[16]Christa Wolf. "Heine, die Zensur und wir. Rede auf dem Außerordentlichen Schriftstellerkongreß der DDR." *Christa Wolf. Im Dialog:* 163.

[17]"Zwischenrede." *Christa Wolf. Im Dialog:* 159.

[18]Vgl. "Schreiben im Zeitbezug: 155.

[19]Vgl. Christoph Hein. "Die Zensur ist überlebt, nutzlos, paradox, menschenfeindlich, ungesetzlich und strafbar. Rede auf dem X. Schriftstellerkongreß der DDR." *Die fünfte Grundrechenart. Augsätze und Reden:* 104-10.

[20]Christa Wolf. "Heine, die Zensur und wir. Rede auf dem Außerordentlichen Schriftstellerkonkreß der DDR." *Im Dialog. Aktuelle Texte:* 163.

[21]Christoph Hein. "Brief an Sara, New York." *Die fünfte Grundrechenart. Aufsätze und Reden:* 201.

[22]"Schreiben im Zeitbezug": 139.

[23]"Schreiben im Zeitbezug": 138.

[24]Christoph Hein. "Weder das Verbot noch die Genehmigung als Geschenk. Gespräch mit der 'Berliner Zeitung', 4. / 5. November 1989." *Die fünfte Grundrechenart. Aufsätze und Reden:* 193.

[25]Ibid.

[26]"Zwischenrede": 162.

[27]"Heine, die Zensur und wir": 166.

[28]Vgl. unter anderen: Dieter Sevin "Zur Genese und Berechtigung der Christa Wolf Debatte" *GDR Bulletin* 17, 1 (1991): 15-18.

BOOK REVIEWS

REVIEW ESSAY

Zinner, Hedda. *Selbstbefragung* Berlin: Buchverlag der Morgen, 1989. 212 pp.
Brüning, Elfriede. *Lästige Zeugen? Tonbandgespräche mit Opfern der Stalinzeit*. Halle/Leipzig: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1990. 156 pp.
Richter, Trude. *Totgesagt. Erinnerungen. Mit Nachbemerkungen von Elisabeth Schulz-Semrau und Helmut Richter*. Halle/Leipzig: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1990. 485 pp.

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The three books to be reviewed here have more in common than their subject, that is, the fate of German communists in Soviet exile in the 1930s-1950s. All three works were written by prominent GDR women, veteran socialists who joined the movement in the 1920s and 30s. Published in the immediate pre- and post-*Wende* period, all three books were intended in the spirit of socialist reform; with their airing of this long tabooed chapter of the socialist past the authors hoped to further the regeneration of socialism in the Soviet Union and the GDR.

Two of the authors, Hedda Zinner and Trude Richter, experienced Soviet exile firsthand, albeit with different outcomes. Elfriede Brüning, who remained in Germany during fascism, collected the memories of émigrés—for the most part, women—as tape-recorded oral history. Hedda Zinner returned to Germany almost immediately after the cessation of hostilities, but Trude Richter and the women interviewed by Elfriede Brüning were not repatriated until 1956/57, in the wake of the 20th Party Congress and Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign. Apparently unbroken by their long ordeal in Soviet labor camps, they too assumed productive roles in GDR society, consciously contributing to the construction of the German socialist state.

Hedda Zinner (b. 1907), the Viennese-born playwright and writer (she was originally trained as an actress), emigrated to the USSR in 1935 with her husband, Fritz Erpenbeck. Both were involved in antifascist activities in Moscow: Zinner primarily as a freelance (radio) journalist, Erpenbeck as editor of *Wort* and, later, *Internationale Literatur*. Despite their cramped and uncertain housing, the threat of statelessness when their German passports expired, and their constant fear of arrest in the late 1930s, Zinner and Erpenbeck's existence in the Soviet Union was relatively easy. As members of the intellectual communist elite, they were part of the inner circle, on good terms with Pieck, Ulbricht, Lukács, etc., and close friends of the Bechers. Zinner had time to worry about proper evening dress, custom-made shoes, and maids able to cook French dishes.

In contrast to other German émigrés, many of whom they knew well, she and Erpenbeck were not arrested during Stalin's purges nor were they banished to Siberia with other Germans when Hitler attacked the Soviet Union in 1941. On the contrary: when Moscow was threatened by the advancing German army, they were evacuated with the Comintern—along with Pieck and Ulbricht—to Ufa (Bashkiria), where they prepared antifascist texts for broadcast to the German troops. Their living conditions in Ufa were primitive, but still far better than those of the native population: the Comintern had special housing and its own store. Hospitalized for the birth of her child, Zinner was appalled at the meager fare the Bashkirian women received—thin cabbage soup three times a day—and had her meals sent in.

