

ZENTRUM DEUTSCHE DEMOKRATISCHE REPUBLIK
DES INTERNATIONALEN THEATERINSTITUTS

CENTRE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE INTERNATIONAL THEATRE INSTITUTE
CENTRE DE LA REPUBLIQUE DEMOCRATIQUE ALLEMANDE DE L'INSTITUTE DU THEATRE



INFORMATION

ITI - bulletin No. 1/2 1990

Theatre and revolution in the GDR - a short report

Editor: Dr. Andreas Bossmann, ITI GDR, collaborator

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Foreword

Although only a few months have passed since the peaceful revolution in October, many changes have occurred since then in society, in the economy and in culture. These changes have more and more taken on an impetus of their own, which can only be described as swift.

Many things, such as the old Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) leadership's claim to complete power, the security service's contemptuous practices or the uniformity of the press, the radio and the television are as part of the past as the upper echelons' fear of a critical reappraisal of the Stalinist past. The people who took to the streets of Leipzig, Berlin and other cities demanding their legitimate human rights identified themselves with the slogan "Wir sind das Volk" - we are the people. The weeks after the October revolution saw the collapse of the Berlin Wall, that monstrosity of the Cold War, which, had the old SED leadership had their own way, would have stood for all eternity. Today the wall is threatened with being completely torn down and can be passed through in all parts of the city in both directions. The irrevocable transition to a parliamentary democracy was made complete with the first secret and democratic elections in the GDR on the 18th March 1990. Does this make the people of the GDR the happiest in the world? In my opinion this is not the case.

The euphoria over the newly gained freedom in the autumn of last year has increasingly, over the past few weeks, turned into pensiveness. What will become of my job? Will I soon be unemployed? are questions which are often heard. The con-

sequences of the imminent market economy and the currency union with the Federal Republic can, by no means, be overlooked. The GDR citizens, who lived in relative social security for 40 years, see themselves being confronted by problems which they have never before had to face and this often results in existential dread and resignation. Many thousands of people still leave the country every week to seek their fortune in the West. The ferment of the past few months has also been noticeable in the theatre. The practice no longer exists of government bodies acting like dictators and interfering in the matters of the theatre to discredit or even forbid critical plays and productions. Plays and artists can now be selected freely everywhere.

However, there are urgent questions needing to be solved, whose dimensions at the moment seem difficult to comprehend. A major problem is what are the functions, after the social ones, of the theatre, now that the social conditions have changed so radically. In the days of the Stalinist cultural policy the theatre often took on the extra function of mass media, the official media all published reports praising the achievements of the GDR. Socially critical plays always drew large crowds, because they dealt with the contradictions in society. This extra function, which the theatre in those days accomplished, is nowadays achieved by the mass media more quickly and informatively, and, as a result, the theatre audiences stay away. What will happen to the theatre? Will it become drastically commercialised and have to pander exclusively to shallow needs of entertainment or will it become characterized as an irreplaceable institution of cultural communication? But

there are still other questions: What structural changes are necessary? How are the theatres going to be financed in the future?

How can the theatre be improved most quickly concerning material and technical aspects?

What will become of the new generation of theatre performers?

How will fees, salaries and wages be secured?

The contradictions and problems which have to be solved are of an increasingly complex nature.

This International Theatrical Institute Bulletin No. 1/2 1990 will attempt to air some of these issues. We feel we owe our international readers a true picture of the situation and the dialogue in our opinion, would be of use to everybody in all countries. This bulletin is meant to be a small contribution to this theme.

Dr. Andreas Bosenmann

- academic member of staff -

"We have the right....."

We are stepping out of our roles.

The situation in our country has forced us to do so.

A country which cannot keep a hold of its youth endangers its future.

A leadership which does not speak to its people is untrustworthy.

A party leadership which no longer looks at the usefulness of its principles is doomed to fail

A people who have been forced to keep silent is now beginning to become outraged.

The truth must come out into the open.

Our work is part of this country. We will not let this country go to ruin.

