

NEWSLETTER

OF THE

INTERNATIONAL FEUCHTWANGER SOCIETY

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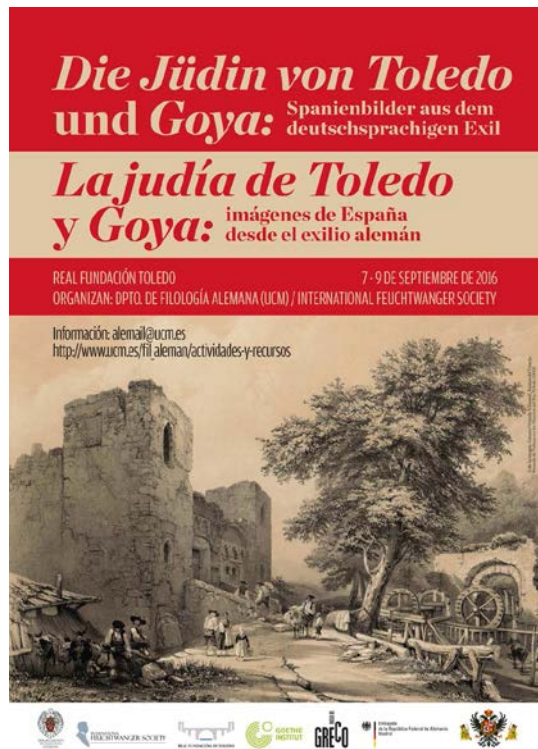
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Liebe Freunde Lion Feuchtwangers, es ist einmal mehr an der Zeit, Ihnen den jüngsten Nachrichtenbrief der Gesellschaft zu präsentieren, worin Sie unter anderem das wissenschaftliche Programm für ein Symposium in Toledo (Spanien) zu Beginn von September d. J. finden, wohingegen ein Call for Papers für die nächste große Feuchtwanger-Konferenz in Paris im Oktober 2017 hier nicht erneut abgedruckt wird. Angesichts der gegenwärtigen internationalen politischen Lage, insbesondere der potenziellen Wahl Donald Trumps zum Präsidenten der USA im kommenden November, haben mein Kollege Frederick Betz (Southern Illinois University) und ich einen längeren einschlägigen Beitrag verfasst, der – zeitgemäß, kurz vor der Republican National Convention in Cleveland (Ohio) am 18.-21. Juli, auf der Trump zweifelsohne nominiert werden wird – am Beispiel von Sinclair Lewis' Roman *It Can't Happen Here* (1935) sowie Philip Roths Roman *The Plot Against America* (2004) als warnendes Beispiel gelten möge (nach dem Motto: ‚The strongest memory is weaker than the palest ink‘), wie diktatorische Entwicklungen in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika – immerhin wurde jüngst in einer Schlagzeile der Londoner *Times* die rhetorische Frage gestellt: ‚Trump, a Dictator in the Making?‘ – in den 1930er Jahren vereitelt wurden. Ich hoffe ferner sehr, dass Ihnen allen auch diesmal wieder das knappe Dutzend Rezensionen zusagt (u.a. Sternburgs revidierte Biografie Feuchtwangers), und möchte Sie hiermit alle einmal mehr höflichst auffordern, gelegentlich selber Buchbesprechungen für den Nachrichtenbrief beizutragen.

Jörg Thunecke

Program/Programm



COLOQUIO INTERNACIONAL / INTERNATIONALE  
KONFERENZ

DIE JÜDIN VON TOLEDO UND GOYA: SPANIENBILDER  
AUS DEM DEUTSCHSPRACHIGEN EXIL

(La judía de Toledo y Goya: imágenes de España desde el  
exilio alemán)

Real Fundación Toledo, 7 – 9. September 2016

**Mittwoch, 7. September 2016**

9:00 - 9:30 Uhr Empfang der Teilnehmer

9.30 - 10.00 Uhr Berta Raposo (València), Wo liegt Heinrich Heines „luftiges Schloß“? Spanienbilder bei einem Exilautor des 19. Jahrhunderts

10.00 - 10.30 Uhr Bernd Springer (Barcelona), Die historischen Romane Lion Feuchtwangers: Geschichte und Literatur als Wege zum Weltbürgertum und der Ort Spaniens in diesem Imaginarium

10.30 - 10.45 Uhr Mike Rottmann (Jena), Lion Feuchtwangers ‚Poetik der Historizität‘ im Zeichen poetisch vermittelter Gegenwartskritik

Moderation: Isabel Hernández

10.45 – 11.45 Uhr Kaffeepause

11.45 – 12.45 Uhr Helmut C. Jacobs (Universität Duisburg-Essen), Lion Feuchtwangers Auseinandersetzung mit Goyas Werk in *Goya oder Der arge Weg der Erkenntnis*

Moderation: Ian Wallace

12.45 –13.15 Uhr Ingrid García-Wistädt (València), Spanische Landschaftsbilder in Feuchtwangers *Goya-Roman*

13.15 – 13.45 Uhr Elisabeth Böhm (Bayreuth), Künstlerroman *Goya*: Spanien als Inspiration

Moderation: Geoffrey Davis

13.45 – 16.00 Uhr Mittagspause

16.00 – 16.30 Uhr François Genton (Grenoble), „Ich selber lieb' es nicht, dies Volk...“. *Die Jüdin von Toledo* und das Problem von Judentum und Macht bei Grillparzer und Feuchtwanger

16.30 – 17.00 Uhr Frank Stern (Wien), „Fremdgehen mit der Fremden“. Inszenierungen von Begierden, Macht und Jüdischem auf Leinwand und Bühne

Moderation: Marje Schuetze-Coburn

17.00 – 17.30 Uhr Kaffeepause

17.30 – 18.00 Uhr Friedel Schmoranzner-Johnson (Villa Aurora, Los Angeles), Locus amoenus und hortus conclusus – Der Garten als Seelenlandschaft

18.00 – 18.30 Uhr Isabel Hernández (Madrid), Ideal oder Wirklichkeit? Das Spanienbild Lion Feuchtwangers im Roman *Die Jüdin von Toledo*

Moderation: Ian Wallace

18.30 – 19.30 Uhr Pause

### **Garten des Museo del Greco**

19.30 – 20.00 Uhr Eröffnungsveranstaltung

20.00 Uhr Zweisprachige öffentliche Lesung: *Die Jüdin von Toledo*. M<sup>a</sup> Jesús Gil begleitet von Begoña Olavide (Música Mudéjar)

## Donnerstag, 8. September 2016

9.30 - 10.00 Uhr Carsten Schapkow (Oklahoma), Das Spanienbild Ernst Tollers: Projektionsfläche von eigener Identität und engagiertem Handeln

10.00 – 10.30 Uhr Sikander Singh (Saarbrücken-Dudweiler), Die gelebte Utopie. Spanienbilder in Gustav Reglers Romanen über den Spanischen Bürgerkrieg

Moderation: Daniel Azuelos

10.30 – 10.45 Uhr Pause

10.45 – 11.45 Uhr Friedhelm Marx (Bamberg), Spanische Geschichte und politische Gegenwart: Thomas Manns Revision des Don Quijote und seine Stellungnahmen zum spanischen Bürgerkrieg

Moderation: Isabel Hernández

11.45 – 12.15 Uhr Kaffeepause

12.15 – 12.45 Uhr Margit Raders (Madrid), Spanien in Heinrich Manns Werk und Briefwechsel

12.45 – 13.15 Uhr Gesa Singer (Göttingen), Spanien als literarische Exilwelt bei Klaus Mann

Moderation: Geoffrey Davis

13.15 – 16.00 Uhr Mittagspause

16.00 – 16.30 Uhr Tobias Christ (Bochum/València), Der Künstler im Bann des Bösen. Historische Camouflage und theologische Weltdeutung in Stefan Andres' spanischer Novelle *El Greco malt den Großinquisitor*

16.30 – 17.00 Uhr Arturo Larcati (Verona), Stefan Zweigs „Sternstunde“ *Flucht in die Unsterblichkeit* über den spanischen Entdecker und Abenteurer Vasco Núñez de Balboa

17.00 – 17.30 Uhr Teresa Cañadas (Madrid), „Spanien an seinem entscheidenden Wendepunkt“: Spanien und das Judentum im historischen Roman von Leo Katz *Die Welt des Columbus*

Moderation: Michaela Ullmann

17.30 – 18.00 Uhr Kaffeepause

18.00 – 18.30 Uhr Ángeles Osiander-Fuentes (València), Exil vs. Insil?/ Innere Emigration und Transit. Drei ungleichgewichtige Räume spanischer Identität in der deutschen Literatur des Dritten Reiches: Reinhold Schneider und die Poetik des Leidens

18.30 – 19.00 Uhr Jörg Thuncke (Nottingham), Der Disput von Valladolid (1550): Fragen über Recht und Gerechtigkeit in Reinhold Schneiders Roman *Las Casas vor Karl V.*

Moderation: Marje Schuetze-Coburn

19.00 – 21.00 Uhr Pause

21.00 Uhr Stadtrundgang Toledo. Treffpunkt: Hotel San Juan de los Reyes

### **Freitag, 9. September 2016**

10.00 – 10.30 Uhr Gabriele Einsele (Zürich), „Auch die Uhr liegt längst unaufgezogen“ – Der Niederschlag von Franz Bleis Exiljahren auf Mallorca

10.30 – 11.00 Uhr Jacob Boas (McMinville), Albert Vigoleis Thelen and Émigré Literature. Dispatches from Mallorca and Other European Venues, 1934-1940

Moderation: Michaela Ullmann

11.00 – 11.30 Uhr Kaffeepause

11.30 – 12.30 Uhr Marisa Siguan (Barcelona), Ibiza: Flucht und Utopie bei deutschsprachigen Intellektuellen in den 30er Jahren

Moderation: Isabel Hernández

12.30 – 13.30 Uhr Abschlussdiskussion

Moderation: Ian Wallace (Präsident der IFS)

More information about travel and accommodation available at:

[https://www.ucm.es/fil\\_aleman/tagung-der-international-feuchtwanger-society](https://www.ucm.es/fil_aleman/tagung-der-international-feuchtwanger-society)

## **TWO CAUTIONARY TALES AGAINST THE SOCIO-POLITICAL BACKGROUND IN GERMANY AND THE USA IN THE 1930s AND 1940s: SINCLAIR LEWIS'S NOVEL *IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE* (1935) AND PHILIP ROTH'S NOVEL *THE PLOT AGAINST AMERICA* (2004)**

“This is how fascism comes to America, not with jackboots and salutes (although there have been salutes, and a whiff of violence) but with a television huckster, a phony billionaire, a textbook ego maniac ‘tapping into’ popular resentments and insecurities, and with an entire national political party out of ambition or blind party loyalty, or simply out of fear — falling into line behind him.”

Robert Kagan: ‘This is how fascism comes to America’, in *The Washington Post*, May 18, 2016.

Today most people are probably unfamiliar with the novel *It Can't Happen Here* (1935) by Sinclair Lewis (1885-1951), the first American winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1930. In literary studies it is usually viewed in the tradition of dystopian novels like Jack London's *The Iron Heel*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, George Orwell's *1984*, or Philip Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*. However, since Lewis grounded his satirical-realistic work in an intricate wealth of historical and contemporary detail, *It Can't Happen Here* (ICHH) has over time been ignored or dismissed as a literary ‘period piece’, too demanding for today's reading public, in marked contradistinction to Philip Roth's (\*1933) novel *The Plot Against America* (2004) published not quite seventy years later. Both novels are closely associated with the struggle against proto-Fascist tendencies in the United States, and it is the aim of this paper to present a detailed and differentiated comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of both books in order to establish that Lewis's third-person narrative – far from presenting mere „surface terror“ and „surface violence“ (Kazin 225) – offers a fully developed projection of an American Fascist state, with ample evidence of contemporary models and counterparts, targeting a broad, historically grounded array of opponents and victims (cf. Betz / Thunecke), whereas Roth's first-person narrative, while achieving more immediacy and credibility by focusing on an actual Jewish neighbourhood in Newark, NJ, in the early 1940s, concentrates more narrowly on anti-Semitism (cf. Cooper), covering proto-Fascist developments in the US much more briefly and far less concretely than his predecessor.

Lewis is said to have written his 458-page novel in four months; and since completion of the original and final drafts are dated August 12 and September 28, 1935 respectively (cf. Schorer 608), he must have started writing his ‘plans’, as he called the drafts of numerous chapters or scenes of the novel, in May or



June of that year.<sup>1</sup> For a writer known to have conducted extensive and meticulous research for his previous novels (e.g. *Babbitt* [1922]; *Arrowsmith* [1925]; *Elmer Gantry* [1927]), it seems incongruous to have included in his ,plans' little or no documentation of sources, influences, and models; but because Lewis himself witnessed contemporary events in both Europe (cf. Schorer 312, 386) and America, and ,received' information from personal contacts, from their conversations, correspondence, and publications, he was immersed enough in his sources that he apparently had no need to precede the intensive writing of his novel with documented research. Moreover, Lewis must have felt that he had no time to waste, as he wanted to seize the opportunity to give a fictional warning against the threat of Fascism in America, which appeared to be increasingly possible by the spring of 1935.

This threat was a response to the Great Depression (1929f.) and Franklin Delano Roosevelt's first pro-business New Deal (1933-35) by a variety of American Fascist leaders and their organizations, modelled after and influenced by Italian Fascism and German Nazism. However, the greatest threat to FDR's leadership came from American demagogues, whose oratorical skills on the political stump or on national radio challenged those of the President himself, namely, Senator Huey P. Long of Louisiana and Father Coughlin of Detroit (cf. Brinkley). First as Governor (elected in 1928), then as Senator (since 1932), with a surrogate serving as Governor, Long had become virtual dictator of his state with almost complete control of the legislature, the judiciary, public works, business, as well as guaranteed election results. Both Long and Coughlin had supported FDR in 1932, but increasingly opposed the President for failing to overcome the Depression, especially for failing to find a way to redistribute the wealth of the country; and by 1934 each had founded organizations ostensibly to deal with the economic and social problems of the time. However, it was widely suspected, or feared, that Long's ,Share Our Wealth' program and Coughlin's ,National Union for Social Justice', both of which had rapidly gained mass appeal and memberships in the millions, were also designed to challenge FDR for national leadership in 1936. Until 1935 FDR had tried to placate or co-opt these challengers, but in light of their growing opposition and popular appeal, as determined by a Democratic Party election poll, which indicated that Long could possibly siphon off enough votes from FDR to throw the 1936 election to the Republican candidate (cf. Amenta 687-91, 698-99; Badger 97; Snyder), FDR decided to fight back through surrogates in his Administration and to ,steal the thunder' of Long and Coughlin by inaugurating in mid-1935 a Second New Deal with a radical shift to the left, to pro-labor, with such measures as Social Security and a ,Soak

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. two undated letters from Dorothy Thompson to her husband, Sinclair Lewis, in spring 1935, in which she gave him advice concerning his plan for the book (Dorothy Thompson Papers in The George Arents Research Library for Special Collections at Syracuse University, NY).

the Wealthy' tax. The most vocal and controversial attack on Long and Coughlin came from General Hugh S. Johnson, former head of the 'National Recovery Administration', whose blanket authority over business and industry would finally be declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in May 1935. However, General Johnson's 'Pied Pipers' speech in March 1935 gave both Long and Coughlin the opportunity to not only defend themselves, but also to attack the Administration before national radio audiences. The controversy received coverage as well in news magazines and in newspapers across the country, further 'building up' Long and Coughlin (cf. Swing [1]). Since late 1934, Raymond Gram Swing had contributed a number of articles on Long, Coughlin, and others whom he termed 'forerunners of American Fascism' in a book of the same title (cf. Swing [2]), which went through two quick printings in April 1935. Swing's book was but one of numerous publications in the mid-1930s predicting the threat of Fascism in America, and it can be assumed that Lewis at least took note of, if not actually read, a number of them. The reference in Ch. 5 of *It Can't Happen Here* (ICHH 48-49) to such 'Messiahs' as Father Coughlin, Dr. Townsend ('Old Age Revolving Pension Plan'), Upton Sinclair ('EPIC Plan'), and William Randolph Hearst (newspaper magnate) suggests, for example, Lewis's familiarity with the Unofficial Observer's (= John Franklin Carter's) book on *American Messiahs*, which also appeared in the spring of 1935. Foremost among the 'American messiahs', or 'forerunners of American Fascism', was, however, Huey Long, who, as Lewis stated in an interview in 1948 ('I based my story on Huey Long'; cf. Austin 203), served as the major American model for his dictator-president, Buzz Windrip (cf. Koenagel; Thanner).

Lewis had either read or learned of *American Messiahs* and *Forerunners of American Fascism* through his second wife, Dorothy Thompson, who had served with Swing as foreign correspondent in Europe (esp. in Berlin in the 1920s). Lewis's principal biographers have argued that he would or could not have written *It Can't Happen Here*, if it had not been for her influence and support (cf. Grebstein 140; Schorer 608; Sheen 207, 271; see also Kurth 204). While Thompson must be considered the single greatest resource for Lewis's novel, the biographers cite but one source of her influence, namely, her interview with Hitler in November 1931, published in March 1932 in *Cosmopolitan* (cf. Thompson [1]), and in the same year also as a slim volume under the title *I Saw Hitler!* (cf. Thompson [2]). To give American readers an idea of what the Hitler movement meant in Germany, Thompson made comparisons with various American political orators, evangelical preachers, tycoons, and organizations such as the American Legion, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Ku Klux Klan. Such comparisons may well have been the 'germ' for *It Can't Happen Here*; for Thompson, having naïvely dismissed the threat of Hitler in 1931/32, subsequently crusaded unremittingly against Nazi Germany in numerous articles, lectures, and books. Lewis must have learned much about the origins and rise, the theory and

practice of the Nazis from the more than a dozen substantial articles Thompson published between 1931 and late 1934 in the popular *Saturday Evening Post*, and in July 1935 in the more scholarly journal *Foreign Affairs* (cf. Sheean 252-53). It has been generally assumed that Thompson was expelled from Germany in August 1934, because she had given an unflattering portrayal of Hitler as just an ordinary man in her interview of 1931, but more likely the order for her expulsion was in retaliation for 1) a series of six extremely critical articles she had written on Nazi terror and persecution of Jews while on assignment in Berlin for the *Jewish Daily Bulletin* (New York) in April and May 1933;<sup>2</sup> 2) her contribution on 'The Record of Persecution' to the volume *Nazism: An Assault on Civilization*, which had just appeared in June 1934 (cf. van Paassen). All together, these further sources from 1931 to 1935 no doubt provided Lewis with additional information and inspiration for his own portrayal of mass rallies, storm trooper actions, techniques of terror and persecution, and concentration camp life. The Lewis biographers have also overlooked Thompson as a source of information on American domestic politics. In late 1934 the publisher of the *Saturday Evening Post* asked the journalist to go to Washington, D.C., to study FDR's New Deal; her assignment (in spring 1935) resulted in three lengthy articles, published in July and August of that year, dealing with the problems of unemployment, relief, taxation, and redistribution of wealth, and comparing the 'solutions' to such problems proposed by Communists and Socialists, and by Huey Long and Father Coughlin (cf. Kurth 205). While in Washington, Thompson also had a two-hour interview with Senator Long, whom she found to be „shrewd, fantastic, and not altogether unlikeable“, as yet undecided as to „whether he [would] run for president on a third party ticket in 1936“; but „certain that if he [did] he [would] defeat Roosevelt“, and yet not „at all sure that he would win himself.“<sup>3</sup> Otherwise, of course, Lewis must have picked up information in countless unrecorded conversations with his wife since they were married in 1928, or at dinner-party conversations concerning the 'political situation' in Europe, which Lewis, the satirical but rather apolitical writer, who became increasingly jealous of his wife's national-international reputation as a journalist, often mocked (cf. Harriman 24; Sheean 263), but perhaps also used as inspiration to demonstrate to her and the public at the appropriate time that he, too, could write convincingly of the growing threat of Fascism. The opportune moment came in the summer of 1935, when Dorothy Thompson shielded her husband from all visitors, while he wrote 'at white heat' on his novel at Twin Farms in Vermont. The only visitor allowed, apparently, was their neighbour, George Seldes (cf. Schorer 608), who had served with Dorothy

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<sup>2</sup> Six articles by Dorothy Thompson under the general title 'Hitler, the Menace' appeared every Sunday in the *Jewish Daily Bulletin* from May 7 to June 11, 1933.

<sup>3</sup> Undated letter of spring 1935 from Dorothy Thompson to Sinclair Lewis (see fn. 1).

Thompson as a correspondent in Berlin (1927/28) after having been expelled from Italy for reporting critically on Mussolini and implicating the Fascists in the assassination of the parliamentary opposition leader, Matteotti, in 1924. Seldes had completed his *Sawdust Caesar. The Untold Story of Mussolini and Fascism* in 1932, but no publisher in Britain or the U.S. would publish his scathing biography before late 1935 (Seldes [1]; cf. also Diggins 44-45, 53-55). However, Seldes relates in his autobiography *Witness to a Century* (Seldes [2]) that Lewis had ‚pumped‘ him at the time on the subject of Mussolini and Fascism (Seldes [2] 294). Perhaps even more important to Lewis were Seldes’s opinions on the prospects of a Fascist takeover in the U.S., as expressed in his two-part article on ‚Hitlerism Marches in America‘, which had appeared on March 9 & 16, 1935 in the independent journal of public affairs *Today* (cf. Seldes [3], March 9 [3-4, 20] & March 16 [6-7, 22], 1935), edited by Raymond Moley, one of the principal ‚Brain Trust‘ advisers in FDR’s first term. In this article Seldes concluded that certain circumstances, which had aided both Mussolini and Hitler in their rise to power, were now, in 1935, extant in America – impatience with parliamentary government, economic unrest, disillusionment, discontent, and even hunger, but that there had as yet appeared no potential American ‚Führer‘ (cf. Seldes [3], March 16 [22], 1935). Although retired General Smedley D. Butler had, as he claimed in testimony before Congress in November 1934, recently refused to lead a Fascist march on Washington, D.C. (cf. Swing [2] 16-17; cf. also Mussolini’s March on Rome in 1922!), Seldes felt that the real danger of Fascist Hitlerism was now greater than ever.

The most likely candidate for future American Fascist dictator was, by consensus, Huey Long. Raymond Swing considered „the Louisiana dictator“ to be „fully as fascist in his type and in the nature of his appeal as Hitler“ (cf. Swing [1] 325), whereas V. F. Calverton noticed that „in Louisiana he had already created his own battalions of storm troops [...] and set up an ‚authoritarian state‘, with all the powers exercised by Mussolini, Stalin, and Hitler in Europe“, and that, „like Hitler, Long plan[ned] going to the people and not to the political heads of the party for his support“ (Calverton 174). And Hamilton Basso predicted that „once Mr. Long reached the White House“ Americans would „of course, be living under a dictatorship“ (672). Benjamin Stolberg, a Marxist intellectual, whose views „carried weight“ with both Dorothy Thompson and Sinclair Lewis at the time (cf. Sheean 239), asked Long how he would fulfil „the deepest wish of the common man in financial trouble“, that is, how one could „share the wealth without socializing the productive process“, to which Long, the consummate practical politician, is reported to have replied: „What sense is there running on a Socialist ticket in America today? What’s the use of being right only to be defeated? First you must come to power – POWER – and then you do things“ (cf. Stolberg 344-45).

Huey Long clearly had plans, then, to run for President, either to defeat FDR himself in 1936 or, more realistically, an even more vulnerable Republican incumbent in 1940. In his book, *My First Days in the White House*, which he wrote in the summer of 1935, Long projects winning the presidency in a bitter campaign in 1936 to save America from Communism and Fascism. After his inauguration in January 1937, so Long suggests, he would immediately set out to create a central bank, as advocated by Father Coughlin, and, with the acquiescence of the ‚barons of Wall Street‘, implement his plan to redistribute the nation’s wealth. These measures, like Long’s Cabinet appointments (among others, FDR as Secretary of the Navy and General Butler as Secretary of War) are passed without debate in Congress and are not declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

Long never actually had the chance to even run for President, of course, as he was assassinated in September 1935, and his *First Days in the White House* was published posthumously. In a footnote to his study *Insurgent America. The Revolt of the Middle Classes* (1935) Alfred Bingham observed that Long’s assassination, while his study was in press, meant „a setback and postponement of the Fascist threat“, but „in no way affect[ed] the argument that it [was] from men of the Long type, with a program similar to Share-Our-Wealth, that an American Fascism was to be feared“ (193). Since Lewis was still working on the final draft of his novel at the time of Long’s assassination, he was able to change reference to Long in the manuscript to »the late Huey Long« (*ICHH* 35). Long’s untimely death (on September 10, 1935) had otherwise no adverse effect on the plan for *It Can’t Happen Here*, for Lewis had used or alluded to a whole array of historical and contemporary European (esp. German) and American figures as models for his fictional counterparts to illustrate the argument that under similar economic, social, and political conditions a Fascist dictatorship, with similar ideologies, programs, organizations, and practices, could indeed be established in America as well as in Europe.

Contemporary reviewers of the novel, which appeared in October 1935 and sold over 300,000 copies that autumn,<sup>4</sup> readily identified various German Nazi models for Lewis’s characters (cf. Robert Morss-Lovett 366-67). Beyond Hitler, of course, as the model for Windrip, it was suggested that Röhm (SA-Leader), Goebbels (Propaganda Minister and President of the Reich’s Culture Chamber), Ludwig Müller (Reichsbishop), and von Blomberg (Minister of Defence) stood as models, respectively, for Windrip’s aide and mentor Lee Sarason (Secretary of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Minute Men), Dr. Hector Macgoblin (Secretary of Culture), Bishop Prang (Radio Priest), and Colonel, later General, Dewey

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<sup>4</sup> The German translation (*Das ist bei uns nicht möglich* [Amsterdam: Querido]) appeared in 1936, and was immediately put on the Index by the Third Reich’s Literature Chamber; it was published in Germany only decades later (Leipzig/Weimar: Kiepenheuer 1984; <sup>2</sup>1992). *It Can’t Happen Here* was also published by Jonathan Cape in London in 1935.

Haik (who eventually became Secretary of War, assumed command of the Minute Men, and ultimately took over as military dictator). While some reviewers found such „transcription of the German revolution into American terms“ unconvincing (cf. Stone 107-08), „part of the plausibility“ of the novel lay, as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. has observed, precisely „in the ease with which Lewis produced American counterparts of leading Nazis.“ (Schlesinger [1] 89)

Thus, Lewis's Hitler, Windrip, was obviously based on Huey Long, but perhaps also on the fundamentalist and Nazi apologist, Reverend Gerald B. Winrod of Kansas (whose name could have suggested Windrip, who is a Senator from a prairie state [*ICHH* 88]); Sarason could have reminded readers of Robert E. Clements, the ruthless organizational genius behind Dr. Townsend's ‚Old Age Revolving Pension Plan‘; and General Dewey Haik might have been suggested by General Douglas MacArthur, Army Chief of Staff from 1930 to 1935, commander of the military suppression of the World War I veterans' Bonus March Strike in Washington in 1932, and, with Huey Long, one of the two men in the country whom FDR considered most dangerous (cf. Tuxwell 349). Moreover, Lewis was able to add distinctive American types to his ‚Fascist gallery‘: Bishop Prang and the League of Forgotten Men, for example, readily recalled Father Coughlin and the Union of Social Justice, but also Huey Long's lieutenant, the demagogic Reverend Gerald L. K. Smith (cf. Jeansonne). Mrs. Adelaide Tarr Gimmitch clearly represented Mrs. Albert W. (Elizabeth) Dilling, the fanatical anti-Communist and author of *The Red Network* (1934/35), whose influence Windrip cites in his autobiography *Zero Hour – Over the Top* (*ICHH* 74), along with that of William Dudley Pelley (ibid.), who founded his ‚Silver Shirts‘ organization (based on the SA's ‚Brown Shirts‘) and who aspired to be the coming American ‚Führer‘ (cf. Ribuffo 19-24, 25-80; Herzstein 165).