Selbstbefragung, Zinner's personal accounting of the time ("Ich will mich mit mir neu auseinandersetzen. Mit meinen eigenen Erfahrungen in diesen zehn Jahren.") (6), consists of many short texts in which she reconstructs and comments on isolated experiences beginning with her arrival in the USSR and ending with her return to Germany in June 1945, and several journalistic and literary pieces she wrote at the time. In spite of a certain self-aggrandizement, Zinner does not shy away from her personal failings, admitting, for example, her shame for not having helped Julius Unruh's wife after his arrest. And, from her position as convinced socialist ("Ich will, mit dem Wissen von heute, nichts von dem zurücknehmen oder korrigieren, was ich damals empfand.") (8), Zinner discusses the mistaken assumptions and misperceptions which stemmed from her "in jener Zeit unverrückbares Sowjetbild" (17). Encountering instances of anti-Semitism, for example, she had refused to recognize them as such, since such negative behavior in the Soviet Union was inconceivable. Zinner's idealism suffered a serious blow in 1936 when Ernst Ottwalt and Hans Günther were arrested. But here, too, she (and other émigrés) assumed there must be reasons for their imprisonment, and

looked to their bourgeois pasts for a possible explanation. And when it became obvious that innocent people were being arrested, she assigned the blame to underlings, convinced that Stalin had no knowledge of the injustice being done (105). For, Zinner writes, to doubt these things would have meant to doubt one's self as well (101-102).

Selbstbefragung is Zinner's second attempt at confronting the years of Soviet exile. She approached the topic for the first time in *Die große Ungeduld* (Buchverlag der Morgen, 1988)—a fictionalized discussion of the "Personenkult" and the appropriateness of breaking the official silence about Stalin's crimes. The heroine's son, outraged that she, a loyal socialist, hid from him the fact that his father died in a Soviet camp, publishes the diary she kept while in exile in a West German *Illustrierte*, and, generally disillusioned by his new knowledge of Stalinist atrocities, he joins a Western terrorist group. Rethinking her life, the mother contrasts the "große Ungeduld" of her son with the "brennende Geduld des wirklichen Revolutionärs" (127), coming to the conclusion that impatience does not motivate, but instead brakes historical change: "Indem wir, in unserer Ungeduld, Geduld auf Geduld häufen, erreichen wir vielleicht nächste Ziele" (127).

In her introduction to *Selbstbefragung* Zinner returns to the concepts "Geduld" und "Ungeduld," maintaining that history demands "eine zuweilen unmenschliche Geduld von uns" (6). Her experiences in Soviet exile—in particular, the treatment of the German communists—robbed her of illusions, but not of her world view, and—as she maintained in 1989—history had borne her out. Her trusting patience and perseverance is shared by Trude Richter and Elfriede Brüning, and many of the women in Brüning's collection.

Elfriede Brüning (b. 1910), the author of popularly written novels about social issues, especially the position of women in socialist society *(Regine Haberkorn, Septemberreise, Partnerinnen)*, worked as a journalist for *Neue Heimat* in the immediate postwar period and, in this capacity, interviewed *Umsiedler*, including "Zivilinternierte" returning from the Soviet Union. Forty years later, rereading an interview conducted with women who had been interned in a Soviet penal colony, Brüning was appalled at the naiveté of her questions, at her having seized on the women's description of the riches and beauty of the north, rather than pursuing their brief mention of the unaccustomed physical labor and bitter cold: "Haben die Frauen wirklich nichts anderes von Siberien erzählt?" (8), "Habe ich mich gar nicht gefragt, warum und auf welche Weise sie nach Siberien gekommen waren?" (9).

Brüning's objective is twofold: to ventilate the fate of the German émigrés—to let them finally speak; and, at the same time, to ponder the ignorance of the communist population in the GDR about this "himmelschreiende Unrecht" (9). Looking back to the time, she, like Zinner, points to the enormous idealism of the German communists vis-á-vis the Soviet Union: "in der Sowjetunion, so glaubten wir Antifaschisten, war es unmöglich, daß unschuldige Menschen verhaftet wurden; das erste sozialistische Land war für uns tabu" (10). A second reason was the lack of information, one cause of which was the SED's silencing of these "lästige Zeugen" in the interest of preserving the idealized image of the Soviet state. As one of Brüning's subjects remarks: "In meinem Fragebogen heißt es lakonisch: Ab 35 bis 56 in der Sowjetunion. Danach Rückkehr in die DDR. Alles was dazwischen liegt . . . habe ich aus dem Fragebogen streichen müssen. Darüber hätte ich den Mund zu halten, ließ man mich wissen . . . " (112). Sometimes the victims themselves chose to remain silent, not wanting to give "ammunition" to the enemy and thus harm the socialist cause (64). And, as Brüning (only) implies, writers like herself made no attempt to inform the population, although, she, at least, had received detailed information on the Stalinist camps in the 1950s—from Trude Richter "[u]nter dem Siegel strengster Verschwiegenheit" (11).