We are using our platform to demand:

- 1) We have the right to obtain information.
 - 2) We have the right to dialogue.
 - 3) We have the right to think and be creative independently.
 - 4) We have the right to pluralistic thought.
 - 5) We have the right to contradict.
 - 6) We have the right to travel freely.
 - 7) We have the right to keep a watchful eye on our Leadership.
 - 8) We have the right to have new thoughts.
 - 9) We have the right to become involved.
- We are using our platform to announce our duties:
- 1) We have the duty to demand that lies and embellishment should disappear from the media.
 - 2) We have the duty to compel the people and the government and party leadership to conduct a dialogue with each other.

3) We have the duty to demand that both our government bodies and ourselves conduct the dialogue without any violence.

4) We have the duty to define the word socialism in such a way that it can once again be accepted by our people as an ideal to be strived for.

5) We have the duty to demand from the government and party leadership that they should start trusting the population again.

Staatschauspiel Dresden

(Protest resolution by the Dresden actors in September 1989)

"This is how it was. How will it be?"

The situation of the theatre in the GDR

The shelves of the GDR playwrights are empty. The radical political changes in the GDR have taken both theatre and authors by surprise. At the moment there is so much uncertainty and anxiety that the problems people are faced with every day are more pressing, more conflicting and more interesting than the issues dealt with in the theatre. It is, however, necessary to go back to the past to get a picture of the whole state of affairs.

For many years the theatre in the GDR acted as a kind of vent. Much of what occupied the people, but which they did not say in public (out of fear, opportunism, for tactical reasons or because it was forbidden) found roundabout ways in literature and, in particular, in drama. It was frequently not permitted to reflect on present day problems in a direct way (every play had to go through a so-called licensing procedure, a kind of

stamp giving permission or refusal); authors such as Heiner Müller, Volker Braun, Ulrich Plenzdorf, to name but a few, were not in favour. And so the classical writers, the critical realists and the authors of the 1920's were used to convey indirectly what could not be mentioned elsewhere (but which was received by the audience extremely intently). Many highly talented GDR artists, for example Adolf Dresen, Manfred Karge, Matthias Langhoff and also Alexander Lang who did not want to serve this "slave's language", as Brecht had called it, left the country. However about two years ago there was a sudden change: Heiner Müller's plays could, almost without abridgement, be shown on our stages; Volker Braun's long forbidden texts experienced their GDR premieres; Ulrich Plenzdorf succeeded in having his adaptations of Aistatov staged; new generations of authors became encouraged - their plays were printed and staged. This "astonishing opening" worried many critical people in the GDR. These "concessions" exposed a new strategical thought and skill on the part of a political leadership whose understanding of society and the economy was, at that same time, characterised by Stalinist power structures, reprisals and uncritical and dogmatic ideology.

Whereas the theatre people up to this time had had to be more delicate, more elegant, more subtle in their criticism of contemporary issues, their messages became more frank from this point onwards. Heiner Müller's "Lohndrücker" production portrays an explosive and intelligent account of the Stalinist structures in the politics and economy of the GDR. Volker Braun in his "Übergangsgesellschaft" outlined the necessity for largescale political changes and designs. Christoph Hein wrote "Die Rit-

ter der Tafelrunde", a comedy, which, in describing the decay of the Arthurian Kingdom and the futile attempts to find the Holy Grail, can also be understood as a parallel to the aged politburo of the GDR and their desperate attempts at attaining the communist ideal. This play in particular did the rounds on the stages of our country during the October of 1989.

In the summer months the wave of GDR citizens leaving the country - they used third countries to emigrate to the Federal Republic of Germany - had increased tremendously. The feeling in the country was more than tense. The contradictions were becoming more and more apparent, but were at first articulated neither at work nor on the street. The church, to some extent, offered dissidents a refuge and to a some extent the theatre allowed a certain amount of solidarity which enabled the audience to experience a feeling of togetherness, for a time at least.