In his *Forerunners of American Fascism* Swing concluded that „the usual complacent assumption that we cannot become fascist, simply because America is ‚different‘, or too large“, did not „bear analysis.“ (Swing [2] 168) Americans had „submitted“ to a „tyranny“, „which was strangely like a fascist terror“ during the First World War. Americans had „accepted it then because [they] preferred unity in the crisis to freedom“, and Americans „would accept it again if [they] found [they] preferred unity to another crisis“, this time in overcoming „economic despair“ (ibid.). Like Swing, Lewis questioned whether Americans, whom he had satirically portrayed in such earlier novels as *Main Street* (1920), *Babbitt* (1922), or *The Man Who Knew Coolidge* (1928) as bourgeois, flag-waving conformists, had the passion for freedom to be able to resist Fascism. The „patriotic addresses“ at the ladies' Night Dinner of Fort Beulah Rotary Club in the opening chapter of *It Can't Happen Here* in late May 1936 (*ICHH* 4f.) would suggest otherwise, for both retired General Herbert Y. Edgeway (i.e. retired General Smedley D. Butler or retired General Hugh S. Johnson) and Mrs. Adelaide Tarr Gimmitch speak admiringly of the model

„discipline‘ of Germany and Italy and denounce laziness, selfishness, pacifism, labor unionism, Socialism, and Communism. When several influential men of this small town, located, significantly, in Vermont, Lewis’s residence at that time, meet after the dinner to talk politics (*ICHH* 19f.), and Frank Tasbrough, the community’s leading industrialist, dismisses the warning that, if Senator Windrip were to win the forthcoming presidential election in November 1936, „ ,[a] real Fascist dictatorship‘ “ (*ICHH* 21) would follow, with the smug exclamation: „ ,That couldn’t happen here in America, not possibly! We’re a country of freemen‘ “ (*ICHH* 21), Doremus Jessup, liberal owner and editor of the local newspaper and Sinclair Lewis’s mouthpiece, replies:

„[...] the hell it can’t! Why, there’s no country in the world that can get more hysterical – yes, or more obsequious! – than America. Look how Huey Long became absolute monarch over Louisiana and how the Right Honorable Mr. Senator Berzelius Windrip owns *his* state. Listen to Bishop Prang and Father Coughlin on the radio – divine oracles, to millions.“ (*ICHH* 21)

Jessup considers the country „ripe for a dictatorship“ (*ICHH* 21); and as the novel unfolds, his prognosis is inexorably borne out. Senator Windrip, whose biographical introduction in Chapter 4 draws especially on details of Huey Long’s career, wins the Democratic Party nomination over FDR in July 1936 (*ICHH* 65f.) and proceeds to campaign (*ICHH* Chs. 8-11) for the presidential election in November (*ICHH* 109f.). Windrip launches his campaign with a proclamation of ‚Fifteen Points of Victory for the Forgotten Men‘ (*ICHH* 74-79), a composite of Long’s ‚Share-Our-Wealth‘ and Coughlin’s ‚Principles of Social Justice‘ programs, with borrowings from other sources such as EPIC (= End Poverty in California), Technocracy, Townsendism, the Ku Klux Klan, and the German-American Bund (cf. Aaron / Bendiner 323; Diamond 141, 158, 204-5). Windrip’s program would, among other things, centralize both financial and political power in the presidency, guarantee private property, but limit and redistribute wealth, eliminate independent unions, imprison Communists, Socialists, or anarchists, and exclude Negroes from voting and holding public office or positions in the legal, medical, and teaching professions (cf. Magil / Stevens 218), points which remind the reader of the party programs of both the Italian Fascists and the German National Socialists. Otherwise, Windrip’s philosophy is cited in excerpts from his autobiography *Zero Hour*, which are used as mottos for Chapters 5 to 20 (to the end of his first year in office) and which are reminiscent of both Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* (1925/27) and Long’s *Every Man A King* (1933). In contrast to the Republican Party nominee, Senator Walt Trowbridge, who „conducted his campaign as placidly as though he were certain to win“ (*ICHH* 100), Windrip and surrogates (esp. Colonel Haik), like Long and Reverend Gerald L. K. Smith, on the one hand, and Hitler and Goebbels, on the other, are excellent speakers and campaign more effectively by using both radio and plane (*ICHH* 98-99). What appeals

most, though, to the average voter, is the promise of sharing the wealth of the nation; so Jessup's hired man, Shad Ledue (*ICHH* 27), becomes the most active crusader for Windrip in Ft. Beulah (*ICHH* 106-07). The final rally of Windrip's campaign takes place in Madison Square Garden in New York (*ICHH* 109f.). With Minute Men in White Shirts (cf. the American Fascist Organization led by George Christians, but also Pelley's 'Silver Shirts', and the SA's 'Brown Shirts'), on guard and raiding a street meeting of Communists a block away, Windrip, „the supreme actor“ (cf. Mowrer 251, 262; Dorothy Thompson [2] 14), tells his audience that he wants power, not for himself, but „to smash the Jew financiers who've enslaved them“ (*ICHH* 109), a scene reminiscent of mass rallies in the Berlin Sportpalast orchestrated by Goebbels (cf. Ogan / Weiß; Reichel; Schäfer). Like Hitler, who was 'democratically' appointed Chancellor on January 30, 1933, Windrip eventually gains power by legally winning the presidential election in November 1936 (*ICHH* 121).

Following his inauguration in January 1937 (*ICHH* 160), Windrip announced the „real New Deal“ (*ICHH* 162f.), orders that the Minute Men – similar to the SA in Germany – be recognized as auxiliaries of the regular army, and demands instant passage of Point 15 of his election platform, giving him complete control of legislation and execution, without interference from the Supreme Court, reminiscent of Hitler's 'Ermächtigungsgesetz' of March 24, 1933, which amounted to the abolition of most basic rights and freedoms and led to the first phase of a totalitarian system in Germany. As in Germany, opponents of the new regime are eliminated, either imprisoned or put in mental institutions (*ICHH* 162f.), and strikes and riots are bloodily put down by the Minute Men (as in Germany by the SA [cf. *ICHH* Ch. 16]). Reminiscent of the division of Germany into 'Gaue', run by so-called 'Gauleiter', the United States are reorganized under the control of Commissioners (*ICHH* 172f.).<sup>5</sup> Ranks for the Minute Men, comparable to those of the SA and SS, are introduced; President Windrip is named „the Chief“ (*ICHH* 184) emulating the title 'der Führer';<sup>6</sup> a new emblem is created comparable to the 'Hakenkreuz' (*ICHH* 185); 'Buzz and Hail the Chief' is adopted as the official Minute Men anthem (*ICHH* 184), comparable to the SA's song of allegiance to Hitler;<sup>7</sup> Loyalty Day replaces Labor Day (*ICHH* 185), and, as in Germany after March 24, 1933, all other political parties are abolished in August 1937 in favor of the Patriotic Party

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<sup>5</sup> The Nazi movement in America adopted the same administrative reorganization (cf. Diamond 99, fns. 29 & pp. 115-16). Many other parallels between Nazi Germany and Lewis's Corpo State can also be found in 'The Friends of the New Germany' (1933-35) and the 'German-American Bund' (1936-39) (cf. Diamond, Chs. 4-5 & 8-9).

<sup>6</sup> Pelley was also called 'the Chief' (cf. Ribuffo 63; Herzstein 166). Lewis satirized the dignity of the chief of state (chief executive, commander-in-chief) by comparing 'Chief' Windrip not only to the 'Führer' or 'Il Duce', but also to the Imperial Wizzard of the Ku Klux Klan (*ICHH* 183).

<sup>7</sup> The hymn 'Bring Out the Old-Time Musket' becomes to Windrip's 'band of liberators' what the 'Horst Wessel Lied' was to the Nazis (*ICHH* 67). As in Nazi Germany, the salute is also given with one arm held out (*ICHH* 310); and the greetings 'Hail Windrip!' (*ICHH* 404) or 'Hail Haik!' (*ICHH* 454).



(*ICHH* 186), a kind of Nazi ‚Einheitspartei‘ (i.e. the NSDAP). The Corporate State, an idea borrowed from Italy (cf. *ICHH* 186), however, abandons its promise to grant each family \$5,000, and instead eliminates unemployment by forcing people into labor camps. Minority groups, particularly Negroes, are suppressed and eliminated, and Jews financially exploited and purged, as were gypsies and Jews in Germany; political opponents are likewise sent to concentration camps; border controls are set up to curtail the flight of „poisonous counter revolutionists“ (*ICHH* 193), among others Walt Trowbridge, who, however, manages to escape to Canada to found the New Underground opposition to the Corpo State (cf. *ICHH* Chs. 17-18). In September 1937, the Corporos start taking over local newspapers, and Jessup is charged with treason and tried (*ICHH* 227f.) before the new District Military Judge, Effingham Swan, who is characterized as „the perfect gentleman-Fascist“ (*ICHH* 215), in the style of the British Fascist leader, Oswald Mosley (cf. *ICHH* 216), although his brutality – the judge orders guards to execute Jessup’s son-in-law for protesting (*ICHH* 234) – is more reminiscent of Nazi legal terror by men like Roland Freisler, President of the ‚Volksgerichtshof‘. In October 1937 all crime is ‚eliminated‘ through mass arrests, and the New American Education is introduced by the closure of private colleges and the absorption of state universities into central Corpo universities, all with the same curriculum (*ICHH* 249), reminiscent of the ‚Gleichschaltung‘ of cultural activities in Nazi Germany. Opposition journalists, such as Raymond Moley and George Seldes, are imprisoned and, reminiscent of Nazi ‚Bücherverbrennung‘ in May 1933, books by ‚unwanted‘ American and foreign authors are burned publicly in cities all around the country (*ICHH* 264f.).

Anticipating arrest, Jessup tries, but fails, to escape to Canada (*ICHH* 277f.). Then, in reaction to pressure from his son, Philip, to stop opposing the government because it jeopardizes his own chance to receive an assistant military judgeship, Jessup not only disowns him (*ICHH* 291), but in February 1938 also becomes actively engaged in the New Underground (*ICHH* 308). Chapters 26 to 30 of Lewis’s novel cover the production and distribution of illegal pamphlets for the New Underground at the offices or his newspaper. However, in July 1938 Jessup is arrested and sentenced by Provincial Commissioner Swan to seventeen years in a local Trianon concentration camp (*ICHH* 371), and Chapters 31-32 describe life there.

A short time later Lee Sarason deposes Windrip and grabs the dictatorship (*ICHH* 409 & 419-20). Subsequently a power struggle, more reminiscent of the USSR in the late 1920s than in Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany, ensues. During his two years as dictator, Windrip, like Hitler has become obsessed with wanting to expand his ‚empire‘ by incorporating Canada, Mexico, and, indeed, all of South America, but was also, like both Hitler and Long, constantly fearful of plots against him and therefore surrounded himself with body guards and spent more and more time in the seclusion of hotel suites than in the

White House (*ICHH* 413f.). Meanwhile, Sarason secretly acquires power by beguiling officials into regarding him as their real leader and by purging others from the government. The plot against ,Chief' Windrip, and even more so the subsequent disposal of Sarason by General Haik (*ICHH*, 426), are therefore also reminiscent of the so-called ,Röhm-Putsch' in Germany on June 30, 1934. After exiling Windrip to Paris, President Sarason appoints „young officer friends to the most responsible offices in State and army“ (*ICHH* 422) and has orgies in the White House. General Haik, the new Secretary of War, scolds Sarason for setting a bad example for the nation with his homosexual and decadent lifestyle (*ICHH* 424), reminiscent of the activities of Ernst Röhm and his gay young SA men. Sarason, ignoring warnings of the ambitious, brutal, and puritanical General Haik, is assassinated by him after only one month as President (January 1939), and Haik subsequently assumes power himself: „then America really did begin to suffer“ (*ICHH* 427) under „the new reign of righteousness and the blackjack“ (*ICHH* 428) of the new president's „Scientific Totalitarian State“ (*ICHH* 427).

In late January 1939 Doremus Jessup escapes from Trianon concentration camp and makes his way to Canada (*ICHH* 436f.) to join the New Underground in Montreal (*ICHH* 440). In the following months popular rebellion against the Corpo regime spreads from the mid-West to the West and disrupts Haik's plans to invade Mexico. In August 1939 General Emmanuel Coon, Chief of Staff of the regular army and one of the leading Corpo idealists, who had supported Windrip as the best defence against Communism, defects to Minnesota and declares Trowbridge as temporary President of the United States (reminiscent of serious army opposition to Hitler in the run-up to the ,Röhm-Putsch' [*ICHH* 448]). However, the rebellion falters (Ch. 37), and the novel ends with the country still a Corpo State, with mounting opposition, but the rebellion temporarily stalled (Ch. 38). Jessup, now fully committed to active opposition, is assigned for service in Minnesota (*ICHH* 450) – where, significantly, Sinclair Lewis was born in 1885 – to ,proselytize' on behalf of „The American Coöperative Commonwealth“ (*ICHH* 450), as the followers of Trowbridge and Coon have begun to call themselves (Chs. 37-38).

Historical events did not, of course, confirm Lewis's literary projection of an American dictatorship. Threats from either the Right or the Left did not ultimately materialize; a third party challenge in 1936 was doomed after Long's assassination in 1935, and rivalries among the leaders of the National Union Party (Coughlin, Lemke, Smith, Townsend,) resulted in ignominious defeat by FDR, who was re-elected in a landslide over the Republican candidate, Governor Landon of Kansas (cf. Bennett 189-272; Brinkley 255-61). While challenges in 1935 had moved FDR to the left in legislation (Second New Deal), he was widely criticized in his second term of office for appearing to want to concentrate in the presidency increasing powers over both the legislative and judicial branches of government. Particularly controversial were FDR's so-called Supreme Court ,packing' plan in 1937 and his Government Reorganization Bill

of 1938, which were motivated by the President's desire to protect New Deal legislation and to make the federal government run more efficiently, but which were perceived as measures threatening the separation of powers in the Constitution. Equally disturbing was FDR's attempt to 'purge' conservative Democrats in the mid-term elections of 1938 in order to make a clear distinction between a liberal Democratic Party and a conservative Republican Party. Such attempts by FDR made it possible for his harshest critics to compare him to Fascist dictators like Hitler and Mussolini (cf., e.g., Garraty 923ff.; Johnson [1] 268-78). FDR served as President for the same twelve years (1933-45) as Hitler held office as Chancellor of the Third Reich. He was democratically re-elected in 1940, and, in the midst of war, for a fourth term in 1944. Among those Americans casting their vote for FDR in 1940 were Sinclair Lewis and Dorothy Thompson, who after years of criticizing so-called 'Fascist' tendencies of the New Deal in her *New York Herald Tribune* column 'On the Record' (1936ff.) switched her support from Willkie to FDR, because she was convinced that the incumbent President could better lead the USA in the world war against Fascism (cf. Kurth 319-27; Schorer 669;).

Jessup is Sinclair Lewis's representative Liberal of the 1930s, who is self-critical enough to blame neither Big Business nor the demagogues for the tyranny of the Corpo dictatorship, but rather „all the conscientious, respectable, lazy-minded Doremus Jessups who have let the demagogues wriggle in, without fierce enough protest“ (*ICHH* 224). He is „a middle-class intellectual“ (*ICHH* 247), who in his 'debates' with the Socialist John Pollikop and the Communist Karl Pascal (cf. Chs. 13 & 20) steadfastly stands for individual freedom and tolerance in democracy against totalitarianism and bigotry in dictatorships, whether of the Fascist Right or the Communist Left (*ICHH* 342-45).

Fascist dictatorships, of course, continued in Italy, Germany and other countries, notably Spain, after the publication of Lewis's novel, and so did Communist dictatorships, particularly in Stalinist Russia. Despite the defeat, or collapse, of these totalitarian regimes (in the 1940s, 1970s and 1990s), the threat of neo-Fascism in the present-day remnant of the Soviet Union, but also in several Western European countries, at the end of the 20th century, and in the United States during the presidency of George W. Bush (2001-09), would have made it particularly rewarding to re-read Lewis's political cautionary tale about the threat of totalitarianism and the Liberal's struggle against the complacent assumption that 'it can't happen here'.<sup>8</sup> Long, Coughlin, and others, including the leaders of the Corpo State in Lewis's novel, shared with the Fascist movement certain anxieties, ideas, and images, and drew from similar

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<sup>8</sup> This year's Republican National Convention, in which delegates of the United States Republican Party will choose the party's nominee for President of the United States, will be held in Cleveland, Ohio, on July 18–21, 2016, and it remains to be seen whether a right-wing radical like Donald Trump will be nominated, and if so, whether he'll become the 45th US president!

political traditions; „they were not, however,“ as Alan Brinkley observed in *Voices of Protest*, „fascist in any meaningful sense of the term.“ (282) According to this author, what was common to any such movements in varying degrees has been „the fear of concentrated power, the tradition of American resistance to being governed“; and „as long as this fear of distant power remained the basis of a movement rather than the foundation of a regime, it was easy to avoid the contradictions“. (ibid.) „But,“ as Brinkley concludes, „had Long and Coughlin ever gained power [as did Windrip, Sarason, and Haik in Lewis’s novel; FB/JT], the conflicts within their beliefs would have become more painful“, and „how they might have resolved them we can only guess“ (283). Lewis’s novel was one such ‚guess‘!

Although there is an abundance of reviews of Roth’s novel, only a few mention *It Can’t Happen Here*, despite the fact that in Anglo-American literature Lewis’s novel is classed as an outstanding example of political utopian fiction. Also, the odd reviews which happen to mention Lewis’s novel – like Alfred Kazin in the early 1940s, alleging that *It Can’t Happen Here* „was not really an ambitious book and certainly not a careful and deeply imagined one“ (Kazin 225) – do so in a rather disparaging way: Schwarzschild, e.g., generalizing, argued that „as a novel it [*ICHH*] has rightly been criticized“, while Wisse noted quite specifically: „To compare *The Plot Against America* with its forgotten predecessor [...], is to acknowledge how much more plausibly Roth has portrayed his imagined America“ (66 & 68). Indeed, there are few dissenting voices, Berman being one, who maintained that „the classic of classics has always been Sinclair Lewis’s *It Can’t Happen Here* from 1935.“

The genesis of Roth’s novel can be traced to his explanatory essay in the *New York Times* on September 19, 2004 (Roth [5] 10-12), which shows that the inspiration for *The Plot Against America* was, above all, the threat of anti-Semitism, both home and abroad, in the 1930s. Roth claims that such a Fascist threat, prompted in 1940 by the fictitious election of Charles Lindbergh as president of the United States, with focus on isolationism, occurred to him in late 2000 while perusing Arthur M. Schlesinger’s memoirs *Innocent Beginnings 1917-1950* (Schlesinger [2]). In his essay Roth states: „It made me think. What if they had?“ (Roth [5] 10) No such reference can be found, however, in Schlesinger’s book, and it must therefore be assumed that Roth confused Schlesinger with A. Scott Berg’s Lindbergh biography (399 & 419), who mentions that some Republicans, especially Senator Borah, had wanted to run Lindbergh for president, an assumption further corroborated by the fact that the author had included similar references in at least two of his previous novels. In *American Pastoral* e.g. the main character, Lou Levov, comments: „The hero Charles Lindbergh – pro-Nazi, pro-Hitler, and the so-called national hero of his country. [...] Sure we have bastards in this country – home-grown and plenty of ‘em“ (Roth [2] 289; cf. also Jeansonne; Ribuffo); and in *The Human Stain* one of the writers in residence at Athena College „is always addressed as Charles Lindbergh, wearing his antique pilot gear.“ (Roth [3] 265) Roth’s outline

plan for *The Plot Against America* therefore seems to have been „[t]o alter the historical reality by making Lindbergh America’s 33rd president while keeping everything else as close to factual truth as [he] could [...],“ with the proviso – which he calls a „spontaneous choice“ – „to tell the story of Lindbergh’s presidency from the point of view my own family [...].“ (Roth [5] 10) It is a sobering novel, but not a bleak one, as stated by the author himself in an interview with *Time* magazine reporter Lev Grossman: „I think this book is wholly optimistic. [...] You know why? It never happened! At a time when it might have happened, it never did happen. That’s pretty terrific, you know.“ (77)

The title of Lewis’s novel, used by the author, among other things, for the purpose of ironic contrast (cf. *ICHH* Ch. 2), has entered the English language as a catch phrase, perennially warning against complacency in reaction to anti-democratic threats. Indeed, some critics claim that it is the phrase rather than the novel itself which is remembered today (cf. Vidal). Despite Roth’s insistence in his explanatory essay that he „had no literary models for reimagining the historical past“ (Roth [5] 10), he no doubt was familiar with *It Can’t Happen Here* and used it as an example for his own novel,<sup>9</sup> especially since he had Lou Levov recommend it in *American Pastoral*: „You know the book *It Can’t Happen Here*? There’s a wonderful book. I forget the author.“ (Roth [2] 287)<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Roth cites Lewis’s wife, Dorothy Thompson (1893-1961), in *The Plot Against America* (cf. *TPAA* 177) as one of Herman Roth’s favourite reporters (cf. *TPAA* 56) and as an eminent liberal journalist (cf. *TPAA* 265), who, of course, was a fierce critic of Hitler (cf. *TPAA* 56), Lindbergh (cf. *TPAA* 13), and the German-American Bund (cf. *TPAA* 177). And additional evidence of Roth’s detailed knowledge of Lewis’s novel can be gleaned from the way he employed similar literary techniques in *The Plot*, such as the utilization of names, enumerations, newsreel reports, radio broadcasts, letters, documents etc. Lastly, there are some clues that Roth borrowed the title of his „popeyed tabloid melodrama“ (Berman) from contemporary publications in the 1940s, abounding with slogans like ‚plot‘, ‚conspiracy‘, or ‚sabotage‘.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Claudia Roth Pierpont: „The ‚what if‘ historical genre was not his [Roth’s] metier, and he’d read hardly any of the books that critics cited in comparison. (There was one exception: Sinclair Lewis’s fascist takeover tale of 1935, ‚It Can’t Happen here‘, had been a favorite of his ever politically vigilant father.“ (276)

<sup>10</sup> In a ‚Postscript‘ Roth included Dorothy Thompson among „among the historical figures in the novel“ (*TPAA* 380).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. e.g. John Carlson: *Under Cover. My Four Years in the Nazi Underworld of America. The Amazing Revelation of How Axis Agents and Our Enemies Within Are Now Plotting to Destroy the United States* (New York: Dutton, 1943); Michael Sayers / Albert E. Kahn: *Sabotage! The Secret War Against America* (New York: Metro Publications, 1944); Michael Sayers / Albert E. Kahn: *The Plot Against the Peace. A Warning to the Nation!* (New York: Dial Press, 1945); Albert E. Kahn: *High Treason. The Plot Against the People* (Croton-on-Hudson, NY: The Hours Publishers, 1950); similarly David George Kin’s polemics: *The Plot Against America. Senator Wheeler and the Forces behind him* (Missoula, MT: John E. Kennedy, 1946), referred to by Joseph K. Howard: ‚The Decline and Fall of Burton K. Wheeler‘, in: *Harper’s Magazine* 194 (March 1947), pp. 226-36, which Roth mentions in the ‚Postscript‘ to his novel (364).

Historical background for both Lewis's and Roth's story was the growth of native Fascism in the US in the late 1930s and early 1940s, which in turn copied nascent Fascist developments in Europe. As far as Lewis's novel is concerned, these aspects have by now been well covered in recent research (cf. Betz / Thunecke; Knoenagel; Tanner); as regards Roth, the rise of anti-Semitism in the US, the main topic in *The Plot*, received attention in contemporary publications as early as the 1940s (Kramer; Strong; Tozier), and was exhaustively dealt with in Schonbach's 1958 dissertation on *Native American Fascism During the 1930s and 1940s*.

This leads straight to the narrated time of the two novels, which runs consecutively from 1936 till 1942, with Roth's narrative starting (in June 1940) shortly after Lewis's finished (in August 1939). More specifically, Lewis covered the period from May 1936 till August 1939, while Roth focuses on the period from June 1940 till October 1942. One third of the narrative time in Lewis's novel (Chs. 1-14) covers the year 1936, and two thirds focuses on 1937/38 (Chs. 15-24 & Chs. 25-34), with just four chapters (Chs. 35-38) of the conclusion on 1939. In other words, *It Can't Happen Here* is devoted mainly to the establishment of the Corporate State under President Windrip, and only to a relatively small degree to him being deposed and exiled, the assassination of his successor, Lee Sarason, the coup d'état by General Haik, and the beginning of a rebellion organized by the defeated presidential candidate, Walter Trowbridge, in Canada. By contrast, the focus of the narrative time in Roth's *The Plot Against America* primarily concentrates on the build-up of a fear-factor (starting in June 1940) in the wake of the nomination, and subsequent election, of Charles Lindbergh as president of the United States, although the threat of Fascism only materializes near the end of the novel (in October 1942), and lasts barely two weeks. This brief spell of totalitarianism in Roth's novel follows the assassination of the Walter Winchell, the disappearance of President Lindbergh, the arrest of OAA director Rabbi Bengelsdorf and other Jewish leaders, and the declaration of martial law by Acting President Wheeler, the novel's 'real villain', as a reviewer observed (Minzesheimer), who is aided and abetted by the Secretary of the Interior in Lindbergh's cabinet, Henry Ford, who had a long history of anti-Semitic activities, and „whom Hitler had already settled on as Lindbergh's successor, despite Ford's advanced age“ (cf. Ch. 8, 325).

While Lewis utilized an astounding array of contemporary sources (many of them supplied by his wife, Dorothy Thompson), and – writing in the summer of 1935 – used historical facts as they actually occurred (1933-35), projecting a fictitious present and future (1936-39), Roth, despite the advantage of writing with hindsight, employed far fewer historical details, and juggled past, present and future to suit his narrative purpose of compressing the plot of his novel into the period 1940-42. In fact, Lev Grossman got pretty near the truth of the author's narrative approach when he asserted that Roth „sees the world

as a tangle of hypotheticals and what-ifs, of counterlives and forking paths and roads not taken. It is down one of those roads that his new novel lies. A chronic reviser, Roth is ready to rewrite history. "(76) Lewis has Buzz Windrip, modelled primarily on Louisiana senator Huey Long (Betz / Thunecke 49, fn. 8; Brinkley), defeat Franklin Roosevelt for the Democratic nomination in 1936 and then win the presidential election later that year. Long was, of course, assassinated (in September 1935) before the completion of *It Can't Happen Here*, but otherwise the southern politician's death had no adverse impact on Lewis's novel, since it alludes to a wide variety of contemporary European and American figures as models for his fictional counterparts. In fact, as argued by Schlesinger, „part of the plausibility [of *ICHH*] [...] is the ease with which Lewis produced American counterparts to leading Nazis. “ (Schlesinger [1] 89) Historical events, of course, did not confirm Lewis's literary projection of a Fascist dictatorship in the United States. Roosevelt was re-elected in 1936 in a landslide victory over Landon and Lemke. However, in his second term of office, FDR was widely criticized for appearing to concentrate in his presidency increasing powers over the legislative and judicial branches which caused his harshest critics to compare him to Hitler (cf. Johnson [1]). Furthermore, his quest for a third (and later fourth) presidential term of office was frowned upon (cf. *TPAA* 306). Nevertheless, Roosevelt was each time democratically re-elected (cf. Tuxwell).

Roth, in *The Plot*, has Lindbergh win the Republican nomination, and then defeat Roosevelt, in the 1940 presidential election, on the campaign slogan ‚Vote for Lindbergh or vote for war‘ (Ch. 1, 30-31). Lindbergh's landslide victory was subsequently presented as „normalcy raided to heroic proportions“; for „if Lindbergh promised no war, then there would be no war [...]“(Ch. 2, 53). Admitting that he had no literary models for re-imagining the historical past, the author conceded that his „talent [wasn't] for imagining events on a grand scale.“ (Roth [5] 10) Rather, he „imagined something small [...] to be credible“, giving vent to the hope that what he described in *The Plot* „could easily have happened in the presidential election in 1940, when the country was angrily divided between the Republican isolationists [...] and the Democratic interventionists“ (Roth [5] 10), adding: „I don't think it's far-fetched to imagine the election outcome as I do in the book [...].“ (Roth [5] 10) So, why did Roth choose Lindbergh as the protagonist of his novel? The author explains that as an „isolationist“ and „white supremacist“ with a „racist attitude toward Jews“, Lindbergh presented himself as an ideal „political figure in a novel where I wanted American Jews to feel the pressure of a genuine anti-Semitic threat.“ (Roth [5] 10) For what mattered to Roth in his novel was not „what he does (which was very little, once he's sign a nonaggression pact with Hitler after taking office [...]), but what American Jews suspect, rightly or wrongly, that he might be capable of doing given his public utterances, most specifically his vilification of Jews in a nationwide address, as alien warmongers indifferent to America's interests.“ (Roth [5] 10) Roth

refers here of course to Lindbergh's notorious speech of September 11, 1941, at an America First rally in Des Moines, Iowa, which Roth moved up to *before* the presidential election in fall 1940, while not „alter[ing] its content or impact“ (Ch. 1, 13), in order to position Lindbergh as the successful Republican challenger to Roosevelt that year. And he also distorted, or simplified, the history of the America First movement (since late 1939), Lindbergh's role as its spokesman rather than as a political leader, and the movement's focus on trying to keep America out of war, thus distinguishing it from other ‚fifth column‘ organizations, especially the German-American Bund (the one most often named in *The Plot*), and their Fascist agendas (TPAA 10, 20, 166, 176-77, 209, 267; also 264-65, 300, 302, 305, 362; cf. also Lavine). Besides, following the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the America First movement more or less disbanded, and its leaders (including Lindbergh) began to support America's entry into the war. However, by delaying the attack on Pearl Harbor to December 1942 in his novel, Roth was able to ignore these developments. Historically, fifth columns, Fascist organizations generally, and organized anti-Semitism had declined in strength and ceased to be a potential threat to the US by 1940 (Diamond, Kramer, Lavine, Schonbach, Strong), as emphasized by Norman Markowitz in a critique of Paul Berman's review of Roth's novel): „I don't think Charles Lindbergh and the America Firsters would have defeated Franklin Roosevelt in 1940 in any presidential election,“ Markowitz argued, „given the strength of the labor movement and the balance of the political forces in the country.“ And Harris pointed out that „the political realities of the summer and autumn of 1940 more or less blow away Roth's premise for his book“, adding: „The fact was, even a politically untarnished Lindbergh could never have beaten Roosevelt in the November 1940 election. It was precisely because they had been smashed flat by all the congressional and presidential elections in the previous 10 years, that the Republicans in 1940 rejected Taft of Ohio [an isolationist] and selected Willkie of Indiana [an interventionist] as their national candidate.“

Similarly, Roth chose Walter Winchell to lead the political opposition to Lindbergh because – as the author explains in his essay – „the real Walter Winchell hated Lindbergh and along with people like Dorothy Thompson and Roosevelt's interior secretary, Harold Ickes, attacked him as pro-Nazi from the moment he became the voice of the America First version of non-intervention“ (Roth [5] 11). But the America First movement was born out of a disgruntled Republican isolationist minority following the 1940 election won by Roosevelt (Johnson [2]), who, however, was still pledging *not* to send American troops to Europe. More importantly, Roth „wanted Lindbergh opposed not by a saint but by a gossip columnist, the most famous gossip columnist in the country, gross and cheap without apology, whose



enemies considered him a loudmouth Jew.“ (Roth [5] 11) In *The Plot* (Ch. 8), La Guardia, then mayor of New York, eulogized the assassinated Winchell as follows:<sup>12</sup> „Walter is too loud, Walter talks too fast, Walter says too much, and yet, by comparison, Walter’s vulgarity is something great, and Lindbergh’s decorum is hideous“ (TPAA 304), continuing: „Our president is an admirer of Adolf Hitler and more like a Nazi himself – and Walter Winchell was Hitler’s first American enemy and his worst American enemy. There’s where our imperfect Walter was incorruptible – where it mattered.“ (TPAA 304) Moreover, the father-character, Herman Roth, identifies Walter Winchell, whom the Roth family, but also Newark, and American Jews in general, admired „as a fearless outsider and a cunning insider, as well as [...] a confidant of Roosevelt’s inner circle“ and as a vehement critic of the German-American Bund (the ‚ratzis‘) and its leader Fritz Kuhn (Ch. 1, 20). Winchell is one of Herman Roth’s favourite reporters (cf. TPAA 56) and, like Herman himself, is referred to as a „loudmouth Jew“ during the family’s trip to Washington, D.C. (Ch. 2, 78). This trip had in fact already been planned during Roosevelt’s second term of office (cf. TPAA 44) but Herman and Bess Roth felt that in June 1941, six months after President Lindbergh’s inauguration, it was still important for them „to visit the historic sites and the famous government buildings“ with their sons Sandy and Philip, and to „convince [their sons] that nothing had changed other than that FDR was no longer in office,“ that „America wasn’t a fascist country and wasn’t going to be,“ that „a new president and a new Congress [were] bound to follow the law as set down in the Constitution,“ (TPAA 55) that although the new leadership was Republican, isolationist, and to a point anti-Semitic, it was still a long way from being Fascist, and that there was still freedom of the press, as well as scrutiny and criticism of the new administration by reporters like Quentin Reynolds, William L. Shirer (498), Dorothy Thompson, Walter Winchell (cf. Gabler), and the staff of the left-wing newspaper *PM* (Hoopes 246; Wechsler).

