

Conferences

Innovations in Food Habits

Charlotte Chase, Washington University

A handful of Americans recently attended the Sixth International Conference on October 8-13 entitled "Innovations in Food Habits." Conference participants represented countries of both East and West and a variety of disciplines, including history, ethnography, anthropology, folklore, and nutrition. Especially memorable were the ties of friendship binding those sharing the experience. Conference papers dealt with a variety of foodrelated topics and were delivered in either English or German. In addition to paper presentations, the program included field trips to Krakow, the Wieliczka Salt Mines, and the Nowy Sazz Open Air Museum some hundred kilometers southeast of Krakow

Given shortages of food resources, the traditional Polish meals served throughout the meeting were notable-especially the feast in one Krakow restaurant on the main market square. Each course was introduced with an ethnographic description of its preparation. In addition, an entire day was devoted to observing the preparation of traditional Polish foods in log cabins scattered throughout the open air village museum. This was followed by an elaborate feast in the manor house complete with folk music and dancing. The planning effort in part reflects the unusual capacity of this small group of independent scholars to "pull it off". It also illustrates a more generalized trend of present day Poles who are seeking to improve their image vis-a-vis neighboring socialist countries and, most particularly, Western nations.

Europe outside the UK

C.M. Hann, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

At the annual conference of the Association of Social Anthropologists (Britain and Commonwealth) held at Keele University in March 1985 on the theme of "Anthropology at Home" there was a session devoted to "Europe outside the UK" at which papers were presented by John W. Cole and Chris Hann. This was the first time that British anthropologists had been

introduced to a whole range of issues concerning the region and the problems of doing research there. An amended and less polemical version of Hann's paper on "The Politics of Anthropology in Socialist Eastern Europe", dealing mainly with issues arising out of his own work in Hungary and Poland, is to appear in a volume of conference proceedings (ASA monograph Number 25, to be published in late 1986). It is understood that Cole's paper, a very wide ranging survey of "Problems of Socialism in Eastern Europe" is to appear in print elsewhere.

Secular Ritual

C.M. Hann, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

Hann was (unfortunately) the only Western anthropologist with a special interest in Eastern Europe to be invited to attend a small conference on "Secular Ritual" organized by the Department of Anthropology, Jagiellonian University, Cracow, in September 1985. Several other Western anthropologists attended and presented papers. but the real novelty of the occasion lay in the several stimulating papers presented by young members of the Cracow faculty; they amounted to the best possible evidence for the viability of doing "anthropology at home", for all of their papers dealt with aspects of their own society. Subjects included "National Symbol in Political Ritual" (Zdzislaw Mach), "Death and Fire; a Diachronic Study of the Ritual of All Souls Day in Polish Culture" (Grazyna Kubica), "Ideological Symbols and Reality" (Andrzej Flis) and "Ritualization as Substitution" (Janusz Mucha). It is hoped that publication of these papers in English can be arranged, possibly in a Cambridge University Press anthropology series. In the meantime those interested could write to members of the Department, which is a part of the Institute of Sociology, ul. Grodzka 52, Cracow. The anthropologists there have recently begun to forge strong ties with many leading figures in the West, partly as a result of the recent commemoration of Malinowski's birth. It is up to us to help them in their endeavors, and to make full use of the work of the "native" anthropologists in our own work in the region.