This development reached a climax in September and at the beginning of October. The theatre had become politicised to such an unimaginable extent that the slightest allusion in a still very harmless play was met with applause, laughter, cheers or malicious remarks, there were regular commotions in the auditoria and even in the opera provocations drew loud applause. A production of "William Tell" from Schwerin had the effect of a time bomb; tickets for the "Lohndrücker", "Die Übergangsgesellschaft", Plenzdorf's "Zeit der Wölfe" and many others were snapped up.

The Fortieth Anniversary of the GDR gave direct impetus to the political movement in the theatre: actors read out resolutions

Immediately after the performances; the day's events were discussed after the production; audiences signed petitions supporting artists demands for, among other things, political responsibility for the people, freedom of the press, freedom to travel and human rights. Many people who still did not dare speak forth at their usual places of work, made their opinions known at the fora and gatherings in the theatres. In a somewhat unexpected way artists, and many actors in particular, became the hope for the democratic demands and ideas, which were coming into being. This movement finally peaked on the 4th November 1989 at the demonstration, which has since gone down in history, at which 500 000 demonstrators, mainly artists and journalists, moving through the centre of Berlin, demanded that articles 27 and 28 of the GDR's constitution concerning freedom of the press, of speech and to assemble be enforced. They showed, using witty and humorous banners, improvised plays, drawings and posters, chants and speeches, just what could be achieved by a "peaceful revolution".

Following this day, which today is looked back on with nostalgia, what Stefan Heym had called the "depressive euphoria of an Ash Wednesday" soon set in. The newspapers, which for the first time in our country dealt with the truth, became (and have remained) more exciting than any play. The population was moved and alarmed much more by scandals concerning corruption and abuse of power by a certain political leadership, by the "complete observation" of the citizens of the GDR by the state security service, by the feared economic collapse of our country and by the shouts from right wing powers demanding reunification, than by the theatre, literature or the fine arts.

Already the voices demanding actors to "get down to some productive work" are on the increase. The admiration for the critical and the daring artists, who may not be directly involved in production has, in the mean time, turned into hatred. And so only a few performances are attended by interested people, whereby the stages in Berlin are at a great advantage: since the opening of the border and the abolition of the need to obtain a visa for Westberliners an interested audience from the Western part of the city has been streaming over into the theatres and the opera houses. However, in the provinces, as far as audiences are concerned, it all looks very dismal. The public is interested at the most by the so-called "Texts about the situation": the victims of Stalinism (e.g. the former managing director of the Aufbau-Verlag publishing house, Walter Janka, or Stefan Heym) present their memoirs and works which have until now not been published in the GDR. However the general interest in and public favour towards the theatre and its producers has declined. Actors and the theatre have, for the majority of the audience, lost their original function as harbingers of a critical reality. The function as a vent has become superfluous. At present nobody knows how the theatre is going to adapt to the new conditions. But one hope still remains: the theatre has often enough been declared dead. But it is still alive and has been for over 2000 years.

Ingeborg Pietzsch

NEW PLAYS FROM THE GDR

Historical developments have always had an influence on literature. But there are also pivotal points: historical events acting like a watershed, after which literature is no longer the same. Previously popular works are forgotten and works, which for a long time had been forgotten, again become popular. Most importantly, however, completely new works come into being. The Revolution in the GDR in 1989 was just such a pivotal point. Right at the beginning the public became aware of plays, which for many years had not been allowed to be published or staged. For example Volker Braun's play I, which was written in the seventies but was de facto forbidden until 1989, describes a situation in the Soviet Union which forms part of the strategical changes in the development of Soviet-European socialism. It deals with the conflict between Stalin and the "new Trotskyite opposition" in 1926/27, that is about the Communist Party's opinion as to its function. Volker Braun describes this Soviet form of party as a contradiction in terms because the concept only means something when there are at least two parties. Braun, however, also lays open the historical forces and contradictions which made the victory of the Stalinist model of society possible. The young author Jörg-Michael Koerbl deals with a similar problem in his DIE KOMMUNISTEN. The play takes place at the end of the War in May 1945; the Red Army is at the gates of Berlin. A German communist who has come to Berlin with them finds out that his former fiancée has, on orders from the Communist Party, been living with a fascist functionary for many years.