*The Plot Against America* focuses on the semi-fictitious Roth family’s experience of anti-Semitism during the ‚re-imagined‘ two years (1940-42) of Lindbergh’s presidency. This focus on a Jewish family in a real milieu (i.e. the Weequahic neighborhood of Newark, NJ; cf. Chs. 1, 1-5, Ch. 6, 207, 219-21 passim), narrated in the first person by Philip Roth, the youngest son, gives the novel immediacy, credibility, and power. In fact, the most convincing and satisfying parts of *The Plot* deal with personal anxieties experienced by various members of the Roth family of potential Fascist and anti-Semitic trends in the United States, rather than recounting ‚actual‘ public events, a narrative stance criticized by various

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Fiorello La Guardia’s notorious ‚Chamber of Horrors‘ speech on March 3, 1937, and another speech against Hitler at Madison Square Garden on March 15, 1937, both of which provoked violent reactions from Nazi Germany, but were ignored in Roth’s biographical sketch on the former mayor of New York (cf. Kessler, listed in Roth [4] and Remak, 158-64).

reviewers. Flusfeder, e.g., argued: „Roth is superb as ever on the ferocious, kitchen-table disputes and the half-lies of family life. But the ‚history‘ wears us down. We are force-fed great chunks of expository prose that aren’t quite the register of the boy then nor man now [...]“ (cf. also Rich; Yardley). Acocella, on the other hand, had nothing but praise: „One of the glories of this book is its counterpoint of large and small, its zooming back and forth, from chapter to chapter, between world events and the reactions to them in the Roth household“ (98), which however – according to the same reviewer – also creates a kind of ‚multivocality‘ that prevents the reader from seeing *The Plot* „as a straightforward political statement.“ (100) In fact, this critic’s comments, in many ways, reflect Herman Roth’s views (and, by implication, those of the author himself) of history, as outlined in Ch. 5: „History is everything that happens in this house to an ordinary man – that’ll be history some day too“. (TPAA 180) Nevertheless, Roth, the author, quite obviously manipulates his family history for his narrative purposes; for the experiences of Philip and his family in the novel are all part of what the author at different times has labelled as his „assault on the imagination“, (Roth [1] 9) his „reimagining the historical past“, his „exercise in historical imagination“ (Roth [5] 11), and which contrasts sharply with details of his family history as presented in Roth’s memoirs *The Facts* (1988), in which he recalls the relative security of his childhood in the 1930s and 1940s, with ‚threats‘ felt only from corporative gentiles at Metropolitan Life or from ethnic youth gangs in Newark. In his explanatory essay Roth concedes that – while trying to portray his (elder) brother (Sandy) „less faithfully“ – he „had to manipulate him a bit for the sake of the story“ (Roth [5] 10). Roth added, however, that „the deepest reward in writing and what lends the story its pathos wasn’t the resurrection of my family circa 1941 but the invention of the family downstairs, of the tragic Wishnows, on whom the full brunt of anti-Semitism falls“, and in particular that of the Wishnows’ little boy, Seldon; for „[i]t’s the children in the book [Philip, Sandy, Alvin, and Seldon] who join the trivial to the tragic“, and whose presence – „far from constraining [him]“ – allowed the author „latitude“ (Roth [5] 11).

Roth, however, not only manipulates his own family history in his novel, but also vastly exaggerates the menace of anti-Semitism in the US in the late 1930s and early 1940s. By focusing on anti-Semitism as virtually the only form of a proto-Fascist threat in the US, and by portraying the Roth family as one of a few becoming obsessed and almost hysterical with it, he greatly magnified the actual danger, compared to details given elsewhere in his autobiographical writings (cf. Wirth-Nesher 167-68). In fact, the theme that Roth develops in the early chapters of *The Plot*, i.e. the growing conflict between Herman Roth and his son Sandy, but also that with Rabbi Bengelsdorf and Aunt Evelyn (his wife’s sister) over his son’s participation in a volunteer program, bear little to no relation to actual events within his family at that time. In the wake of an invitation to the White House on the occasion of an official visit by the German

Secretary of State, Joachim von Ribbentrop, things eventually come to a head between Herman and Rabbi Bengelsdorf. For the Rabbi, who has just been appointed Director of the Office of American Absorption in Washington, D.C., uses the opportunity of an invitation to a dinner at the Roth's place for a powerful, and highly compelling, rebuttal of Herman's criticism, stating:

Because there is ignorance as well among Jews, unfortunately, many of whom persist in thinking of President Lindbergh as an American Hitler when they know full well that he is not a dictator who attained power in a putsch but a democratic leader who came to office through a landslide victory in a fair and free election and who has not exhibited a single inclination toward authoritarian rule. He does not glorify the state at the expense of the individual [...]. Where is the fascist statism? Where is the fascist thuggery? Where are the Nazi Brown Shirts and the secret police? When have you observed a single manifestation of fascist anti-Semitism emanating from our government? What Hitler perpetrated on Germany's Jews with the passage of the Nuremberg Laws is the absolute antithesis of what President Lindbergh has undertaken to do for American's Jews through the establishment of the Office of American Absorption. The Nuremberg Laws deprive Jews of their rights and did everything to exclude them from membership in their nation. What I have encouraged President Lindbergh to do is to initiate programs to invite Jews to enter as far into the national life as they like – a national life that I'm sure you would agree is no less ours to enjoy than anyone else's.

(TPAA 110-11)

Despite Roth's claim, in his explanatory essay, that Jews were humiliated by being „deliberately and systematically excluded from partaking of certain advantages and making certain affiliations and entering important portals at every level of American society [in the late 1930s / early 1940s],“ (Roth [5] 11) the whole issue was far more complex than that, especially since many Jewish politicians and leaders – both historically and fictionally – were active in all fields of US society at that time (a fact acknowledged by Roth in his novel after the introduction of martial law on October 13, 1942 [TPAA, Ch. 8, 316]). And consequently, Rabbi Bengelsdorf's ‚sermon‘ – one critic referred to him as „a delicious pontifical windbag“ (Acocella 78) – is rather counter-productive to Roth's narrative strategy in his novel, being far more convincing than any of Herman Roth's fear-induced statements, which lack logic and supporting evidence. In any case, the concrete ‚threat‘ to Jews by a brief Fascist administration in the US does not appear until much later in *The Plot*, with FBI surveillance and interrogations (in TPAA, Chs. 5 & 6: 164-67 [Philip] and 170 & 173 [Alvin]), with Metropolitan Life's letter announcing Herman's transfer to Danville, KY, under the so-called Homestead 42 Program (in Ch. 6, 204-05), with Shepsie Tischwell's emigration to Canada in June 1942 (in Chs. 5 & 8, 180, 194-95, 300), FBI surveillance of Herman Roth (in Chs. 7, 249-50), Rabbi Bengelsdorf's arrest (in Chs. 8 & 9, 316, 326, 337), Winchell's presidential

campaign, followed by urban riots and his assassination (in Ch. 7, 242ff., 264ff., 272ff.), Lindbergh's disappearance (in Ch. 8, 307) followed by the introduction of martial law (in Ch. 8, 308), widespread arrests of prominent politicians (among others La Guardia and Roosevelt; 316-17), and First Lady Anne Morrow Lindbergh's escape from a mental institution (in Ch. 8, 317). All this is far more cursory than the actual historical reality in Nazi Germany, in contrast to Sinclair Lewis's extensive portrayal of an American Fascist state (cf. Betz / Thunecke, 41-42). Also, the so-called 'plot' in Roth's novel has a sudden and weak ending, with the 'deus ex machina'-like disappearance of Lindbergh (which is never properly explained!), followed by just two weeks of martial law under Acting President Wheeler, and the employment of cheap narrative techniques – mainly diary-like newsreel reports in Ch. 8 as an alternative to actual action and dialogue, while the parallel chronology of public and private events has a retarding effect leading to a vastly inferior conclusion of *The Plot Against America* as compared to Lewis's *It Can't Happen Here* (notwithstanding its maudlin last sentence: „And still Doremus goes on in the red sunshine, for a Doremus Jessup can never die.“ (ICHH 458) Thus, reviewer Bob Minzesheimer's evaluation of the weak conclusion of *The Plot* is quite fitting: „[...] Roth lapses into melodrama when he tries to tie up all the loose ends in such a hurry that he fails to explain how another presidential election was held in 1942,“ corroborated by other reviewers, like e.g. Flusfeder, who found the „lack of jeopardy“ to be one of the main problems of this novel; for „[a] sensitive child's apprehensions in an uneasy USA are not much of a match for what was going on in the Europe of 1941 and 1942“, or Frederick Busch, who complained: „What we get is a '40 Jewish fairy tale come not-quite-true“. Michael Gorra, too, noted that „many of the book's sharpest moments lack a fully necessary relation to its opening premises“, and that the way „the country emerges from the Lindbergh years requires a carefully planned deus ex machina“, and Ruth Wisse even derided „Roth's animating political conceit“ which „fizzles in two pages like a spent firecracker.“ (68) In fact, the ending of his novel is probably only 'saved' by its concluding part, when Herman and Sandy Roth travel to Kentucky to retrieve Seldon Wishnow, which elicited praise from at least one reviewer: „One of Roth's greatest strengths is the ability to craft a provocative ending, and the beautifully paced concluding page of *The Plot Against America* can stand with his finest works.“ (Gorra)

The conclusion of *The Plot* returns the focus to the Roth family. Both they, and the Jessup family in Lewis's *It Can't Happen Here*, are subjected to intense struggles, conflicts, divisions, and tragedies, which can only be touched on briefly here. Herman and Bess Roth, despite their problems in troublesome times, remain devoted to each other. Doremus Jessup also has an intellectual lover, Lorinda Pike; and in their discourse Lewis successfully depicts „the politically ignorant average American who is susceptible to fascist doctrine.“ (Knoenagel 23) While Herman Roth and his family refuse to emigrate to Canada and

stay in local Newark, NJ, Doremus fails in his initial attempt to get across the Canadian border, is – as a result of his activities for Trowbridge’s New Underground – ultimately arrested and imprisoned in a concentration camp, but eventually escapes abroad to engage in subversive activities. The older sons, Philip and Sandy, rebel against their respective fathers; however, while „the shock of circumstances“ finally steers Sandy back into the family fold (Ch. 7, 239), Philip remains permanently estranged from his father, Doremus, by becoming, and remaining, a loyal judge in the Corpo State. Dr. Fowler Greenhill, executed on the order of District Judge Effingham Swan, is avenged by his wife Mary – her son David, having been brain-washed to join the HJ-type Corpo youth movement – in a Kamikaze-style plane crash. Cousin Alvin, prevented from active service in the US armed forces, joins the Canadian forces and goes to war in Europe, only to be severely wounded, having one leg amputated at the knee, and returns, only to be disenchanted with life in general, and eventually – following a bloody brawl with his uncle Herman, becomes permanently estranged with the Roth family (Ch. 8). But while the end of *It Can’t Happen Here*, despite the hope of overthrowing the Fascist dictator (Haik), is inconclusive (Parry),<sup>13</sup> Roth’s *The Plot Against America* by contrast offers relief from the nightmare of an imagined Lindbergh presidency and martial law under Acting President Wheeler. And there is also poetic justice in the end in so far as Philip becomes the „prosthesis“ to his playmate Seldon, the „stump“, when he eventually returns to Newark.

Sinclair Lewis wrote his *It Can’t Happen Here* with contemporary native Fascist threats in mind (principally Huey Long), as confirmed by the author in an interview in 1948 (cf. Austin 203),<sup>14</sup> and it can therefore, with some justification, be labelled a political novel. Philip Roth, for his part, bluntly referred to „George W. Bush [as] a man unfit to run a hardware store[,] let alone a nation like this one“(Roth [5] 12), but otherwise denied that *The Plot* is „a roman à clef to the present moment in America.“ (Roth [5] 11) Nonetheless, most reviewers of *The Plot* – like e.g. Gabriel Brownstein, who insisted that „references to George W. Bush’s America are impossible to miss“ – noted allusions and parallels to the current political situation with approval, reservation or objection. Michael Gorra, in response to Roth’s disclaimer, also argued that „it is impossible to read this book, in which an election plunges the nation into an alternative universe, without America’s current condition in mind“; and similarly Daniel Handler: „Reading this novel now feels inescapably allegorical“. For his part, Jonathan Yardley labelled *The Plot*

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<sup>13</sup> Parry argues that „the strongest part of [Lewis’s] novel is the beginning“, but that „once the fascists have established their government, *It Can’t Happen Here* doesn’t have the same intensity.“ (126); see also Schorer, who found in *ICHH* „less real anger“ than „sociological schematization.“ (760) Nevertheless, Parry finds that „*ICHH* was an important novel in 1934“ and that it „is an important novel now“ (147).

<sup>14</sup> Lewis claimed: „I based my story on Huey Long.“

*Against America* „a parable for our times“, while Frank Rich linked it to „the sinking sense that the ‚perpetual fear‘ defines our post-9/11 world – and the ruthless election-year politics of autumn 2004“, a sentiment echoed by Michael Schaub:

Roth has clearly stated his disdain for the current president, and it's easy to read echoes of George W. Bush in Charles Lindbergh. Even the name of Lindbergh's final solution („Just Folks“) hearkens to Bush's false good-o'-boy style. But where Lindbergh was an isolationist, keeping America from liberating the European Jews [...], Bush is the opposite, invading countries on false premises. President Lindbergh scapegoated the Jews; President Bush is scapegoating the Arabs and Muslims.<sup>15</sup>

And most recently Christopher Vials maintained that „Roth's novel could be considered a Bush-era version of Lewis's oft-cited story.“ (12; cf also Swirski 179, 182, 203)

Unlike Lewis's novel, solely devoted to decrying the potential Fascist threat of contemporary demagogues like Huey Long, Roth's book, despite its ‚subtext‘ of critical and ironic allusions to the Bush administration, is not a political novel like Lewis's.<sup>16</sup> Written with hindsight, it must be classed as a historical novel whose primary aim was to demonstrate that in the United States of America, while subjected to internal and external threats, in the late 1930s and early 1940s a climate of fear developed, which could have become fertile ground for ruthless politicians to exploit and to establish a proto-Fascist or even fully fledged totalitarian system, one aspect of which might have been rampant anti-Semitism. Thus Lewis's *It Can't Happen Here* and Roth's *The Plot Against America*, each in its own right, cautioned – and still do! – its respective readership, then and now, of the dangers posed by subversive activities of home-grown proto-Fascist regimes. Having said this though, it should at once be added that both cautionary tales are by no means on a par; for while Lewis, at the time he was writing his novel in 1935, had genuine grounds for being wary of the potential dangers of contemporary Fascist tendencies and anti-Semitism, wide-spread in the 1930s and 1940s in the US, this was *no* issue in American society during the early 2000s, when Roth was writing his novel, as Wisse put it quite succinctly in her review of *The Plot*: „[...] the real fear aroused by Roth's novel is not that America is under ‚threat of becoming fascist‘ but that many of its cultural leading figures and part of America's Jewry, are not prepared to sustain a war against anti-Semites and the America-haters of our own time“, raising the danger of what she calls „infantilization“ (70).

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<sup>15</sup> Of late this kind of scapegoating has gained new prominence in presidential Republican hopeful Donald Trump's demand of a ban of all Muslims entering the United States.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Wisse, who stated peremptorily that „as a novel about politics, this book [TPAA] is irrelevant.“ (70)

Notwithstanding such ‚neo-conservative‘ views, the late dramatist Arthur Miller was one of many prominent liberals giving vent in the autumn of 2004 – shortly before his death – to misgivings about contemporary political trends in the US stating: „We’re headed toward a kind of fascism – it’s our own brand, made in the USA“ (Ungeheuer 48). In the light of his warning it can only be hoped that in troublesome times like ours – much as Lewis’s and Roth’s literary projections of Fascist dictatorships and widespread anti-Semitism were not confirmed – future generations will equally withstand such threats successfully. Granted the novelistic scenario of a potential Fascist or anti-Semitic menace facing open societies like the American (cf. Magil / Stevens), literary works by outstanding authors like Lewis, Nobel Prize winner for literature in 1930, and Philip Roth, a perennial candidate for this award, must therefore be considered invaluable defenders of democratic institutions of a nation increasingly divided into two political camps, and often hamstrung by powerful individuals and groups (cf. Aaron / Bendiner; Vials 23).

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**RÜDIGER AHRENS: *BÜNDISCHE JUGEND. EINE NEUE GESCHICHTE, 1918-1933*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015. 477 pp.**



Rüdiger Ahrens's new history of the German Youth Movement from 1918 to 1933 is a revised Ph.D. dissertation (University of Freiburg, 2014). Born in 1981, Ahrens notes that he has belonged to the Christliche Pfadfinderschaft Deutschlands for the past quarter century (which means that he joined when he was about 9 years old), but that "mittlerweile" he has been more a passive observer than an active member, and that his experience was "hilfreich, um die Faszination einer Jugendgruppe zu verstehen und zugleich den Abstand der untersuchten Bünde zur heutigen Szene besser abzuschätzen" (390).

Previous scholars have tended to repeat the findings from the two early comprehensive studies of Walter Laqueur (*Die deutsche Jugendbewegung. Eine historische Studie* [1962]; *Young Germany. A History of the German Youth Movement* [1962]) and Harry Pross (*Jugend – Eros – Politik. Die Geschichte der deutschen Jugendverbände* [1964]) rather than engage in independent "Quellenforschung"; as a result, particular groups often remain undifferentiated in the context of the German Youth Movement (12). Previous scholars have otherwise been heavily influenced by surviving leaders of the Bünde, whose apologetics, however, were often sharply criticized (13). Even more influential have been such publications by the "Ehemaligen" as Werner Kindt's monumental *Dokumentation der Jugendbewegung* (3 vols., 1963-74). As a former Wandervogel leader and editor of various periodicals between WWI and WWII, Kindt (1898-1981) had an unmatched overview of the Bünde and was still very well connected after 1945 (13).

Kindt argued that politics played only a subordinate role in the Bündische Jugend (14), but other writers had already soon after WWII identified not only "eine starke Rechtstendenz" but also "eine deutliche Affinität zum Nationalsozialismus" (14). In focusing on the rise of the NS-Bewegung and therefore on the period after 1929, however, they tended to ignore the genesis and development of the Bündische Jugend (15). In other studies, the Bündische Jugend appears as only one grouping among many of the German Right, in which the NSDAP ultimately assumed leadership (15). Shortly after WWII, Armin Mohler (*Die konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918-1932* [1950]) distanced, "mit unverhohlenen apologetischer Absicht und bestechlicher Quellenkenntnis," the "konservative Revolution" from National Socialism, implying that the German Right was otherwise innocent of having caused "die

Katastrophe” and supplying useful scholarly justification for “psychische Entlastung” in the Bundesrepublik (16). Forty years later, Stefan Breuer (*Anatomie der konservativen Revolution* [1993]) “demontierte begriffskritisch” Mohler’s analysis, and yet by overly differentiating and emphasizing “die Existenz interner Bruchlinien und Fraktionen,” he blurred “den Grundbestand gemeinsamer Überzeugungen, die in der Rechten vertreten wurden” (16).

On the basis of empirical and archival research of the leading Bünde (421), Ahrens analyzes their organizational development, their ideas, and their activities. The primary sources are the periodicals of the Bündische Jugend (423-25), the records and chronicles of individual Bünde (422), diaries and Nachlässe (422) of individual leaders and members (24). Drawing on documentation especially from the Archiv der deutschen Jugendbewegung (Witzenhausen), Ahrens has also compiled 63 Kurzbiographien (391-418) for convenient reference to the careers of important participants. Although it is difficult to define “das Bündische,” there was an ensemble of Bünde, which felt connected to each other and considered themselves to be “die bündische Jugend.” They regarded themselves to be the legitimate successors to the Wandervögel, that is, to the original German Youth Movement at the turn of the century; they asserted their independence from other groups or associations. The ‘bündische Jugend’ formed what Ahrens calls a “Szene im Sinne eines themenfokussierten Netzwerkes, das sich durch Kommunikation und Interaktion, nicht durch scharf abgrenzbare ‘Mitgliedschaft’ konstituierte” (19).

In the most comprehensive contemporary compilation of *Die deutschen Jugendbünde. Ein Handbuch ihrer Organisation und ihrer Bestrebungen* (1929), Günther Ehrental listed around 40 Bünde, which he called collectively the “freie Jugendbewegung” (20). Only 6 Bünde had more than 6,000 members, far more than the other, much smaller Bünde: Die Deutsche Freischar (13,000), der Großdeutsche Jugendbund (8,000-10,000), der Jungnationalen Bund or Junabu (7,000), der Deutsche Pfadfinderbund or DPB (6,000), die Adler und Falken (6,000), and die Fahrennden Gesellen (10,000). Ahrens notes, however, that die Fahrennden Gesellen lost significant membership after WWI and by 1930 really had no more than 3,000 members, and therefore he focuses his study on the other 5 major Bünde (20) and treats only those of the three dozen other Bünde (with membership ranging from a few hundred to 2,000) named by Ehrental, which aimed to give new impetus to the whole German Youth Movement or developed a distinctive profile: among the older Bünde, der Freideutsche Bund, der Jungdeutsche Bund, der Kronacher Bund, and the academic guilds; among Bünde “mit innovativen Stilelementen,” der Nerother Bund and die dj.I.II (pronounced “De-jot-eins-elf” for Deutsche Jungenschaft vom 1. November 1929); among later Bünde, which wished to distinguish themselves from the established Bünde, der Bund der Reichspfadfinder, die Schilljugend, and die Freischar Schill. Ahrens also considers die Geusen,

who seceded from die Fahrenden Gesellen, as well as smaller Bünde for “Mädchen und Frauen” and the “Sonderfall” of the “Siedlungsbewegung der Artamanen” in East Prussia (21, 136).

An exact total membership of the Bündische Jugend cannot be ascertained, but it is reasonable to estimate that it was around 60,000. Ahrens argues that the total was significantly higher, because the membership increased regularly with more admissions than resignations, and if one estimates an average term of three years’ membership, the total for the 14 years of the Weimar Republic (1919-33) would be four or five times 60,000, or a quarter million (21). To be sure, 60,000 does not appear to be a large number compared to the number of citizens between 15 and 20 (1925: 6,5 million) or to the number of youths between 14 and 25 organized under the Reichsausschuß der deutschen Jugendverbände, primarily in Turn- und Sportvereinen (1926-27: 4,5 million). The difference can be explained by the elitist appeal of the Bünde, which precluded general recruitment. The significance of the ‘bündische Jugend’ derives therefore not from its numbers, but rather than from its influence (22).

Ahrens’s new history of the Bündische Jugend is divided into five chapters or phases. Each chapter begins with a summary of the phase it chronicles and a list of Bünde and their founding year. Chapter 1 (27-47) briefly reviews the two most important predecessors, the Wandervögel and the Pfadfinder (adapted from the English Boy Scouts) in the years 1900 to 1914. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 form the core of Ahrens’s study. Chapter 2 (48-127) traces the formation of the Bündische Jugend (comprised of reformed youth organizations and newly established ones) from the war years (1914-18) to the mass meeting in the Fichtelgebirge in summer 1923. Chapter 3 (128-243) examines the consolidation of the ‘bündische Jugend’ into a broad network (“Szene”) and its idealistic stance (aiming to develop an elite for future national leadership) in opposition to the Weimar Republic in the years 1923 to 1928. Chapter 4 (244-348) analyzes the simultaneous or overlapping offensive actions against the Weimar Republic and defensive stance vis-à-vis National Socialism and the Hitler-Jugend in the years 1928 to 1933, when it went out of organizational existence. Chapter 5 (349-375) traces the “Nachleben” of the ‘bündische Jugend’ during the Third Reich (assimilation and careers of Bündische) and after 1945 (formation of new groups and retrospection of the “Ehemaligen” or pre-1933 Bündische). Ahrens emphasizes that the three phases of the history of the Bündische Jugend from 1914/18 to 1933 should not be considered as strictly demarcated, but rather as overlapping periods. The period of formation process, for example, continued beyond 1923, and the opposition to the Weimar Republic not only continued, but also intensified after 1928 (25-26). Moreover, while the individual chapters follow a strict chronology, thematic aspects are highlighted within each chapter, and both are summarized in Ahrens’s “Ergebnisse” (376-388).

The 'bündische Jugend' did not, as has often been suggested or implied in previous scholarship, develop only out of a fusion of the Wandervogel and the Pfadfinderbewegung. This view obscures the role of a number of other youth groups founded only after WWI, above all, the Deutsch-Nationaler Jugendbund (1919), the Jungnationaler Bund (1921), and the Adler und Falken (1920), which had only loose ties to the two major predecessors and were "stark politisiert" from the beginning (27). Experience of war and defeat gave decisive impetus to veterans and youth in rejecting the pre-war social order and what they perceived to be the chaotic and destructive Liberalism of the Weimar Republic (376). The principles of individual liberty (England) and egalitarianism (France) would be replaced by a holistic and hierarchical order, in which the welfare of the individual would be subsumed under the welfare of the Nation or rather the "Volk", whose timeless existence had become obscured (376). As envisioned in Oswald Spengler's treatise *Preußentum und Sozialismus* (1920) or in Arthur Moeller van den Bruck's book *Der preußische Stil* (1920), the model was not the Prussian State, but rather "Preußentum" as an instinctive "Haltung" or "Lebensgefühl" (67-72). Spengler's work was enthusiastically reviewed and recommended by one of the most influential leaders of the 'bündische Jugend' (67-68), Ernst Buske, who was at the time the Bundesleiter of the Alt-Wandervogel (1920) and would later become Bundesführer of the Deutsche Freischar (1928).

The mission was to follow in the footsteps of the fallen soldiers of WWI and to continue the fight for a better outcome of the war (and the imposition of the Versailles Treaty), not in the literal sense of military operations, but rather in the development of the soldier-type and an elite for future national leadership (376). Exchanges among the post-war Bünde culminated in their meeting in summer 1923 in the Fichtelgebirge, where the label 'bündische Jugend' began to be used to emphasize their common cause over their different backgrounds, traditions, and activities. The meeting was also a "Gegenveranstaltung" to the meeting of "gemäßigt linke Gruppen aus der Tradition der Vorkriegsjugendbewegung" on the tenth anniversary of the famous meeting of the Wandervogel "auf dem Hohen Meißner bei Kassel" in 1913 (377), one hundred years after the "'Völkerschlacht' bei Leipzig" in 1813 (34).

Like the Wandervogel and the Pfadfinder (27), the 'bündische Jugend' was dedicated to "Deutschtum," to the exclusion of Jews, and had hiking and camping as main activities of their physical and nationalistic culture. Hiking and camping were expanded into "Grenzlandfahrten" and "Grenzlandarbeit" (130-141), to reach out to "Auslandsdeutschen" beyond especially the eastern borders of the German Reich (137). The "Siedlungsbewegung der Artamanen" would go so far as to want to drive out Polish field workers from landed estates in East Prussia and replace them with unemployed "Gesinnungsgenossen" (136). The 'bündische Jugend' were motivated by the combined ideal of soldier and Wandervogel, as portrayed

by such writers (151-54) as Hermann Löns, Ernst Jünger, Hans Grimm, but especially Walter Flex (who had fallen on the eastern front in the war) in his novella *Der Wanderer zwischen beiden Welten* (1916). “Wehrhaftigkeit” (141-56) was the ideal stance in preparation of the ‘bündische Jugend’ for the inevitable next war (377), and “Heldenfiguren von der germanischen Vorzeit bis zum Ruhrkampf” (see 186 for names) were their models, representing the “überzeitliche Substanz des Deutschen” (378). Unity with the “Volk” was fostered especially “beim rituellen Singen und bei körperlicher Ertüchtigung” (378). The ‘bündische Jugend’ had contacts and even double membership with other organizations, especially the Ring-Bewegung and in the heavily politicized “Studentenschaft,” in what contemporaries already called “das nationale Lager,” which, according to Ahrens, aptly brought “die organisatorische Vielgestaltigkeit bei Einigkeit in den Zielen sowie die gemeinsame Gegnerbestimmung zur Geltung” (379; cf. 234-43). The shift from restrained to aggressive opposition to the Weimar Republic can be dated to 1928 (380; cf. 244-45), when the ‘bündische Jugend’ engaged in intense debates recommending “Hinein in Staat und Gesellschaft” (Friedrich Kreppel) versus continued “Draußenbleiben” (Hans Zehrer). What concrete form a more aggressive opposition would take, however, remained unclear. Alluding to Friedrich Georg Jünger’s treatise *Aufmarsch des Nationalismus* (1926, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1928), Bundesführer Alfred Pudelko, for example, called on his Adler und Falken in 1929 simply to “march” (“Wir wollen aufmarschieren!”) for “das kommende Deutschland” (245-46). Similarly, Bundesführer Wilhelm Fabricius urged the DPB in his *Reichsbefehl des Deutschen Pfadfinderbundes* (1931) to change from “Abwehr” to “Angriff” (246).

