács?
- Don't be silly. Lukács is dead, Lukács gave the 56 sermon.
- Who gave the 33 sermon?
- Heiner Müller.
- Really? That's not possible. They wouldn't have let him. He was too young.
- What do you mean, too young? He gave it in 79.
- Sounds as if it was a sermon for something else.
- You might be right.
- Who gave the last sermon then?
- It seems it is still being written.
- Somebody said, the last sermon was written by Brecht.
- What was the 78 sermon about?
- Hard to remember exactly but it was delivered with feeling. The preachers said we had come to bury Brecht and not to praise him because he was a macho egomaniac who spent his time writing fairy tales instead of reading The Gulag Archipelago. He was also into Lyssenko's genetics and believed in the perfectability of industrialisation. They also said he was a smart-ass who thought he knew all the answers. Then he constructed a whole theory to make you think he didn't really know them, to make you think you found them all by yourself. They said he fooled everyone for more than 20 years, until somebody suddenly realised there was something wrong with his questions. There was nothing wrong with the answers. It was

the questions that were causing all the trouble. It was time to change the questions.

- How did he fool everybody for so long?
- Nothing special in that. Par for the course for a poet. Words can make you believe anything. And people want to believe. They want to be told the truth. They're always on the look-out for truth-tellers, for leaders.
- I thought Brecht didn't want to make believe. He wanted to make think.
- That was part of the trouble. They believed he wanted to make them think. It seems thinking isn't enough. There have to be other things going on as well.
- There was this trip in the Sixties, wasn't there? And when that didn't work out, somebody had to take the heat. There was Brecht, still saying the same old things. It didn't work out. Somebody just shouted - shut up. Everyone was very relieved when one of them had the courage.
- But that was 78, not 68?
- Just the usual time lag with the theatre people. They are always a bit slower than the rest. Just too busy to think, specially about thinking. All those stages aching for truth. They have their performances and their programmes and they're sensitive too. You can understand it. Here you are acting the revolution and it all stops at 10:30. Everyone claps and goes home. It must get you down after a while. And then they worry that the politicians don't go to the theatre to learn about revolution.
- Really?
- Yes, well Claus Peymann does anyway. It seems the politicians don't go to the theatre much at all. It's no wonder everything is moving so slowly now. They go to the opera instead. Probably makes them feel better, you don't have to listen to the words.
- On the whole, things seems to be flagging right now.
- That depends on where you are and what you mean by revolution. Maybe one form is sitting still and thinking.
- Well, then people need to be told to sit down and think. Isn't there a play by Brecht which tells them to sit still and think?
- Yes of course there is.
- What's it called?
- It's called the Life of Galileo. Some people say it's at the centre of Brecht.
- Other people feel it's at the edges; it's not revolutionary enough.
- Sometimes you can spell revolution with a 'd'.
- How do you mean?
- Devolution.
- They're always arguing.
- Not any more. They've cut the cord now. They're not listening. The Confucius syndrome.
- But that really is bunkum - Brecht as Confucius.
- Who said so?
- Everybody, even Tatlow said so.
- I thought he said Brecht was Confucius.
- No, no, he said Brecht wasn't Confucius. That was his own fault, nobody reads a book over 300 pages nowadays, not about Brecht and Confucius anyway.

- There's hope for Tatlow then too.
- Yes, there's hope for Tatlow, Rischbieter, Ronald Reagan and Karl Marx.
- Where does that leave us?
- It leaves us with Brecht the doubter as leader. He's got you trapped.
- That's just another mask. It doesn't matter what you think, it's what they think that matters.
- Who are they?
- The mourners, of course.
- Yes, but who are the mourners?
- I told you, the theatre people, the critics, the journalists, even some of the scholars and probably most of the audiences.
- In Frankfurt?
- Frankfurt and surroundings.
- What about Berlin and East Germany?
- Like I said, they buried him in Berlin already and didn't need to show up again. At least some of them believe they buried him. Others are not so sure.
- Let's have some names.
- Only off the record.
- OK.
- Reich-Ranicki was in black.
- He's a professional Brecht mourner. He's been in black for decades. He builds little Brechts and buries them every six months.
- There was Flimm as well.
- That's more serious. Wait a moment, I thought Flimm was still trying to resurrect him or resuscitate him or whatever.
- Yes, he's having trouble. His father's ghost. You know the symptoms.
- Better keep an eye on him.
- What about the rest?
- The usual crowd. First they worship. Then they assassinate. Then they have a great funeral. They take their funerals seriously. Very solemn affairs. They just went ahead and buried His Omniscience.
- Were there any Chinese around?
- One or two.
- That means a billion minus one or two weren't there.
- Maybe they had visa problems.
- Not for Frankfurt, just for Berlin.
- They might have come if they'd been courteously invited.
- No, they joined the ITI too late. Anyway it seems they are too busy right now translating Brecht and playing him. Apparently he has something to say to them. That's what they think anyway. For some reason, the plays seem to be useful right now.
- Well, that's only one quarter of humanity, or is it one third? What about the other three-quarters?
- At the moment, the Indians seem to think he's useful too. India has old theatrical forms which some people think are worthwhile. It looks as if Brecht's plays suit them. It's also a country with fairly devastating social problems, like bonded labour for life. Brecht seems to be alive in India. The Jatra theatre has an audience of thousands. There were three Caucasian Chalk Circles

