

Book Reviews

Edited by J. Gregory Redding

History

Encounters in the Rubble: American Interactions with German Children and Youth in Postwar Germany.

By Erica J. Lansberg. De Gruyter Studies in Military History, vol. 12. Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2025. 366 pp. \$117.99.

Just over eighty years ago, as World War II entered its final phase with large American armies breaching Germany's western border, most Germans didn't quite know what to expect. Would U.S. forces, which had helped render large parts of most German cities into piles of rubble, prove merciful, or as Nazi propaganda had it, would they seek to slaughter and rape the civilians in their path and pillage what was still left standing?

On the other hand, the invading American forces also did not know what lay in their paths. As Lt. Melvin Lasky noted in his diary: "The trucks were setting a fierce pace. Children were still around waving at the convoy going by, but this time there was no response. Were we still in France? Wasn't this German territory? No one would risk a gesture of fraternization, and the new coldness was a little bewildering" (56).

Much of the civilian population was by this point homeless and undernourished. Robert Baird, another American soldier, described how his truck was met at a local dump by bands of hungry older adults and children scrounging for discarded scraps of food (62). Youth competed in collecting used American cigarette butts, which they reprocessed for cash. The ban on fraternization was largely ignored as children sitting on heaps of rubble pled for candy and chewing gum. In Lansberg's view, "these soldiers saw the

children as innocent of the Nazi crimes, despite their Germanness. GIs had to navigate their own personal views of Germans and opinions on their guilt for the Nazi past and the war when coming face to face with young Germans' needs" (62). Many of them concluded that these were not the enemy, but hapless victims of the war which they had no part in starting.

Lansberg's study, an update of her dissertation, lays out clearly how individual American soldiers among the occupying forces often led the way in rehabilitating German youth, seeing their fate as representing the hope of a future democratic nation. Through the actions they took, often at odds with official policy, "GIs remained in the occupation role as the best possible models of the democratic, American way of life to average German citizens" (89).

As a case in point, German Youth Activities (GYA) programs fostered in the American Occupation Zone had their beginnings in Bremen in 1946 and initially grew largely through the energy and enthusiasm of Sergeant Patrick J. Moriarty. What had started as an off-duty initiative soon became a staple of the occupation government, and as it spread throughout the zone, it was assigned a full-time staff. When coupled with the CARE package program, which sent over ten million packages to German families in five years, the school meal program, the so-called *Schulspeisung* provided by the American government, fed thousands of young Germans and provided an essential part of their nourishment. In many ways, American GIs became surrogate parents for German youth whose fathers had died in the war or were imprisoned in allied or Soviet POW camps. Significantly, the activities of the GYA included not only sports and recreation, but schooling in the basics of democracy, such as working out an organizational constitution and expressing opinions in forums and newsletters, activities that formed a contrast with Nazi youth counterparts of the *Hitler Jugend* and the *Bund Deutscher Mädel*. Unsurprisingly, there were limits, as when *Die Brücke*, the student newspaper, was suspended for publishing articles critical of America's Soviet allies (198).

As lines between the western and the Soviet allies began to harden into the Cold War, interactions between occupying forces and local youth became part of the competition between East and West. While Russian soldiers stationed in Berlin were often also seen as friendly, their lack of chocolate and chewing gum to share—or any products of a consumer society—placed them at a marked disadvantage.

Clearly, in the Cold War battle for hearts and minds, spontaneous actions led by individual soldiers played a major role. Moreover, food aid, from candy bars and CARE packages to school meals, became a key to soft power (233). No single development underlined this fact more than Lt. Gail Halvorson's efforts during the Berlin Airlift of 1949. In July of the previous year, Halvorson

had made an independent decision to share homemade parachutes of candy with German youths after meeting a few dozen waifs along a fenceline at West Berlin's Tempelhof airport. His spontaneous decision to begin dropping airborne treats soon became an official part of the Airlift and the public face of that effort (286). This helped form the propaganda narrative that the Soviets, in trying to starve West Berlin through their Blockade, were clearly a "destructive force," while Americans could be seen as a "benevolent source of liberation, freeing Germans from fascism (and the new enemy, communism)" (289).