Only the “Feindbilder” were more clearly profiled than before: “Der schlaffe, unkriegerische und nicht gemeinschaftsfähige Mensch, der Westen und die Liberalen, die Republik und ihre angeblich undeutschen Grundlagen” (380). The “Feindbild” the ‘bündische Jugend’ most vehemently attacked was Erich Maria Remarque’s novel *Im Westen nichts Neues* (1929) for popularizing “das falsche [Kriegs]erlebnis.” Serialized in the *Vossische Zeitung*, beginning on November 10, 1928, one day before the tenth anniversary of the Armistice, and published by Ullstein-Verlag in January 1929, Remarque’s novel became a huge bestseller, tripling in one year (900,000) the sales of Walter Flex’s novella *Der Wanderer zwischen beiden Welten* between 1916 and 1930 (249). Offended by the success of Remarque’s novel, the ‘bündische Jugend’ vilified the author for using a French pseudonym and the “Jewish” publisher for conducting “eine raffinierte Werbekampagne” (250).

Beyond attacking Remarque’s novel “mit Tinte und Feder”, the Bünde adopted “die schwarze Fahne” (251-55) as a symbol of their defiant resistance against the imposition of the Versailles Treaty on Germany, which Walther Kayser characterized as “Knechtschaft” versus “Freiheit” in his “Aufruf” addressed to the Jungnationalen Bund (“An den Bund,” published in the Junabu’s periodical *Wehrwolf*

[1928/29] and other “bündische Organen”). The ‘bündische Jugend’ also mobilized with other organizations of the German Right against the Young-Plan, which was being negotiated between Germany and the Allies during the first half of 1929 to reduce reparations and ease other Allied controls (255-61).

In light of the growing political success of the NS-Bewegung, however, the ‘bündische Jugend’ was put on the defensive and forced to look for ways to cooperate while maintaining its own identity (380; cf. 296-327). That there were “flexible Gemeinsamkeiten” via double membership of many Bündische, who had already become members of the NSDAP before 1933 and therefore worked together, gave hope of cooperation. Otherwise, the conceptual “Arbeitsteilung” within “das nationale Lager,” even before the rise of the NSDAP, continued to be a viable argument. But in its drive for political power, the NSDAP, of course, was little interested in such cooperation and division of labor. In 1933, the NSDAP not only prevailed against the Left and the Liberals, but also assumed absolute leadership of “das nationale Lager.” The ‘bündische Jugend’ was dissolved in 1933, not as a result of ideological differences, but rather of no toleration for any competition with the Hitler-Jugend under the totalitarian leadership of the NSDAP (380).

After 1933, certain practices of the ‘bündische Jugend’, especially camp life, continued in the Hitler-Jugend, and the mentality of former Bündische was a stabilizing factor parallel to the NS-Herrschaft, as many of them integrated themselves and served in important roles in the new order, for example in scientific research or even in the SS (355-60). Although their loss of identity was painful, the Third Reich did not change their allegiance to Germany, and many Bündische served in WWII, for which they had been preparing, as it were, since 1918 (387; cf. 350-62). The decisive “Erfahrungsbruch” of the ‘bündische Jugend’ was not 1933, but rather 1945, when the conservative reaction was disavowed and a liberal order was established in the Bundesrepublik in 1949. After 1945, most Bündische still had a long life ahead of them and found it difficult to part with their ideals; most of the former Bünde were unable to re-establish themselves. The ‘bündische Jugend’ was, as Ahrens concludes, history (388).

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Dem vorliegenden Sammelband liegen 13 Beiträge einer im Juni 2013 in Tutzingen abgehaltenen Konferenz zugrunde, welche sich mit einer – von einer internationalen Historikerkommission 2010 herausgegebenen – kontroversen Publikation befasste.<sup>17</sup> Der Band ist in drei Teile von jeweils vier einschlägigen Beiträgen gegliedert:<sup>18</sup> ‚Das Personal des Auswärtigen Amtes‘ (3-75), ‚Das außenpolitische Kerngeschäft des Auswärtigen Amtes‘ (79-147) sowie ‚Das Auswärtige Amt und die NS-Verbrechen‘ (151-238). Bereits eingangs wird dabei der Anlass dieses Tutzinger Treffens betont, nämlich die Tatsache, dass sich die zeitgenössische ‚Streitkultur‘ der Historikerkunft einmal mehr als defizitär erwiesen hat!

Im ersten Abschnitt über das Ausmaß der Nazifizierung des AA-Personales widmen sich Martin Kröger (‚Aspekte der Personalentwicklung im Auswärtigen Amt – der höhere Auswärtige Dienst 1933-1945‘ [3-20] und Bernd Ispording (‚Der gehobene Auswärtige Dienst in der NS-Zeit‘ [21-35]), den zwei wichtigsten Karriereäzweigen der deutschen Diplomatie (abgesehen von der jeweiligen Führerriege bestehend aus Außenminister und Staatssekretär). Da sich *Das Amt* – laut Kröger – in erster Linie mit sogenannten ‚Entscheidungsträgern‘ im AA befasste, machte der Autor es sich zur Aufgabe, auf der Basis des *Biographischen Handbuchs des deutschen Auswärtigen Dienstes* (2000-2014), welches die Biogramme von 2,890 Personen auflistet, eine statistische Untersuchung vorzunehmen, die sich vier Aspekten widmet: „1) der zahlenmäßigen Entwicklung der Beamten und Angestellten des höheren Dienstes; 2) der Parteizugehörigkeit dieses Personenkreises; 3) den Attachés von 1933, dem ersten unter den Bedingungen der Diktatur einggerufenen Jahrgang [...]; 4) der Wiederverwendung von Beamten der Wilhelmstraße im neuen Auswärtigen Amt in Bonn.“ (6) Aufgrund derartiger statistischer Erhebungen kommt Kröger dann u.a. zu dem Ergebnis, dass einerseits „die bloße Parteimitgliedschaft [nur] einen sehr begrenzten Aussagewert hat“ (13) und andererseits – auch das bemerkenswert – „keine verlässlichen Zahlen über den Anteil der ehemaligen NSDAP-Mitglieder unter den Diplomaten der frühen Bundesrepublik [vorliegen].“ (18) In Ispordings Beitrag ist besonders der Abschnitt ‚Gehobener

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<sup>17</sup> Eckart Conze / Norbert Frei / Peter Hayes / Moshe Zimmermann (Hg.): *Das Amt und die Vergangenheit. Deutsche Diplomaten im Dritten Reich und in der Bundesrepublik*. München: Blessing, 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Der den Band abschließende, dreizehnte Beitrag von Conze – der übrigens Sprecher der oben erwähnten Historikerkommission war –, „Verbrecherische Organisationen“. Genese, Anwendung und Anwendung einer Rechtsfigur‘ (219-38) fällt völlig aus dem Themenrahmen und soll hier deshalb nicht erörtert werden.

Auswärtiger Dienst und NSDAP' (32-35) von Interesse, worin vor allem zwei Dinge deutlich werden: „erstens, wie stark sich der gehobene Auswärtige Dienst während der Dienstzeit der bis 1945 tätigen Beamten wandelte; zweitens, dass es sich beim gehobenen Dienst der Zeit vor 1945 nicht etwa um ein Spiegelbild des höheren Dienstes mit weniger Kompetenzen handelt[e], sondern um eine in ihrer Vielfältigkeit nicht leicht zu fassende, vielfach anders strukturierte Laufbahn.“ (35)

Lars Lüdikes Beitrag (,Die Personalpolitik der Minister Neurath und Ribbentrop' [37-57]) beschreibt zunächst die Ausgangslage, d.h. den Wechsel vom Reichsamt zum Reichsministerium nach Ende des Ersten Weltkriegs, wobei u.a. hervorgehoben wird, dass im Kaiserreich Juden der Zugang zum höheren Auswärtigen Dienst versperrt war und dass drei Viertel der im Auswärtigen Dienst tätigen Spitzendiplomaten zum Jahreswechsel 1932/33 bereits während der Kaiserzeit bzw. zu Zeiten der Weimarer Republik in die oberste Riege des AA aufgestiegen waren und dass diese Spitzendiplomaten zum überwiegenden Teil auch im Dritten Reich ihre Karrieren fortsetzten, nicht etwa wegen einer pronationalsozialistischen Gesinnung, sondern aufgrund „d[er] relative[n] Anpassungsfähigkeit der Diplomaten sowie d[er] ungebrochene[n] Stetigkeit einer sich auch in den nationalsozialistischen Staat fortsetzenden Personalentwicklung.“ (41) Wichtige Etappenpunkte in der weiteren Entwicklung (,Kontinuität und Brüche: Der Weg in die Diktatur' [42-47]) waren dann einerseits der Wechsel Neuraths an die Spitze des Außenministeriums (auf ausdrücklichen Wunsch Hindenburgs) sowie das ,Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums' (Anfang April 1933), was vielen Behörden, u.a. eben auch dem AA, die Möglichkeit bot, ,missbeliebiges' Personal zu entlassen. Die Brüche in der Personalpolitik des AA waren somit nach dem Machtwechsel deutlich, obwohl andererseits von einem Nachschub von Außenseitern nicht die Rede sein kann; vielmehr fand – was sich auch bei anderen NS-Behörden nachweisen lässt – eine Art von ,Selbstgleichschaltung' (46) statt. Ein weiterer Bruch mit der Tradition spiegelt sich im Aufstieg Ribbentrops, der zunächst als ,Sonderbeauftragter' Hitlers agierte und seine eigene Dienststelle hatte, sodann Botschafter in Großbritannien wurde (1936) und schließlich Anfang 1938 Neurath als Außenminister ablöste, was zu einer Änderung beim Personal im AA führte, da Ribbentrop ausdrücklich die Herausbildung eines ,neuen Diplomantentyps' (51) forderte, eine Vorgabe, die allerdings aufgrund des Kriegsausbruchs nur begrenzt umgesetzt werden konnte. Der Autor schildert diese Personalentwicklung anhand von vier Typengruppen: 1. Berufsdiplomaten; 2. systemkonformen Aufsteigern; 3. Selbstanpassern; 4. Karrieristen; und er schließt seinen Beitrag mit dem Hinweis ab, dass die klassische Diplomatie mit Kriegsausbruch 1939 ständig an Bedeutung verlor, dass „[k]lassische Normen und tradierte Gepflogenheiten zunehmend ergänzt und verdrängt [wurden] durch unregelte, rein machttaktisch begründete Maßnahmen" (54) und dass ein Großteil der Spitzendiplomaten auch

dann noch dem Regime diene, „als der verbrecherische Charakter des Systems ebenso klar hervorgetreten war wie der Irrtum, auf dessen Beeinflussbarkeit rechnen zu können.“ (57)

Georges-Henri Soutous Beitrag („Amt und Verantwortung: Diplomaten in Deutschland und Frankreich 1933-1945“ [59-75]) ist einer der enttäuschenden Teile dieses Sammelbandes; denn seine Vorgaben, dass erstens „eine massiv ideologisierte Außenpolitik immer noch Außenpolitik [war]“ und zweitens, dass sich „das Primat der Außenpolitik in ein Primat der Innenpolitik verwandelt[e]“ (59) wird in seinen nachfolgenden Ausführungen hinreichend nur für Frankreich belegt, wobei die jeweiligen Abschnitte höchst unausgeglichen sind!<sup>19</sup> Soutou gelangt letztendlich zu dem Schluss, das sich „[t]rotz offensichtlicher Unterschiede zwischen der Entwicklung der Außenministerien in NS-Deutschland und Vichy-Frankreich Gemeinsamkeiten feststellen [lassen].“ (75)

Wie bereits oben erwähnt, beschäftigen sich die vier Beiträge des zweiten Abschnitts des Sammelbands mit dem außenpolitischen Kerngeschäft des AA. Einführend analysiert Marie-Luise Recker ‚Ergebnisse, Probleme und Perspektiven der Forschung‘ hinsichtlich der Außenpolitik des AA (79-91). Die Autorin betont gleich anfangs – was von etlichen anderen Beiträgern ebenfalls hervorgehoben wird –, dass „[k]ein Themenfeld des Dritten Reiches quellenmäßig so gut und so breit dokumentiert [ist], wie die Außenpolitik des Auswärtigen Amts“ (80), und erläutert sodann, dass das AA während des Zeitabschnitts 1933 bis 1937 Revisionspolitik betrieb, dann allerdings 1937 ein Wendepunkt stattfand und seitdem Expansionspolitik verfolgt wurde, obwohl Aufrüstungs-, Expansions- und Kriegskurs von Beginn an konstituive Elemente der NS-Politik – und somit auch des AA – gewesen waren. Recker widmet ihre Aufmerksamkeit anschließend den außenpolitischen Entscheidungsprozessen sowie den daran beteiligten Akteuren, wobei die zentrale Rolle Hitlers immer mehr in den Blickwinkel rückt, insbesondere seit Ribbentrop 1935 dessen außenpolitischer Berater und Sonderbevollmächtigter wurde. Interessant ist in diesem Zusammenhang auch Reckers Querverweis auf Staatssekretär Ernst von Weizsäcker, der diesen Posten 1938 übernommen hatte, um einen europäischen Krieg zu verhindern, gleichwohl die Autorin quasi im gleichen Atemzug betont, dass an der Spitze des AA „keine Persönlichkeiten agierten, die in der Lage gewesen wären, der deutschen Außenpolitik zwischen 1933 und 1945 ihren Stempel aufzudrücken.“ (86) Relativ oberfächlich bleibt in Reckers Abhandlung das Thema ‚Mitwirkung am Holocaust‘; denn indem sie den Mitgliedern der Historikerkommission Schützenhilfe leistet, ohne selbst Substanzielles zu diesem Thema beizutragen, andererseits aber

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<sup>19</sup> Man vgl. dazu z.B. den Abschnitt ‚Verschiedene Ausgangspunkte‘ (60-63), worin Deutschland eine halbe, Frankreich hingegen zwei Seiten gewidmet werden; und noch ausgeprägt ist dies Unverhältnis im Abschnitt ‚Der Übergang: Die Gleichschaltung‘ (63-68), wo Deutschland auf einer Viertelseite abgetan wird, Frankreich andererseits auf vier Seiten.

Gegenargumente von Spezialisten wie Browning und Döscher herunterspielt,<sup>20</sup> trägt dieser Teil ihres Artikels kaum etwas zu der eigentlichen Debatte des vorliegenden Sammelbandes bei.

Auch Wolfgang Michalka („Das Auswärtige Amt und der Weg in den Krieg“ [93-109]) betont, dass nach Januar 1933 zunächst kein Bruch in der deutschen Außenpolitik stattfand, stuft jedoch ebenfalls das Jahr 1937 als Wendepunkt ein, als mit dem ‚Bekenntnis zur Gewalt‘ (99) der Beginn der Ära der Eroberungspolitik eingeläutet wurde. Der Autor erörtert ausführlich, wie Hitler aufgrund von Kritik zu Jahresbeginn 1938 mit einem großen Revirement sowohl bei der Wehrmacht als auch beim AA reagierte, in dessen Zuge einerseits der Chef des Generalstabs, Ludwig Beck, andererseits Außenminister Constantin Freiherr von Neurath entlassen wurden. Mit dieser Entwicklung hatte die Stunde von Joachim von Ribbentrop geschlagen, der bereits 1935 als Botschafter in London ein Flottenabkommen mit Großbritannien ausgehandelt hatte und nun regelrecht zum Kriegstreiber wurde. Es war Ribbentrop, der im August 1939 das Bündnis mit der Sowjetunion aushandelte, eine Entwicklung, die Michalka ausführlich analysiert (105f.), wobei er ausdrücklich Ribbentrops machtpolitisch orientierte außenpolitische Ausrichtung hervorhebt, im Gegensatz zu Hitlers mehr ethnisch orientierten Zielvorstellungen, und abschließend darauf besteht, es gäbe keinen Zweifel daran, dass letztendlich der Führer „das Entscheidungsmonopol im Dritten Reich innehatte und systematisch, planvoll sein rassenideologisches Programm situativ-flexibel und opportunistisch umsetzte.“ (109)

Der Untertitel von Annette Schmid-Klügmanns Beitrag ‚Die Leitung des Auswärtigen Amtes zwischen Kontinuität und Anpassung 1933-1936‘ deutet an, worauf die Autorin abzielt („Bernhard Wilhelm von Bülow, Hans Dietrich Dieckhoff, Friedrich Gaus“ [111-29]): Bernhard Wilhelm von Bülow war Staatssekretär im AA von 1930 bis zu seinem Tode 1936, Hans Dietrich Dieckhoff Ministerialdirektor im AA und Leiter der Abt. III, zuständig für die angelsächsische Welt, und Friedrich Gaus Ministerialdirektor sowie seit 1923 Leiter der Rechtsabteilung des AA. Die Autorin behandelt – mit Blickwinkel auf diese drei Spitzendiplomaten im AA – zwei thematische Komplexe: einerseits deren Haltung zur Innenpolitik, wie sie nach außen vertreten wurde, und andererseits die Ziele der Außenpolitik selbst. Alle drei Diplomaten hatten – wie Schmid-Klügmann ausdrücklich betont – dem ideologischen Gedankengut der Nationalsozialisten bis 1933 ferngestanden; er fügte diesem Hinweis jedoch im gleichen Atemzug hinzu, aus den Akten gehe eindeutig hervor, „dass man von Anfang an mit verblüffender Eilfertigkeit die sofort einsetzenden Gewaltmaßnahmen des NS-Regimes nach außen hin abzuschirmen bestrebt war.“ (114) Ferner weist die Autorin auf die schwierige Quellenlage bei der Ermittlung der individuellen politischen

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<sup>20</sup> Vgl. dazu Christopher Browning: *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office* (1978) u. Hans-Jürgen Döscher: *Das Auswärtige Amt im Dritten Reich* (1986).

Einstellung von Beamten des AA hin, da Akten nur in seltenen Fällen darüber Auskunft geben: „Grundsätzlicher Dissens mit der politischen Führung ist, wenn überhaupt, nur versteckt zu finden. Auf diese Tatsache wird in der Forschung [jedoch] kaum hingewiesen. Sind private zeitgenössische Aufzeichnungen [wie etwa im Fall Dieckhoff] oder zeitgenössische Urteile überliefert, so ergibt sich ein viel differenzierteres Bild.“ (116) Schmid-Klügmann fasst diesen ersten Teil ihres Beitrags folgendermaßen zusammen: „Innerhalb kürzester Zeit nach der Machtübernahme der Nationalsozialisten gewannen die innenpolitischen Vorgänge in Deutschland außenpolitische Bedeutung.“ (116) Anschließend widmet sie sich den außenpolitischen Zielen und Methoden des AA während der ersten Jahre nach der Machtübernahme der Nazis, wobei insbesondere die Rolle der drei AA-Diplomaten angesichts des Austritts Deutschlands aus dem Völkerbund (Oktober 1933), des Nicht-Angriffspakts mit Polen (Januar 1934) sowie der Rheinlandbesetzung (März 1936) im Detail analysiert wird. Schmid-Klügmanns Schlussfolgerung lautet folgendermaßen:

Man hat oft davon gesprochen, dass die Teilidentität der Ziele zwischen dem traditionellen auswärtigen Dienst und den Nationalsozialisten in den ersten Jahren der NS-Herrschaft die tiefgehenden Unterschiede überdeckte und so eine Zusammenarbeit erleichterte. Dies ist insofern einzuschränken, als zunächst auch in der Methode der Revisionspolitik grundlegende Unterschiede klar zutage treten: vor allem in dem Bestreben des Auswärtigen Amtes, die hartnäckig verfolgten Revisionsziele auf friedlichem Wege und auch langfristig mit möglichst wenig Eskalation durchzusetzen. Parallel dazu zeigte sich jedoch schleichend der Kompetenzverlust des Amtes auf allen außenpolitischen Gebieten: Die Marschroute wurde mehr und mehr von Hitler vorgegeben. (128)

Michael Jonas' Beitrag („Das Auswärtige Amt und die deutsche Nordeuropapolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg“ [131-47]) ist insofern einer der interessantesten des vorliegenden Bandes, als er sich einem geographischen Gebiet zuwendet, das traditionell in der Forschung zum Dritten Reich – vom AA ganz abgesehen – vernachlässigt wurde, wobei sich ziemlich divergente Ausrichtungen herauskristallisieren. Schweden gelang es bekanntlich, als einziges skandinavisches Land seine Neutralität während der gesamten Kriegszeit zu wahren, eine Situation, die deutscherseits von der Sicherung der Zufuhr schwedischer Rohstoffe diktiert wurde und wozu die deutsche Gesandtschaft (unter Leitung von Viktor Prinz zu Wied) relativ wenig beitrug. Wesentlich interessanter als Beispiel erfolgreicher kleinstaatlicher Selbstbehauptung ist Dänemark, das – wie auch Norwegen – 1940 Opfer deutscher Aggressivität wurde; denn unter dem Reichsbevollmächtigten und SS-Obergruppenführer Werner Best (der von 1940 bis 1942 in der Militärverwaltung in Frankreich tätig gewesen war [s.u.]) wurde dort eine

„Bündnisverwaltung“ eingerichtet, die sich bis 1943 als höchst erfolgreiches Modell herauskristallisierte, während in Norwegen – unter Reichskommissar Josef Terboven (einem früheren Gauleiter), nach Vidkun Quislings fehlgeschlagener „Nasjonal Samling“ (1940) – völlig dem Reich unterstellt und keine Gesandtschaft unterhalten wurde. Am weitaus interessantesten war jedoch der Fall Finnland; denn der deutsche Botschafter in Helsinki, Wipert von Blücher – der u.a. gute Verbindungen zum Referat IV („Skandinavien und Randstaaten“) im AA unterhielt – entpuppte sich als durchaus selbstbewusster Missionschef, der während der frühen 40er Jahre Vorschläge unterbreitete, die „den vorherrschenden Prämissen der deutscher Gewalt- und Okkupationspolitik diametral entgegenstanden.“ (140) Sowohl Best als auch Blücher offerierten somit – zumindest bis zur Wende im Kriegsgeschehen 1943 – Alternativen in Nordeuropa zu der von Terboven betriebenen „Politik der harten Hand“.

Der dritte Teil des Sammelbandes behandelt „Das Auswärtige Amt und die NS-Verbrechen“ (s.o.), wobei der erste Beitrag von Magnus Brechtken „Das Auswärtige Amt, Sicherheitsdienst und Reichssicherheitshauptamt 1933 bis 1942“ (151-64) betrifft. Auch in diesem Fall trägt der Untertitel „Antisemitismus und Judenpolitik zwischen Machtfrage und Radikalisierungserfahrung“ zur Einengung des Themas bei, da sich der Blick des Autors auf die Rassenpolitik bzw. die Lösung der „Judenfrage“ richtet sowie auf die Rolle, welche das AA in diesem Zusammenhang spielte. Der Autor gliedert seinen Artikel in „Vor dem Krieg“ (152-58) und „Im Krieg“ (158-63), wobei sich insbesondere nach 1937 der wachsende Einfluss des SD-Hauptamtes (später in Reichssicherheitshauptamt umbenannt) abzeichnete (neben Heydrich waren Eichmann, Dannecker, Hagen und Wisliceny die Hauptakteure), während der AA-Verbindungsmann, Emil Schumburg vom Referat „Deutschland“, zunehmend an Bedeutung verlor. Ferner war es bis Kriegsausbruch Ziel der NS-Politik, möglichst viele Juden aus Deutschland herauszuschaffen, gleichwohl die Idee der Gründung eines „Judenstaates“ in Palästina verpönt war und der sogenannte „Madagaskar-Plan“ bald verworfen wurde. Vielmehr sollten die deutschen Juden gezielt über ganz Europa verstreut werden, um dort jeweils den örtlichen Antisemitismus anzukurbeln! Bekanntlich änderte sich die politische Ausrichtung der NS-Führung nach Kriegsausbruch 1939 (insbesondere nach der notorischen „Wannsee-Konferenz“ zu Beginn des Jahres 1942); und in diesem Sinne änderte sich auch die Haltung des AA unter seinem neuen „Judenreferenten“ Franz Rademacher (ab Sommer 1940), der sich jedoch mit seinen Plänen gegen das RSHA nicht durchsetzen konnte. Brechtken fasst dies folgendermaßen zusammen:

Analysiert man die Diskussion innerhalb des Auswärtigen Amtes sowie zwischen dem Amt und dem RSHA, so fällt die stark divergierende Disposition der Akteure auf. Rademachers Gedanken und Vorschläge kreisten darum, die Notwendigkeit seiner Institution bei der Planung und Umsetzung

nachzuweisen, sich selbst ins Spiel zu bringen und aus dem Vorhaben ein Zusammenspiel mehrerer Behörden zu gestalten. Sein Ehrgeiz ist ebenso erkennbar wie seine weitgehende Erfolglosigkeit. Denn der Plan des RSHA zeigt in seiner Genese und seiner Formgebung den Willen der SS, das Heft der Judenverfolgung ganz in der Hand zu behalten [...]. (161)

Allerdings ist – wie der Autor abschließend betont – eine angemessene Bewertung des AA während dieses Zeitabschnitts nur mit Hilfe einer multi-institutionellen Perspektive möglich; und „[i]nsofern bleibt eine derart integrierte Geschichte des Auswärtigen Amts und seiner Rolle, Funktion und Wirkung in der NS-Gesellschaft und der NS-Verfolgungspolitik ein Desiderat“ (163), wofür der Autor einen fünfteiligen Wunschkatalog erstellte (163-64).

Moshe Zimmermann eröffnet seinen Beitrag („Das Auswärtige Amt und der Holocaust“ [165-76]) mit einer Attacke gegen Gustav Freytag und dessen Roman *Soll und Haben* (1862), wobei völlig unklar bleibt, was das im Zusammenhang des vorliegenden Themas bezwecken soll, insbesondere da es inzwischen unter Literaturwissenschaftlern eine Binsenweisheit ist, dass – zumindest nach heutigen Maßstäben –, fast alle deutschen Schriftsteller in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts antisemitische Äußerungen von sich gegeben haben (Wilhelm Raabe sowieso, aber auch Theodor Fontane) und dass ferner in diesem Sinne auch fast alle angelsächsischen Romanciers dieses Zeitabschnitts – mit Ausnahme George Eliots –, also Dickens, Thackeray und Trollope u.a. Antisemiten waren. Insgesamt handelt es sich bei Zimmermanns Ausführungen – laut Michael Mayer im anschließenden Beitrag –, um „ahistorische Dekontextualisierungen“ (194), was sich besonders gut anhand des abschließenden Paragraphen in Zimmermanns Beitrag belegen lässt, wo es heißt:

Der Historiker kann und will sich nicht als Revisionsinstanz im Nürnberger Prozess gegen Neurath und Ribbentrop oder im Wilhelmstraßen-Prozess postieren. Gültig [*sic*] bleibt das Urteil der Geschichte in Bezug auf die Rolle des Auswärtigen Amts im Holocaust – anders als Ernst von Weizsäcker in seinen Memoiren behaupten wollte, war das AA nicht nur indirekt mit der ‚Judenfrage‘ befasst. Diplomaten haben mehr angeregt, initiiert und mitgewirkt als dagegengehalten. Mindestens die Bezeichnung ‚Hitlers willige Abschirmer‘ trifft im Zusammenhang des Holocaust in sehr großem Umfang zu. (176)

Michael Mayers Ausführungen in ‚Diplomaten im Krieg: Die Deutsche Botschaft Paris und die NS-Unrechtspolitik im besetzten Frankreich‘ (177-95), der die deutsche antisemitische Politik im besetzten Frankreich erörtert, ist der bei weitem beste Beitrag in der Kontroverse um *Das Amt*. Der Autor gliedert ihn in vier Abschnitte: erstens ‚Die Deutsche Botschaft und die Rassengesetzgebung im besetzten

Frankreich im Sommer 1940' (178-84), zweitens ‚Die Deutsche Botschaft Paris und die Deportation der Juden‘ (184-88), drittens ‚Die Radikalität der Deutschen Botschaft bei der Umsetzung des Holocaust: Der Fall Gompel‘ (188-93) und viertens ‚Die Deutsche Botschaft Paris und die Entscheidungsfindung zum Holocaust‘ (193-95). Der erste Teil behandelt die Rolle des deutschen Botschafters in Paris, Otto Abetz, der von sich aus zu keinem Zeitpunkt aktiv werden konnte und deshalb im Sommer 1940 dem damaligen Kriegsverwaltungschef in Frankreich, Werner Best, Pläne unterbreitete zwecks der Entfernung von Juden aus dem besetzten Gebiet, von denen jedoch nur das Verbot einer Rückkehr der nach Vichy-Frankreich geflüchteten Juden umgesetzt wurde. Generell gelangt Mayer bereits in diesem Abschnitt zu dem Ergebnis: „Es kann zwar kein Zweifel daran bestehen, dass die Zentrale des AA und seine Auslandsvertretungen weitgehend im Holocaust involviert war, doch muss deutlich zwischen einer Initiierung dieses Menschheitsverbrechens und einer Beteiligung daran, also einer Täterschaft und einer Mittäterschaft, unterschieden werden.“ (183) M.a.W., die Behauptung in *Das Amt*, gemeinsame Initiativen von AA und RSHA bzgl. der Judenpolitik hätten auf gleicher Augenhöhe stattgefunden, ist unzutreffend! Im zweiten Teil seines Beitrags behandelt Mayer sodann Änderung der Sicherheitsvorkehrungen in Frankreich im Sommer 1942, als diese der Militärverwaltung entzogen und dem Leiter der neu etablierten HSSPF-Stelle, Carl-Albrecht Oberg übergeben wurde, der dann – mit Hilfe der frz. Polizei – massenweise ausländische und staatenlose Juden verhaften und deportieren ließ. Der Autor weist in diesem Kontext nach, dass die Behauptung in *Das Amt*, das AA habe dabei eine ‚entscheidende Rolle‘ gespielt, falsch ist (186). Auf den von Mayer im dritten Teil seines Beitrags abgehandelten ‚Spezialfall‘ des Juden Roger Gompel, soll hier nicht diskutiert werden, höchst lesenswert ist jedoch Mayers Zurückweisung von Zimmermanns Behauptung – einem der Mitglieder der Historikerkommission –, dass das AA bei Entscheidungsprozessen zum Holocaust einbezogen wurde (193f.). Es kann hier leider nicht auf Einzelheiten dieser Kontroverse eingegangen werden, bewerkenswert – und deshalb zitierwürdig – ist jedoch Mayers Fazit, dass „[d]ie langjährige Beschäftigung mit dem Holocaust angesichts der Ungeheuerlichkeit dieses Menschheitsverbrechens manchmal zu einer bedauerlichen ahistorischen Dekontextualisierung [führt].“ (194)

Ähnlich wie Mayer geht auch Sebastian Weitkamp (‚Kooperativtäter – die Beteiligung des Auswärtigen Amtes an der NS-Gewaltpolitik jenseits der „Endlösung“‘ [197-217]) davon aus, „dass das AA bei der endgültigen Entscheidung zum Genozid kaum eine Rolle gespielt hat“ (197) Der Autor machte es sich in diesem Zusammenhang zur Aufgabe, den Unterschied zwischen ‚Initiativtäterschaft‘ und ‚Kooperativtäterschaft‘ deutlich herauszuarbeiten, was ihn dann letztendlich zu dem Ergebnis führt, dass das AA mit seinen Instrumenten der klassischen Diplomatie hauptsächlich als ‚Kooperativtäter‘ einzustufen sei (205). Weitkamp demonstriert diesen Tatbestand mittels einiger individueller Beispiele –



so etwa in Abschnitt 4 anhand des Mords am frz. General Mesny in Jahre 1945 (206f,) bzw. im Abschnitt 6 anhand hausinterner Verfahren gegen die Gesandten Erich Heberlein und Ekkehard Tertsch (210f.) –, um dann im abschließenden Abschnitt 8 zusammenzufassen:

Legt man die [...] Kategorien von Initiativ-, Kooperativ- und Passivtäterschaft zugrund, wirkte das AA in erster Linie kooperativ bei der Umsetzung der NS-Gewaltpolitik mit. Die Initiativtäterschaft lag bei der NS-Führung oder den exekutiven Institutionen wie Wehrmacht und SS. Sehr wohl konnte das AA innerhalb der Tatkomplexe initiativ werden, und es versuchte, im Rahmen seiner Möglichkeiten mit unterschiedlichem Erfolg Einfluss auf die NS-Gewaltpolitik zu nehmen. (213).