- in Calcutta recently within weeks of each other.
- I heard they were being played simultaneously.
 - Does it matter?
 - Well, that's another quarter gone of the three-quarters that were left. What about the rest? What about the Arabs?
 - Which Arabs? There are lots of Arabs?
 - In general, the Arabs seem to think Brecht has some useful ideas. There are a few particular Arabs who aren't too pleased with them. But it looks as if their number is coming down.
 - How many have we got left?
 - Round about two billion.
 - What about the Soviet Union, that's 15%?
 - Funny you should ask. Right now, they seem to think Brecht is the cat's whiskers.
 - Why on earth?
 - The questions appear to be in the right place.
 - Which questions?
 - The ones they are interested in.
 - What about Latin America?
 - That's a hot topic. Brecht is banned in some places. Another form of burial.
 - You can't be banned and buried at the same time. That's not burying, that's planting. By the way, was Augusto Boal at the funeral?
 - I didn't see him there.
 - What have we got left?
 - Between a third and a quarter of the population. Indonesia, Africa, the USA, Western Europe.
 - What about Japan?
 - Some of the best Brecht I've ever seen anywhere is on in Japan right now.
 - Indonesia is a bit of a mystery. Huge population. I'm looking into it. I'll get back to you later. Africa doesn't know Brecht that well, or only in a few places. Too early to judge yet.
 - Brecht didn't know Africa either.
 - Nothing is certain.
 - That leaves the USA.
 - The USA is enigmatic. Seems things are going to get better there.
 - You mean worse.
 - That's what I said.
 - Is that supposed to be good news?
 - Depends who you are.
 - How can you be so unemotional? That's un-American for a start.
 - We've got the Brecht Society in the USA. Let them find out what's happening.
 - Why is it called International Brecht Society?
 - I'm not sure.
 - What can we do about Brecht in the USA?
 - You have to start with the end and work backwards. Begin with standing ovations.
 - What on earth do you mean?

- If you don't get a standing ovation, nobody takes you seriously. The clapping makes people hungry and thirsty. It's good for the economy. TV is out right now. Another way would be through the church.
- Which church?
- Somebody has to see the light.
- What, in the Brecht Society?
- Don't you remember the IBS meeting in Austin? The missionary who had a product to sell?
- What about the First Church of Brecht the Baptist?
- You mean Brecht the scientist?
- It's worth a try. They don't want to talk about politics.
- Hallelujah!
- Well now, apart from one or two pockets of resistance, Brecht doesn't seem to be doing too badly.
- Who was this guy Brecht anyway? What's all the fuss about?
- Didn't I introduce you? He was always stirring things up. Turning things upside down. Turning things inside out. A devolutionary comic.
- Everyone likes a laugh in a funeral parlour.
- It's not a laughing matter. Some people think his jokes are out of date.
- Jokes are never out of date. You're just telling them badly. Was Dario Fo at the funeral?
- I didn't see him there either.
- That doesn't surprise me much. He was too busy to come.
- Dario Fo isn't Brecht anyway.
- Of course he isn't. Brecht isn't Brecht either.
- He's not what somebody else has buried. He's what you can make of him, or maybe what he makes of you.
- If everybody has decided there's nothing more to be done with him anywhere, then let's make devolution with somebody else.
- Devolution? Are you crazy? This is the International Brecht Society Parlor Game. You can't make devolution here. It's against the constitution.
- What about a quiet devolution then? A diplomatic devolution.
- We distinguish between totalitarian and authoritarian dévolution.
- You have to make a start somewhere.
- Absolutely no devolution here please. We don't talk about politics either. We decided that last time. It's in the minutes. We're not supposed to talk about these things. Look at the first rule of the Diderot Society. We don't talk about Chile, or Poland, or the USA, or anything else. We just talk about Brecht. This is the International Brecht Society. This is not a bunch of terrorists.
- Who said devolutionaries were terrorists?
- Devolution is Un-American Activities.
- Did any IBS members go to the funeral?
- Not very many.
- Why not?
- They couldn't afford to.

