

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SLAVIC STUDIES:
1979 CONVENTION

(New Haven, Connecticut 10-13, 1979)

The American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, which has its headquarters in the State University of Columbus, Ohio, has completed some fifteen years of fruitful activity in the field of research into the history and present situation of the whole contemporary Slavic world, both in itself and in relation to the West and its culture. In the United States of America in particular there live a considerable number of emigrants from all the Slavic countries, who have distinguished themselves in various sectors of American life.

The main achievement of the Slavo-American intellectuals has been the founding of this Association, which today numbers 2.600 regular members from all over the world, though chiefly from the USA and Canada. Its permanent aim is the advancement of Slavic Studies in America and all over the world through collaboration with universities, institutes and specialist scholars. The Association's regular members are scholars of specialised subjects closely connected with its aims, scholars who give their services in 653 colleges, universities and research institutes, of which 552 are in the USA, 33 in Canada and the remaining 65 in Europe and elsewhere.

In a summary of the Association's achievements until now, the following ventures have been particularly successful: first, the holding of eleven first-rate conventions since its foundation, in which a great number of scholars have taken part from all over the world, though chiefly from the USA, Canada and Western Europe; secondly, the publication of a special scholarly periodical entitled "Slavic Review" (of which 38 editions have so far been produced), an Information Bulletin which keeps the Association's members continually up to date on topics and events concerning their special subjects; and the Association's progress is reported in a section entitled "AAASS Newsletters", which appears four times a year; there is also an annual Slavic bibliography entitled "Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies"; thirdly, the support of special research programmes conducted by its own members or by members of other affiliated or local branches of the Association, which total eighteen in the USA and Canada alone.

But over and above all this, the Association's established specialised authority must be stressed here; it has developed into one of the most representative centres of scholarship and has attracted a remarkable number of scholars from all over the world.

During the four-day convention, 130 meetings took place on a corresponding number of topics, on which the opinions of the 800 or so speakers, discussants and observers were given. Of these meetings, 50 were devoted exclusively to the Soviet Union, both past and present. The subjects under discussion were history, historiography, economics, art, philosophy, religion, literature, the press, nationality, sociology, individuals (Marx, Lenin, Stalin), penal justice, inflation, architecture, colonialism and, above all, the human rights of the Soviet intellectuals today.

Another 52 meetings were devoted to subjects concerning Eastern European countries and their relations with the Soviet Union and other international organisations; under discussion were such topics as agrarian communities, the political situation, socialism, foreign policy, nationalist movements in the countries of South-East Europe, political lines common

to the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries in the United Nations, literature and writing.

Another group of subjects, which occupied five further meetings, concerned the relations between the USA, West Germany and the Soviet Union, and also the Soviet Union's relations with the developed countries and those of the Third World. Yet another interesting group concerned the Balkan Peninsula; topical issues were discussed, such as economics, politics, demography, ethnography, religion, literature and the Balkan countries' relations with each other and with the West, in particular the USA.

The above subjects clearly demonstrate the central themes of the eleventh Slavic Studies Convention in New Haven. The Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the Balkans, both individually and as regards their relations with each other, with the Western World and with the USA in particular, were the chief subjects of study, research and discussion during the four days of proceedings in New Haven. Most of the subjects under discussion were burning topical issues with particular emphasis on Mankind and human rights. Much more specialised subjects also arose, of course, such as history, literature etc.; these are of great interest in that they reveal the historical background to contemporary topical issues which concern the Slavic World in general, but also these issues are of interest to the Western World since many scholars are engaged in such studies.

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