

Preface

On page 2 of the 28 October 1783 issue of the *Gemeinnützige Philadelphische Correspondenz* the following advertisement appeared:

Es ist in der Presse und wird in ein Paar Tagen zu haben seyn, bey *Carl Cist*, Buchdrucker, In der Markt=strasse, gegenüber dem Schwarzen Bären, [für 15 Pens das Stück und 12 Schillinge das Dutzend,] Wahrheit und Guter Rath an die Einwohner Deutschlands, besonders in Hessen. Obige Schrift enthält eine freymüthige und lebhaftige Schilderung von dem elenden Zustande des armen Landmanns in Deutschland; entgegen gestellt der Glückseligkeit, welche derselbe in diesem freyen Lande genießt; nebst einer Einladung zu einer Niederlassung in America.

Den Beschluß macht ein feuerreiches Lied eines Americanischen Granadiers an die Heßischen und andere nach America gesandte Deutsche Truppen; verfertigt im Jahr 1777.

(The following is being printed and will be available in a few days at *Carl Cist*, printer, on Market Street, opposite the Black Bear, [for fifteen pence a copy and twelve shilling a dozen,] Truth and Good Advice to the Inhabitants of Germany, Especially in Hesse. The above pamphlet contains a frank and vivid description of the miserable condition of the poor peasant in Germany; contrasted to the happiness that the peasant enjoys in this free country; in addition to an invitation to a settlement in America.

At the end there is a fiery poem of an American grenadier, written in 1777 and directed to the Hessian and other German troops that were sent to America. [The Historical Society of Pennsylvania graciously gave me permission to reproduce the advertisement.]

Carl Cist, the printer was, like his former employer Henry Miller, an ardent Revolutionary. The advertisement, which very well might have been written by the author, gives an excellent summary of the contents of the pamphlet. It was reissued in the same year, with a number of emendations and a couple of new mistakes. The revised version is reproduced here, with a translation, a commentary, and notes.

The pamphlet has been mentioned in a cursory manner by a few scholars and is listed in some bibliographies. It is always characterized as an attempt to make the Hessian soldiers, who were waiting in New York to go back to Europe, desert the British army, and stay in America. If the pamphlet were nothing more than that, i.e., an offer of land and

other incentives to those who would leave the British army, the pamphlet would not deserve special attention since the texts of several such appeals have been published in various places. However, this is a unique document in that it shows intimate knowledge of Hesse-Kassel at the time when the German princes recruited soldiers and leased them to England for substantial sums of money. Also, the author shows good knowledge of his adopted country, contrasting America's advantages with the miseries experienced by the common people in the feudal society of Germany.

Stylistic features of the text point to an author with literary ambition. The twenty-eight stanza poem at the end of the pamphlet gives evidence of his having been, while still in Hesse-Kassel, a reader of the poetry of the Göttinger Hain, formed by a group of poets in 1772 and active for a few years afterwards, that is, exactly during the time prior to the author's departure for America. That departure must have been in 1776 since he mentions in the 1783 pamphlet that he has been in America for more than seven years (p. 21). He converts the purely rhetorical "Tyrannehass" (hatred of tyrants) of the group, especially prominent in the poems of Friedrich Leopold Graf von Stolberg, into the reality of an attack on the German princes in general and on Friedrich II, Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel, in particular. There is no other document dealing with the Hessians in the American Revolution that combines factual information with literary skill in such an unusual manner as the 1783 pamphlet. It is of equal interest to German and to American historians and to literary scholars and therefore deserves to be published. I hope that the publication of the pamphlet will give the author the distinguished place in early German-American political writing that he so clearly deserves.

Wahrheit und Guter Rath was published anonymously. I believe that its author was Karl Wilhelm Führer, who was twenty years old when he came over to America as an officer in Wilhelm von Knyphausen's regiment in 1776. As I will show in detail in the commentary, Führer, who was captured when Washington defeated a Hessian brigade at Trenton and who then spent over a year as a prisoner of war in Dumfries and Fredericksburg, both in Virginia, had the appropriate background