The strengths of Lansberg's study include the introduction of direct sources from children's diaries and other first-person testimony to bolster her thesis. Other valuable sidelights include describing the role of African-American soldiers in their positive interactions with German youth, providing many with inter-racial freedoms denied them in their own country.

There is abundant bibliographical support for her arguments in the text. It is a fluently written account, accessible for both historians and the general reading public, and would prove a worthy addition to academic and public libraries seeking to bolster their readings of post-war history.

Longwood University

Geoffrey Orth

Nazis in the New World: German Students in the United States, 1933–1941.

By Aaron Gillette. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2025. 305 pp. \$54.95.

This is an important book with implications extending beyond its narrow topic. It examines the experiences of some 270 German exchange students sponsored by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) for study in the United States. Exhaustively researched, a good 200 pages of text are backed by 40 pages of footnotes and 50 pages of bibliography. The introductory chapter on the contentious historiography of Nazism shows the difficulty in assessing the true motives and degree of complicity of people operating in totalitarian systems. Although the author never uses the term *Gleichschaltung*, he demonstrates that the degree of Nazi control was not as total as often imagined. The student exchange administration was never fully coopted for Nazi purposes. As was the case in much of the Third Reich bureaucracy, administrative competence was at odds with ideological purity, often resulting in "organized chaos" (74). Thus the selection process

of exchange students included many who were not particularly interested in promoting a benevolent view of the “New Germany,” which was the official goal of the DAAD after the Nazi takeover.

Even those students sympathetic to Nazism had little success in spreading their views abroad, and they found that “German Americans were no more willing to assist the Third Reich than other Americans were” (149). Instead, the “cognitive dissonance” that most exchange students experienced left their U.S. images “changed substantially, if not profoundly” (122). Some “left Germany for their exchange year as Nazis, but ended their exchange year as culturally American” (146), in one case leaving \$10 with a friend to send care packages of breakfast cereal. What anti-Americanism remained owed more to the arrogance of the pre-Nazi *Bildungsbürgertum* from whom most exchange students continued to be recruited, than to Nazi ideology (200).

Gillette categorizes the exchange students after 1938 as an “espionage” cohort (148), whose efforts, however, he finds “reminiscent of the Keystone Cops” (168). The “true beneficiaries” of their fifth column efforts were FDR and J. Edgar Hoover, who exaggerated their threats in order to combat isolationism and fatten the FBI’s budget. The traditional German diplomatic corps was nearly as outraged, seeing their attempts at preserving U.S. neutrality undermined by these clumsy amateurs.

The roster of DAAD students includes some familiar names. Among them was Sigismund von Braun, elder brother of the rocket scientist, who later was distantly linked to the opposition Kreisauer Kreis; Elisabeth Noelle [Naumann], the “founding mother” of German survey research despite her continuing Nazi sympathies; and the distinguished Yale historian Hans Gatzke, who came under suspicion of the Gestapo upon his return to Germany and managed to emigrate permanently in 1937. Of the exchange students mentioned by name, only the more prominent ones such as those above are included in the index, a minor annoyance.

Gatzke’s return was not an isolated case; well over fifty, or about one-fifth of the exchange students in that era, stayed on or returned permanently to the United States. In the years of 1933-34, half of those who left Germany never came back, and even in the late 1930s when the selection process was most stringent, the same was true of 10 to 15 percent. Because of their bilingual facility and democratic convictions, former exchange students, whether U.S. or German based, played a disproportionate role in the postwar occupation and founding of a democratic West Germany.

The examples in this book also offer contemporary parallels and lessons. Then as now, there were people desperately struggling to avoid being sent back to their homeland to face danger and possible death. This study also demonstrates the effectiveness of American “soft power.” The example of our open, egalitarian political system impressed and made converts even among

guest students chosen to promote the image of Nazi Germany abroad. Foreign exchanges have been an effective tool of American diplomacy up to the very recent present. But now an investment in the future is being mindlessly stripped away through cuts in the Fulbright Exchange program. When asked about the benefit of hosting foreign scholars, I always say, "Too soon to tell." Forty-two Fulbright alumni are serving or have served as heads of state or government of their home countries. They are continuing the legacy of (former) Nazis in the New World.

Texas A&M University

Walter D. Kamphoefner

Thomas Mann's Antifascist Radio Addresses, 1940-1945: Listen, Germany!

