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**A Workshop of Independent Social Criticism
On the fifth international InkriT-conference**

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Remarkable international and interdisciplinary workshops in marxist-oriented socio-critical scholarly work have been realized in recent years by the Berlin Institute of Critical Theory (INKRIT). This impression was confirmed by the INKRIT conference 2000, the fifth since the institution's foundation in 1996. It was held last weekend (June 1-4) in conjunction with the Institute of Philosophy of the Freie Universität Berlin and the US-American journal *Boundary 2*. These conferences are linked to the Historico-Critical Dictionary of Marxism (HKWM), edited by the InkriT-chairman Wolfgang Fritz Haug. The Dictionary, a venture designed to comprise a total of 15 volumes, has advanced to four volumes so far published.

This year's conference attracted more than one hundred participants from all parts of Germany, from fourteen European countries, from Australia, Canada, the USA, Mexico and India. They represented experts of many disciplines, among them philosophers, computer scientists, sociologists, theologians. A gratifying proportion of those attending the conference and making contributions were of the younger generation on whose commitment the future of the venture depends.

General subject of the conference 2000 was "Justice/Violence/Hegemony: Putting Marxist Concepts to the Test". In four plenary sessions and nearly 30 workshops selected entries appertaining to volume 5 of the Marxism-Dictionary ("Counterpublic" to "Hegemony") were submitted for discussion. Problems of violence were viewed against the background of neoliberally oriented global capitalism and its barbarian effects. The debate on justice and hegemony drew attention to the predicament of the left in respect of the meaning of hegemony and how to achieve it under "postmodern" conditions.

Basic issues of historical interdependence and individual agency were raised in connection with the intermarxist controversy on determinism and overdetermination. They were also focused on in the discussion of the articles on laws of history, philosophy of history, society, and gender relations. The unbiased approach to general practical and philosophical discourses on issues outside the general orbit of Marxism but connected with it in the past and present deserves a special mention: Entries in the dictionary discussed comprised spirit (Geist), parish/community (Gemeinde/Gemeinschaft), common sense, various matters





relating to the so-called computerised world, e.g. the entry on hacker (here the debate focused on germinal elements of an alternative mode of production, fostered by computer + internet, and tendentially transcending capitalism).

As for the practical relevance of the discussions, it was felt that much is achieved, if --to take up a remark by Haug-- amidst the debris of lost certainties elements of knowledge are recovered and re-thought under the new conditions, and if background analyses can be developed for the actual political struggles. To make such scholarly works available was considered an invaluable contribution by Dr. Evelyn Wittich, head of the Rosa-Luxemburg-Foundation.

A great deal still needs to be done to acknowledge and critically evaluate philosophy and social sciences in the socialist countries prior to 1989, often too globally and derogatorily subsumed under Marxism-Leninism. On the other hand, their still active representatives should show more readiness to cooperate. Another urgent task of the editorial committee of the Dictionary is to expand cooperation between scholars from the North and the South. Even in its problems, however, the Historico-Critical Dictionary of Marxism reveals the enormous usefulness of its successfully practiced unity of publishing, networking, and organising international conferences.

A most enjoyable evening entertainment was provided to the InkriT-fellows by Günther Mayer and a number of young contributors to the Hanns-Eisler-Edition who presented a musical and poetic collage on Eisler, Brecht and the 17th June 1953.

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