The play ends in tragedy. In addition to the excitingly told story Jörg-Michael Koerbl also describes the Stalinist rituals which came hand in hand with the adoption of the Soviet model of society in eastern Germany and which greatly hindered democratic reform in the society. Ulrich Plenzdorf, Georg Seidel and Sewan Latchinian deal with the present-day GDR in their plays.

In his KEIN RUNTER KEIN FERN Ulrich Plenzdorf tells the story of one brother killing another. One of the brothers is a policeman and is standing at the Wall in Berlin. He is supposed to help prevent an event which has been announced as "illegal" from taking place. As he is standing, facing his brother who is intending to take part in the event, he kills him. A hard hitting play which describes the reasons why people have become deformed because Stalinist thought which creates enemies has deformed society.

Georg Seidel's play CARMEN KITTEL also deals with a murder. A young woman who has grown up in homes pretends to be pregnant so that she does not have to go to work. Nine months later she steals a baby to show it off as her own to her colleagues. However, the baby dies. In highlighted scenes and using dialogues, which are as short as they are to the point, the play does not simply tell the story of a criminal outsider, but also analyses the social circumstances uncompromisingly.

Sewan Latchinian, one of the youngest authors in present-day GDR drama, tells, in his BERLIN, a Romeo and Juliet story between the East and the West. Two lovers cannot come together. But their child personifies the hope that the conditions in

this divided country and in this divided city may change. Latchanian's play is full of disturbing experiences characteristic of the GDR: lack of freedom, the lack of individual choice, the clinging to an ideology instead of accepting reality, extremely aggravated relations between the conforming older generation and the critical youth. No single play in the history of GDR drama has shown such a panorama of the most varied GDR problems and offences.

Other authors have treated and continue to treat social problems much more indirectly. They use mythical material or go back in history and find models in the past who have something to say about the problems of our present. Three examples of this are:

Peter Brasch in his SANTERRE tells the story of a member of the lower middle class who is dragged into the French Revolution, fights for the Revolution with great fervour only to return at the end disillusioned and disappointed to his pub to serve beer. From a theatrical point of view SANTERRE is certainly a particularly interesting play because it endeavours to make full use of the technical possibilities of the theatre in its structure.

Christoph Hein, one of the most successful GDR dramatists in recent years, uses motives and characters from the legend of King Arthur for his play DIE RITTER DER TAFELRUNDE. However in his play King Arthur and his knights are already old and have fallen out with each other. The Holy Grail has still not been found and the kingdom is in decline. Nobody has found a solution. Christoph Hein tells his play as a comedy in three acts and it is clear that he is attacking the political state

of affairs and the end of Stalinist socialism in Europe in particular. He also tries, however, to do the "old heroes" justice. DIE RITTER DER TAFELRUNDE was one of the plays which was up-front during the revolutionary changes in the GDR in 1989 and has since become a play of international renown. One of the most internationally famous GDR authors, Peter Hacks, writes his most recent play JONA from what appears to be a position, extremely distanced from the present day (in reality, however, it is very close). The material comes from the Bible (Voltaire had already adapted it to the stage). The theme is that of a little state and colony of a massive neighbouring country which wants to engage in international politics. This has no chance of going well and does, in fact, not go well at all. Five acts, blank verse, cutting irony, richness of action with a historical background, strong characters from the intelligent to the power crazed to the blasphemous - this is surely one of Peter Hacks' most important plays.

Gregor Edelmann

"The off theatre scene before and after the changes"

What effects has the so-called "turning point", which has after all altered the conditions of production and reception of theatrical art radically, had on the theatre in general, but in particular on the off scene?

To pass judgement on this it would be best left to those coming after us to analyse the situation with the necessary hindsight: we are still so much in the midst of things that it is very difficult to pass judgement on or to evaluate the situation. At the moment one can only describe individual symptoms, but nothing more.