Der Gesamteindruck des vorliegenden Bandes, dessen Beiträge ja – wie auch die Konferenz, welche Anlass dafür gewesen war – die Debatte um *Das Amt* entschärfen und auf eine mehr faktische Grundlage stellen sollten, war – von einigen wenigen Beiträgen abgesehen – eher enttäuschend!

Jörg Thunecke, Nottingham, England

**TILMANN LAHME: *DIE MANNS. GESCHICHTE EINER FAMILIE*. Frankfurt/M.: Fischer, 2015. 479 S.**



“Fang nie was mit Verwandtschaft an, denn das geht schief, denn das geht schief!” Kurt Tucholsky warned in a cabaret song. “Denn so von Herzen hundsgemein kann auf der ganzen Welt kein Fremder sein!” Tillmann Lahme’s story of the Mann family is a corrective to Heinrich Breloer’s popular 2001 television miniseries *Die Manns: Ein Jahrhundertroman*, which offered a glimpse into a dynamic, gifted, and inspiring family. This new “story / history of a family” exposes the complexities, conflicts, and tragedies behind the surface. The result is a most entertaining, disturbing, and occasionally shocking chronicle, narrated in a reserved, at times drily ironic voice. It goes well beyond the scope of two other books that tread this ground in the last decades: Hans Wiskirchen’s short and rather dry Rowohlt monograph *Die Familie Mann* (1999) and the exhibit catalogue *Die Kinder der Manns: Ein Familienalbum* (2005) which offers a mosaic of illustrated life stories. The new book synthesizes and develops this material into a broad, dynamic historical narrative that reads like a novel of the twentieth century.

This account of the “amazing family” (as an American journalist called them, a badge they wore with pride) is a brilliant tapestry in which the threads of the life stories form a fascinating weave of colors and contrasts as they constantly intersect, separate, and reconnect. Lahme resists projecting himself into the inner lives of the figures, but instead lets their actions and their words speak for themselves. He also avoids the temptation to synthesize literature and biography; where he does cite the literary work, it is because of the role it plays in the family’s daily life, or where it is clearly autobiographical – and then he keeps his discussions brief and refrains from elaborate interpretation. And yet he can indulge in the occasional snarky aside, for instance on the children’s parasitic greediness, or when remarking on Golo’s short career in the mines as the only time one of the young Mann children got themselves a real job. The writing comes alive in short, declarative sentences that race through the story in an almost breathless manner – not at all the complex, metaphor-loaded writing we associate with the literary titan Thomas Mann. Such an approach may run the danger of superficiality, as there is no time to look into depth at the deeper feelings and back-stories, but with eight distinct lives to cover in one story in just under five hundred pages, the narrative thread dare not linger long on any one life before jumping back to another. This makes for a wonderful story that grows and grows.

The book restricts its scope to the parents Thomas and Katia and their six children: Erika (1905-1969), Klaus (1906-1949), Golo (1909-1994), Monika (1910-1992), Elisabeth (1918-2002), and Michael (1919-1977). Other interesting and important figures such as Heinrich and Nelly or the Pringsheims are relegated to the margins, and the eyes are directed tightly at the center of the clan. Understandably, Lahme does not begin his story until 1922, when all the children are born, and the two eldest, Erika and Klaus, are just coming into their own as young adults and about to embark on their own careers as notorious public figures. (This moment was also captured in Thomas Mann’s story 'Unordnung und frühes Leid'.) The tale, in turn, ends with the death of the last surviving Mann child, Elisabeth, in 2002, and a visit to the family gravesite, where they are united – except for Klaus, who lies in Cannes, and Golo, who insisted on resting away from his family in the same cemetery.

The central theme of this tale is the children’s various struggles and rivalries for attention and recognition – both from the public and from the father. Their frequent demands for money from their parents suggest the parasitic quality of privileged children who never took responsibility for themselves, but also their desperation for security and affirmation. Not just for the famously tormented young author Klaus, coping with his father’s overwhelming fame and expectations from both within the family and outside was a lifelong challenge. Homosexuality, drugs, and depression are touchstones of the clan’s experience, but above all, each of the children became a writer in one way or another and coped with his / her identity through fiction as well as non-fiction. The unique experience that defined the clan

in its tensions and interdependences was the loss of their homeland and exile. The extreme dynamics of the personal and the political played themselves out in new ways as, and under the star of Thomas Mann's outspoken anti-Nazi activities, the members found new roles as outcasts and as resistance figures. Despite the rivalries and resentments, family remained the only homeland they had.

Lahme's interest and sympathies seem to lie with the men. Golo, sometimes derided as ugly and strange but who grew into an admired historian, is the only one who really comes away well in the end – Lahme has already devoted an entire biography just to him. Eldest son Klaus's torment is central to the volume in his struggles with drugs and with his father's literary shadow, though as an openly gay man he did not struggle with repressed homoerotic desires like his father or his brother Golo. His 1949 suicide (admittedly but one of many within the extended family) haunts the family chronicle. Erika's coming of age story parallels that of her brother, but as a character, she does not really come into her own in this narrative until she is mature; then as an older woman, she appears as mean, controlling, and selfish. Klaus and Erika's development from bohemian rebels to antifascist activists is one of the strongest tales the book offers.

Lahme rather makes light of Thomas Mann's favorite child, Elisabeth, and her fantasies of global leadership through a world constitution, and one could argue that he does not take her academic accomplishments and international honors as seriously as she deserves. Elisabeth alone managed to create for herself a public persona free and clear of the family and its literary traditions, though she too wrote occasional fiction as well as books on saving the oceans. Violinist Michael, the youngest, had a most difficult time of it, detested by his father and struggling as a musician, with a disastrous career turn as a result of a vicious conflict with his accompanist (the sister of Yehudi Menuhin). His mental and emotional state seems to be the most unstable in the family. Finally he found a new career as a German professor and thus returned to his troubled youth, issuing his mother's "unwritten memoirs" and embarking on editions of his father's writings, a sort of rapprochement after Thomas' death. He was clearly haunted by many demons, and his death, be it suicide or an accidental overdose, remains a mystery. Middle child Monika is herself somewhat of a riddle, her life and inner experience being the least documented of all. Everyone in the family dismissed, rejected, even hated her, it seems. If anyone deserves sympathy, it is probably her. It was hardest for her to assert her independence and integrity. After surviving the torpedoing of a transatlantic ship, a shattering disaster in which her husband died before her eyes, she retreated to Italy and tried to make a simple life for herself out from the shadow of her illustrious family. Yet even she felt a calling to write: work that was dismissed by the family, and apparently by Lahme as well, as amateurish scribbling. That the presumptuous outsider's memoirs of life with her father were more kindly received by critics than Erika's, which were published at the same

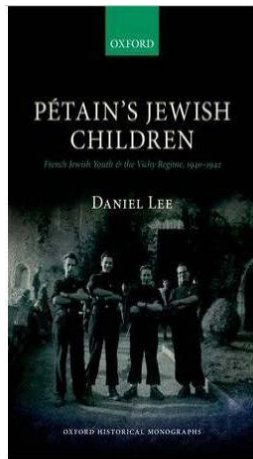
time, was a bitter irony for some. Meanwhile, mother Katia (1883-1980), the universal manager casting the family net through correspondence and arrangements, remains concealed behind her façade of propriety and authority, until in old age she slides into dementia (cf. Kirsten Jüngling & Brigitte Roßbeck: Katia Mann. *Die Frau des Zauberers*. Biografie [2003]).

Lahme's tale draws on an incredible wealth of sources, letters, diaries, interviews – this family is richly documented, but much of the private material is still unknown. (In the wake of this book, Lahme is preparing an edition of Mann family correspondence.) The narrator lets the documents themselves do the talking where possible, rather than stepping in to shape, interpret and moralize. His resistance to the psychologizing impulse of many biographies is evident, for instance, in his treatment of Michael Mann's death by a drug overdose. While Marianne Krüll in her 1991 study *Im Netz der Zauberer* emphasizes that during Michael's recent reading of his father's diaries, he was deeply upset by the discovery that his father intended to have him aborted, Lahme instead foregrounds Michael's professional and legal frustrations over the conception and copyrights of the planned edition of correspondence and elides any sense of Freudian trauma.

Trouble pursued the children to the bitter end, when Elisabeth and Michael sued Golo and his adopted family over sister Monika's estate, and later, when, as the last survivor, Elisabeth attempted to control and redefine the family's image by demanding that Heinrich Breloer's mini-series cut the interviews with Golo's adoptive daughter-in-law Ingrid Beck-Mann, who had cared for Monika and Golo in their last years – these events are only mentioned in passing but would surely be fascinating stories in their own right. Despite the almost overwhelming amount of information and documentation in the saga, the reader leaves the book fascinated and still curious to learn more about these colorful and often painful lives.

Alan Lareau, Oshkosh, WI

**DANIEL LEE: *PÉTAİN'S JEWISH CHILDREN – FRENCH JEWISH YOUTH AND THE VICHY REGIME, 1940-1942*. Oxford: OUP, 2014. 274 pp.**



This is an interesting study (originally a Ph.D. thesis at Oxford University [2011]), albeit with a limited range. In it the author discusses in seven chapters the ‚Jewish Youth Movements’ Response to Vichy’ (= title of Chpt. III), of which – at least for the general readership – the first three chapters are of particular relevance, less so however the subsequent, highly specialised ones dealing with select examples of the interface between Vichy’s administration and Jewish youth organisations as part of various state-sponsored schemes.

Following France’s resounding military defeat at the hands of Nazi Germany in June 1940 and the terms of the subsequent armistice, splitting France into an occupied northern section and an unoccupied southern part (= ‚Free Zone’), the Vichy government, under the leadership of Philippe Pétain, launched the so-called ‚National Revolution’. This was intended as a kind of moral ‚regeneration’, „an all-encompassing term that bundled together general principles of work, family and fatherland“ (2), but also tried to identify those responsible for the military disaster (namely Socialists, and particularly Jewish ones, like Léon Blum and his followers). Henceforth ruralism, farm work and manual labour were given a high priority, „incompatible with Vichy’s image of Jews“ (3), who consequently were, by and large, excluded from playing a direct role in this National Revolution. As a result, starting as early as the summer of 1940, the new French government enacted a series of legal measures against ‚anti-France’, culminating in its own racial laws, the ‚Statut des Juifs’, in October of that year, aimed at excluding Jews from the economy and marginalising them in French society, a development which accelerated in spring 1941 when Jewish property became subject to confiscation, and eventually led to the rounding up of Jews in the ‚Free Zone’ – even prior to the German occupation in November of that year – in August 1942.

Lee refers to the situation of Jews in Vichy France under three headings (labelled ‚canonical interpretations’ [11]): resistance, rescue, and persecution, adding that „[a]pproaching the subject through such lenses can take the historian only so far“ (11), since they do not permit him to investigate areas, which the author in turn tries to address, namely: „cooperation and accommodation between Vichy and the Jews.“ (11) Neither has previous research under those three headings – according to Lee – been able to conduct in-depth analyses of the regime’s heterogeneity, i.e. the experiences of French Jewry during the Occupation cannot be fully explored adopting such a limited approach. Instead, the author tried a different stance:

Although Jewish men, women, and children all sought various modes through which to accommodate the New Order, an examination of the way young Jews adapted, reacted to, and positioned themselves with or against Vichy provides the most effective lens through which to explore the coexistence between Vichy and its Jewish citizens. (12)

In line with this approach, Lee summarises the layout of his study as follows (19f.): Chpt. I provides the historical context, followed by an outline of Vichy's project for regenerating the nation in Chpt. II, and the regime's response to young Jews in Chpt. III. The following Chpt. IV then charts the points of intersection between Vichy and the Jews, while the next three chapters of the book are taken up with various case studies: the *Éclaireurs Israélites de France* (EIF) in Chpt. V-VI and the *Chantiers de la Jeunesse* in Chpt. VII, followed by a 'Conclusion' (in Chpt. VIII).

During the first decades of the twentieth century, as the author points out in Chpt. I, three factors, above all, dramatically changed the structure of French Jewry: „Waves of immigration, the rise of Zionism, and the birth of Jewish youth movements“(28). Furthermore, the demise of the Third Republic had additional grave implications for Jewry, since its exclusion from French society took top priority with the new regime. Lee also discusses the role of some key ministers in Pétain's first cabinet as regards Jewish youth, e.g. Georges Lamirand's appointment as Minister of Youth (*Secrétariat Général à la Jeunesse*), from September 1940 till March 1943, and that of his lieutenant, Louis Garonne, emphasizing that Lamirand's position on the 'Jewish Question', particularly „his leniency towards Jewish youth, which „illuminates the heterogeneity that existed among policy-makers at Vichy. “ (55) He also expounds Lamirand's conflicts with Vichy's Commissioner for Jewish Affairs (*Commissaire Général aux Questions Juives*), Xavier Vallat, a fierce nationalist and Germanophobe, who adopted an overt anti-Semitic line and often clashed with Lamirand. Yet two more ministers who affected the Jewish Question during the early years of Vichy France were Pierre Caziot, Minister of Agriculture (who had a say in the settling of Jewish youth in centres throughout the 'Free Zone' of rural France), and Jérôme Carcopino, Minister of Education, leading the author to the conclusion that the question of regeneration, above all that of Jewish youth, polarized leading figures in the Vichy administration: „Questions that related to youth policy and Jewish affairs“, he writes, „proved to be melting pots for intense conflict and debate across all levels of the administration.“ (68)

Following the occupation of the northern part of France, Jews, who had fled to the 'Free Zone', were forbidden to return, and the south of France, which hitherto had been home to only a fraction of the country's 300,000 Jews, was suddenly inundated by them. Quite a few of these younger Jews were

subsequently organised in the above mentioned EIF, whose aim it had been, even prior to the events of 1940, to create the so-called ‚New Jew‘, especially since – as Lee puts it – „[t]he EIF’s acceptance by Vichy, and the financial recognition that followed, immediately rendered it an attractive option to a large number of young Jews“ (71). As a result, the EIF’s leader, Shatta Simon, was able to establish a camp in Lautrec in the Department of Tarn (part of the Languedoc-Roussillon-Midi-Pyrénées region), discussed by Lee at length in Chpt. V: ‚The EIF’s Return to the Land Project‘ (116-55), prioritising three aspects which turned this camp into a centre for manual trades and agriculture: a) converting it into a permanent home for Jewish children; b) using it as a focal point for developing the EIF in major towns and cities throughout the non-Occupied Zone; and c) establishing Chantiers Ruraux, i.e. agricultural training centres for Jewish youth (73). As a result, the Vichy regime and EIF, during the period 1940 to 1942, entered into a relationship that went far beyond mere passive recognition of Jewish scouts, at a time when thousands of Jews perished in Gurs. However, as intimated above, Lamirand and Garonne’s sympathetic attitude towards EIF was not shared by some of their ministerial colleagues; and Vallat in particular tried hard to reduce the organisation’s influence, including others by creating, at the end of 1941, L’Union générale des Israélites de France (UGIF), intended to ostracize the EIF, which only through the help of General Lafont, a close friend of Pétain’s, managed to survive. However, EIF, by being forced to become part of UGIF, lost its independence and judicial status, and eventually was dissolved in January 1943.

Chpt. IV of Lee’s study concentrates on ‚The Interface between Vichy and Jewish Youth‘ (90-115), examining in detail Jewish participation in four of Vichy’s most important youth programmes: „the leadership school of Uriage, the artistic performers of Jeune France, the youth hostelling movement Auberges de Jeunesse, and the Compagnons de France“ (90). In all four instances – at least up to the end of 1942 – the revitalization of French youth took precedence over racial laws, bearing in mind that in June 1941 a second ‚Statut des Juifs‘ had expanded the number of Jews eligible for exception (168-69). Young Jews responded in various ways to these Vichy organizations, three main factors for their participation being:

First, some had little choice and took part in a scheme as the nominated representative of the EIF and other Jewish organizations. Second, full-time participation in a youth organization usually brought with it a supply of food and accommodation [...]. Third, the aims of certain Vichy organizations resonated with the ideological conviction of some young Jews [...]. (91)

Lee then proceeds to discuss in detail ‚Uriage‘ (92-98), ‚Jeune France and the Comédiens Routiers‘ (98-106), ‚Auberge de Jeunesse‘ (106-09), and ‚Compagnons de France‘ (109-15), which, however, cannot be dealt with in this short review. Following the case studies of ‚Lautrec‘ in Chpts. V (116-55) and VI (156-84) and ‚Jewish Participation in the Chantiers de la Jeunesse‘ in Chpt. VII (185-226), which cannot be discussed here either, the author's ‚Conclusion‘ in Chpt. VIII (227-40) neatly summarises the multifarious ways in which French Jews and Vichy France sought to coexist, providing „compelling insight into the uncertainties and the inconsistencies that prevailed during the first two years of the regime.“ (227) In addition, the author lists various factors which made this coexistence possible (228-29), namely a) Vichy's dual priorities for regeneration and exclusion, which complicated the regime's anti-Semitic agenda; b) diverse responses by Vichy institutions towards the Jewish Question; and c) tension regarding policy implementations between central and local levels of government. Simultaneously he cites factors among the young Jews which helped to make this coexistence viable (229-30), namely a) EIF's favourable response to Vichy's programmes for regeneration; b) EIF's leadership which took advantage of contacts with various sections of the new regime; and c) Jewish participation in the setup of the New Order, benefitting from tension between central and local governments. However, all this came to an unfortunate end after approximately two years, as outlined by Lee in the final chapter of his study:

In the non-Occupied-Zone, the roundups of foreign Jews in the summer of 1942 and the invasion by the Germans in November of the same year [...] almost extinguished any remaining ambition of Jewish youth to coexist with Vichy. From that point on, employing the categories of persecution, resistance, and rescue as a means to explore the daily experience of Jews under Vichy is both fitting and required. (230)

The return of Pierre Laval as Prime Minister in April 1942 signalled a closer cooperation with the German overlords, a turning point which led to the replacement of various key ministers: Pierre Caziot made way for Jacques Le Roy Ladurie in the Ministry of Agriculture, and Jérôme Carcopino was replaced by the notorious anti-Semite Abel Bonnard in the Ministry of Education. And while Lamirand had almost free reign as long as Carcopino was in office, things quickly deteriorated for the Jews under the new setup, which eventually led to Lamirand's resignation in March 1943 and a much stricter application of the ‚Statut des Juifs‘, ultimately leading to death of appr. 76,000 Jews, many of them youngsters.

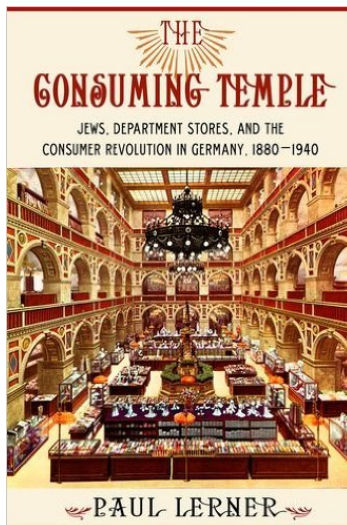
Overall Daniel Lee's study amounts to a solid examination of Jewish youths' engagement with Vichy France in the ‚Free Zone‘ during the period mid-1940 till mid-1942, the only downside being its emphasis on ‚oral history‘ (exemplified in the case studies of Chpts. V-VII), which quite obviously reflects the



influence of the current school of historical thought at Oxford University, typified in Robert Gildea's most recent study *Fighters in the Shadows. A New History of the French Resistance* (2015), to be reviewed in a later *Newsletter*.

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**PAUL LERNER: *CONSUMING TEMPLE - JEWS, DEPARTMENT STORES, AND THE CONSUMER REVOLUTION IN GERMANY, 1880-1940*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell Up, 2015. 266 S.**



Paul Lerner's study of German department stores during the Wilhelmine, Weimar and NS eras makes for such disconcerting reading; for it is neither fish nor fowl, i.e. it offers neither a historical account of the development of Waren- and / or Kaufhäuser in Germany, nor is it a literary study!

Divided into five chapters, only two (Chpt. 1: 'Jerusalem's Terrain: The Department Store and Its Discontents in Imperial Germany' [21-55] and Chpt. 4: 'Beyond the Consuming Temple: Jewish Dissimilation and Consumer Modernity in Provincial Germany' [139-78]) deal with historical developments in the strict sense, whereas two others (Chpt. 3: 'Uncanny Encounters: The Thief, the Shopgirl, and the Department Store King' [94-138] and Chpt. 5: 'The Consuming Fire: Fantasies of Destruction in German Politics and Culture' [179-211]) are literary studies based on interpretations of numerous German novels, short stories and plays published during the period in question, whose fictitious accounts singularly lack historical accountability!

But not just Lerner's emphasis on contemporary fiction, whose plots are based in / on 'Warenhäuser', is cause for concern in a book which – at least according to its title – claims to be a historical study – but even more so that many – often absolutely valid points (as e.g. those in Chpt. 2: 'Dreamworlds in Motion: Circulation, Cosmopolitanism, and the Jewish Question' [56-93] – equally apply to department stores in France, Britain, and above all in the US, during the period in question, i.e. they are not typical German features; and the author's brief sub-chapter on this issue ('The Department Store and Its Discontents: Modern Retail in France, the United States, and Britain' [33-36]) simply does not do justice to this wide-ranging topic!

Above all though, Lerner's utter failure to deal with the problem of German department stores during the period after 1933, let alone those of its ideological antecedents in the 1920s, lays it wide open to

criticism. For though he briefly mentions Rudolf Hess and Martin Bormann, as well as the Nazi economist Hans Buchner's publications *Dämonen der Wirtschaft* (1928) and its sequel *Warenhauspolitik und Nationalsozialismus* (1929), and though furthermore Heinrich Uhlig's key publication *Die Warenhäuser im Dritten Reich* (1956)<sup>1</sup> is referred to in passing, that's about it as far as the Nazis' opposition on economic grounds (though Lerner repeatedly states the Nazis' moral objections) to – mainly Jewish – 'Waren- and Kaufhäuser' is concerned.

As mentioned above, Lerner analyses – often at great length – a whole string of German novels and plays written between the end of the 19th century and the early 1930s; however, he unfortunately missed out on one key novel, namely Arnold Zweig's *Das Beil von Wandsbek* (1947),<sup>2</sup> which – for a proper understanding – absolutely necessitates a detailed analysis of the NSDAP's ideological stance vis-à-vis department stores.<sup>3</sup>

By 1935, let alone 1937, the NSDAP's 25-point party political programme, based on economic concepts formulated by Gottfried Feder, and originally drafted by Drexler and Hitler, had lost what little credibility it ever had. Having been officially adopted in February 1920, it was declared 'permanent' ('unveränderlich') following Hitler's election as party chairman in July 1921, though in practice it had little bearing on the day-to-day running of the party. Item 16 of this programme explicitly states:

Wir fordern die Schaffung eines gesunden Mittelstandes und seine Erhaltung, sofortige Kommunalisierung der Großwarenhäuser und ihre Vermietung zu billigen Preisen an kleine Gewerbetreibende, schärfste Berücksichtigung aller kleinen Gewerbetreibenden bei Lieferungen an den Staat, die Länder oder Gemeinden.

Of course, a review like this cannot be the place to give a detailed account of the development of department and chain stores in the final years of the Weimar Republic and the early years of the Third Reich, and interested reader are therefore recommended to consult the reviewer's article on Arnold Zweig's *Das Beil von Wandsbek* (cf. fnt. 3), which offers a more detailed survey of the NSDAP's battle against, and ultimate failure to liquidate various kinds of large stores.

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<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Uhlig: *Die Warenhäuser im Dritten Reich*. Köln/Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1956, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Written in Palestine in the late 1930s & first published in Hebrew in 1943.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Economic Conditions of the Butchers' Trade During the 1930s: A Socio-Political Commentary on the Plot of Arnold Zweig's Novel *The Axe of Wandsbek*', in Arthur Tilo Alt / Julia Berhard (eds.): *Arnold Zweig: Sein Werk im Kontext der deutschsprachigen Exilliteratur*. Bern: Peter Lang, 1999, pp. 141-62.

The Nazis' battle against such stores did not start in earnest though until their accession to power and the passage of the so-called 'Ermächtigungsgesetz' on March 24, 1933. From then onwards though, a solution of the so-called 'Warenhausfrage' became an urgent issue, primarily addressed in the 'Wirtschaftliche Sofortprogramm' of the NSDAP. As a result, the years from 1933 to 1935 were characterised by on-going campaigns against large stores in which mainly the lower party echelons took part. During these campaigns, 'Mittelständische Kampfbünde' played a prominent part, which did not hesitate to resort to boycott measures and even terrorist activities. Following the successful completion of the arianisation of Jewish owned stores, boycott actions, especially in March 1933, and intimidation of the staff of large stores, particularly in the grocery sections, were supplemented by a catalogue of legislative measures ('Restriktivmaßnahmen')<sup>4</sup> as additional support for small traders, and to help enforce the implementation of Item 16 of the 'Permanent Party Programme'.

The combined effect of a general economic crisis in the early 1930s, and the restrictive measures imposed by the Nazis themselves, led to growing uncertainty about the economic future of 'Warenhäuser' and had most of the big stores and chains teetering on the brink of collapse by the middle of 1933. At this vital juncture in July 1933, Hitler's deputy, Rudolf Heß, intervened, issuing a decree which, with immediate effect, prohibited any further economic sanctions – other than state legislation – against large stores and chains:

Die Einstellung der NSDAP zur 'Warenhausfrage' ist im grundsätzlichen nach wie vor unverändert. Ihre Lösung wird zur geeigneten Zeit im Sinne des nationalsozialistischen Parteiprogramms erfolgen. Im Hinblick auf die allgemeine Wirtschaftslage hält die Parteileitung vorerst ein aktives Vorgehen mit dem Ziele, Warenhäuser und warenhausähnliche Betriebe zum Erliegen zu bringen, nicht für geboten. In einer Zeit, da die nationalsozialistische Regierung ihre Hauptaufgabe darin sieht, möglichst zahlreichen arbeitslosen Volksgenossen zu Arbeit und Brot zu verhelfen, darf die nationalsozialistische Bewegung nicht dem entgegenwirken, indem sie Hunderttausenden von Arbeitern und Angestellten in den Warenhäusern und den von ihnen anhängigen Betrieben die Arbeitsplätze nimmt. Den Gliederungen der NSDAP wird daher untersagt, bis auf weiteres Aktionen gegen Warenhäuser und warenhausähnliche Betriebe zu unternehmen.<sup>5</sup>

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4 Cf. Adelheid von Saldern: *Mittelstand im »Dritten Reich«. Handwerker – Einzelhändler – Bauern*. Frankfurt a.M / New York: Campus, 1979, pp. 61-62; a list (plus commentary) of the various restrictive measures ('Restriktivmaßnahmen') mentioned in the text can be found in Elmar Michel: *Einzelhandel und Einzelhandelsschutz*. Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlags-Anstalt, 1937, pp. 9-54.

5 Cf. *Völkischer Beobachter*, July 10, 1933, p. 3 (cited by Uhlig: *Die Warenhäuser im Dritten Reich*, p. 111).

The economic reasons for this decision, beyond those given by Heß in his statement, are only too obvious: hundreds of millions of RM, owed to suppliers, would have been lost had big stores been allowed to fold,<sup>6</sup> a policy fiercely opposed by the major banks, which, by the middle of 1933, owned sizeable chunks of the main department stores. From this point onwards in mid-1933 the survival of department and chain stores was never really in any doubt, and instead of a programme of wholesale closures, only restrictive measures remained in operation. The decline of big stores in terms of turnover had been dramatic indeed, however, despite huge losses in 1933/34, the big stores never looked back following the 'Heß Decree', and even less so after the so-called 'Bormann-Erlass' of February 1934, reiterating the line adopted by the Deputy Führer. In fact, the party's attitude towards department and chain stores changed considerably during the course of 1935, and the whole question ('Warenhausfrage') gradually lost its priority status as other economic issues replaced it, especially the first 'Four-Year-Plan' under Göring's leadership in the autumn of 1936. The overall result of a turbulent year (1935) was that any action regarding Item 16 of the 'Permanent Party Programme' was now interpreted by NS officials as reflecting the economic situation of the 1920s<sup>7</sup> which no longer applied, advocating its postponement, or even abandonment. After that the issue was closed, not to be reopened during the remaining years of the Third Reich.

