

CALL FOR PAPERS

Protest!

Reaction and Reform, Tradition and Modernity in German Culture and Society 1871-1918

Thursday 20 September 2012 – Friday 21 September 2012

Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies, London

In Wilhelmine Germany progressive responses to the bourgeois conservatism of the nineteenth century coexist with anti-modern reaction against the symptoms of modern capitalism and industrialization. Both responses give rise to protests against the status quo which can be described as modernist in the sense that they championed competing concepts of modernity. They generated a plethora of demands for cultural and social reform in which elements of 'radicalism' and 'traditionalism' are often hard to separate. Political developments such as the eugenics movement or the *Heimatbewegung* were informed by a reforming zeal to revitalize the nation. Theosophy, as developed by Rudolf Steiner in particular, played an important role in the founding of new schools. Socialism, feminist organizations, religious revival movements such as the Salvation Army, and *Lebensreform* enthusiasts of all kinds, among many others, all engaged with the social realities of the modern city.

This interdisciplinary conference will explore the various discourses of protest, reform and experimentation conducted in the socio-political field. It will also ask how these discourses are taken up and transformed by art and culture. Further objectives are to investigate the literary and artistic strategies employed to engage with socio-political concerns, to examine the relationship between factual and fictional discourses, and to determine the impact made by artistic production on the socio-political debates of the time.

We invite papers of 25 minutes length on all topics connected with modernisms, reaction, or protest in German society, literature, and culture from the late nineteenth century to the First World War. Topics might include modernist art and architecture, *Lebensreform*, educational reform, feminism (and anti-feminism) and women's writing, the city, eugenics, theosophy and ethics, the reception of socialism, perspectives on capitalism, ideas of national revival, and campaigns for the preservation, promotion or development of German language, culture or religion.

A postgraduate discussion workshop will take place on the afternoon of Thursday 20 September. British Academy funding will be available to help with expenses incurred by postgraduate contributors to the conference.

Please send an abstract of 250-300 words to Godela Weiss-Sussex (godela.weiss-sussex@sas.ac.uk), and Charlotte Woodford (cw268@cam.ac.uk), by 31 January 2012.

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