The slim volume contains Brüning's own remembrance of her BPRS writer colleague Sally Gles, who, arrested in Leningrad in 1937, died in prison camp; the diary of Sally's wife, who was deported to Kasachstan in 1943, where she worked in coal mines until 1955; the childhood memories of their son, who grew up in Soviet orphanages. And first-person narrations of four other German women (one identified: Anni Sauer, a dance teacher; the others, only by first name and first letter of the last name) who, having come to the Soviet Union in the early 1930s, were arrested—for the most part, along with their husbands—either during the purges of 1936/38 or in 1941/42. The men perished; the women spent the next fifteen to twenty years in Kasachstan, in the harshest living conditions, working in mines, in saw mills, in the fields, first as prisoners, then as "Verbannte," and finally as free workers, free but not able to leave, until their rehabilitation after the 20th Party Congress.

Brüning phrased her title as a question—*Lästige Zeugen?* For her, of course, there is no doubt; she is convinced that the testimony of the victims of Stalinism, no matter how painful to give and to receive, is essential for the revitalization of the socialist cause. The question mark alludes instead to the unchanged view of the conservative SED leadership that the old USSR was sacrosanct. Encouraged by the de-Stalinization process in the Soviet Union, Brüning had begun collecting her interviews in 1988; in November of the same year, the SED forbade the sale and circulation of the Soviet journal *Sputnik* because of its critical articles on Stalin. The rigid SED position was upheld even by one of Brüning's interviewees, who at the last minute refused to grant permission to use her text, fearing the negative light her experiences would shed on the Soviet Union and the socialist cause: her bad memories "'brächten nur Verwirrung in die Bevölkerung'" (154).

In her introduction, written in December 1989, Brüning is full of hope for socialist reform. Like the women whose voices are heard in her book, she clearly puts the blame for the injustice suffered by the exiled German communists solely on Stalin, and she blames the Stalinists in the GDR who silenced the "lästige Zeugen" for the malaise in the GDR. This she expects will be overcome in the new socialism that she sees *ante portas*.

The *Literaturwissenschaftlerin* Trude Richter—her real name was Erna Barnick—(1899-1989), after working as secretary of the BPRS in the late 1920s and early 30s, joined her husband, the economist and Marxist theorist Hans Günther, in Moscow in 1934. Arrested with Günther in 1936, she was sentenced to five years in labor camp for "counter-revolutionary-Trotskyist activities" and sent via Vladivostok (where she last saw Günther, who died in the detention camp) to Magadan and then Kolyma region in northern Siberia. Here she worked in the fields and woods, and at other physically demanding tasks until 1946—her prison term had been automatically extended in 1941. After three relatively free years in Magadan, she was arrested again in 1949 (although there were no new charges) and sent "zur unbefristeten Verbannung" (391) to Ustj-Omtschug, where

she again eked out a primitve existence until her *Pensionierung* in 1956. Thoroughly Russified after more than twenty years in the USSR, and without relatives in Germany, she had planned to stay on in the Soviet Union, until she received a copy of *Sonntag*, which reawakened her interest in German culture. With the help of Anna Seghers, who secured permission for her to leave the USSR, Richter returned to the GDR in 1957, where she worked as *Dozentin* of Russian and Soviet literature at the Becher Institut in Leipzig.

In contrast to the books of Zinner and Brüning, Richter's memoirs are not contemporary, dating instead from the 1960s. The first part: "Vom großen und vom kleinen Werden," written in 1968, was published as *Die Plakette* in 1972. Seen chronologically, it covers her life from childhood to her arrest in 1936; the majority of the text deals with her "second" and "third" lives, that is, the beginning of her active career in the KPD and her work with the BPRS in the late 1920s and early 30s—she assumed her pseudonym at this time—and her antifascist and *Aufbau* activities in the Soviet Union in the two years before her arrest. Her bourgeois childhood and upbringing—her many facetted, superb education would be of great benefit to her during her imprisonment—are treated in the form of an extended flashback. Richter relates with such exactness and detail, that those interested in German society during the early part of the century, or in the BPRS, will read her text with interest.