It is not just this whole NS episode though, which Lerner ignored in his study of German department stores. Rise to criticism also gives his chapter about store fires in German fiction during the period in question, since it creates a completely wrong impression about the true historical circumstances. After all, fires – especially in factories – at that time were quite a commonplace due to the large scale exploitation of the owners of sweatshops all over the western hemisphere. And to corroborate this point one merely needs to refer to the notorious 'Triangle Shirtwaist Factory' fire in New York's garment district (Greenwich Village) in late March 1911, when 146 employees perished in the flames (the owners had illegally blocked the emergency exits), and scores of others suffered severe injuries.

Overall, my conclusion regarding this study therefore is that it is rather unbalanced, putting far too much emphasis on matters which concern not strictly historical but literary material, to the exclusion of details (e.g. the Nazi period) which in such a book ought to have been a must! Rather positive, however, is Lerner's account of the spread of departments stores in the German provinces; and especially his analysis of the Schocken brothers' – Simon and Salma – empire, is excellent! The book is richly

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6 Adelheid von Saldern: *Mittelstand im ›Dritten Reich‹. Handwerker – Einzelhändler – Bauern*. Frankfurt a.M. / New York: Campus, 1979, p. 62.

7 Cf. Arthur Schweitzer: *Die Nazifizierung des Mittelstandes*. Stuttgart: Enke, 1970, p. 57.

illustrated, drawing on numerous contemporary photos of 'Waren- and Kaufhäuser' during the era in question, which gives the reader a good impression of what some of these buildings, e.g., Wertheim's store on Leipziger Straße and Tietze's KaDeWe on Tauentzienstraße, both in Berlin, looked like (bearing in mind that many were destroyed during WWII).

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**KRISTINA MEYER: *DIE SPD UND DIE NS-VERGANGENHEIT 1945-1990*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015. 549**

S.



Kristina Meyers Dissertation, die 2015 mit dem Willy-Brandt-Preis für Zeitgeschichte ausgezeichnet wurde, rückt ein nur auf den ersten Blick banales Verhältnis in den Mittelpunkt: Zwar befanden sich die Sozialdemokratinnen und Sozialdemokraten im Frühsommer 1945 auf der ‚Siegerseite‘ einer Gewaltgeschichte, die einst mit dem Reichstagsbrand, der Reichstagswahl am 5. März 1933 und der Rede von Otto Wels gegen das ‚Ermächtigungsgesetz‘ am 23. März 1933 im Berliner Reichstag ihren tragischen Lauf genommen hatte. Zugleich hatte es die wiedererstandene SPD in den drei westlichen Besatzungszonen aber mit einer Bevölkerung zu

tun, die sich zum einen in weiten Teilen eben noch im Frühjahr 1945 nicht hatte befreien lassen wollen und die nach Kriegsende in „einer Mischung aus Gleichgültigkeit und Selbstbezogenheit auf die NS-Zeit zurückblickte.“ (7) Zum anderen hatte es jene Überläufer, Kollaborateure und sonstigen Profiteure auch in der eigenen Wähler- und Mitgliedschaft gegeben; denn nicht jede sozialdemokratische Biografie führte 1933 in den Widerstand oder die Emigration. Was auch Anlass dafür war, dass die letzteren beiden Handlungsweisen nach 1945 keineswegs selbstverständlich positiv besetzt waren.

Dies verweist bereits auf eine der Strategien, mit denen die Sozialdemokraten den gesellschaftlichen Realitäten der frühen Nachkriegszeit begegneten, wie sie ihre Partei darin verorteten und wo sie ggf. – und auch über die Köpfe der Mitglieder hinweg – geschichtspolitische Zugeständnisse und pragmatisch orientierte Politik machten. Jene Strategien sind es, die Kristina Meyer in sechs Kapiteln und für einen Zeitraum von 1945 bis in die 90er Jahre in ihren jeweiligen Kontexten herleitet bzw. auf ihre Funktion und Wirkung hin befragt. Der Fokus liegt dabei immer auf der SPD und wird von den in ihr agierenden Akteuren aus geschildert. Die Arbeit folgt stets einem chronologischen Aufbau und stellt in ihrem ersten Kapitel die Jahre 1945 bis 1949 vor, die in der SPD-Mitgliedschaft von Hoffnungen auf eine juristische Abrechnung mit dem Nationalsozialismus einerseits und auf einen demokratischen wie sozialen Aufbau

andererseits gekennzeichnet waren. Die überaus komplexe Gemengelage, in der es für die Sozialdemokraten nicht zuletzt auch um eine aus der jüngsten Geschichte hergeleitete politische Legitimität bzw. einen folglich moralisch begründeten Führungsanspruch ging, enttäuschte dabei nicht wenige der SPD-Mitglieder, wurden doch die Erwartungen etwa an eine umfassende Entnazifizierung nicht erfüllt. Zugleich erfolgte in einem Gestus der sich nicht selbst stilisierenden Bescheidenheit keine konkrete Aufwertung oder gar Inszenierung von sozialdemokratischem Widerstand und Verfolgung, was ebenfalls zu ersten Tendenzen der Abkehr auch in der eigenen Mitgliedschaft führte. Diese maßgeblich mit der Person Kurt Schumacher verbundene Phase war dabei geprägt von einer vor allem auf die aktuellen politischen Gegner gerichteten Sicht auf die Geschichte. Schließlich warf die SPD den Kommunisten und den bürgerlichen Kräften vor, den Untergang der Weimarer Republik herbeigeführt zu haben. Die „Handlungsspielräume zwischen Widerstand, Immobilismus und Anpassung“ (502) hatten aber auch die Mitglieder in den eigenen Reihen nach 1933 ganz unterschiedlich ausgefüllt. Diese Auseinandersetzung umging man anfangs und beließ es beim Verweis auf die eigene Rolle im Kampf gegen die Nationalsozialisten, mehr noch aber bei der Betonung der historischen Fehler der politischen Konkurrenten und Parteigegner.

Das zweite Kapitel behandelt die Zeit bis zum Godesberger Programmparteitag 1959 und damit die zentrale Zeit der Opposition. Schließlich war es den Sozialdemokraten über mehrere Legislaturperioden nicht gelungen, die parlamentarische Mehrheit und damit die Kanzlerschaft zu erringen. In Teilen hatte man sich dem freilich auch verweigert, was insbesondere mit Schumachers immer wieder vorgetragenem Recht auf deutsche Selbstbestimmung und eigenständige Demokratisierung verbunden war. Die Verfasserin stellt diese Zeit als eine Phase vor, in der die SPD zwischen Opposition und Opportunität changierte – etwa hinsichtlich der Vergangenheitspolitik der Bundesrepublik unter Kanzler Adenauer und den „Zugeständnissen an die Entlastungs- und Verdrängungsbedürfnisse der Bevölkerungsmehrheit“ (20). Letzteres deutet bereits auf den Weg zur Volkspartei, der unter anderem auch über die Integration ehemaliger Mitläufer und NSDAP-Mitglieder führte, denen man unter der Formel des ‚irregeleiteten Idealisten‘ gewissermaßen eine zweite Chance einräumte. Hinzu kam die bereits von Schumacher entwickelte Fokussierung auf den Widerstand des ‚anderen Deutschlands‘, der gezielt den Ansätzen der Kollektivschuld entgegengestellt wurde. Die SPD wies dabei wie keine andere Partei die bereits in der Einleitung von der Autorin als „Paradoxon“ (22) gekennzeichnete Besonderheit auf, nach dem sich der Volksparteien-Erfolg der deutschen Nachkriegs-SPD auf eine gemischte Mitglied- / Wählerschaft aus ehemaligen Verfolgten und Widerstandskämpfern auf der einen sowie ehemaligen NSDAP-Mitgliedern und sonstigen Mitläufern der nationalsozialistischen Polykratie auf der anderen Seite stützte – ja: stützen musste. Die entsprechenden Gruppen waren in keiner anderen Partei der

Bundesrepublik derart groß, und die Bruchlinien konnten bisweilen kaum härter sein, wie allein die Biografie des SPD-Neugründers Kurt Schumacher zeigt.

Der neue und eher konfliktscheue SPD-Vorsitzende Erich Ollenhauer integrierte diese Ansätze des Umgangs mit der Vergangenheit dann im Sinne einer gesellschaftlichen Harmonisierung: nach Schumachers Tod 1952 war kaum noch die Rede von der Rolle der bürgerlichen Kräfte oder der Kommunisten im Jahr 1933, auch passte man sich mehr und mehr dem ‚durchweg positiven Narrativ‘ des 20. Juli 1944 an. Diese Harmonisierung führte auch zu einer anfänglichen Unterstützung der Amnestiepolitik gegenüber den NS-Tätern durch die Regierung Adenauer, hinter der die pragmatischen Kräfte in der SPD-Führung mehr Wählerpotential vermuteten, als in historisch korrekter Glaubwürdigkeit. Diese Positionierung freilich bot auch breiteste Angriffsflächen für die Propaganda der DDR, wie sie parteiintern insbesondere das Vertrauen zahlreicher NS-Verfolgter enttäuschte. Und sie zeigte, dass die SPD nie bloße Geschichtspolitik betreiben konnte, sondern dass dieselbe im Nachkriegsdeutschland sehr oft verbunden war mit tagesaktuellen politischen Positionen. Dieser Zusammenhang offenbart sich im Besonderen an Themen wie der von den Sozialdemokraten anfangs abgelehnten deutschen Wiederbewaffnung, die die bundesdeutsche Öffentlichkeit und auch die SPD selbst stark prägten. In Meyers Studie kommen diese Themen – manchmal etwas überraschend ob ihrer Bedeutung – dagegen aber nur dann und zumeist am Rande vor, wenn sie zum Kontext einer geschichtspolitischen oder erinnerungskulturellen Entwicklung gehören.

Im dritten Kapitel stehen dann die geschichtspolitischen Strategien der SPD als ‚Volkspartei‘ und hier in der Phase von 1959 bis 1966 im Mittelpunkt, die zugleich von einer verstärkten Strafverfolgung von NS-Verbrechern gekennzeichnet war – von der Verurteilung Adolf Eichmanns in Jerusalem bis hin zu den Frankfurter Auschwitz-Prozessen. Jene Phase war für die SPD von einer regelrechten Gratwanderung in der Vergangenheitspolitik wie auch von zahlreichen Ambivalenzen geprägt, die durch den beginnenden innerparteilichen Generationswechsel bedingt wurden: mit dem Begriff der Versöhnung verbundene Strategien der Normalisierung der Vergangenheitspolitik überschritten sich mit antisemitischen Skandalen oder der Verjährungsdebatte. Letztere vor allem für Mord nicht zu gewähren, bildet nun gewissermaßen einen zentralen geschichtspolitischen roten Faden und für führende Sozialdemokraten stets ein politisches Argument, um deutsches Ansehen im Ausland zu generieren. Zugleich betonten vor allem Vertreter der SPD etwa im Zusammenhang mit der Synagogenschändung im Dezember 1959 in Köln, wie sehr die Reflexe gegen Ostblock und Kommunismus die selbstkritische Auseinandersetzung mit den eigenen Problemen und ihren historischen Ursachen verhindere. Als es dann aber im Frühsommer 1961 in den Bundestagswahlkampf ging und erneut ehemalige Emigranten als einst verantwortungsscheu diffamiert wurden, entschied sich die SPD-Führung wieder für eine Linie der

Zurückhaltung – aus Angst, durch die Betonung eines bewussten Handelns ‚gegen Deutschland‘ nicht noch mehr Wählerunmut auf sich zu ziehen.

Das vierte Kapitel stellt dann die Kanzlerschaft Willy Brandts von 1966 bis zu seinem Rücktritt 1974 in den Mittelpunkt, die durch einen grundlegenden gesellschaftlichen Wandel geprägt war. Schließlich standen System und Gesellschaft der Bundesrepublik bei einer jüngeren Generation zunehmend im Verruf, doch nur eine Fortsetzung jener ‚alten Ordnung‘ der Zeit vor 1945 bzw. das Relikt einer verhinderten Neuordnung zu sein. Insbesondere hier sah sich die SPD-Parteiführung in der Großen Koalition, der von den ‚jungen Linken‘ allzu viel Pragmatismus und Versöhnlichkeit vorgeworfen wurde, nicht nur mit neuen Ausdrucksformen konfrontiert; vielmehr offenbarte sich in der 68er-Bewegung auch die gescheiterte Integration der „irregeleiteten Idealisten“, die sich vom Klischee der „skeptischen Generation“ (Helmut Schelsky) absetzten und sich ganz im Gegenteil vom Idealismus eben jener jungen 68er angezogen fühlten. Zwar waren die in diesen Kreisen hergeleiteten politischen Szenarien bzw. Parallelen, die im historischen Vergleich ein neues 1933 möglich sahen, sicher mehr als überzogen. Viel wichtiger war aber, dass sich die Konfliktlinien innerhalb der SPD längst nicht mehr allein um den Umgang mit dem Nationalsozialismus bewegten. Vielmehr ging es in den späten 60er Jahren auch um die Einordnung des Aufbaus nach 1945 und die Deutung der Rolle der SPD in dieser positiven Aufbauzählung. Womit sich zugleich ein wesentlicher Kern des Generationenkonfliktes auftat.

Als Brandt dann 1969 als Kanzler gestärkt aus der „Willy-Wahl“ hervorging, waren die Erwartungen an ein ‚Nachholen des Versäumten‘ immens. Und die Enttäuschung über einen vor allem außenpolitisch orientierten Kanzler war daher auch in den eigenen Reihen groß – hier vor allem seitens der Verfolgten des NS-Regimes und ihrer bislang ausgebliebenen Anerkennung und Wiedergutmachung. Letztlich stand aber Brandts Kniefall in Warschau hier nicht antithetisch zu einer ausgebliebenen innenpolitischen Schwerpunktsetzung, sondern sollte aus dem Äußeren jenseits der internationalen Wirkung auch in die deutsche Gesellschaft und auf eben jenen Umgang mit der eigenen Vergangenheit wirken. Dass diese Leistung freilich erst der jeder Schuld erhabene einstige Emigrant Willy Brandt erbringen musste, ist ein eigenes Signum jener späten 60er und frühen 70er Jahre der Bundesrepublik.

Das fünfte Kapitel, das zeitlich auf die Kanzlerschaft von Helmut Schmidt bis 1982 fokussiert, zeichnet einen grundlegenden erinnerungskulturellen Wandel in der Bundesrepublik nach, empfanden doch konservative Kräfte des Landes die Bundesrepublik zunehmend geschichts- und identitätslos; zugleich attackierten diese die SPD in Zeiten des RAF-Terrorismus mit der vermeintlich ideologischen Verwandtschaft von Sozialismus und Nationalsozialismus. Innerhalb der sozialdemokratischen Partei setzte aber erst mit der erinnerungskulturellen Wende in der deutschen Gesellschaft selbst eine Hinwendung zur Vergangenheit ein – Auslöser war hier vor allem die 1979 ausgestrahlte US-



amerikanische Fernsehserie ‚Holocaust‘ und ihr Blick für die ‚normalen‘ Opfer ‚im Durchschnitt‘ der Gesellschaft. Zugleich entdeckte man freilich Anfang der 1980er Jahre auch zunehmend die Alltagsgeschichte ‚von unten‘; und in ihr die Schicksale und den Mut der Einzelnen. Diese „Renaissance des Geschichtsbewusstseins“, die zugleich eine „Selbsthistorisierung“ beinhaltete (515), schlug sich etwa in der stärkeren Fokussierung der Verfolgten und ihrer Widergutmachungsansprüche nieder.

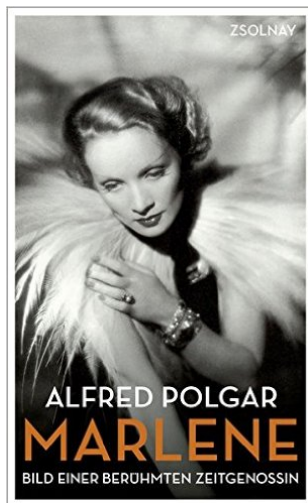
Das sechste und abschließende Kapitel behandelt dann die mit Bundeskanzler Helmut Kohl verbundene ‚geistig-moralische Wende‘, die ab 1982 in ihrem Bestreben um eine ‚Normalisierung‘ des Verhältnisses der Deutschen zu ihrer Vergangenheit eine bundesdeutsche Musealisierung ebenso anstieß, wie sie regelrechte Skandale (Bitburg) und auch heftige, teils gesellschaftlich sehr breit geführte Debatten provozierte (Historikerstreit). Geschichtspolitisch geriet die SPD in dieser Phase immer stärker in die Defensive, wobei sich zugleich die ‚Erlebnisgeneration‘ vor allem des Widerstands und der Emigration zunehmend in den politischen Ruhestand verabschiedete. Die Partei begegnete dem mit Institutionalisierungen wie der Gründung einer Historischen Kommission. Zugleich stritt man ambivalent mit den Vertretern von Alltagsgeschichte und Oral History – die im Kern die geschichtspolitisch richtigen Themen fokussierten, in struktur- und sozialgeschichtlicher Perspektive den zumeist ‚fachwissenschaftlich professionellen‘ Mitgliedern der genannten Historischen Kommission aber als ‚Barfußhistoriker‘ galten. Diese Auseinandersetzungen waren für die SPD insofern von neuer Qualität, als dass nun zur Positionierung nach links und rechts parallel auch die Verhältnisbestimmung zwischen oben und unten hinzukam. Kristina Meyer konstatiert hier zurecht, dass der Nachholbedarf längst versäumter eigener Debatten wie auch das ‚Debattieren im Biotop‘ ihr ohnehin zugeneigter Historiker schließlich dazu beitrug, dass sich die SPD in den 80er Jahren zwar noch hörbar zu den geschichtspolitischen Initiativen der Kohl-Administration positionieren konnte. Zugleich war diese Suche nach einer Position zur eigenen Vergangenheit aber auch Teil der Orientierungssuche in der Opposition und gegen die neu erstandenen Grünen. Sie trug folglich dazu bei, dass die SPD 1989 von der Rasanz, die politische Ereignisse gelegentlich haben, regelrecht „übrumpelt“ wurde (518). Erst spät, und eigentlich erst nach dem Ausscheiden der Erlebnisgeneration, fand die SPD dann in den 90er Jahren zu einer offensiver dargestellten Widerstands- und Emigrationsgeschichte, deren Thematisierung möglicherweise wertfrei eben erst ohne die Erlebnisgeneration möglich war. Und ist. Die Debatten über das Verhältnis der SPD zur NS-Vergangenheit sind damit freilich nicht abgeschlossen, dies benennt auch die Autorin als Illusion – und Chance zugleich.

Die Studie von Kristina Meyer, die auf breitester Quellen- wie Literaturbasis erarbeitet und durch ein Personenregister leicht erschließbar ist, leistet in verschiedener Hinsicht einen Beitrag zum Verständnis der Geschichte und des Geschichtsbewusstseins der Bundesrepublik wie auch einer ihrer großen

Parteien. Diese Verflechtung von politischer und Gesellschaftsgeschichte ist ein besonderer Vorzug der Arbeit und ergänzt hier die erinnerungskulturell orientierten Studien etwa von Edgar Wolfrum. Zugleich gelingt der Autorin im Längsschnitt bis in die 90er Jahre – und eben nicht in Beschränkung auf zumeist als ‚Ära‘ klassifizierter Zeitabschnitte –, die Entwicklung des Verhältnisses der SPD zur NS-Vergangenheit überzeugend und eingehend in ihrer Entwicklung und Veränderung nachzuzeichnen; in Teilen überrascht sie den Leser bisweilen mit Gleichzeitigkeiten deutlich ungleichzeitiger Entwicklungen, die sich aus dem konsultierten und teils einzelpersonenbezogenen Material ergeben. Gerade hier liefert das generell überaus gut lesbar geschriebene Buch ein wirklich neues Stück Zeitgeschichtsschreibung, das sich mit seiner kulturgeschichtlichen Argumentation von einer klassischen Politikgeschichte weit entfernt – der chronologische Aufbau ist nur auf den ersten Blick konventionell – und das zugleich eine Lücke der bisherigen Parteienforschung schließt bzw. in seiner Perspektivierung möglicherweise eben dieser Parteienforschung einen neuen Impuls gibt.

Swen Steinberg, Los Angeles / Dresden

**ALFRED POLGAR. MARLENE: BILD EINER BERÜHMTEN ZEITGENOSSIN. HERAUSGEGEBEN MIT EINEM NACHWORT VON ULRICH WEINZIERL. Wien: Zsolnay, 2015. 136 S.**



Film star Marlene Dietrich is legendary for her discrete but dedicated assistance to persecuted artists and refugees from Nazi Germany. Among those she helped was the Viennese writer Alfred Polgar, who witnessed her first Viennese stage appearance in the gangster thriller *Broadway* (1927), where in a minor role she made such an enormous impression on him that he counted himself among the earliest members of her fan club. He then brushed shoulders with her after his move to Berlin, and he followed her career in films and on the stage up to her breakthrough starring role in *Der blaue Engel* / *The Blue Angel* (1930) and beyond, into her early Hollywood career. The admiration was mutual, and in 1937 grew into a collaborative

but abortive biographical project that only now has found its way into print.

Editor Ulrich Weinzierl, author of two Polgar biographies (1978 and 1985), recounts the story behind this „lost“ manuscript in his generous afterward. Tipped off in early 1934 by a common friend that Polgar, who had escaped to Vienna, was in dire straits and deep depression, Dietrich wired the writer monies on several occasions. When Dietrich visited Salzburg in 1936, Polgar visited and paid his respects to her,

followed by a devoted letter thanking her for her kindness and generosity, and offering to return her support in his own way; the following year, the idea of an authorized biography developed. Dietrich's career was showing signs of crisis, so the book could help her, and through it she could indirectly offer Polgar work and an income. The volume was to appear with a Viennese publisher, and that summer, a first interview took place during her Salzburg sojourn. Already by fall, however, the project was faltering as Dietrich was too busy and appeared to lose interest, and Polgar was frustrated by her lack of commitment. He found himself dealing with Dietrich's husband Sieber, who viewed the manuscript as a publicity piece rather than a literary work. Polgar noted the danger of slipping into irony under such conditions and expressed revulsion at the notion of appearing as a „Psalmist einer Film-Diva“, while he was reminded that pride was a luxury he could hardly afford in his situation (99).

Polgar left Austria for Switzerland just before the Nazis marched in; he took his manuscript with him, but under the new conditions, publication in Vienna was out of the question. From Paris, he sent the text to Sieber hoping that it might find a publisher in America, perhaps even in Dietrich's film studio, but Sieber was stand-offish, promising future meetings and development in Paris that never happened. Polgar soon lost hope for the project and fell into a black pool of frustration. When he later fled Paris, in turn, he lost almost all his possessions and manuscripts, except for his doomed Dietrich piece. And after he landed in Hollywood with a one-year charity contract at MGM arranged by the European Film Fund, there appears to have been no more contact between Polgar and Dietrich, even under the mediation of her husband. She was otherwise occupied, and the project no longer relevant or promising. Decades later, in 1984, in the presence of Weinzierl, the widow of Polgar's stepson opened an old suitcase in New York and discovered the unknown manuscript, which she then gave to Weinzierl.

Unfortunately, this background story, which makes up some half the volume in the afterword, is more gripping than Polgar's actual rediscovered manuscript on Dietrich. That the manuscript existed was no secret, since Weinzierl's 1985 biography quoted from the portrait, citing it as a typescript in his personal possession, but it has taken this long for the complete text to be published in its own right as originally intended. Alongside an account of her rise to stardom, Polgar offers chapters on her legendary sex appeal, her face, her voice, her body, and her acting, then a discrete glance into her private life, an interview, a few anecdotes, and a reflection on her future. The anticipated marketing function of the text is apparent in its idealizing tone. In its day, this short text would have made an enjoyable and stylish magazine portrait or a cultivated illustrated book the likes of other early Dietrich biographies by Franz Hessel (1931), Manfred Georg (1931) or Alfred Rosenthal (1932). What it offers beyond these is its expanded perspective on Dietrich's early Hollywood work through the Sternberg period – and Polgar's stylish turn of phrase. Throughout the book, he grapples with the difficulties of capturing Dietrich's

ineffable power in words. Polgar is fascinated by the complexities and ambiguities of her performances, as when he writes of *Marocco*, „Es ist, als verrate einer sein Geheimnis eben durch die Sorgfalt, mit der er es zu verhehlen trachtet“ (49). The melancholy and isolation Polgar felt in these turbulent years also tint an expressive passage on Dietrich’s face:

Die Grundmelodie, bald leise, bald stärker, aber nie völlig überhörbar aus den Zügen dieses Gesichts tönend, heißt: Verlorenheit, Verlorenheit in der Welt, in der Liebe, im labyrinthischen Schicksals-Plan. Es ist das Gesicht eines Menschen, über den verhängt wurde, das Leben immer ein wenig als Exil zu fühlen. Mag sein, gelegentlich auch äußerst vergnügtes Exil. Aber die Heimat ist anderswo. (39)

The interview chapter, on the other hand, feels like superficial pulp journalism, and here it is evident that the collaborative goal of the book failed when the film diva was unwilling to let her guard down enough to form a genuine connection with the writer.

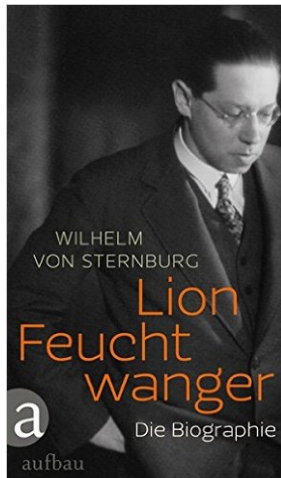
As Weinzierl notes at the end of his foreword, Polgar does not hint at the dark sides of Marlene’s life and person, as most sensationally revealed in the 1992 book by her daughter, Maria Riva. Polgar’s portrayal avoids any mention of personal or professional weakness or ambivalence. For today’s readers, however, it is precisely the ambiguous and contradictory character of the diva, the tensions between the public image and the private persona, the demons lurking in the shadows that make a figure like Marlene Dietrich so fascinating. Polgar’s portrayal of over 75 years ago is therefore, regrettably, rather outmoded, offering nothing „new“ to our understanding of the star. A touch of the caustic irony that Polgar found himself resisting might have spiced the rapturous portrait up.

With its afterword and appendices (including minute editorial annotations and footnotes), the volume is nonetheless valuable for its gripping story of a doomed manuscript and its rediscovery, and for the light it casts on a brief relationship of mutual respect and support between the film star and the author. Above all, this is a revealing document of the vagaries of exile: Polgar’s existential desperation, his need (both financial and intellectual) for work, and the compromises he had to undertake. It is a tale of the shifting ground of emigration, and ultimately the loss of a market, an audience, and a voice. Even in its one-sidedly glorifying tone, Polgar’s manuscript can be seen as an act of resistance, for a German-language monument to the star in exile was a slap in the face of the Nazis, for whom she was a problematic and challenging figure. Well into the thirties, the regime still hoped that she would return, though her continuing work with Jewish directors von Sternberg and Lubitsch made her Hollywood work unacceptable and suggested a lack of moral character, as did her portrayals of strong and sensual women. Polgar’s monograph avoids any direct politicizing and never mentions her anti-Nazi stance or

her support of refugees and her continued work with Jewish film artists, but his admiration for her courage and convictions is evident between the lines.

Alan Lareau, Oshkosh, WI

**WILHELM VON STERNBURG: *LION FEUCHTWANGER. DIE BIOGRAPHIE*. Berlin: Aufbau, 2014. 543 pp.**



First published in 1984 in time to mark the centenary of Lion Feuchtwanger's birth and subsequently republished in a number of new editions, Wilhelm von Sternburg's biography of the author has established itself over the past thirty years and more as an indispensable reference point for all Feuchtwanger scholars. The substantially revised and expanded edition which appeared thirty years later in 2014 takes full account of new archival resources and other published and unpublished material which have become available in recent years. In doing so, it has significantly enriched von Sternburg's original study without, however, substantially altering its findings in any essential respect.

Adopting a fundamentally chronological approach, von Sternburg intersperses his concise and sharply focused presentation of the various stages of Feuchtwanger's life with individual chapters on themes of particular significance. These comprise the writer's lifelong loyalty to Judaism (in Chapter 4 von Sternburg describes Feuchtwanger as not simply a German author of Jewish background but "vor allem ein jüdischer Schriftsteller, der in deutscher Sprache schrieb" [54]), the story of his erotic involvement with numerous women (Chapter 7), his view from the sidelines of the Bavarian revolution in 1918/19 (Chapter 11), and his important literary friendships with Brecht, Arnold Zweig, Heinrich Mann, Thomas Mann, and Bruno Frank (Chapter 12). His perceptive commentary on Feuchtwanger's literary output demonstrates a keen awareness of the autobiographical significance of even those works of only slight literary merit. Characteristic of his approach is a judicious combination of succinct plot summary, apposite choice of quotation from Feuchtwanger's texts, and critical assessment in which a sharp eye for revealing detail is matched by a firm grasp of historical context.

The predominant impression of Feuchtwanger which emerges from the book's five hundred pages is of a major novelist, a less than impressive writer of short stories, and a competent, commercially successful playwright who exercised considerable influence over Bertolt Brecht's work in the theatre. His novels, among which *Jud Süß*, *Erfolg* and the Josephus trilogy are seen as the most important and therefore receive particularly close attention, have lost none of their force since his death in 1958:

Seine Romane [...] sind zeitlos, und auch deswegen sind die Leser diesem Autor mehr als ein halbes Jahrhundert nach seinem Tod weiterhin treu geblieben. [...] er gehört zu den wenigen Schriftstellern seiner Generation, deren Name und deren Werk den Wandel der Zeiten und den Wandel der Leserschaft erfolgreich überlebt haben. [...] Denn ein großer Erzähler ist Feuchtwanger, ein ironischer und verstehender Deuter unserer Triebe und unserer Leidenschaften, ein hellsichtiger Geschichts- und Menschenkenner. (11)

In making such large claims for Feuchtwanger von Sternburg is also explicitly taking issue with a far less positive view which is widely shared among professional critics in Germany. By denying Feuchtwanger the status of a major writer, such a view promotes what amounts in von Sternburg's eyes to "seine fahrlässige Herabsetzung als Schriftsteller". (238) While taking him to task (wrongly, in von Sternburg's view) for stylistic weaknesses and a lax disregard for historical facts, his most severe critics fail to recognise his impressive powers as a story-teller, powers which quickly attracted a loyal international readership.

