

BOOK REVIEWS

Kahn, Lisa, Ed., *Reisegepäck Sprache: Deutschschreibende Schriftstellerinnen in den U.S.A. 1938-1978*. Munich: Fink Verlag, 1979. 145 pp.

The twenty writers represented in this anthology seem, at first glance, to have little in common. About half belong to the older generation and came to America before the war, as exiles; the others are younger and came after 1945, as immigrants. Some of the poems and prose pieces are traditional, others modernistic; the thematic range is likewise great. The element that does unite these writers is expressed in the title: *Reisegepäck Sprache*. As the reader sees, in the works themselves and in comments under the rubric "zur Sprache" which each author has supplied, they share the desire—in some cases the compulsion—to retain at least this one connection with the land in which they grew up.

A few of the contributors will be familiar to readers of *Journal of German-American Studies* (Franzi Ascher-Nash, Mimi Grossberg, Margarete Kollisch, Margot Scharpenberg), most are known only to a limited audience, and a few are virtually making their literary debut. Erika Metzger, Lilo Pretzer, Christiane Seiler, and Rita Terras are represented by previously unpublished poems. These authors, each of whom has her own unique style, offer new and interesting perspectives. They share a contemporary attitude and an acute awareness of their situation, living "in zwei Sprachen" (Pretzer). Indeed, several of the poems contain English phrases which are carefully integrated with the German.

The works of these authors is different from most literature now being written. This is not surprising, since they, as German-Americans, inevitably will have different points of view from persons who live and write within a single cultural framework. As the editor observes in her introduction, "die vorliegende Anthologie [soll] als literarische und nicht als politische Arbeit gewertet werden." These works are first and foremost literary documents (and many are outstanding). Secondly they are products of German-Americans. And finally, they are by women—although a radically feminist position is consistently absent. Whatever a given reader's reason may be for approaching these texts, it is not likely that he—or she—will be disappointed.

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Ernest G. Fischer. *Marxists and Utopias in Texas*. Burnet, Texas: Eakin, 1980. x—246 pp., illus., biblio., index. Cloth \$14.95.

Despite its flamboyant title, the flaming red hammer and sickle on its cover, and the subscript on the dust jacket describing this book as an account of "the Lone Star State's pioneer flirtation with Socialism-Com-

munism, Fischer's work delivers neither thorough scholarship nor delightfully shocking yellow journalism. Scandal has, I'm afraid, grown more demanding of late than what Fischer offers.

The author, a guest of the German High Command and an AP correspondent with the German army on the Russian front during World War II and more recently a part-time journalism teacher at Tulane and the University of Texas, claims this book was ten years in the making. It does have ten chapters. At the apparent rate of a chapter a year, one might expect these chapters to be organized; they are not.

Fischer presents an assortment of anecdotes and a great deal of trivia—much of it published elsewhere but some of it uncovered as a result of his own sleuthing—on early German communists and Forty-Eighters, French Fourierists and Cabetists, Mormons, Quakers, and other utopianists. The illustrations are good. The conclusions are missing. Some day this subject, which promises so much, will attract the deserved attention of kindred and competent scholars.

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Otto W. Tetzlaff, tr. and ed. *The Emigrant to Texas: A Handbook and Guide*. Bremen: Schuenemann, 1846. Rpt. Burnet, Texas: Eakin, 1979. vi plus 120 pp., illus. Cloth \$7.95.

This little volume, written in a fairly elementary style, was first published in 1846 as an emigrant guide to Texas. The translation by Otto Tetzlaff, head of the Modern Languages Department at Angelo State University, includes a brief history of Texas, a description of its geography and economy, and an outline of its government, followed by a more thorough discussion of the Mainz and Antwerp emigration organizations.

Tetzlaff labored carefully to give an accurate and readable translation of a text written to be understood by people of limited education. Tetzlaff's own introduction, while not the work of an English stylist, is probably the best part of the volume. The rest of the book is sketchy, especially the parts about Texas which are occasionally misleading in the glib re-presentation of cliched materials on Texas widely published and read in Germany. The passages on flora and fauna afford some of the best unintentional humor in the book. Texas is described, of course, as a potential garden, richly resourced, blessed by a generous climate, and populated by ruffians—Anglo-Americans among whom “drunkenness [sic.], fraud, and gambling” were widespread. The Mexican population was less consequential than the Anglos but more compatible with German standards of culture. Apparently there were few Indians in Texas in 1846, a matter which may surprise American historians; those Indians mentioned briefly in the last paragraphs on population and commerce are described as having “nothing to look forward to but complete extinction, to which their craving for brandy only adds.”