Translated by Jeffrey L. High and Elaine Chen. Edited by Jeffrey L. High, Elaine Chen, and Hans Rudolf Vaegt. Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2025. lxvi + 157 pp. \$120.00.

Thomas Mann chose exile when the Nazi regime gained power in 1933. Just four years removed from winning the Nobel Prize for Literature, his fierce criticism of fascism in general and Nazism in particular made him a liability to the new German state. At the outbreak of World War Two, Mann left Switzerland for the United States, eventually settling in Los Angeles, where he would remain until 1952.

As a powerful and credible voice for Germany's humanistic and cultural traditions, Mann began recording a series of monthly radio messages to the people of Germany. He would ultimately record 59 radio broadcasts, 58 of them addressed to "Deutsche Hörer" back in his country of birth, and one directed specifically to Americans of German descent in his adopted homeland. All are published here in translation for the first time.

His first message was broadcast by the BBC in October 1940. By this point of the war, Germany had conquered and occupied most of Western Europe. Allied forces had been evacuated from the continent at Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain was underway, and of course the United States was over a year away from entering the conflict. Although in exile, he speaks to the people of Germany as one of them: "German Listeners! A German author speaks to you..." (1) he begins. But his adopted perspective as a German American is already evident in this first broadcast, as he describes the response to Germany's aggression that he is seeing "in America, the great and free nation in which I have found a home" (1). He describes America as a nation

of immigrants, with strong ties to people and nations who are suffering under the Nazis, and he anticipates America's involvement in the war.

Long before the Allies began reversing the trend of German victories, Mann sees the defeat of Germany's Nazi regime as inevitable, thanks to the bankruptcy of their ideas and their inability to offer anything of real human value. His vitriol for Hitler and his henchmen is unrestrained throughout his five years of radio address, and while he is sympathetic to his fellow Germans living under authoritarian rule, he does not exculpate them. "[Y]our obedience knows no limits," he says in his Christmas address of 1940, "and, I just want you to know, with each passing day, your obedience becomes more unforgivable" (7). He calls on them to stand up: "Germans, save yourselves! Save your souls by renouncing your oppressors..." (9).

In each address, Mann shows detailed knowledge of events in Germany and the broader theaters of war. He offers his *deutsche Hörer* truths about Germany's crimes that were concealed by Nazi propaganda. For example, already in September 1942 he shared with them reports on the wholesale murder of Polish Jews and the stated goals of the *Endlösung* (61-63). And as the end of the war approaches in 1945, he makes it clear to his listeners that any eventual German reconciliation with the world will require their "complete and uncompromising recognition of abominable crimes" committed by Germany, crimes which were either hidden from them or which they chose to ignore as an act of self-preservation (117). Germany can and will be great again, says Mann, but only through a rigorous personal and public coming to terms with the past.

Of special interest here is Mann's October 1942 address to Americans of German descent. Mann was on the path to U.S. citizenship at that time, and so he speaks to them "as one of your own" (64). He targets any conflicted loyalties that German Americans might feel as inhabitants of two cultures. "It would be a grave misapprehension to confuse the heinously seduced and disfigured Germany of today with that country that you envision when you reminisce about the homeland of your ancestors," he says (64). In Mann's view, all Americans of German descent should understand that "the evil demon who presently reigns over Germany ... must be annihilated so that Germany, which has strayed from itself, might be restored to its former self again, and so that you too, German-Americans, could love it again with a clear conscience" (65).

Each of Mann's addresses are of the moment, with references that were readily clear to his contemporary listeners but less so to today's readers. To that end, the editors of this volume have annotated each address with copious footnotes that clarify Mann's comments. The collection is prefaced by a thoughtful foreword by Frido Mann, an introduction by Hans Rudolf Vaget on "Thomas Mann's War on Fascism," and Mann's own foreword to the 1943

book edition that published 25 of these radio addresses.

Frido Mann's foreword outlines the timeliness of renewed study of Thomas Mann's antifascist addresses, as global democracy is increasingly stressed by authoritarian and fascist threats. Without overstating his case, he draws parallels to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the plight of Middle Eastern and Central American refugees, and violence toward minorities in the United States. He holds his grandfather's 1940s addresses up as a call to action for today's readers: "I plead fervently that [these addresses] not be read and marveled at today as historical museum pieces, but that they instead be understood as an urgent appeal to the world of the present" (xiv).