Von Sternburg himself is by no means uncritical of Feuchtwanger the writer, however, dismissing as no more than a pointless trick, for example, his misguided decision to present the events in *Erfolg* from the point of view of a narrator writing in the year 2000 – a mistake which Feuchtwanger himself in due course acknowledged. But this defect is not seen as substantially affecting its status as "ein Meisterwerk" (208). Such a defence is not possible in the case of *Moskau 1937*, described here as "eine schmale Broschüre voller Ungereimtheiten und Irrtümer" (346) and its author dismissed by an otherwise admiring critic in the most categorical terms as "der leichtfertige Moskau-Propagandist" (389) who displays in this work "Halb- und Nichtwissen, ideologische Voreingenommenheit und flache Reflexionen" (388) as well as an arrogance, vanity, political naiveté and a degree of literary and intellectual betrayal (including a keen interest in promoting his own commercial interests in the Soviet book market) which make of him no more than a willing puppet in the hands of Stalin. Yet von Sternburg devotes no fewer than 50 of the volume's 500 pages to a discussion of what he regards as Feuchtwanger's weakest book. Given that, by comparison, he deals in only 80 pages with the whole period of the writer's exile in the USA, from 1940 to 1958, when he wrote seven novels, two plays (including one co-authored with Brecht), several short stories, his report on his internment in France in *Der Teufel in Frankreich*, and numerous shorter pieces of journalism as well as substantial passages of *Das Haus der Desdemona* on which he was still working when he died in 1958, the question has to be asked whether the analysis of the Moscow book is disproportionately long.

The main reason which may be adduced in justification of such length is quite clear: this is Feuchtwanger's most controversial book and one which continues to exercise critics today (see the

piece by Erhard Bahr in *Newsletter* 15 and the discussion of Andreas Heusler's recent biography in *Newsletter* 17). A second reason can be found in von Sternburg's attempt to marry his categorical and unequivocal rejection of the book's ideological bias on the one hand with his wish to plead mitigating circumstances in Feuchtwanger's defence on the other. There is undoubtedly real and persuasive traction in his argument that, at a time when the Nazi threat was immediate and overwhelming, Feuchtwanger was justified in regarding the Soviet Union as the world's best hope of successful resistance. Far less persuasive is the logic which argues that the amount of blood spilled by the Soviet people somehow means that "in einem gewissen Sinn im 'Ganzen' " (394) Feuchtwanger's book was not so wrong after all. Von Sternburg's appeal for a more sympathetic understanding of the difficult position in which Feuchtwanger found himself (he was exhausted by the many hours spent at the show trials, often deep into the night; as a non-Russian speaker he could not understand much of what was being said; in private and in his diaries he did criticise the trials; the mistakes he made in *Moskau 1937* should be seen in the context of the thousands of pages which make up the rest of his oeuvre; Feuchtwanger never intended to write an objective account but only record his own impressions; he was not the only western visitor to be led up the garden path by Stalin, and so on) often sounds dangerously like special pleading.

It is often insufficiently realised both that Feuchtwanger had established a considerable reputation in the theatre well before he turned to the historical novel after the Great War and that, in the plays which he wrote in 1914-18, he displayed admirable courage and, at the time, unusual independence of mind with his criticism of nationalists and warmongers (this largely explains the fact that his play *Die Kriegsgefangenen* was the first German play to be translated into French after the cessation of hostilities). He came to prominence during the war when he established himself as the most-performed dramatist in Munich's theatres, notably for his 'dramatic novel' *Thomas Wendt* (1918/19; revised as *Neunzehnhundertachtzehn* in 1934) which he came to regard as his best play, a judgement with which Sternburg is in complete sympathy. During his years in Berlin in the late 1920s he remained in the public eye with works such as *Kalkutta. 4. Mai*, the most performed of all his dramas and one which enjoyed a measure of success even after 1945. On the whole, however, his plays, ranging from the six one-acters he had written by the age of twenty-one to the full-length play *Die Witwe Capet* which appeared in 1956 two years before his death, have for eighty years rarely if ever been performed in Germany or abroad, and in standard reference works they are usually passed over in silence. Although Feuchtwanger never ceased to think of himself as a dramatist as well as a novelist, his work for the theatre, while technically sound and intellectually stimulating, is, in von Sternburg's eyes, fundamentally conventional, lacking the political or satirical edge of contemporaries such as Hauptmann, Brecht, Wedekind and Sternheim. They

are, he adds, “vielleicht mehr Lese- als Sehstücke” (130), well constructed and intelligent but, in the final analysis, lacking the theatrical qualities of an outstanding play. In a word, Sternburg’s assessment of Feuchtwanger’s plays is sympathetic but falls well short of any argument for a ‘rediscovery’ of the dramatist in the theatre. He does agree with those, however, who insist on Feuchtwanger’s considerable influence on Brecht as he developed his epic theatre (Brecht memorably referred to him as “einer meiner wenigen Lehrmeister”: cit. 132) and emphasises too the way in which his work for the theatre gradually evolved into a fruitful preparation for what would in due course become some of the prose works on which his international reputation ultimately rests, most notably in the case of *Jud Süß*.

Given von Sternburg’s importance as an indispensable reference point for students of Feuchtwanger, two minor blemishes should be pointed out which can easily be removed in any future edition. Edgar Feuchtwanger, Lion’s nephew and the son of Ludwig, moved to England not in February 1940 but in 1939, and it is also inaccurate to say that he was part of a 'Kindertransport' (35). As Edgar notes in his recently published memoir *I was Hitler’s Neighbour* (reviewed in the last *Newsletter*), in his case “a rather more individual procedure proved possible [...]. My fate was therefore slightly more privileged than those who went on the Kindertransport, but not dissimilar.” (*I was...*, 60f.) Lion Feuchtwanger attended the premiere of the British film *Jew Süss* in London in 1934 and not in 1935 (255, where both dates are given).

More seriously, perhaps, Feuchtwanger is described at one point as “der Sozialist Feuchtwanger” (441). Although von Sternburg later cites with approval Robert Neumann’s comment on Feuchtwanger five years after his death – “Auch sein Sozialismus war ehrlich” (485) –, this unqualified statement comes as an abrupt surprise to the reader in a text which has hitherto presented a more nuanced portrait of a bourgeois writer of liberal persuasion, a stoic and even a fatalist who, while in the 1930s and the early 1940s clearly expressing in public debate and essays his sympathy with socialism in the anti-fascist struggle, always remained in his literary work and in his private correspondence “ein skeptischer Betrachter der Welt, ein ‘frei schwebender’ Intellektueller, verpflichtet nur der eigenen Wahrheit.” (190) Given this stress on Feuchtwanger’s loyalty to “his own truth”, it could be argued that von Sternburg is insufficiently critical of the writer’s readiness on occasion to perform a kind of self-censorship, for example in order to remove or modify material which his GDR publisher Aufbau found problematic. Although von Sternburg denies the significance of such changes (“Es sind keine entscheidenden und, auf den Gesamtumfang gesehen, nur wenige Änderungen, die erbeten werden” [479]), it is doubtful, however, whether this could be truly said, for example, of the major changes Feuchtwanger made to *Moskau 37* in order to meet the demands of the Soviet authorities, who were particularly nervous about his portrayal of Trotsky. Von Sternburg himself notes that, in approving some changes to the text of



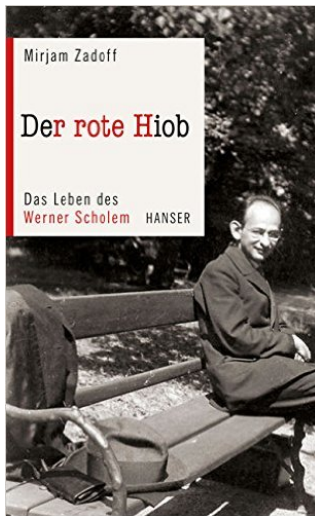
*Erfolg* before publication by Aufbau, he was giving the green light to “Manipulationen, die leider auch die bundesdeutschen Lizenzausgaben enthielten.” (294) An author has the right to make alterations to his own work, of course, but, given the particular circumstances in which Feuchtwanger himself exercised this right, it has to be asked whether his insistence elsewhere that he would brook no interference in his determination to tell the truth requires critical qualification.

One important gap in von Sternburg’s otherwise admirably comprehensive and balanced study relates to Feuchtwanger’s status as a writer of truly international reach whose work has been translated into numerous foreign languages. This is a theme which, while touched on, is not explored here in any detail and which has hitherto also been largely neglected in Feuchtwanger scholarship as a whole. The question might be raised, for example, as to why Feuchtwanger’s novels were such bestsellers in the USA and Great Britain, and to investigate in detail their impact in the context of the particular socio-political realities of these countries (von Sternburg does this in exemplary fashion in the case of Germany). The quality of the translations which shaped the reception of Feuchtwanger outside of the German-speaking world requires more critical scrutiny than it has so far attracted. It is known that Feuchtwanger took a deep (and sometimes anguished) interest in the English translations of his work, but what did he (and what do we) really know about the quality of, for example, the Russian translations which reached so many Soviet readers? Detailed work on questions such as these would add a further dimension to the rich portrait of Feuchtwanger which von Sternburg provides.

Ian Wallace, Clevedon

**MIRJAM ZADOFF: DER ROTE HIJOB. DAS LEBEN DES WERNER SCHOLEM. München: Karl Hanser Verlag, 2014. 383 S.**

**RALF HOFFFROGGE: WERNER SCHOLEM. EINE POLITISCHE BIOGRAPHIE (1895-1940). Konstanz/München: UVK 2014. 496 S.**



Im Jahr 2014 erschienen gleich zwei Biografien über den deutsch-jüdischen Kommunisten Werner Scholem, die als Qualifikationsschriften in München (Mirjam Zadoff: Habilitation) und Potsdam (Ralf Hoffrogge: Dissertation) eingereicht wurden. Die Arbeiten über den lange Zeit vergessenen älteren Bruder des Religionshistorikers Gershom (Gerhard) Scholem begründete sich dabei nicht allein aus den individuellen

Forschungsinteressen der Autorin und des Autors. Vielmehr trat die Person Werner Scholem am Beginn der 1990er Jahre generell wieder ins Bewusstsein – „als Gegenfigur und Zwischenfigur in einer Zeit, in der die großen Ideologien und Utopien der Moderne in der Krise stecken.“ Neue „Erinnerungsprozesse“ wie jene an Werner Scholem waren folglich „aus der Krise geboren.“ (Hoffrogge, 12) In der Folge wurde nicht nur die wissenschaftliche Forschung zum Judentum oder zum Kommunismus auf Scholem aufmerksam. Vielmehr erfuhr die Figur – erneut – auch eine literarische Verarbeitung etwa durch Alexander Kluge oder Hans Magnus Enzensberger. Diese ‚Konjunkturen‘ gehören fraglos auch zum Entstehungskontext beider Bücher.

1895 als dritter von vier Söhnen eines überaus erfolgreichen bzw. international agierenden Druckereibesitzers in Berlin geboren, wuchs Werner Scholem in einem Haushalt jüdisch-bürgerlicher ‚Aufsteiger‘ auf – die deutschen Vornamen waren Teil dieses Selbstverständnisses, ebenso die Pflege ‚deutschen Brauchtums‘ (Weihnachtsfest etc.). Die Familie selbst blieb dennoch weitgehend auf jüdische Kreise beschränkt, Werner Scholems Vater war Mitglied im ‚Centralverein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens‘ und Gegner der sogenannten Mischehe. Die jüdische und die deutsch-bürgerliche Welt waren im Haushalt der Scholems folglich stets gemeinsam präsent, auch wenn im Zweifelsfall ersterer zumindest nicht der offiziell-identifikatorische Vorzug gegeben wurde. Doch gerade auf diesem religiösen Feld entwickelten sich die ersten Bruchlinien innerhalb der Familie, die gleichsam von der autoritär-abweisenden Art des Vaters bedingt wurden: Werner und Gerhard / Gershom begeisterten sich frühzeitig für den Zionismus, der von Mitgliedern des ‚Centralvereins‘ prinzipiell abgelehnt wurde.

Die sich hierin andeutende Emanzipation von der Assimilation – letztere bezeichnete Gershom Scholem später als „Irrweg und Selbstbetrug“ (Hoffrogge, 15) und vollzog diesen Bruch mit dem Elternhaus 1923 mit seiner Auswanderung nach Palästina – führte Werner Scholem allerdings auf einen Pfad jenseits von Religion und Bürgertum: 1912 trat er der Sozialistischen Arbeiter-Jugend bei, 1913 folgte der Beitritt zur SPD. Allein dadurch geriet er in Konflikt mit dem Vater, der sich zwar als sozial denkender Arbeitgeber verstand, mit ‚ideologischen Vertiefungen‘ aber wenig anzufangen wusste und wollte. In Hannover, wohin Werner Scholem 1913 regelrecht an ‚Gildemeisters Institut‘ verbannt worden war, stieg er schnell zum sozialdemokratischen Versammlungsredner und Referenten in der sozialistischen Bildungsarbeit auf, im Sommer 1914 sprach er hier auf Antikriegskundgebungen. Nach dem Abitur in Berlin und der Aufnahme eines Geschichtsstudiums in Göttingen konnte er sich dann im Juni 1915 der Einberufung nicht entziehen. Der Verwundung im März 1916 folgten neuerliche politische Aktivitäten in der Antikriegsbewegung und schließlich 1917 eine zehnmonatige Haft wegen Majestätsbeleidigung. Als Werner Scholem dann im Dezember 1917 eine nichtjüdische Frau heiratete, vollzog sich der Bruch mit dem Vater vollständig: Diesen Bruch mit der Familie, der zugleich ein Bruch mit der jüdisch-bürgerlichen Aufstiegs Geschichte war, stellt Mirjam Zadoff ihrem Buch voran und markiert diesen so als das zentrale Moment in der Biografie Werner Scholems. Zugleich ist er Gegenstand des abschließenden Unterkapitels ihres Buches, in dem sie pointiert die Frage der Identität der (deutsch-)jüdischen Juden und jener „nicht-jüdischen Juden“ wie Werner Scholem diskutiert (Zadoff, 301-6).

Und tatsächlich: es waren die gesellschaftliche wie wirtschaftliche Ausnahmesituation des vorletzten Kriegsjahres und die politischen Erosionen, die den politisch ‚weithin visionären‘ Werner Scholem zum Lands- und Reichstagsabgeordneten machen sollten – dem Eintritt in die USPD 1917 folgte 1920 der Übertritt zur KPD, in deren Reihen er als Organisationsleiter und Zentralkomitee-Mitglied schnell in zentrale Positionen gelangte. Vorangegangen war dem die Redakteurstätigkeit bei der *Roten Fahne* in Berlin. Doch der ‚aufsteigende Stern‘ Werner Scholem, der als Gegner der Einheitsfrontpolitik zwischen April 1924 und Oktober 1925 im Zenit stand, sank schnell: Ursprünglich mit der ‚Bolschewisierung‘ der Partei beauftragt, ging Werner Scholem in Opposition zu Ernst Thälmann und warnte vor einer allzu starken Abhängigkeit von Moskau; aus dem einst von Stalin protegierten deutschen Kommunisten in der ‚linken Opposition‘ um Ruth Fischer und Arkadi Maslow wurde zunehmend ein Gegner der Stalinisierung der deutschen KP. Dieser regelrecht rasante Aufstieg und Fall, der in seinen politischen Nuancen und Hintergründen insbesondere bei Ralf Hoffrogge detailliert geschildert wird, war dabei aber zugleich von dem Umstand begleitet, dass Werner Scholem als Jude, Intellektueller und Sozialist gewissermaßen mehrdimensional im Visier von politischen Gegnern, Polizei und Justiz stand. Dieses Spannungsfeld – welches mithin bis in die Gegenwart schnell zu antisemitisch verstandenen Irritationen führen kann –

wird in beiden Büchern gleichermaßen detailliert herausgearbeitet und leistet einen wesentlichen Beitrag zum Verhältnis von Religion und Politik in der deutschen Gesellschaftsgeschichte, die am Beispiel Werner Scholems als Verflechtungsgeschichte erzählt werden kann. Im Oktober 1925 wurde dieser nämlich aus dem Zentralkomitee der KPD abberufen und im November 1926 schließlich ganz aus der Partei ausgeschlossen – er musste „sich nicht nur eine neue politische Heimat, sondern auch eine neue Lebensgrundlage suchen.“ (Zadoff, 189) Die neue politische Heimat fand Werner Scholem 1928 kurzzeitig in der von ihm begründeten linkskommunistischen Partei ‚Leninbund‘, die neue Lebensgrundlage sollte nach einem Jurastudium in der Tätigkeit im Justizdienst liegen. Es war dies aber zugleich der Beginn des Vergessens. Denn mit diesem (weiteren) biografischen Bruch ließ sich Werner Scholem nicht in das marxistisch-leninistische Geschichtsbild der DDR integrieren; wurden Gruppen wie der ‚Leninbund‘ hier überhaupt erwähnt, dann galten sie als „Sektierer und Ungläubige“ (Zadoff, 188). Diese negative Konnotation der linken Opposition fand zugleich Eingang in die westdeutsche Geschichtsschreibung.

Als Kommunisten und Juden standen Personen wie Werner Scholem von Beginn an im Fokus der nationalsozialistischen Verfolgung, und der Referendar im Justizdienst wurde bereits am Abend des Reichstagsbrandes in Berlin verhaftet. Er sollte das Licht der Freiheit nicht wieder erblicken: Polizeigefängnissen folgten Haftanstalten wie Spandau, Moabit oder Plötzensee. Dem überaus überraschenden Freispruch wegen Hochverrats vor dem Volksgerichtshof im März 1935 folgten ‚Schutzhaft‘ in den Konzentrationslagern Columbiahaus, Lichtenburg, Dachau und Buchenwald. In letzterem Lager wurde Werner Scholem am 17. Juli 1940 von einem SS-Mann ermordet. Werner Scholem war dabei in den Konzentrationslagern keineswegs ein ‚durchschnittlicher‘ Häftling. Vielmehr stand er durch seine Prominenz in der Zeit der Weimarer Republik deutlich stärker ‚unter Beobachtung‘ – auch Seitens der kommunistischen Mithäftlinge, die ihn als ‚Verräter‘ gezielt ausgrenzten. Diese Haftbedingungen, die in beiden Büchern teils sehr eindrücklich nachgezeichnet werden, stellen dabei einen gesonderten Beitrag zur Geschichte des Holocaust mit seinem ‚Lageralltag‘ dar, der am Beispiel Werner Scholems ohnedies noch einen traurigen Höhepunkt hervorbrachte: In der im November 1937 im Deutschen Museum in München eröffneten Ausstellung ‚Der ewige Jude‘ war auch eine Büste Werner Scholems zu sehen, die gemeinsam mit einer weiteren Büste die markanten ‚Judennasen‘ zeigen sollte. Mutmaßlich im Konzentrationslager Dachau war der entsprechende Wachsabdruck angefertigt worden. Werner Scholem geriet folglich 1933 in die Maschinerie des Nationalsozialismus, die ihn auch ideologisch missbrauchte und schließlich umbrachte. Seiner Frau, die im April 1933 ebenfalls verhaftet worden war, gelang dagegen im Februar 1934 während eines Hafturlaubs mit den Töchtern die Flucht nach Prag; von dort gelangte sie weiter nach England und überlebte.

Die beiden Bücher, die reich bebildert und durch Personenregister zusätzlich erschließbar sind, liefern fraglos einen substanziellen Beitrag zur Biografie Werner Scholems, zur linken parteipolitischen Geschichte insbesondere der Weimarer Republik und schließlich zum Zusammenhang von Familienbiografie und Politik im „Zeitalter der Extreme“ (Eric Hobsbawm). Denn gerade die Biografie von Werner Scholem und seiner Familie steht für die spezifische Verbindung von Utopie und Tragik, wie sie speziell das 20. Jahrhundert hervorbrachte: die nur vermeintliche Integration der deutsch-jüdischen Familie, die nach 1933 ohnehin nichts mehr galt; die Weltrevolutionsphantasien Werner Scholems, die von der eigenen Partei schon 1925 zunichte gemacht wurden; die globale Dislozierung der Familie, die ab 1934 im Verband nur noch virtuell bestand; und schließlich der gewaltsame Tod Werner Scholems in der nationalsozialistischen Vernichtungsmaschinerie, die Hoffen und Entrinnen nicht vorsah. Hinzu kommt die erinnerungskulturelle Perspektive auf das spezifische Vergessen eben jener Person, die in beiden Arbeiten immer wieder in den Text eingebunden wird und die eine wesentliche Stärke beider Bände ausmacht: weder Zadoff noch Hoffrogge haben schlicht ‚eine Biografie‘ vorgelegt, die mit dem Tod Werner Scholems endet. Vielmehr zeigen beide Arbeiten immer wieder die Langfristigkeit auch der Verborgenheit und des temporär Unsichtbaren auf, die individuellen Schicksalen und wissenschaftlichen Zugriffen auf sie eigen ist. Grundsätzlich verschieden sind die Bücher in Inhalt und Wertung deshalb nicht, Details wie die Einordnung der Todesumstände Werner Scholems bestätigen als Ausnahme die Regel.<sup>8</sup> Der Blick auf den Gegenstand – Hoffrogge hat eine ‚politische Biografie‘ vorgelegt, Zadoff ist ihr Buch mehr ein „kulturgeschichtlicher Text“ (31) – offenbart aber eine unterschiedliche Fokussierung: Bei Ralf Hoffrogge dominiert das Politische; im „roten Hiob“ tritt er uns dagegen eher „im dichten sozialen Netzwerk seiner vielfältigen Beziehungen“ entgegen, der Schwerpunkt liegt „im Besonderen“ auf den „verwandtschaftlichen und freundschaftlichen Kontakte[n]“. (Zadoff, 31). Wohl auch deswegen reflektiert nur Mirjam Zadoff, deren Buch generell unkonventioneller komponiert und sprachlich ausgereifter ist, in einem kurzen Kapitel methodisch über die „biographische Intention“ (30-33, vgl. auch 302-3) ihrer Arbeit und die Schnittstelle von strukturellen Rahmenbedingungen und individuellem Handeln; letzteres Verhältnis (structure vs. agency) beschäftigte vor allem die jüngere

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<sup>8</sup> Zadoff dokumentiert wie Hoffrogge die verschiedenen Versionen der Todesumstände. Breiten Raum nimmt dabei die nicht zuletzt durch Erinnerungsberichte von Zeitzeugen befeuerte Spekulation, dass Werner Scholem in Buchenwald auch ein Opfer der „Lagerfeme“ und damit der Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Häftlingsgruppen oder gar der eigenen ehemaligen Parteigenossen gewesen sein könnte: Er könnte also denunziert und bewusst in ein Kommando versetzt worden sein, in dem ein gewaltsamer Tod wahrscheinlicher war. Hintergrund dieser Spekulationen war nicht zuletzt der nahezu zeitgleiche gewaltsame Tod Leo Trotzki im mexikanischen Exil (Zadoff, 292-94). Hoffrogge widerspricht dem deutlicher und analytisch überzeugender mit dem Verweis auf die „Mordwelle“ in den Lagern im Sommer 1940, die vor allem jüdische Häftlinge traf (Hoffrogge, 446). Die Deutung unterscheidet sich folglich in der Bewertung als bewusste Handlung oder Folge der Lagerwillkür. Beide Autoren weisen aber abschließend darauf hin, dass die Todesumstände nicht abschließend geklärt werden konnten; und vermutlich auch nicht geklärt werden können.

Biografieforschung.<sup>9</sup> Dies allerdings ist das einzige und auch lediglich geringfügige inhaltliche Monitum, das sich im Vergleich zur Arbeit von Ralf Hoffrogge ausmachen lässt.

Swen Steinberg, Los Angeles / Dresden

**VOLKER WEIDERMANN: *SUMMER BEFORE THE DARK. STEFAN ZWEIG AND JOSEPH ROTH, OSTEND 1936*. TRANSLATED BY CAROL BROWN JANEWAY. London: Pushkin Press, 2016. 168 pp. (American edition under the title *Ostend: Stefan Zweig, Joseph Roth, and the Summer Before the Dark*, New York: Pantheon, 2016. 163 pp.)**



“Two men, both falling, but holding each other up for a time” (61). Volker Weidermann’s slim but deeply moving volume builds on the last chapter of his *Buch der verbrannten Bücher* (2008), in which he related the stories of the 131 authors whose work burned in the May 1933 bonfires of so-called ‘un-German literature’. The list of banned and banished writers included many now forgotten figures besides luminaries like Feuchtwanger, Heinrich Mann, or Tucholsky. But the reservation of a pair of these figures in particular for the close of the documentation suggested that Weidermann had a special esteem and affinity to these two Viennese writers: Stefan Zweig and Josef Roth. Out of this friendship grew the subsequent book, *Ostende 1936: Sommer der Freundschaft* (2014), which became a best-seller in Germany and is now available in English translation (a 28-page advance excerpt of this rendition appeared in the *Yale Review* of January 2016 as ‘A Summer in Ostend: Stefan Zweig and Josef Roth in 1936’).

Weidermann’s book captures a moment in the summer 1936 as a number of Jewish exiles congregate at the resort site of Ostend, an oasis of freedom:

Trying to pretend that they’re carefree. Really, it’s just a great long trip they’ve been on for years. Far from home, traveling with friends, in Paris, Nice, Sanary-sur-Mer, Amsterdam, Marseille, Ostend. And at some point there’ll be a return journey. But when? The more urgent this question becomes, the less often it is posed. With every day of this vacation that goes by, any return becomes less plausible. They all know it. But it’s never discussed. (97)

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<sup>9</sup> Vgl. hierzu vor allem die Beiträge in Volker R. Berghahn/Simone Lässig (eds.), *Biography between Structure and Agency. Central European Lives in International Historiography*, New York 2008.

Stefan Zweig serves as the central narrative perspective; the “child of Fortune” who has grown into a “world star of literature” (28), above all through his sensitive historical portrayals. Zweig invites his younger friend and protégé Joseph Roth, whose story is developed in the wake of that of the benevolent patrician, to join him in Ostend. Roth hails from East European poverty; his world is an idealized Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The two so different men embody a productive tension of opposites. Soon they are joined by Irmgard Keun, who despite not being Jewish has clashed with the Nazi regime to the point that she too has fled Germany. She quickly falls in love with Roth, and the lovers become partners in drinking and writing as well.

The circle enlarges to encompass the notorious ‘racing reporter’ Egon Erwin Kisch, socialist playwright Ernst Toller, journalist Arthur Koestler (who will later famously renounce Communism), writer and editor Hermann Kesten, and the burly and charismatic Communist publisher Willi Münzenberg. All these ‘refugees in vacationland’ with their astonishing energies and their diverse outlooks on life are “storytellers thrown together here overlooking the beach in July by the vagaries of world politics” (8). Then there are the women in their wake: besides Keun, who rises to the role of a supporting character, there is Lotte Altmann, Zweig’s secretary and lover, later his wife, and the actress Christiane Grautoff, Toller’s wife; in the background are the left-behind wives, Fridericke Zweig and Friedl Roth. Finally, there are the figures not present but embedded in the men’s histories, such as the artist James Ensor or writer Emile Verhaeren. “Really, it’s just a great long trip they’ve been on for years,” Weidemann says of the writers torn from their homelands (97). Yet despite the vacation atmosphere and the spirit of escape, work is central for these authors feverishly writing to maintain their lives’ meaning; Roth and Keun engage in a strict regimen of daily writing in the café that almost becomes a contest – a desperate attempt to assert control over a world that has cast them off, to somehow maintain the illusion of an enduring link to their audience and their past through their language.

*Summer Before the Dark* reads like a novel, though it is all historically based and filled with quotations, facts, snippets from literary works, and historical curiosities. Weidemann penetrates discreetly into the hearts of his protagonists, evoking their emotions, their affections, their fears with a poet’s sensitivity. “For when we read, what are we doing if not sharing the inner life of strangers, seeing with their eyes, thinking with their minds?” Zweig later writes (141), a passage that also encapsulates the character of this story itself.

The relationship of Zweig and Roth is the book’s central axis, a fascinating coupling in its volatile mix of admiration and resentment – “a remarkable love” (45). Zweig is fantastically noble in his wealth and sophistication, while Roth is chronically unhappy and restless; both find their true home in dreams of the past. “Zweig is still writing out of a world, and about a world, that no longer exists” (30); his idealism

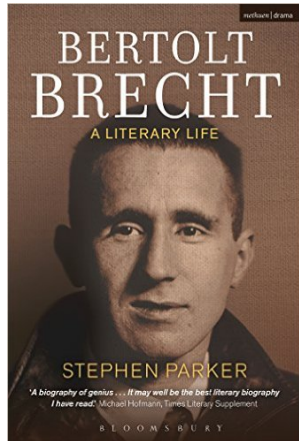
has lost its place amidst the contemporary brutality, yet he cannot bring himself to write direct political indictments of the Nazi menace. Roth, in dire need of money and at the end of a limb, writes feverishly and risks his integrity with artistic compromises as he sinks into an abyss of alcohol and despair. For Zweig, Roth is his “burden, the most beloved weight on this shoulders, his bad conscience, his literary conscience, his incorruptible, difficult friend” (135). While we read Roth’s story, the younger man probably being the more complex and interesting character, it is Zweig’s heart into which we delve. Weidemann evokes the deep-seated ambivalence in Zweig’s character: on the one hand his cosmopolitanism, and on the other his longing for roots and a homeland, despite his skepticism toward home and family. As Zweig looks back at his earlier visit to Ostend during the First World War and the surrounding events, he synthesizes his life’s experiences and insights in this pivotal moment, a pause of reflection in the midst of turmoil.