What happened was that we were freed of an iron bondage, but it has since been shown that we had grown so much used to this bondage that we were also supported by it. We no longer have the clear-cut adversary in the off scene. That is to say, we were all (more or less) turned into semi-criminals in the last few years or treated as an exotic flower and only given peripheral treatment. But most importantly we were refused any form of organizational and material means, that is we did not, and we still do not have agents, which means that the whole system of placing and organisation does not work. The experience we have since gained in this field has more to do with the way things were, but can also partly be used under the new situation. On the one hand there is in the GDR no actual off theatre, that is to say there are no actual theatre buildings where off theatre can be played. There are the official theatres with their more or less official companies and there are the youth

club and culture scenes, where we admittedly did perform from time to time, but where theatre, in the broadest sense of the word, could not develop as an alternative to the official theatre. And from this situation - we were standing so to speak on a sheet of very thin ice - we are now going to be flung onto the open market, directly and without any softening transitional phase, which we could not have prepared ourselves anyway.

According to the cultural policy of the still very recent past, free groups were not permitted in our country. What is the trend today? Are free groups springing up like mushrooms?

Surprisingly enough they are not. I thought they would come in to being all over the place. The increase is small, on the whole it is really only the familiar scene. The big run which I had expected and feared did not happen, understandably.

In what way "understandably"?

Because the people in question both from the professional as well as from the semi-professional or amateur scenes have been filled with a feeling of total uncertainty. Freedom comes in the concrete form of risks, uncertainties, problems and fears. And we, accustomed to a system of social security as we are (which we were actually not aware of a year ago), must first of all come to terms with this completely new situation.

So that means scepticism and a wait-and-see attitude prevail at the moment?

I can only talk for those groups I have come into contact with through the Büro Freie Gruppen (Free Group Office) in the

theatrical association. Two different trends can be observed: some see their salvation in a certain amalgamation, in working together, in a getting to grips with such problems as rooms and money. This togetherness requires, amongst other things, a clearing up process, during which the external conditions for it will change continually....

What about the external conditions?

You cannot actually speak of any external conditions. There are neither clear statutes, nor space in which to work. We do not know where the money - if any at all - is going to come from and above all how much of it and so on... We can only bank on eventualities and we are doing this with all our might. We are working hard and spending a lot of time preparing for that moment when new governmental structures have established themselves here.

The other trend mentioned above relies on the principle of "self sufficiency". That is those people, who come on well independently, regardless if they are from well established groups, if they have already established a name for themselves, or have just started out. What is surprising is that those just starting out, who approach all these problems with a certain naivety, sometimes achieve much more than those of us who have for a long time weighed out the possibilities and considered how we could get on most fairly.

Our conversation so far has been dealing more with the structural problems of the free scene. What determines the artistic and the aesthetic level of the off theatre in our country?

One cannot yet say a lot about the artistic or rather the content after the changes: very few productions have come about since.

What I want, perhaps it is a little exaggerated, from the off theatre scene is stimulus and provocation which I only partly get from professional theatre. What I mean is something which can be attached to the ideas of authenticity or identity.

One must take into account that the alternative scene here, as anywhere, can be compared with an alternative educational channel, that is, if you are not accepted at one place then you try to achieve what you want by going round the institutions.

What makes the free groups' performances in the GDR so special is that they touched on themes which were or are taboo. These were courageous and difficult undertakings because as the alternatives, were more vulnerable, they were more susceptible to having things prohibited. On the other hand, however, many young people came together in the free scene who wanted to stretch themselves, to do things they could never have carried through (for a number of reasons) in the state theatre. There, one comes up against many illusions and incorrect demands. On the whole, however, bearing the social security already described in mind, only a few societies, which had to form to survive due to repression (in the broadest sense of the word), came into being.

The basis for the off theatre scene was a fairly professional one, most of the actors have been trained as such and then left the state theatres fully conscious of their decision. They stepped into the uncertainty of the free groups or projects, usually with a strong awareness of what they had to do, and with great expressive power. This was made clear for example by the fact that it was relatively rare for a trend to survive several productions, however, most of these productions seemed more like the voice of a new generation of artists, which again and again had repercussions on the official theatre.

Was it perhaps the themes, the off-theatre's power of content which I found interesting...