By ignoring Anglos, avoiding Indians and Mexicans, abstaining from crude Texan liquor, not trafficking in slaves, and staying clean, Germans were assured of leading wholesome and morally upright lives. It is questionable, however, whether the Germans did not endure the same fate which befell their imported potatoes; the anonymous author of the guide lamented that "European [sic.] potatoes do well, but degenerate within a few years, providing fewer and smaller tubers. Therefore, from time to time these potatoes must be replaced from abroad."

The shortcomings of the guide are the shortcomings of the popular nineteenth-century travel guides in general. One must bear in mind that such writings were designed to sell travel packages; if they were not as accurate as modern Michelins, then too people then were not as conversant with travel as now.

Eakin Press does scholars a great service by printing such resources and making them available for study and research. One would hope that the press will soon acquire a more reliable editorial staff and submit manuscripts to reputable scholars for reading before publication. Frequent typographical errors, garbled cutlines, and distracting design do not enhance the publications of a press which has shown its willingness to revive and sustain local lore and literature.

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George Fenwick Jones and Renate Wilson, Trs. and Eds., *Detailed Reports on the Salzburger Emigrants Who Settled in America... Edited by Samuel Urlsperger*. Volume 5, 1738. Wormsloe Foundation Publications, No. 14. Athens: University of Georgia Pr., 1980.

Anyone now or in the future interested in the colonial Germans in general or the Germans in Georgia in particular will find a wealth of source materials as a result of the work of George Fenwick Jones. Among the works which come to mind is his article on the German language in Georgia "Colonial Georgia's Second Language *Georgia Review* 21:1 (1967): 87-100. The volume reviewed here is an annotated English translation of the reports written in 1738 in Ebenezer, Georgia and sent to the Francke Foundation in Halle.

Most of these reports were written by Johann Martin Boltzius and Israel Christian Gronau, the former of which was the Lutheran pastor assigned to the Salzburger Protestant exiles in Georgia, the latter of which was Boltzius' assistant. The reports were first sent to Augsburg where they were edited by Samuel Urlsperger, the senior Lutheran minister of Augsburg. After editing the reports he sent them on to Halle to the Francke Foundation. These edited reports were then published by the Waysenhaus Press at Halle while the fuller reports were transcribed into copy books at the Foundation. Prior to the present edition scholars and researchers have had to rely on the "greatly bowdlerized edition."

The present edition restores all of the text deleted by Urlsperger and indicates this textual material by placing it in brackets. Text which was added by Urlsperger is set off with slashes. An example of deleted material are those texts which discredit the English authorities and the behavior or conditions of the Salzburgers.

These reports are "almost the only intimate information we have of that important segment of the population, which was so little understood by the British authorities and inhabitants of the town." The notes are fascinating and the select bibliography and index useful. In short, an outstanding contribution to the field of German-American studies and a sterling piece of scholarship.

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Darrel E. Bigham with Research Assistance from Charles F. Petranek, *Reflections on a Heritage: The German-Americans in Southwestern Indiana*. Evansville, Indiana, 1980. 32 pp.

This booklet, made possible through matching grants from the Indiana Committee for the Humanities in cooperation with the NEH, represents an excellent utilization of oral history in the field of German-American studies. Based on interviews with approximately sixty third- and fourth-generation German-Americans within a ca. twenty mile radius of Evansville, Indiana it aims not to write a community or institutional history, but rather to record the reflections and impressions of persons "about what it meant (and means) to be a German American."

Most mentioned the following factors as causes for their ancestors' immigration: wars, famines, industrialization, conscription, and religious and political persecution. New Orleans was the prime port of entry for Germans who settled in southwestern Indiana, and they were attracted to the area mainly by word of mouth. Descendents of the immigrants knew the general place of origin of their ancestors, such as Hesse-Darmstadt, Württemberg, Baden, Bavaria and Alsace-Lorraine, and some have studied their family history closely. Most Germans immigrated to the area between the 1830s and 1880s.