- What do you mean, couldn't afford to? They're all college professors. Of course they could afford to.
- I mean they couldn't afford to admit that Brecht was dead.
- Why not?
- Well, they would have to talk about something else then, wouldn't they?

Antony Tatlow, Univ. of Hong Kong

The above satire was submitted to Communications 15 months ago, before its author became a candidate for the IBS presidency. With his permission the printing of this spoof was postponed till after the Portland meeting, where Rose Leopold and Ron Davis rendered it as an unconventional opener of the 6th International Brecht Symposium.

letters

Excerpts from a letter from the GDR:

During the theater season 1981-82 Baal was staged in Erfurt and Drums in the Night in Schwerin. Both were first runs in the German Democratic Republic. This prompted the reviewer in Sonntag to ask rhetorically, whether there are any specific reasons for this beyond the fact that the whole Brecht is thus made accessible to GDR audiences? She answered her question by describing what distinguishes both productions: ". . . a refreshing, non-ceremonial approach to Brecht, pushing away energetically any thought of museum quality. They offer perfect entertainment within the framework of political theater... Also, we have a propitious state of affairs in that, so far, there is no model production that would have to be emulated or surpassed."

This points to familiar problems. It seems to me that Brecht's aesthetic-theoretical proposition has not been used in all its ramifications. What is being discussed are the symptoms ("forced learning," "rationalism") and not the basics: the connection between progress in art and social relationships. Many theater people (also in the GDR) are not enough aware of the anti-conformist essence in the so-called models and in many a solution Brecht offered for both practical and theoretical problems.

In the humdrum existence of the official municipal theater twenty-five years after Brecht's exemplary work, ignorance and selfishness serve again to stop the gaps in the repertory. Too often the slogan is "originality," based on arguments like "subjective expression" or "self-realization," which stand in the way of dialectical "synthesis."

Also often, the paradoxical situation occurs that, in an attempt to motivate and justify certain conditions and interactions, the aesthetic originality of the piece is repressed to such an extent that the resulting production turns out dull, lacklustre, unimaginative. Opinions were divided about Macheath in the Threepenny Opera of the Berliner Ensemble (recently

the role has been recast). However, another reviewer, again in the Sonntag, expressed the main tenor when she wrote that between seemingly somnambulistic perfection and a monstrosity that gobbled up syllables and motivations alike, something went lost, something which Brecht had recommended in his 1931 "Hints for Actors": "There must be a process of exchange between spectator and actor, with the latter at bottom addressing himself directly to the spectator despite the strangeness and detachment." (Manheim/Willett transl.). The reviewer thought that in Macheath's way of acting the relationship with the audience had gone lost.

It is heartening with regard to the differences of opinion in the GDR, that acting and directing are being judged by the way they render relationships between people. Brecht's aesthetics of contradictions, while setting the standard, is also a challenge: theatricality and diversity of form are increasingly seen as preconditions. . .

Heinz-Uwe Haus
transl. - ln -

(continued from page 3)