The English-language title already prepares readers unfamiliar with these figures for the prospect that the intimate, tranquil story is to culminate in tragedy and catastrophe as the delicate peace and hope of the short reprieve shatter. After they separate, only briefly seeing each other again twice in the following years, Zweig and Roth’s friendship crumbles, unable to bear the strain of the age and the circumstances. Later, Keun frees herself from Roth as he destroys himself with alcohol. In Brasil, Zweig searches for a new life with a connection to the lost, old world. But this utopia, too, is disappointed, culminating in his double suicide with Anna in February 1942. The close of the volume recounts the fates of the secondary and tertiary figures, wrapping up the stories and fragments that surfaced in the narrative. The key photo of Zweig and Roth drinking together in an Ostend bistro, however, with the elder Zweig leaning affectionately over a perhaps distrustful Roth, is withheld for the last page of the story, though this scene is evoked in empathic detail earlier in the book (124). Weidemann’s account, in its simplicity and evocativeness, is a wonderful read, a window to a world suspended between history and the literary imagination.

Alan Lareau, Oshkosh, WI



**STEPHEN PARKER: *BERTOLT BRECHT. A LITERARY LIFE*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014 (=Bloomsbury Methuen Drama). 689pp.**



Stephen Parker's new biography of Bertolt Brecht, the first in English for twenty years, represents a significant, authoritative addition to the substantial body of research on Brecht which has appeared in recent times. In a dynamic and lucid text bristling with narrative energy, Parker displays an impressive mastery of his subject, filling a number of information gaps left by previous biographies while also challenging a good deal of myth and misinformation attaching to Brecht (for instance, regarding his activities at the time of the November Revolution of 1918 as well as his claim in 1935 that he was a member of the USPD after the Great War: "There is no evidence to support this" [117]). He offers sensitive and illuminating readings of individual works, arguing most notably, for instance, that the often neglected 'Danish' version (1938) of *Leben des Galilei* is in fact "the most crucial work in Brecht's intellectual biography" (393). Describing it as "the classic depiction of the unheroic intellectual, diminished in the struggle with repressive authority" (393), Parker in effect challenges the iconic status of the later German and English versions of the play and calls for the re-discovery of the Danish version, "a landmark achievement in Brecht's dramatic oeuvre, a brilliant meditation upon his plight, which reverberates throughout his work" (398). In sum, Parker's comprehensive, insightful study is highly likely to become and remain the standard English-language biography for many years. Clearly written particularly with a (virtually) monoglot English-speaking reader in mind, the volume presents all quotations from Brecht's work (and other sources) in excellent English translation, but the publication of a German version of such an important work can surely only be a matter of time.

One major aspect of Brecht's life about which Parker is far more illuminating and detailed than any previous biographer concerns the serious health problems which always plagued him. These problems have hitherto been discussed in general terms but Parker's assiduous research enables him to provide chapter and verse through a revealing analysis of his subject's medical records. These confirm, for example, Lion Feuchtwanger's recollection in a letter to Arnold Zweig on 6 May 1958 that his friend Brecht had suffered from kidney problems for as long as he had known him (190) – a period covering his entire adult life. His fragile physical constitution even as a child had been undermined by bacterial pharyngitis, leading in due course to Sydenham's chorea, inflammation of the heart and ultimately chronic heart failure. Despite Brecht's wish to see himself as a rationalist in a scientific age, his awareness of the imperative need to protect his health even led him to embrace complementary

medicine. Although clearly conflicted in this respect, he never managed to resolve this paradox, and even on the very day of his death he was planning a repeat visit to the sanatorium of Johannes Ludwig Schmitt, the well-known Munich specialist in respiratory massage, homeopathy and herbal remedies in whose work he clearly invested considerable confidence. Parker offers a series of perceptive insights into how Brecht's awareness of his physical fragility impacted both on his work (the importance of the body in his early work is particularly significant) and also on his behaviour towards others. In this regard, Parker presents Brecht as an emotionally flawed genius. With his "unstable mix of outspokenness and reserve" (100), the young Brecht constantly teetered on the brink of self-destruction in his social interaction, and in his work for the theatre this psychological fragility undermined important relationships with alarming frequency. It was Lion Feuchtwanger (and, in later years, Helene Weigel) who often provided the steadying hand of a friend and in this way often helped him avoid the worst consequences of what Parker describes as his "highly combustible sensibility". (371) This produced behaviour which was often "truly appalling" (109), notably in his treatment of his many women. Utter self-absorption and overpowering ambition were typical of him even from a very early age. His ability, when it suited him, to use his physical and psychological fragility as a ready excuse for his frequent bad behaviour invariably meant "emotional carnage" (199) for his circle of lovers and friends.

Caspar Neher, Otto Muensterer, Kurt Weill, Erich Engel, Elisabeth Hauptmann, Ruth Berlau, and Paul Dessau belong to those who must be counted among Brecht's most intimate friends and collaborators, but Parker's account confirms just how close he was to Lion and Martha Feuchtwanger in particular, with Lion even acting as a witness at Brecht's marriage to Marianne Zoff in 1922. Brecht's reference to Lion as his "discoverer" (118) is highlighted, as are his determined attempts to find a publisher for *Baal* while Brecht was still an unknown. It was only after Brecht's father had listened to the "ever-supportive" Lion as "his son's most influential advocate" (157) that he agreed to provide the financial support which enabled Brecht to continue his literary apprenticeship until he was able to stand on his own two feet. When Brecht sought refuge from the Nazis Feuchtwanger was instrumental in paving his way to the USA, dealing with the tiresome bureaucratic procedures, which might well have defeated Brecht, as well as providing financial support. For her part, Marta claimed to have suggested the title *Trommeln in der Nacht* for the play which was to do so much to establish Brecht's reputation, and it is a claim which Parker cites without contradiction. Similarly, it was Lion who suggested *Die Dreigroschenoper* as a title for what became "the first great modern musical" (246). It is clear, then, that Brecht's breakthrough to literary prominence in the 1920s owed a great deal to his friendship and collaboration with Feuchtwanger. Parker does not comment, however, on the claim sometimes made that Feuchtwanger was the inspiration behind his theory of an 'epic theatre'. More problematically, he also accepts without

comment Brecht's description of Feuchtwanger's *Moskau 1937* as the best account of the USSR in European literature, omitting any mention of the controversy which has always surrounded a work usually seen as far less even-handed and successful than here appears to be the case.

Ian Wallace, Clevedon

**NICHOLAUS WACHSMANN / SYBILLE STEINBACHER (HG.): *DIE LINKE IM VISIER – ZUR ERRICHTUNG DER KONZENTRATIONSLAGER 1933*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2014. 286 S.**



Wie einer Danksagung Mitherausgeberin Sybille Steinbachers entnommen werden kann (275), handelt es sich beim vorliegenden Band um die Ergebnisse einer Konferenz im Jahre 2013 im Rahmen der sogenannten ‚Dachauer Symposien zur Zeitgeschichte‘ (= Bd. 14), in dem ein Dutzend Vorträge veröffentlicht wurden.

Im ersten Beitrag – der gleichzeitig als Einleitung dient – thematisiert Nikolaus Wachsmann den ‚Terror gegen links: Das NS-Regime und die frühen Lager‘ (7-30), wobei er deutlich macht, dass sich die Nazis zu diesem frühen Zeitpunkt einem heiklen Balanceakt gegenüber sahen; denn einerseits

wollte man „die Botschaft von der Zerstörung der Linken verbreiten“, andererseits jedoch „die Botschaft mit einem Anstrich von amtlicher Korrektheit versehen.“ (15) Wachsmann, ein Experte in Sachen deutscher Konzentrationslager,<sup>10</sup> hebt dabei in seiner Einführung hervor, dass in jüngster Zeit „der öffentliche Terror gegen links sowohl in der wissenschaftlichen als auch in der öffentlichen Diskussion aus dem Blick geraten [sei]“ (20), wofür seiner Meinung nach zwei Tendenzen maßgebend seien: einerseits das Interesse der Forschung an politischem und Rassenterror, andererseits die Darstellung des Dritten Reiches als ‚Volksgemeinschaft‘, eine Entwicklung, der man – anlässlichlich des 80. Jahrestages der Errichtung der ersten KZs im Deutschen Reich – mit dieser Konferenz gegensteuern wollte.

Relativ wenig Neues bietet der sich an die Einleitung anschließende Beitrag von Michael Schneider (‚Verfolgt, unterdrückt und aus dem Land getrieben: Das Ende der Arbeiterbewegung im Frühjahr 1933‘ [31-51]); denn dessen zweiteiliges Fazit, dass es den Nazis erstens mittels einer Politik, „in der sich Gewalt und Terror mit dem Schein rechtsstaatlicher Kontinuität mischten“, gelangt „die in der Arbeiterschaft ohnehin vorhandenen Bruchlinien zu verstärkt“ und zweitens „die Versäumnisse auf

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<sup>10</sup> Vgl. Nikolaus Wachsmann: *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps* (New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2015; dt. 2016 im Münchner Siedler Verlag), das jedoch seltsamerweise – im Gegensatz zu Veröffentlichungen etlicher anderer Beiträger – im vorliegenden Band nicht angekündigt wurde.

Seiten der Arbeiterbewegung nicht zu übersehen [seien]" (46), erinnert an Wilhelm Buschs geflügeltes Wort: ‚wofür er besonders schwärmt, wenn es wieder aufgewärmt!‘ Das Stichwort ‚KZ‘ – immerhin Thema des Symposiums und des Sammelbandes – wird hingegen kein einziges Mal erwähnt!

Gleichermaßen enttäuschend ist auch der nächste Beitrag von Richard Bessel (‚Anfänge des Terrorregimes: Zur Rolle der Gewalt der SA beim Aufstieg des Nationalsozialismus‘ [52-69]); denn die zahlreichen Beispiele von Gewalt seitens der SA in Ostpreußen und Schlesien (55f. bzw. 57f.) stammen ganz offensichtlich aus des Autors Oxforder Doktorarbeit ‚The SA in the eastern region of Germany, 1925-1934‘ (1980), die vier Jahre später auch im Buchform erschien.<sup>11</sup> Bessels Artikel ist zudem einer der wenigen, die am Ende kein Fazit ziehen. Nichtsdestotrotz lassen sich seine Schlussfolgerungen folgendermaßen zusammenfassen: erstens „wurden Gewaltaktionen nicht vorrangig von der obersten Führung der NSDAP oder der SA sorgfältig geplant und durchgeführt, sondern mehr toleriert, bejaht und benutzt, um politische Ziele zu erreichen“; zweitens „war es nicht nur die Linke, die [in den deutschen Ostprovinzen] im Visier der NS-Bewegung stand“; und drittens „wurde die Gewaltwelle der SA in Ostpreußen und Schlesien 1932 nicht durch den Widerstand der linken Parteien, ihrer Kampftruppen und der Gewerkschaften beendet, sondern durch das schnelle und effektive Eingreifen des Staates.“ (59-60)

Irene von Götzs Beitrag (‚Die Errichtung der Konzentrationslager in Berlin 1933: Entfesselter SA-Terror in der Reichshauptstadt‘ [70-83]) ist – abgesehen von den einleitenden Hinweisen Wachsmanns – der erste, der sich gezielt dem eigentlichen Thema des vorliegenden Sammelbandes widmet. Die Autorin weist einleitend auf Unterschiede zwischen improvisierten Haft- und Folterstätten sowie den frühen KZs hin: letztere „zeichneten sich durch ihre Größe aus, sie wurden über einen Zeitraum von mehreren Monaten hinweg genutzt und hatten eine deutlich höhere Zahl von Inhaftierten“ (73). Anschließend listet Götz im Detail die insgesamt elf Berliner KZs auf, von denen zehn der SA und eins der SS unterstanden. Die SA-KZs befanden sich in Charlottenburg, Köpenick, Kreuzberg, Prenzlauer Berg, Spandau, Tiergarten sowie an zwei Zentralstellen in Berlin Ost und West: in der Hedemannstraße und der General-Pape-Straße (76-77). Das SS-KZ befand sich im Columbia-Haus (78-79). In ihrer Zusammenfassung konterkariert Götz teilweise die Einschätzung Bessels (s.o.), indem sie zu der Feststellung gelangt, dass „[d]er Terror der SA in der ersten Jahreshälfte 1933 kein spontaner Ausbruch von Gewalt [war]“ (79) und dass es bereits im Vorfeld der Machtübernahme im Januar 1933 ein ‚stadtumfassendes Terrornetz‘ (80) gab. Die zahlreichen Haftstätten in Berlin und die zehn frühen KZs

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Political Violence and the Rise of Nazism. The Storm Troopers in Eastern Germany 1925-1934* (Newhaven, CT: Yale UP, 1984).

unter Führung der SA gliedert Götz folgendermaßen: a) 220 kleinere Folterstätten, die sich meist in Sturm-Lokalen der SA befanden; b) größere, frühe Stadtteil-KZs (s.o.); c) zentrale Orte des Terrors in der Hegemannstraße in Kreuzberg sowie in der General-Pape-Straße in Schöneberg. Die Autorin betont abschließend, dass die frühen KZs „das Fundament des Terrorinstrumentariums“ (81) waren, jedoch eine zentrale Steuerung des Terrors von oben weder notwendig noch gewollt und dass das stadtumspannende Terrornetz hochgradig undurchsichtig für die Gegner des Nationalsozialismus war (81).

Zwei Vorträge der dem vorliegenden Band zugrundeliegenden Konferenz wurden auf Englisch gehalten und von Hermann Graml vom Institut f. Zeitgeschichte in München übersetzt.<sup>12</sup> Der erste dieser Beiträge stammt von Christopher Dillon („Gewaltakte der SS in der Frühphase des Konzentrationslagers Dachau: Situationsbedingt oder Rache?“ [84-103]). Wie Bessels Beitrag basiert auch dieser Artikel auf der Doktorarbeit des Autors, die erst jüngst abgeschlossen wurde (2013) und in Buchform erschien.<sup>13</sup> Dillon weist darauf hin, dass „[f]ür 40 Angehörige der SS-Wachen im frühen Konzentrationslager Dachau präzise Daten zu ihrer Rekrutierung vor[liegen]“, woraus der Autor schlussfolgerte, dass in dieser Frühphase die Auswirkungen der Wirtschaftskrise und die enorm hohe Arbeitslosigkeit in Deutschland „offensichtlich ein zentrales Motiv [waren], um Wachdienst in Dachau zu verrichten.“ (91) Ferner deuten diese Belege darauf hin, dass „die Gewalt in Dachau [...] einen ideologischen Rahmen hatte“; im KZ Dachau wurde nämlich scheinbar auf zwei Ebenen Rache genommen: auf individueller und auf kollektiver (92). ‚Tätergewalt‘, so Dillons Resumé, wurde in der Vergangenheit stets konfrontativ interpretiert: „Sozialwissenschaftler bevorzugen situative Erklärungen, Historiker legen größeres Gewicht auf individuelle Dispositionen.“ (96) Der Autor glaubt jedoch, den Graben zwischen den Disziplinen durch eine ‚interaktive Methode‘ überbrücken zu können: „Diese erkennt an,“ so Dillon, „dass Individuen kognativen Ballast in bestimmten Situationen mitbringen, die sie sich freilich [...] oft selbst ausgesucht haben.“ (96) M.a.W., das Verhalten der Wachen in Dachau „war selbstverständlich [...] auch Ausdruck der Ideologie des SS-Personals, doch sollten Historiker vermeiden, das Verhalten einzelner Wachen primär mit ideologischen Motiven zu erklären.“ (97)

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<sup>12</sup> Diese Übertragungen sind leider stilistisch nicht immer sehr geglückt, und manchmal haben sich sogar Fehler eingeschlichen, die den Text entstellen, so dass man sich fragt, ob es nicht besser gewesen wäre, diese Beiträge im englischen Original abzudrucken. Auf S. 86 heißt es z.B. an einer Stelle: „Die drei wichtigsten situativen Studien zur Gewalt in Konzentrationslagern [...] *werfen die Frage auf*, ob bei der Rekrutierung [...] die Weltanschauung eine primäre Rolle gespielt habe; *stattdessen* seien [...] in den Lagern institutionelle Kultur [...] maßgebend gewesen [Hervorh. JT].“ Dieser Satz ergibt so natürlich keinen Sinn, denn der Übersetzer hat nicht erkannt, dass das englische Verb ‚to question‘ (das dem Original ganz offensichtlich zugrunde lag) auch ‚bezweifeln‘ bedeuten kann!

<sup>13</sup> Vgl. *Dachau & the SS. A Schooling in Violence* (Oxford: OUP, 2015).

Höchst informativ ist Barbara Distels Beitrag ‚Staatlicher Terror und Zivilcourage: Die ersten Morde im Konzentrationslager Dachau‘ (104-16), in welchem die zahlreichen Morde zu Beginn des KZ Dachau unter der Leitung von Hilmar Wäckerle (1899-1941) und die juristische Verfolgung dieser Straftaten durch die Münchner Staatsanwälte Karl Wintersberger und Josef Hartinger dokumentiert wird, was Himmler zwang, Wäckerle Ende Juni 1933 durch Theodor Eicke (1892-1943) zu ersetzen. Eickes Bemühungen, aus dem KZ Dachau ein ‚Musterlager‘ (109) zu machen, waren dann bekanntlich so erfolgreich, dass Himmler ihn im Mai 1934 zum Inspekteur aller deutschen KZs beförderte. Distel – die in der Nachfolge von Otto Kohlhofer – Kuratorin der Gedenkstätte Dachau wurde (s. dazu Hammermanns Beitrag [245]), behandelt außerdem die verbrecherischen Tätigkeiten des SS-Wachmanns Hans Steinbrenner (1905-64) während der Frühphase des KZs Dachau und dessen Strafverfolgung in der Nachkriegszeit (112f.): am 10. März 1952 verurteilte das Landgericht München ihn wegen der Morde an den Juden Aron und Lehrburger sowie aufgrund von neun Fällen nachgewiesener schwerer Körperverletzung im Amt zu lebenslanger Zuchthaus-Haft, die er bis 1962 in der Strafanstalt Landsberg verbüßte (wobei allerdings unklar bleibt, warum Steinbrenner dann frühzeitig entlassen wurde).

Bei Dirk Riedels ‚Bruderkämpfe im Konzentrationslager Dachau: Das Verhältnis zwischen kommunistischen und sozialdemokratischen Häftlingen‘ (117-40) geht es um die Frage, „wie sich das Verhältnis zwischen sozialdemokratischen und kommunistischen Gefangenen in der Frühphase des Konzentrationslagers Dachau gestaltete“ (119), wobei insbesondere berücksichtigt werden muss, dass die Quellenlage über das ‚Binnenverhältnis‘ – das, wie der Autor betont, bisher nur ein Randthema der Forschung war – zwischen den beiden Gruppen von Sozialisten sehr dürftig ist und sich die Untersuchung daher auf einzelne biografische Berichte Überlebender konzentrieren musste. Die Mehrheit der bis Frühjahr 1933 im KZ Dachau Inhaftierten waren Kommunisten (s. dazu die von Riedel zitierte Statistik Himmlers von Mitte April 1933 [123]), eine Situation, die sich jedoch ab Ende Juni 1933 aufgrund der Massenverhaftungen von Sozialdemokraten änderte (124f.). Riedel zeichnet von den Verhältnissen zwischen diesen beiden Gruppen ein Bild wechselseitiger Konflikte und Solidarität, d.h. einerseits flammten im Lager die ‚Bruderkämpfe‘ der Weimarer Zeit erneut auf; andererseits wäre es jedoch falsch, „[t]rotz der extremen Zwangslage [...], die Häftlinge als reine, von den Interessen der SS geleitete Objekte zu begreifen [...].“ (135)

Kim Wünschmann betont gleich eingangs in ihrem Beitrag ‚Jüdische politische Häftlinge im frühen KZ Dachau: Widerstand, Verfolgung und antisemitisches Feindbild‘ (141-67), dass immer noch viel zu wenig bekannt ist, wer die jüdischen Häftlinge waren, die im KZ Dachau festgesetzt wurden, und sie machte es sich aus diesem Grunde zur Aufgabe, das Sozialprofil dieser jüdischen Häftlingsgruppe zu untersuchen. Ihr Ergebnis lautet, dass einerseits die Zahl jüdischer Häftlinge in Dachau – sie lag im Schnitt zwischen 60

und 80 Inhaftierten – im Vergleich zu anderen KZs relativ hoch war und dass andererseits auch die Zahl der jüdischen Todesopfer während dieser Frühphase überproportional war (von 22 nachweislichen Todesfällen war die Hälfte jüdisch). Wünschmann erklärt diesen hohen Anteil u.a. am hohen jüdischen Bevölkerungsanteil in Mittel- und Unterfranken (Tabelle, 144), wobei sich allerdings – im Gegensatz zur Gesamtzahl und geographischen Herkunft der jüdischen Häftlinge – nur ungenaue Angaben über deren politische Einstellung eruieren ließ (ca. 36%). Wünschmann geht sodann noch auf einige jüdische Einzelschicksale ein, so etwa das von Erich Gans, Max Hanns Kohn und Karl Lehrburger, die allesamt vom oben erwähnten Wachmann Steinbrenner ermordet wurden. Interessant ist ferner der von der Autorin erwähnte ‚Entsolidarisierungsprozess‘ (143) zwischen Juden und Nicht-Juden, der aktiv von den Wachtruppen im KZ Dachau gefördert wurde, um das stereotype antisemitische ‚Feindbild‘ selbst im Lager zu forcieren.

Bei Paul Moores Beitrag („Noch nicht mal zu Bismarcks Zeiten“: Deutsche Populärmeinung und der Terror gegen die Linke‘ [168-80]) handelt sich um den zweiten von Graml aus dem Englischen übertragenen Vortrag, wobei auch dieser auf einer Doktorarbeit beruht, die allerdings – trotz Ankündigung (278) – bisher noch nicht im Druck erschienen ist.<sup>14</sup> Der Autor stellt eine Reihe von Behauptungen auf – ohne diese jedoch immer hinreichend zu belegen –, denen gegenüber Zweifel angesagt ist: so etwa, dass in der Forschung das Ausmaß an Zustimmung für den NS-Terror nach Januar 1933 unterschätzt wurde; dass die Vorkriegsjahre im Dritten Reich von einer ‚Wohlfühl-Diktatur‘ bestimmt waren;<sup>15</sup> dass die sozialistischen Häftlinge aller Schattierungen Bitterkeit gegenüber ihren Führern empfanden, die sich nach Moskau, Wien, Prag oder Paris abgesetzt hatten; bzw. sein Fazit, dass sowohl in der Arbeiter- als auch in der Mittelklasse grundsätzliche Opposition gegen den nationalsozialistischen Terror selten war (185). Andererseits hat Moore sicher Recht, wenn er hervorhebt, dass zum ‚Entfremdungseffekt‘ gegenüber der Linken die nationalsozialistische Eroberung vieler öffentlicher Räume und die Kolonialisierung [sic] ganzer, ehemals linker Stadtteile beitragen hat (171). Moores Schlussfolgerung lautet:

Wie erfolgreich das NS-Regime die Deutschen schließlich auch davon überzeugen konnte, dass es eine geeinte, harmonische Volksgemeinschaft geschaffen habe, so hat [...] der Terror der Nationalsozialisten 1933 alte Sicherheiten und Bindungen zerstört, ohne jedoch die Klassenschranken zu überwinden, die in jenem Jahr noch Bestand hatten. (186)

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<sup>14</sup> Vgl. *The View from Outside: The Nazi Concentration Camps and the German Public, 1933-1945* (Oxford: OUP, angekündigt).

<sup>15</sup> Vgl. dazu Götz Aly: ‚Raubgemeinschaft‘, in: *Der Spiegel* vom 7. März 2005.

Daniel Siemens ‚SA-Gewalt, nationalsozialistische „Revolution“ und Staatsr son: Der Fall des Chemnitzer Kriminalamtschefs Albrecht B hme 1933/34‘ (191-213) pr sentiert eine Fallstudie dar ber, wie gewisse Spitzenbeamte im Dritten Reich bem ht waren, „das Alte und das Neue in  bereinstimmung zu bringen“, d.h. „den Nationalsozialismus [...] in die Tradition deutscher Rechtsstaatlichkeit einzupassen.“ (199) Dr. iur. Albrecht B hme war von 1933 bis 1934 Vorstand des Kriminalamtes Chemnitz, zust ndig f r die Landgerichtsbezirke Chemnitz und Freiberg. Er publizierte und setzte sich u.a. daf r ein, dass Psychotherapie bei Sexualt tern Vorrang vor anderen Zwangsma nahmen einger umt werde (192-93). Als der SA-Terror im Fr hjahr 1933 eskalierte, pochte B hme – der NSDAP-Mitglied war und sp ter der SS beitrug – auf die rechtsstaatliche Verfolgung der T ter, was ihn in Konflikt mit dem Gauleiter Sachsens, Martin Mutschmann (1879-1947), brachte. 1938 wurde er von Himmler zur Kriminalpolizei nach M nchen versetzt, wo er sich einen Namen bei der Aufkl rung des Attentatversuchs auf Hitler im B rgerbr ukeller im November 1939 machte. Allerdings machte er sich im M rz 1940 durch seine Unnachgiebigkeit bei der Verfolgung eines Sexualdelikts – der bekannte Regisseur Fritz Fischer, ein G nstling des M nchner Gauleiters Wagner, hatte eine junge T nzerin vergewaltigt – unbeliebt, wurde von Heydrich aus der SS ausgeschlossen, blieb jedoch formal Angeh riger der M nchner Kripo. Siemens zieht aus dem Fall B hme folgende Schlussfolgerungen: erstens, dass er „ein Schlaglicht auf den Umgang der Beh rden im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland mit der SA-Gewalt der Jahre 1933/34 [wirft]“ (205) und zweitens, dass er deutlich macht, „dass es auch im Kreise  berzeugter Nationalsozialisten eine partiell starke Ablehnung der SA-Gewalt in der Fr hphase des Dritten Reiches gab.“ (206)

Der bei weitem informativste Beitrag im vorliegenden Sammelband ist der der gegenw rtigen Direktorin des International Tracing Service in Bad Arolsen (Hessen), Rebecca Boehlingers (‚Ein unentdecktes Archiv: Das ITS und die fr hen Konzentrationslager‘ [214-22]). Was hier auf wenigen Seiten  ber die Geschichte des ITS (214-16) und die dort vorhandenen Archivalien  ber fr he KZs (216f.)<sup>16</sup> ausgef hrt wird, sollte sich jeder NS- und Exilforscher zu Gem te f hren, insbesondere da – wie die Autorin betont – aufgrund meist schwieriger Quellenlage einschl gige Best nde des ITS oft eine unsch tzbare Rolle spielten, seit diese im Jahre 2008 der Forschung zug nglich gemacht wurden.<sup>17</sup> Quasi als Zugabe pr sentiert Boehlinger dann anhand von Unterlagen in Bad Arolsen eine Fallstudie, n mlich die des ehemaligen Reichstagsabgeordneten Gerhart Seger und dessen Familie (220-25). Seger (1896-1967) war

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<sup>16</sup> Insbesondere die zahlreichen Frageb gen  berlebender KZ-H ftlinge (218f.).

<sup>17</sup> 1949 erschien ein erstes Verzeichnis (‚Catalogue of Camps and Prisons in Germany and German-occupied Territories‘), das den Zeitabschnitt September 1939 bis Mai 1945 umfasste; ein erweitertes 2-b ndiges Verzeichnis wurde 1950 publiziert, und 1969 wurde ein Verzeichnis aller KZs (incl. deren Au enlager) ver ffentlicht.



1933 von den NS-Machthabern verhaftet und im KZ Oranienburg festgesetzt worden. 1934 gelang ihm auf spektakuläre Weise die Flucht nach Prag, wo er einen Aufsehen erregenden Bericht über seine Erlebnisse im KZ verfasste. Später emigrierte er dann in die USA, wo er lebenslang als Journalist (insbesondere als Chefredakteur der *Neuen Volks-Zeitung* [New York])<sup>18</sup> und als Vortragsredner tätig war.

Gabriele Hammermann (, „Dachau muß in Zukunft das Mahnmal des deutschen Gewissens werden“: Zum Umgang mit der Geschichte der frühen politischen Häftlinge‘ [229-58]) berichtet gleich eingangs, dass in den frühen 1950er Jahren der Widerstand der Arbeiterbewegung gegen das NS-Regime kaum gewürdigt wurde und dass aus diesem Grunde ehemalige kommunistische Häftlinge im Fokus ihrer Untersuchung stehen. Kommunistische KZ-Überlebende waren nach 1945 während drei Phasen präsent: „in der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit, anlässlich der Errichtung der Gedenkstätte [Dachau] und in den achziger Jahren“ (230). Hammermann hinterfragt in diesem Zusammenhang, in welchen Erinnerungsgemeinschaften die frühen politischen Häftlinge aktiv waren, mit welchen Konflikten sie konfrontiert wurden und welche Auswirkungen ihr Kampf um Anerkennung im Hinblick auf die Erinnerungskultur hatte (232). Sie behandelt sodann im Detail (233f.) die Rolle der ‚Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes‘ (VVN), einer Organisation, die im Zuge des Kalten Krieges bald als kommunistisch unterwandert verschrien wurde, seit 1948 unter den Folgen des sogenannten ‚Unvereinbarkeitsbeschlusses‘ der SPD litt (235f.) und 1951 in der BRD verboten wurde (nachdem sie in der DDR bereits früher untersagt worden war). Feierlichkeiten – so z.B. anlässlich des 10. Jahrestages der Befreiung des KZs Dachau – litten natürlich enorm unter dieser Entwicklung, und es ist deshalb dem bereits oben erwähnten Vertreter der Lagerverwaltung, Otto Kohlhofer (1915-85), hoch anzurechnen, dass er nie aufgab, eine Gedenkstätte zu etablieren! Hammermann beschreibt im Detail den schwierigen Weg dieser Gedenkstätte (245f.), welche letztendlich im Mai 1965 eröffnet wurde, wobei insbesondere das mangelnde Interesse der bayrischen Staatsregierung während dieser zehnjährigen Phase des Kampfes hervorgehoben wird.

Den Sammelband abschließend wurde das Transkript einer sich an das Symposium anschließenden Podiumsdiskussion abgedruckt (250-74), auf die hier aus Platzgründen nicht eingegangen werden kann.

Jörg Thuncke, Nottingham, England

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<sup>18</sup> Vgl. *Oranienburg: Erster authentischer Bericht eines aus dem Konzentrationslager Geflüchteten* (Karlsbad: Verlagsanstalt Graphia, 1934) sowie *A Nation Terrorized* (Chicago: The Reilly & Lee Co., 1935).

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