

# THE CHRONICLE

of Higher Education.

September 7, 1988 • \$2  
Volume XXXV, Number 2

CLA 8809-7842

Gazette	A37
Government & Politics	A17-24
Grants	A28
International	A33-35
Personal & Professional	A12-16
Scholarship	A4-11
Students	A29
<b>SECTION 2</b>	<b>Pages B1-52</b>
Architecture	B3-5
Bulletin Board	B6-51
End Paper	B52
Opinion & Letters	B1-2

## East Germany Is Allowing Its Scholars to Travel More Freely to West Germany

By CLARK MILLER

GÖTTINGEN, WEST GERMANY

At the University of Göttingen here, just 20 miles from the heavily patrolled border with East Germany, a well-known history professor gave a lecture a few months ago that may come to symbolize a turning point in academic relations between the two countries.

The professor was Dieter Fricke of Friedrich-Schiller University in Jena, East Germany, and his appearance was part of a new development in German-German relations.

Spurred by a 1986 cultural agreement,

East Germany has begun to let its scholars travel more freely to West Germany and, perhaps more significantly, to permit people like Mr. Fricke to make open proposals for the creation of formal academic ties.

After more than 40 years of an academic "cold war" between East and West Germany, the historian said here recently, it is time for their scholars to start working together and try to make some sense out of their common past.

"We need intellectual exchange and stimulation," he said. "Whether it comes from Marxists or not isn't important."

Two years ago, an East German aca-

ademic probably would not have made such remarks in West Germany—if, indeed, he had been allowed to go there at all, says Manfred Ackermann, a spokesman for West Germany's Federal Ministry for Inner-German Relations in Bonn.

"It's a sign of positive, overall developments that Fricke can come right out and say clearly that he wants contact with the West, and that it doesn't matter if it's with non-Marxists," Mr. Ackermann adds.

Because of Mr. Fricke's academic standing—he is a former editor of the East German history journal *Zeitschrift für*

*Continued on Page A34*

## East Germany Has Begun Allowing Its Scholars to Travel More Freely Across West German Border

*Continued from Page A1*

*Geschichtswissenschaft*—his advocacy of formal exchanges is believed to carry special weight.

Although solid working connections do not yet exist between East and West German universities, an improving political atmosphere suggests that such contacts may not be far off. Already a student-exchange program has been agreed to for this year, with as many as 200 people from each country expected to visit universities in the other country for stays ranging from a day to a month.

Last year, according to Mr. Ackermann, East German scholars made about 1,000 brief visits to West Germany, and about twice as many West Germans went to the East.

This fall Mr. Fricke and his Göttingen host, the political-science professor Peter Lösche, plan to begin a modest series of informal exchanges that Mr. Fricke says eventually could lead to a formal program.

Mr. Lösche says the universities in Göttingen and Jena are farther along in developing East-West links than most other German institutions. In addition to informal contacts in political science, they have developed ties in anthropology and Slavic studies, he says.

At least three other universities in

each country have agreements for academic contacts, including the exchange of publications and limited appearances by individual professors, although none of the faculty members are lecturing for a full term.

In addition, a psychology professor from West Germany's University of Bremen is said to be spending the entire academic year in East Germany.

### A Historic Visit

The 1986 cultural agreement was signed by East German General Secretary Erich Honecker and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and last fall Mr. Honecker made a historic visit to West Germany in which he stressed a mutual need for peace.

The thaw has emboldened scholars on both sides of the border to seek new contacts with one another. The prestigious West German newspaper *Die Zeit* called the official movement to improve intellectual contacts a "cardinal new chapter" in German-German relations.

Mr. Fricke is quick to caution that the future of faculty and student exchanges will continue to depend largely on the political environment. A pivotal factor, observers here note, is likely to be the degree to



Dieter Fricke: "We need intellectual stimulation. Whether it comes from Marxists or not isn't important."

which Mikhail S. Gorbachev's programs of openness and economic restructuring are able to influence policy in conservative East Germany.

When Mr. Honecker visited West Germany last year, he called for a

"return to the way of détente." But he also remarked that socialism and capitalism "cannot be combined, just as it is impossible to combine fire and water."

### 'There Are Major Differences'

In addition, Mr. Fricke's own cautious optimism about the prospects for improved academic relations between the Germans has been tempered by an awareness of the countries' ideological contrasts.

For East and West German social scientists, he says, "there are already major differences."

"We ask different questions in our research," the professor explains, adding:

"Of course, there still are a lot of ethnic similarities, but that's just one element of German-German relations. The most important element is the difference in the two social systems. These are profound differences—ones that can't be integrated."

Nevertheless, Mr. Fricke says East Germany and West Germany, because of their strategic roles in Central Europe, share a special responsibility to seek "dialogue and reason."

In East Germany, he says, academic research is entering a "new

era"—putting more emphasis on interdisciplinary work and individualized courses of study. But while he acknowledges that his government retains decisive influence over academic affairs, Mr. Fricke says he and his colleagues in Jena have a broad outlook.

They seek to understand society as a "complex picture," and do not use a Marxist template to interpret their findings, he says. Like other East German scholars, he adds, they now see Marxism as one of many scholarly tools.

"We're moving from a study of the 'anatomy' of society to a 'physiology,'" Mr. Fricke says, playing down the structural approach that is often ascribed to Marxism. "And we don't want to cut off the arms and legs in the process."

Mr. Ackermann, the West German ministry spokesman, says the extent of the new German-German exchanges remains "very, very small," compared with West Germany's scholarly ties with Britain, France, and the United States.

Scholars on both sides of the border have wanted closer contacts for years, he adds.

What is new, he says, is that now "the East German politicians want it, too."