

Newsletter for November 2016

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New York lecture series to commemorate Tivadar Soros, Esperanto speaker

October 30, 2016. Esther Schor, author of *Bridge of Words: Esperanto and the Dream of a Universal Language* (Metropolitan Books, 2016) will be the first speaker in a series of lectures memorializing Tivadar Soros, whose memoir *Masquerade*, written in Esperanto, recorded his successful efforts to keep his family alive and intact in Hungary during the Nazis' round-up and murder of thousands of Jews. The family ended up coming to the United States, where his son, George Soros, rose to prominence in the financial and humanitarian worlds.

The lecture series, made possible by a grant from the Esperantic Studies Foundation, is sponsored by the Linguistics Program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, 365 Fifth Avenue (at 34th Street). The lecture will take place in room C198 on Friday, December 16, 2016, at 4:00 p.m.

Professor of English at Princeton University, Esther Schor has studied the origins and development of the International Language Esperanto and its position in the modern world. In many respects her new book is a reaffirmation of the importance of Esperanto as a social movement in today's world. According to a review in the *New York Times*, it "leaves us in no doubt that whatever Esperanto might be doing, it seems to be doing it right."

Future lectures will feature Michael Gordin, Professor of the History of Science at Princeton University (on a connection between Albert Einstein and the international language movement), Brigid O'Keeffe, Professor of History at Brooklyn College (on Esperanto in the early years of the Soviet Union), Ulrich Lins, historian and author (on the persecution of Esperanto speakers under Hitler and Stalin), Nico Israel, Professor of English at Hunter College (on James Joyce and Esperanto), and Ulrich Becker, New York-based publisher of Esperanto books (on publishing in Esperanto). More information is available at: www.soroslectures.org

Esperanto at the World Social Forum, Montreal

September 20, 2016. When the World Social Forum met in Montreal in early August – for the first time in the North and the twelfth time in its history – Esperanto speakers were there in force. Launched in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2001, the Forum has met since then in India, Kenya, Mali, Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, and Venezuela. Some 15,000 people from over 100 countries were present in Montreal. The Forum is described as "the largest gathering of civil society to find solutions to the problems of our time."

Esperanto-speaking participants took part in the March for the Earth, set up an information booth for three days of the Forum, and gave two talks, in English and French, on Esperanto and its importance in the movement for social reform. The Esperanto contingent was also multinational and multilingual, presenting the arguments for learning Esperanto not only in English and French but also in Spanish, Portuguese, and Japanese. Many participants pointed out that, while the official languages of the Forum were French, English and Spanish, interpretation was provided only for major sessions, and, in any case, speakers of all other languages were out of luck. As the Esperanto speakers explained, such unfair discrimination on grounds of language is all too common at such events – a consequence not only of lack of money but also of lack of will to tackle what is a fundamental communication problem. They urged the numerous Forum participants whom they contacted to sign up on the Esperanto learning site Lernu.net.

The Universal Esperanto Association and local and regional Esperanto organizations helped underwrite the Esperanto activities.

2017 Esperanto Congress will discuss sustainable tourism

October 27, 2016. Next year's World Congress of Esperanto will have as its theme "Tourism and Development: Paths to Sustainability," according to an announcement from the Universal Esperanto Association's executive board. The decision to concentrate on sustainable tourism was inspired by the UN General Assembly's decision to name 2017 the International Year for Sustainable Tourism for Development.

"Today's mass tourism grew out of ideas and initiatives that were formed in the same period as Esperanto," Mark Fettes, president of the Universal Esperanto Association, pointed out. "Tourism has great potential to bring people together, but it can also be destructive of the environment and of cultures. At a time when the world is seeking sustainable solutions for its problems, the link between worldwide communication and worldwide travel has become an important issue."

President Fettes went on to point out that almost a tenth of the world's jobs are related to tourism, according to UN statistics. The significance of this economic sector "is often underestimated," according to the Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization, Taleb Rifai. "Particularly in the economically least powerful countries," added Dr. Fettes, "the development of sustainable tourism could be an effective response to the efforts to eliminate acute poverty – the first of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which are now shaping the work of the United Nations."

Dr. Fettes also cited Goal 8, on economic development, Goal 12, on sustainable consumption and production, and Goal 14, on protecting the oceans, as having a direct bearing on sustainable tourism.

In its resolution proclaiming the Year for Sustainable Tourism, the General Assembly put particular emphasis on the cultural significance of tourism "in fostering better understanding among peoples everywhere, leading to a greater awareness of the rich heritage of various civilizations and bringing about a better appreciation of the inherent values of different cultures, thereby contributing to the strengthening of peace in the world."

These ideas, so close to those of Esperanto-speakers, underline the value of wider education, discussion and action on sustainable tourism – not only in the World Congress but into the future.

"Our movement consists of people eager to learn about other countries and cultures, who want to meet the local people in a spirit of

equality,” Fettes explained. “This in itself is an extremely valuable contribution to sustainable tourism. But we could do much more to advance the educational and environmentally conscious aspects of tourism in Esperanto. I hope that the congress in Seoul will help inspire new ideas and new initiatives in this field.”

The Seoul World Congress of Esperanto will be the 102nd in the series. In 2018 the Congress will meet in Lisbon, Portugal.

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