Initially German culture was centered on religion, language and rural folkways. "The Germans were unable to separate religious expression from the German language." One person recalled "If you weren't confirmed in German, you weren't confirmed. God didn't listen to you in the English language." Prior to the 1920s little English was taught in the church schools. A school day at Trinity Lutheran School before World War One consisted of "beginning with a German greeting, and a German hymn, followed by an hour of Bible instruction. The remainder of the day—devoted to such basics as literature and arithmetic—was also taught in German." By the fourth of fifth grade English instruction began in such

schools. Most German-Americans who began their education before the First World War recall that English was learned only after they started school.

Supporting church and language were the various agrarian folkways, at the center of which stood the patriarchal family within the broader framework of a close-knit network of family relatives. Among the farming communities the land was prized as if it was sacred. They practiced scientific farming and crop rotation and the "worst sin" was to waste the land. Language, religion and family were, therefore, central to the German heritage in southwestern Indiana.

In the urban areas residential enclaves were established by the immigrants: most German-Americans in Evansville lived on the west side. However, such enclaves not only provided security but also job opportunities. Young German-American women, for example, found the best job opportunities on the west side. The community, however, was not homogenous since there were regional differences amongst the Germans as well as religious and ideological conflicts, especially with the Forty-Eighters. The church was especially important since together with its schools, organizations and various activities it "attested to a way of life which stressed, through pageantry and ceremony, separateness and superiority."

Celebrations, such as German Day, were important, but the most important was the family celebration of Christmas. One recalled "That was the only time you could get fruits that they did not grow—like bananas, cranberries, oranges, and tangerines." Less obvious, however, were the values held by German-Americans.

German-Americans were conservative and stressed the values of "perseverance, patience, thrift and respect for authority, with enough idealism to save and build homes in the New World." On the west side of Evansville little credit was needed since German-Americans worked hard, saved money and lived within their means. Fundamental to German-American conservatism was the belief "that government should spend as little as possible." Also, party affiliation was related to family tradition, but regardless of party affiliation or faith "most Germans shared, on the whole, a set of values brought from the Old World." And they translated into "honesty, thrift, hard work, and discipline. Central to those ideals were loyalty to family, church and community."

Within this framework this booklet examines what remains of the German heritage today. Most fourth-generation German-Americans spoke little English as they entered grade school in the 1940s. By the fourth-generation general attitudes about marriage had changed: Alsatians married Bavarians, Lutherans married Catholics, and Germans married non-Germans. Technological change brought new occupational opportunities that drew people from their various communities. The Health Department closed an old world open-air market, an important aspect of agrarian folkways. Residential neighborhoods have been displaced by industrialization and churches have, therefore, lost membership, some closed, as a

result. Modern methods of transportation also contributed to the weakening of residential enclaves and suburbs emerged with the result of further population dispersal. However, German-Americans assigned the greatest significance to two major factors which affected their life and heritage: World War One and prohibition. Nevertheless, generalization about the German-Americans of the area is difficult since the degree of cultural retention and modification varies greatly. Regarding German traditions one person responded "I think these are built into these people, and they might even suggest them without realizing that they came out of the old tradition."

Since the 1940s the German language and its various dialects are confined mainly to family use with public use limited to church sermons or to choral presentations. The religious beliefs of Protestants, Catholics and Jews are still patterned on the immigrant past. Most still belong to the religious institution of their immigrant ancestors. One person observed "this was the church of their fathers, their church came out of Germany, and this is the place where they would belong." Self-contained neighborhoods still persist, but not to the extent as earlier. Political loyalties still evidence German traditions: certain families belong to this or that political party as a part of family tradition. Clubs, such as the Lessing Lodge, the Central Turners and the Germania Maennerchor, are popular. Food and drink evidence the German tradition, although much fainter than earlier.

The old ways have been obviously modified by the American experience, and much has blended together so that at certain points it is difficult to distinguish what is American and what is German. However, this booklet documents the presence of German traditions and values in and around Evansville, Indiana. There is little overt identification there with German roots since they are simply part of every day life, but to the outside observer "much of the German tradition persists, although altered by the American experience."

Reflections on a Heritage: The German-Americans in Southwestern Indiana is not only a fine contribution to the field of German-American studies, it is an example of the use of oral history, and one which should and could be replicated elsewhere.

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