The second part of *Totgesagt*, "Tod und Auferstehung," which begins with her imprisonment and ends with her return to Germany, was written in 1964, but never published. Brüning writes that Richter, not expecting her memoirs to be printed, had deposited them in the SED archive for safekeeping (Brüning, 11). Although *Totgesagt* did not appear until 1990, arrangements for its publication were made before Richter's death in early 1989, and a portion of the second part was printed in *Sinn und Form* in May/June 1988.

With her title "Tod und Auferstehung" Richter is alluding, on the one hand, to her arrest and conviction, her shock of suddenly and without cause having been branded an enemy of the country to which she was so committed—as she told a guard on the way to Vladivostok: "'Wissen Sie, was das Schlimmste auf der Welt ist? Wenn man Sie für einen Feind hält, und in Wirklichkeit sind Sie der allerbeste Freund.' Ich . . . würgte an dem bitteren Brocken, den ich nie verschlucken würde, das wußte ich" (297); and, on the other hand, her "arising" from the "dead" in the years thereafter, in the labor camps in Siberia and later in the GDR. For despite the enormous hardship of the years in Siberia—which Richter graphically describes—she found positive sides of her incarceration, valuing her experiences with the people and nature of Siberia as an enrichment of her life, her "Universitäten" (469). A highly spirited, energetic, and resolute woman, "vergüteter Stahl" (467), as an acquaintance once remarked, Richter not only survived, but managed to be intellectually productive and creative, even happy, also during the hardest of times.

And she maintained her strong belief in socialism. Toward the end of her stay in Ustj-Omtschug she converted her anti-Soviet Cossack housemate to socialism! As she told Elisabeth Schulz-Semrau, who couldn't accept "ihre allzu idealistische Sicht . . . nach allem, was passiert ist" (462): '. . . ich ordne das alles historisch ein . . . . Das Kind, wenn es klein ist, macht Fehler . . . (462). At the end of *Totgesagt*, Richter sums up her Soviet exile:

> Es waren schwere Jahre gewesen, die meine Kräfte bis aufs Äußerste beanspruchten, in jeder Beziehung. Doch ich hatte nie zu denen gehört, die sich den Aufbau des Sozialismus als Zuckerlecken vorstellten. Daher hatte ich stets neben dem Negativen auch das unaufhaltsam wachsende Neue wahrgenommen. Fest überzeugt, daß in einem klassenlosen Staate schließlich die Geister der Vergangenheit zum Untergang verurteilt sind (454).

Objectively seen, the three books reiterate information about Stalin's purges and prison camps long since known in the West. The important difference is that these German émigrés, in spite of the injustice done to them in the name of socialism, remained faithful to the socialist cause; their political commitment was neither destroyed—nor apparently even reduced—by their experiences in the Soviet Union. Their reconciliation of the seemingly unreconcilable was made possible by their voluntary subordination of self to the greater whole—their acquiescence in what they saw as historical necessity—and their belief that Stalin alone was to blame for the derailing of socialist humaneness—to paraphrase his own statement: the Stalins come and go, but socialism remains.

Even without concurring in their political conviction, one cannot help but be impressed by the enormous strength and resoluteness of these women—especially those in Brüning's and Richter's books—who emerged morally, if not physically, intact from their subhuman existence in Stalin's Soviet Union. One wonders how they are coping with the most recent blow to their world view. Zinner speaks of "Die große Ungeduld, vom langsamen, schweren Schritt der Geschichte mitleidlos in den Staub der Illusionen und Lebenslügen getreten . . ." (5). It reads like a sad summing up of the present situation.

Blunk, Harry, & Dirk Jungnickel. *Filmland DDR: Ein Reader zu Geschichte, Funktion und Wirkung der DEFA.* Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1990. Paper, 120 pp. ISBN 3-8046-8764-4

"Honecker's Hollywood" it was wryly called—the East German state-subsidized motion picture studio DEFA (Deutsche Filmaktiengesellschaft), one of the success stories of the GDR, despite many trials and tribulations during its 44-year history.

The hope of preserving DEFA in some form as a production facility with a staff of more than 2000 people persisted long after the united German Treuhand had begun dissolving what was left of East German industry. Now that this hope, too, has been dashed, it is an opportune moment to take a good look at what DEFA actually was and did.

Filmland DDR is a fine collection of eight pieces written between summer, 1989 and spring, 1990 which deal succinctly with a surprising variety of aspects of studio production practices and policies. Of the anthology's six authors, five lived and worked in the GDR, four of them at DEFA. They present a fascinating composite image of a strikingly competent group of artists and technicians forced to operate at various disadvantages—sometimes financial, usually bureaucratic, inevitably ideological. The SED, heeding Lenin's