Business Meeting

- 4) Lack of finances remains one of the main problems of the IBS. In this connection:
 - a) Lee Baxandall mentioned that the IBS is still awaiting tax-exempt status in Maryland.
 - b) Antony Tatlow proposed to register the IBS on the Hong Kong stock market, which will allow for property income.
 - c) Members were encouraged to advocate the IBS in concerts and theatrical performances. For this purpose IBS flyers can be obtained from Karl-Heinz Schoeps. (In the meanwhile a Spanish translation of the folder, made by DeVina Barajas, awaits printing.)
 - d) In order to acquaint a wider circle of theater people with the IBS, James Lyon agreed to write a press release, which John Rouse and Richard Reineccius would take to theater periodicals (see p. 7).
- 5) The meeting subsequently concentrated on the three main points of Antony Tatlow's program for the IBS.
 - a) Diversification.
It was anticipated that the establishment of an English-language based Year-book will prove helpful in reaching theater people in this country and abroad, e.g., in India and China.
The need was expressed for a "Directory of Expertise," a source list, so members will know whom to turn to with practical questions, e.g., rights to and versions of a given Brecht piece (see p.20). In this context John Fuegi wants all members to know that he is establishing a materials center at the U. of Maryland. So everybody should send their programs there as well as to the Brecht Archives in Berlin. Eventually Fuegi hopes to compile the information on a computer data base.
 - b) Internationalization.
Lamice ElAmari was particularly concerned about the dissemination of Brecht's ideas and work outside Germany and the USA. She suggested that there should be various liaison outposts, that may eventually develop into regional centers. These centers could encompass a wider scope, much in the way Brecht envisaged a "Diderot Society," that was to include philosophers and scientists.
For a starter, Lamice ElAmari promised to be the liaison person with the Arab speaking world, while Arnold Blumer will keep track of Brecht events in South Africa. (His report will be in the next issue of Communications.) Antony

Tatlow, of course, will monitor China. Others are urged to volunteer for the same function in different geographic/linguistic regions (see p.20).

c) Politization.

Ronald Davis pointed to the political developments in Latin America, where theater has an impact on social intervention. He felt that regional centers should do more than monitor. Thoughtful commentary was needed. The "Forum" section of Communications needs to be expanded, so arguments can be followed through. Eventually, Communications should become a dynamic instrument in journal form.

John Rouse commented that Tulane U. has a strong Latin American Center that could be interested in Brecht's impact in Latin America.

Local activists, mainly from the Revolutionary Workers Party, pleaded for direct participation of the IBS in the world struggle. They urged that expertise be placed into the hands of revolutionary artists.

6) Plans for the 7th International Brecht Symposium were loosely discussed. With the new stress on "international," Peking and Capetown were mentioned as possible sites but also Philadelphia, where the meeting could center around a Brecht production by Wal Cherry at Temple U.. The 7th IBS Symposium will have to be a very special one, 7 being Brecht's "holy" number!

A warning from this year's organizer: start early, start now! We had only 9 months here in Portland and that was really not enough. That it worked at all was due at least as much to foolhardiness as to the Oregon Committee for the Humanities, Portland State University, Reed College, the IBS, the Goethe House and several other organizations, who helped out.

John Fuegi has a copy of both the final and the financial report of the 6th International Brecht Symposium. This may be of help to prospective organizers.

- ln -

announcements

From our Secretary-Treasurer:

1) The secretariat still has copies available of the magnificent photo-documentary Material Brecht - Kontradiktionen 1968-1976 (88 pp.), compiled for the 4th International Brecht Symposium in Dallas, TX (Nov. 1976). Members in good standing can order the book for the bargain price of \$ 2, others will have to pay \$ 4.

2) The Brecht Center in the GDR makes available a BRECHT EXHIBITION: CHANGE THE WORLD; FOR IT NEEDS CHANGE, with approximately 70 boards ($\pm 6'x 3'$), stage models and costume figurines. Text in English, French or Spanish available. For more information contact:

Karl-Heinz Schoeps, Dept. of Germ. Lang. & Lit., U. of Illinois, Urbana, IL. 61801

(We had a predecessor of this exhibit at the 6th Internat. Brecht Symposium grace to the Cultural Attaché of the GDR in Washington and found it most instructive.-ln-)

recent publications

Banholzer, Paula. So viel wie eine Liebe. Der unbekannte Brecht. (München: Universitas Verlag, 1981), 240 pp., DM 32.-

forthcoming publications

Rouse, John S. "The Influence of Brecht's Theatre Work on Postwar West German Directing." Diss. Stanford U. Completion expected Dec. 1982. Thesis advisor: Martin Esslin.

Brecht, Bertolt. Gedichte Band XI, containing all hitherto unpublished Brecht poems according to James Lyon. Watch out for notate 4 for further details.

recent productions

A Man's a Man

Tulane University Theatre, New Orleans, LA

April 19-25, 1982

Translation: Gerhard Nellhaus; adaptation: John Rouse and Bert Cardullo

Music: Howard Weingrad

Director: John Rouse; Dramaturg: Bert Cardullo; Stage Designer: Brett Batterson

Cast: Galy Guy: Cree Rankin; Mrs. Guy: Lisa Schmidt; Uriah Shelley: Richard Birke;
Jeraiah Jip: Douglas Armstrong; Polly Baker: Michael Price; Jesse Mahoney:
Danny Teal; Mr. Wang: Peter Veiguela; Sergeant Fairchild: Ron Gural; Widow
Leocadia Begbick: Giselle Dover; Wang's Sexton: Dan Zellner.

