

Damit erscheine der Text als ästhetische Wiedergabe der "fehlenden Dialektik zwischen literarischer Fiktion und ideologischer Determiniertheit," als Abbild einer gottverlassenen Epopöe (131). Der Mensch habe sich in eine ausweglose Situation gebracht. Mit dieser anspruchsvollen Interpretation zeigt Hammer, wie Hein in seinen Texten das Dilemma der DDR-Gesellschaft aufzeigt, doch gleichzeitig einen Ausweg offenläßt, der sich auch für die Zukunft als fruchtbar erweisen könnte.

Daß Hein seine eigenen Ratschläge beherzigt hat, zeigen die beiden Aufsätze von Reinhard Andress und Frauke Meyer-Gosau, die sich mit Heins öffentlichem (d.h. politischem) Arbeiten während der Krisenzeit 1989/90 befassen. Hein sah sein öffentliches Engagement als direkte Fortsetzung des dialogischen Arbeitens, ein deutliches Zeichen, daß Heins literarisches Arbeiten immer auf den öffentlichen Dialog angelegt ist. Klaus Hammer hat mit diesem Band ein wichtiges Werk zur Wirkungsgeschichte Christoph Heins vorgelegt, der sich ohne Zweifel zu einem der wesentlichsten Autoren in den nächsten Jahren entwickeln wird.

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Philipsen, Dirk. *We Were the People. Voices From East Germany's Revolutionary Autumn of 1989*. Durham/London: Duke University Press, 1993. 417 pp.

This is an impressive oral history of the East German revolution based on over a hundred interviews. Dr. Philipsen, Professor at Duke University, formerly a student in Berlin, returned in the Spring of 1990 to talk with these subjects including Hans Modrow, the last (but very atypical) prime minister, a wide spectrum of intellectuals and the leadership of various opposition groups, and some rank and file workers. Their responses are organized into three clusters, the multiple roots of protest in the 1980's, activism in the fall of 1989, and more briefly, perspectives on the future.

The first theme that emerges from the book is that the East German revolution was different. Poles, Hungarians, Bulgarians, and Czechs overthrew one-party rule, and regained their national identity. East Germans did so, and lost it. No one opposed to Communist rule had advocated or foreseen the victory of West German cultural values. Those who worked hardest at dissent, those who risked jail and Stasi retribution to combat Honecker, talked about their sense of loss soon after the Wall fell and unification began.

The opposition was not alone in that feeling. I recall a conversation on the train to Berlin that same Spring. A former high-ranking economic apparatchik told me, "You don't know how hard this is on us. We were Germans, and proud to be the only people who had made socialism work. We were successful, and could take vacations, in the Crimea, on Rumania's Black Sea coast, on the Adriatic. We alone of the socialist peoples had our own automobiles. Then the Wall came down and they laughed at us, felt sorry for us. Suddenly we were just Ossis, and all we owned were pitiful little polluting Trabbis." This national pride and sense of loss united party loyalist and opponent: "We were always better off than any of the other socialist countries," said Bärbel Bohley, "mother of the revolution."

The second lesson is that the televised events of the Autumn of 1989 were far from spontaneous. The number and variety of opposition groups, Green, religious, cultural, and political, was enormous. They had been building a movement for years, and had drawn many into dissent in one form or another. The Stasi was very busy indeed. However, for all the preparation and for all the numbers involved in dangerous opposition, the events of '89 were unique

in the overnight mobilization of a vast portion of the population previously uncommitted. One senior history professor and loyal party member talked about attending his first demonstrations in September and October and reported, "I was terribly troubled -- all the contradictions I had long carried around with me suddenly surfaced...I simply *had* to expose myself, because I had to stand up in front of my students and tell them what my own position was."

The final message is sadness. Both long-time oppositionists and countless little people who were mobilized in the heady days of Autumn six months later experienced a level of frustration equal to their cynicism under Communist rule. "The degree of powerlessness toward what is being done 'up there' is now very comparable to what it was before." The vote proved to be a poor substitute for activism: those who had overthrown the government had scant role in the political parties imported from the West to guide the new electorate. We were the people, but no longer.

Sensibly edited and introduced, these interviews help explain why Communism failed, why a free democratic East Germany did not replace the discredited old regime, and why the East became an economic colony of the West. It preserves the conflicting voices of the participants in a major historical event, and is likely to become a staple for college courses for years to come.

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Rosellini, Jay. *Wolf Biermann*. München: Beck, 1992. 169 pp.

No one was more captivated by the events in East Germany in 1989 and 1990 than Wolf Biermann. This *enfant terrible* of the German-speaking world saw the inequities of the East German political system come to an end. But Biermann also saw his world crumble. Because of Biermann's role in the world of pop culture, it is appropriate to re-investigate him now that Germany has united.

Jay Rosellini presents an in-depth re-examination of Biermann's life and works. Rosellini justifies his choice of Biermann by arguing that "*der Zeitraum 1960-1990 als ein geschlossenes Ganzes betrachtet werden kann*" (7). In his examination, Rosellini concentrates on Biermann's biography, choosing to examine his life in *stages*. After a brief introduction, Rosellini introduces some controversial facts about Biermann's life in the GDR. He mentions Biermann's connection to the *Stasi*, which began with his role as a *Stasi-Spitzel* shortly after the uprising in June 1953. Rosellini asserts that Biermann was even proud of this *Stasi* activity.

Rosellini describes the period from 1965-1976 as the years of isolation. During this time Biermann was very productive artistically. His works were, however, prohibited in the GDR and it was only through smuggling tactics that his songs could reach their intended audience. Despite Biermann's popularity with GDR citizens, Rosellini questions the extent of Biermann's influence. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the majority of GDR citizens rejected Biermann's type of democratic socialism in the free elections.

The facts surrounding Biermann's expatriation and the writers' petition have been well-documented. Rosellini does, however, choose to reassess the situation, noting that the decisions of the SED were never equitable. Their policies continued until 1989 and this undermined the solidarity among the writers.

Rosellini argues that, following his expatriation, Biermann found it difficult to fit in. His politics did not conform to Western thinking. In *Preußischer Ikarus*, Rosellini asserts, it becomes clear that Biermann can only find a political home in the GDR.

In his works from the 1980s Biermann turns his attention to artistic development. Rosellini notes this trend particularly in *Affenfels und Barrikade*. Here Biermann turned to the "classics," a trend that Rosellini interprets as a move from the "low" to the