No, it was not just those alone, I must contradict that. What was fascinating, unusual was the form which conveyed the content (or did not, as the case may be) and which could not have been done in the same way in a state theatre.

The play "Le bal", which is known here as a film, was originally, at the beginning of the eighties, an extremely successful production in Paris, would not have had a chance of being staged in the GDR.. The fact that the directors and artists use certain source material to create their own works, becoming thereby the actual authors of the production, was not recognized as being artistically great, or it was, but in a perverted form. Admittedly you could do what you wanted, but you had to produce a play. You could, for example, create your own, your present-day theme using "Don Carlos".

You could express what you wanted using the legitimate classics just as well in the theatre as in the off scene, but what could only really be accomplished in the off scene was this being able to start off with just a hint of something, just a vague idea and not knowing exactly what would come out at the end. Although only a few such projects actually did so: the Zimnover group, in the form of its successor the PATIE theatre.

Where do you see the future of the off theatre scene in the GDR?

I feel that there must be a considerable break in the development, that commercial pressure will start playing a very important role, that a development in two directions will be unleashed: in a marketable that is in a direction which commercially is meant more to be entertaining at a more superficial level; and in one directed more at the aesthetic and the intellectual, which will, however, only be able to survive in the large cultural centres. It is not important whether this more or less elitist theatre will find a broader public; it will survive on its patrons.

Both directions are open to negative and positive impulses. Even the more intellectual of the two is in danger of trivialisation. When the avant-garde begins to get established it very quickly slips into repeating the old forms of expression of the traditional avant-garde. And then it happens that the new and developing avant-garde is overlooked because of the established avant-garde. And I feel that the relationship between the off theatre and the official theatre must more or less come together, because the institutionalised theatre has now got to fight for

its continued existence, whereas we, who until now had no existential basis at all, have now got to fight to obtain one. So if we have proclaimed the fight for equal opportunities to be the motto for the off theatre scene in the GDR we actually mean that the state theatre should give us a piece of their pie. (Silvia Brendenal interviewed the puppeteer, director, producer and entertainer Peter Waschinsky)

Joint declaration of the Secretariat of the Trade Union for the arts, the media and culture and the committee of the Society of Theatre Creators

I. Our theatre is an important part of the culture of the German nation. Many theatre producers, using their artistry, have created cultural treasures, relevant throughout Europe. For a long time they have signalled undesirable trends in society with their personal involvement and they have paved the way for and shaped the process of democratisation and renewal in our country. This reinforces our present claim to formulate and to emphatically state our position on the further development of the theatre because basic decisions concerning the fate of our country are being pronounced and the way to German unity is being mapped out.

II. The theatre scene in the GDR is part of a cultural tradition which has developed from a conflict for a democratic culture which has existed for over two hundred years. It is the duty of every government and of all powers having an effect on the future cultural policy to maintain this tradition and, at the same time, to shape the new requirements accordingly.

The closing of just one theatre does damage to this tradition and with it a part of German culture. We are fully aware that many and, in particular, small theatres are surviving on the limits of their material and artistic existence. Wiping them out would mean not only inflicting unfair social hardship on colleagues who had worked well under extremely difficult circumstances, but most importantly the preclusion of the possibility of replacing theatre work, which has become unproductive with new democratic forms of theatrical communication

in exactly that place where, according to experience, the least developed cultural infrastructure exists.

It is the duty of the country as a whole, the States and local authorities to maintain and to promote a genre which actively affects the community like no other and contributes to the shaping of democratic activities by critically analysing what already exists.

III. A society in which people differ from each other economically, politically and spiritually, requires a pluralistic theatre in which the most varied organizational forms of the theatre can develop freely and which offers enough room for all talents to unfold.

Every artist who wants to investigate new artistic possibilities by experimenting and in so doing breaks into social areas which were either not or insufficiently touched on by the theatre until now, requires special support from the community, the State and the local authorities. In our opinion, in particular, theatre for children and young people, theatrical activities as part of the community culture, theatre for ethnic minorities, for foreigners and social fringe groups and theatrical attempts which have an effect on the whole development of art by going further than the limits of the genre and are linked to other arts fall into this category.

