

Cooperation Between First Peoples and German Canadianists

An Outreach Success Story from the Greifswald Canadian Studies Program (CGSP)

From October 26-29th, 2007, the Greifswald Canadian Studies Program at the University of Greifswald, Germany hosted a conference titled "*The Métis, An Aboriginal Canadian Nation: An ELT Project for German Secondary Schools*", which attracted scholars, teachers, specialists, university students and experts from Germany, Poland, Switzerland, Finland and Canada. This two day event along with visit from Métis educator Rene Inkster from Mission, British Columbia, presented the capstone of a Métis school project in local high schools, which have been developed and taught by teachers, students and graduates from the Institute of British and North American Studies under the supervision of Dr. Hans Enter, in cooperation with Dr. Hartmut Lutz and other members of Greifswald Canadian Studies Program.

This project is the result of a long time collaboration between Greifswald Canadianists and Métis and Aboriginal scholars and teachers in Canada. This relationship began in 1992 when with the help of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), the Canadian Embassy and the Association for Canadian Studies in German-Speaking Countries, Dr. Anette Brauer organized an international conference aptly titled *Peoples in Contact*. Since then, cooperation between scholars and Métis and Aboriginal institutions never faltered and received constant support from the Canadian population along with Métis and Aboriginal artists and educators. The following examples give an idea of the scope of the cooperation between Métis, Aboriginals and German Canadianists:

- In addition to lectures from renowned Aboriginal authors such as Jeannette Armstrong, Alootook Ipellie, Lee Maracle, Daniel David Moses and Drew Hayden Taylor, guests Métis professors visited such as painter Professor Bob Boyer and author Dr. Warren Cariou.
- Ties with colleagues from Saskatchewan are particularly strong as shown by guest teachers' positions, visits for research activities by Greifswald scholars and the popularity of student exchanges with the University of Saskatchewan.
- In 2004/2005, upon a one year visit to Canada after winning the 2003 John G. Diefenbaker award, Professor Lutz collaborated for a whole year to a posthumous edition of biographical writings of the late Howard Adams, *Howard Adams Otapwy: The Life of a Métis Leader in His Own Words and Those of His Contemporaries*, with Métis specialist and historian Murray Hamilton, director of the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) at the University of Saskatchewan, and dramatist and cultural worker Donna Heimbecker, director of the Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company (SNTC). The book was published in Saskatoon by Gabriel Dumont Institute Press (GDIP) of Saskatoon.
- Cooperation with SUNTEP and GDI has proved very beneficial to students who throughout the last four years visited Saskatoon under SUNTEP's director Murray Hamilton's expert supervision. Several of them have presented during the Conference that was held in October 2007.
- Other graduated students from CGSP at the Institute of British and North American Studies teacher training program are now involved in the Métis project while teaching English to German high school students, simultaneously doing doctoral work with Dr. Hans Enter.
- CGSP founding director, Dr. Hartmut Lutz has supervised numerous masters' thesis and several doctoral thesis in Canadian literature and Canadian Native studies. Many of those former CGSP Ph.D. students now hold high level jobs in universities or in government, in Canada and Germany.
- Each summer, CGSP organizes a three days international conference in Canadian Studies and welcomes guests from neighbouring European countries, especially Poland, but mostly from Canada, including several aboriginal artists.

- Last summer, Dr. Knopf organized an exhibition in the town hall of Greifswald, showing photographs by arctic photographer Hans Blohm of Ottawa and the foremost Inuk artist and author Alooook Ipellie. Ipellie had drawn the cover and written an introduction for the book *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab*, which has been translated and published by Greifswald students.