The critics were extremely laudatory about this production.

The Chalk Circle

Portland State University Department of Theater Arts, Portland OR

May 14 - 16, 20 - 22, 1982

Translation: Revised English version by Eric Bentley; adaptation: Tom Stotler and
William Tate; Music: Larry Fritts

Director: William Tate; Stage Designer: Glenn Gauer

Setting: Latin America in this century

Cast: Maria (=Grusche): Stacey Olson; Chazdak: James Eikrem; Simon: Jim Caputo

The Threepenny Opera

Fir Acres Theatre at Lewis and Clark College, Portland OR

May 24 - 29, 1982

Music: Kurt Weill

Translation:

Director: Edgar Reynolds ; Musical Director: Brian P. Kelly

Set and Costume Design: John Gerth

Cast: Ballad Singer: Paul O'Dell; Macheath: Nicholas Smith; Mr. Peachum: David R. Onash;
Mrs. Peachum: Maria-Ines Hulse; Polly Peachum: Laure Millet; Tiger Brown: Philip
Lowery; Lucy Brown: Teresa Yoder; Low-Dive Jenny: Valerie Leonard

Several attenders of the 6th International Brecht Symposium saw this production and they were quite impressed.

Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny

The Australian Opera, Sydney Opera House

July 14, 10, 23, 26, 29, 31; August 3, 7, 1982

Music: Kurt Weill

Translation: not mentioned

Director: Richard Wherrett

Conductor: David Kram

Designer: Vicki Feitscher; Choreographer: Lois Strike

Cast: Locadia Begbick: Rosina Raisbeck; Fatty: John Germain; Trinity Moses: Robert
Allman; Jenny: Etela Piha; Jimmy Mahoney: Gregory Dempsey; Alaska-Wolf Joe:
Bruce Martin; Jacob Schmidt: Robin Donald; Moneybags Bill: John Fulford

The program notes are impressive. They cover the whole alphabet: H = die Hauspostille;
L = Lotte Lenya; V = Verfremdungseffekt; Z = Zeitoper. Of course: B = Brecht!

Two interesting "performance" items from the Federal Republic of Germany:

1) On Sunday, May 9, small-business men in Nuremberg mounted a protest march. Their marching tune was Mack the Knife's song with the following lyrics: "Well, the people/ they pay taxes/ like they never/ have before./ And the government/ takes and wastes it/ Oh, what do they/ spend it for?" (This Week in Germany, May 14, 1982)

2) Brecht's daughter, Hanne Hiob, apparently found a group of Bavarian boy scouts ready and willing to perform Brecht's Herrnburger Bericht (music Paul Dessau) in Essen. But the Essen city authorities would not allow them to use the Saalbau (auditorium) because these Bavarian boy scouts were an "ultra-leftist organisation."

(Die Zeit, May 7, 1982)

dues notice

By the time members will receive the 1981-82 yearbook (see p. 8), dues for 1982-83 will be payable. The board has revised the dues in such a way that retired members as well as members who earn less than \$ 10. 000 a year should feel free to pay the student dues of \$ 10 per year. The dues schedule appears on p. 27 of this issue.

Please make Xerox copies of the following slips if you want to use them but hate to cut up p. 19.

Please list my name and address in the forthcoming IBS Resource Directory (see p. 17).

My specific area(s) of expertise is/are: _____

and/or I will gather and forward information on Brecht in theater and other cultural events in the following geographic/linguistic area(s): _____

My name is: _____ Please mail to: Marc Silberman
Address: _____ German Department
University of Texas
San Antonio, TX 78285
USA

To: Marc Silberman, German Department University of Texas, San Antonio TX 78285, USA

I want to report a production of the play _____

Institution _____

Date of Premiere _____

Director _____ Music _____

No. of Performances _____ Stage Designer _____

Translator _____

Cast: _____

Please remember to send at least one copy of the program to each:

Bertolt-Brecht-Archiv
Chausseestrasse 125
DDR-104 Berlin GDR

John Fuegi
Comp. Lit.
U. of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742

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