IV. One of the most important bases determining the quality of the theatre in the GDR is the high standard of training. The responsibility of the state for future generations of artists is not an invention of socialism but a very old demand coming from theatrical artists themselves. Only in this way can it

be guaranteed that all talents have the opportunity to form and quality becomes the determining criteria when society is responsible for training them and helps to prevent them from becoming commercialised. Both the trade union and the society declare their willingness to help and advise the state in all matters of training new generations of artists for the theatre and also to bear some of the responsibility for safeguarding the artistic quality. This, however requires settlements making it possible for theatre creators to have a direct influence on the aims and the methods of training.

V. Today's theatre, as with all other forms of art, can only develop through continuous exchange with other cultures. Considerable impulses from the international theatre scene have influenced our theatre just as the theatre in the GDR has had a strong, and at times virtually determining influence on the international theatre. This has means that the theatre in the GDR is obliged to maintain this mutual influence, in particular, to the theatre in the Third World, even when the theatre of the GDR will be part of unified German culture.

This quality of exchange in theatre with other countries must become a fundamental part of the foreign cultural policy of the GDR and, in the future, of a unified Germany, because it cannot or only insufficiently be realized within the context of commercial, international relations or of those resting on private initiatives. The government is obliged to promote the exchange of cultures and can be well advised to use all its many powers resulting from the trade union's and society's connections with foreign partners when doing so.

V. The trade union for the arts, the media and culture and the Society of theatre creators will represent the interests of the theatre and those of the theatre creators in the GDR in accordance with these principles and requirements with their specific possibilities and powers and will work with them closely and will stand up for the protection of the quality of the theatre in the GDR and of the artistic and basic social rights of the theatre creators in the transition period towards a united German state. In so doing we can also rely on the interest and the solidarity of our colleagues in the Federal Republic and in Westberlin.

VI. The trade union for the arts, the media and culture will effect these demands by consistently fighting for the maintenance of our theatre and for the securing of the basic social rights of the theatre creators. It will represent its members in negotiations concerning pay and will enable them to become aware of their artistic and social interests towards the theatre management. It will fight for the legally established right of the members of a company to co-determination in all decisions in the theatres concerning economy, structure and industrial law. It will be engaged in securing the basic social rights of freelance artists and assuring that fees are negotiated fairly and will protect its members' artistic work from uncontrolled commercialisation or exploitation.

The trade union representatives in the theatres will also look after the artistic interests of the colleagues. With a theatre concept drawn up between the management and the company, as a basis they will have the right of co-determination in decisions

concerning programmes, in engaging and casting when creating an effective production at a high artistic level and will assure that the members of the ensemble can develop all their artistic potential and use it to the full.

VII. The society of theatre creators represents, above all, the interests of theatrical art towards society and its legislative and executive bodies. Both by itself and in cooperation with other artists' societies it will influence the future cultural policy at the federal, state and local levels through legislative initiatives, public events and declarations and by offering of strategic ideas. It will also contribute to improving the qualifications of theatrical art and artists with numerous further training schemes, workshop events, practical and theoretical seminars and experiments, by documenting and informing and by exchanging ideas on an international level. The society sees itself as a forum in which colleagues from state and non-state theatres, freelance artists and members of free groups, academics and journalists, cultural politicians and interested people from other areas of the public, regardless of their membership of a trade union or institution can work together in order to achieve a theatrical art of high spiritual and artistic standard.

VIII. Both the trade union and the society are, at present, undergoing transformations. They are reassessing their tasks, the organizational and working structures on the basis of the requirements, the interests and the demands of the political and economic development of the country as far as theatre work is concerned. At the same time, however, they have begun

to confront the challenges arising from a rapid social development and have begun to influence them actively. Although at present, nobody can say what form trade union representation and the society of artists' interests will settle upon in the future, both groups feel obliged to do everything in their power to maintain and develop the theatre of this country and to introduce it into a German and European theatre culture as a true enrichment.

Berlin, 4th March 1990