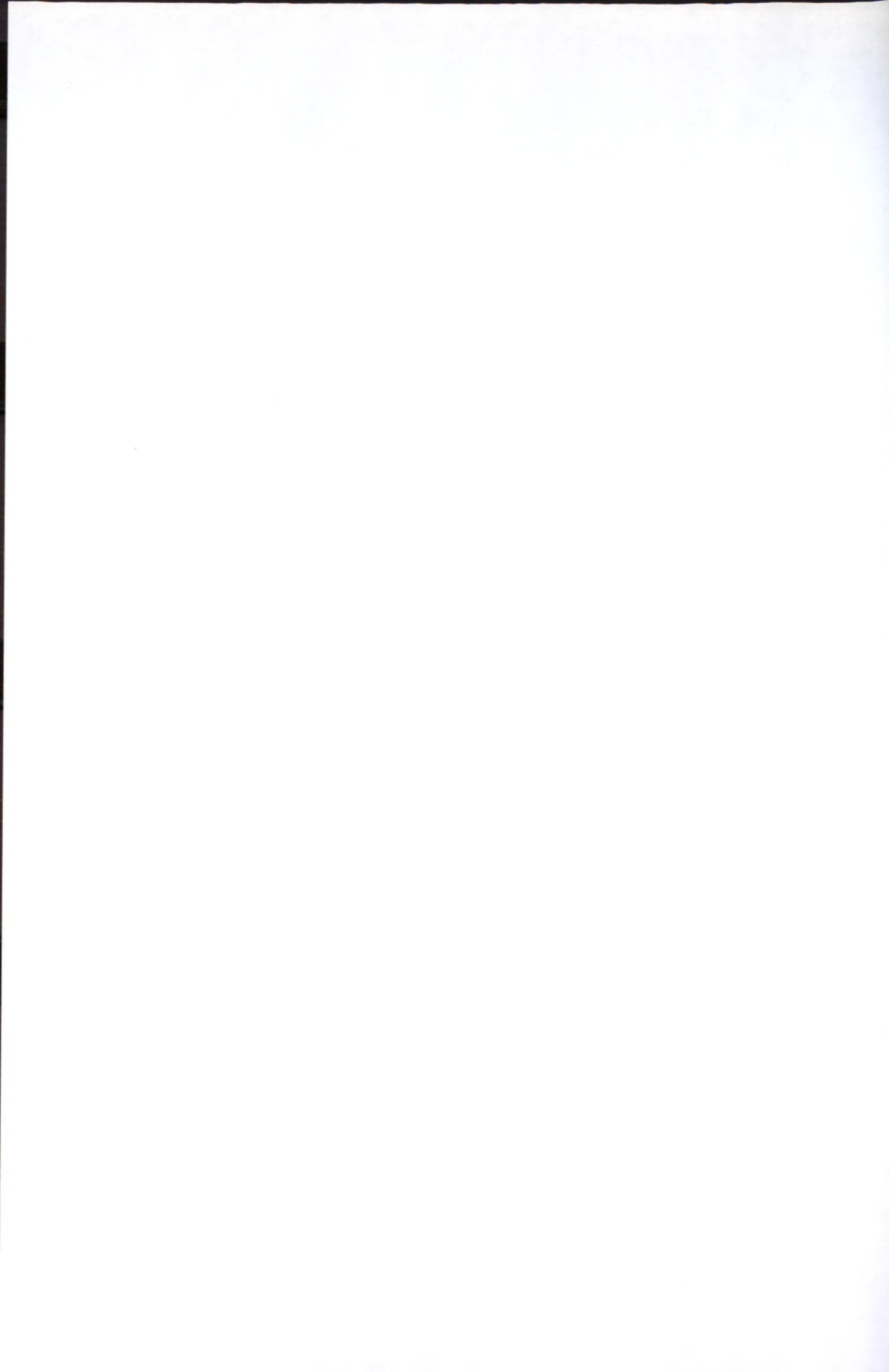
in Germany and the connections in America to have authored the pamphlet.

It is an important pamphlet in that it not only tells us about the excesses of the recruitment practices in Hesse-Kassel but also presents the most radical anti-feudal statement in German at the time. Führer turned out to have been a most unusual Hessian officer who came to abhor the government of his country and who opted to change loyalties so as to be "im Lande der Freyheit" (in the country of liberty; pp. 17 and 31) and to enjoy its many material and political advantages.

I want to thank, first of all, Ms. Ann W. Upton of the College Archives & Special Collection Libraries of Franklin & Marshall College for giving me permission to reproduce the text of the unique copy of *Wahrheit und Guter Rath*. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Wilson Library staff helped me in innumerable ways. Gerd-J. Bötte and Werner Tannhof located the unique copy of the pamphlet, and Gerd-J. Bötte also assisted me in trying to locate another rare pamphlet. Inge Auerbach, Archivoberrätin of the Hessisches Staatsarchiv Marburg repeatedly gave me invaluable advice. My former colleague, Richard D. Lawson, read through the English translation and made excellent suggestions for improvement. William Keel, Editor of the *Yearbook of German-American Studies*, encouraged me to submit the manuscript for possible publication as a supplemental issue of the *Yearbook*. Finally, my two sons, Stephen and Peter, as well and most of all, Cathy, my wife, assisted me greatly in the preparation of the edition for publication. Also, a grant from the Research Council of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill helped defray the cost of publication of the pamphlet.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Christoph E. Schweitzer



W a h r h e i t
und
G u t e r R a t h,
an die
E i n w o h n e r D e u t s c h l a n d s,
b e s o n d e r s i n
H e s s e n.

Errette den, dem Gewalt geschieht, von dem, der ihm Unrecht thut, und seye unerschrocken, wenn du urtheilen sollst.
Rede die Wahrheit, hasse die Lügen, und schene Niemand.
Jesus Strach und Paulus.

Philadelphia, Gedruckt bey Carl Eist, in der
Markt-strasse, 1783.