This important publication will be of interest to a wide range of interests and academic disciplines. It is worth noting that a handful of the original broadcasts read by Thomas Mann can be found on YouTube by searching "Thomas Mann Deutsche Hörer" or "Thomas Mann German Listeners."

Wabash College

J. Gregory Redding

The Invention of Humboldt: On the Geopolitics of Knowledge.

Edited by Mark Thurner and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra. New York: Routledge, 2022. 342 pp. \$144.00 (hardback) \$43.99 (paperback).

In recent years, especially around Humboldt's 250th anniversary, hagiographic portrayals of the world-renowned Prussian naturalist Alexander von Humboldt have gained popularity through books, exhibitions, and documentaries. These portrayals often depict him as an isolated hero of science, the first ecologist, or a global thinker. However, this interpretation exaggerates his achievements by ignoring the historical sources he relied on and the work of his contemporary scholars with whom he collaborated closely. From a History of Science perspective, this is inaccurate and hinders diplomatic endeavors among the involved countries. Therefore, a critical rebuttal of this narrative, these "inventions of Humboldt," is very much needed.

This collection of essays, edited by Mark Thurner and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, describes itself as a "game-changing volume" that "dispels many myths" about Humboldt and "reshapes the landscape of scholarship" by uncovering the "real sources" of Humboldtian knowledge. It is based on 12 contributions by authors mainly from Spain and Ibero-America, including Leoncio López-Ocón, Alberto Gómez Gutiérrez, Neil Safier, Juan Pimentel, José Enrique Covarrubias, and Irina Podgorny. Combining approaches that

analyze his work from different regional perspectives, academic disciplines, periods, or in connection with specific personalities, these scholars elaborate what they see as Humboldt's errors, his silencing and suppression of knowledge, his appropriations, and his misreadings. *The Invention of Humboldt* argues that Humboldt benefited from knowledge communities and archives in Spanish America, and that these sources have been erased from history by the powerful "Humboldt cult."

The heroization of Humboldt, built at the expense of others and at the cost of scientific accuracy, certainly warrants an insightful response, and this collective work contributes to the much-needed reflection. However, in the methodological realm, it lacks a crucial distinction: separating criticism of Humboldt himself and the methodology he used from criticism of the appropriation and heroization of his person, created over generations and across nations. While academic and societal discussions always benefit from a critical and nuanced assessment of historical figures, these personalities should not be blamed for their instrumentalization by others.

Humboldt certainly did not "invent nature," nor was he a "pioneer of global science" or the first to promote interdisciplinary research combining the arts and sciences. However, he neither claimed to be a pioneer in those areas nor saw himself as a "second Columbus," as the volume implies. These labels have been assigned to him for commercial or ideological reasons, among others, even as he repeatedly criticized this practice. Additionally, the volume claims to reveal Humboldt's sources; yet, Humboldt himself provides this information in detail, citing the works that informed his texts, maps, or illustrations. He does so extensively in the *Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain* or in his renowned *Cosmos*. Humboldt viewed himself as part of a "chain of ideas," embedded in a long tradition of incremental knowledge creation, connecting him to figures like Aristotle, Eratosthenes, and Strabo. Furthermore, in his *Examen Critique*, he describes this "continuity of ideas" linking his work to sixteenth-century Spanish writers such as Acosta, Oviedo, and Barcia. Beyond his historical sources, Humboldt consistently acknowledged the Spanish and Hispanic naturalists he met personally and from whom he benefited. Through his widely circulated publications, translated into many languages, he shared those studies on an international stage. Although recent research has identified instances in which Humboldt may not have fully acknowledged his sources, he should not be blamed for concealing the foundational knowledge behind his works. Nor should Humboldt be criticized for using those sources, as the volume suggests. Quite the opposite: in this context, Humboldt followed the standard approach to modern knowledge development, beginning with a thorough analysis of the field's current state. It would have been noteworthy if he had ignored significant work by both prior and contemporary scholars.

Several contributions in this volume focus on errors identified in Humboldt's descriptions, measurements, or calculations, evaluated from today's perspective. While it is certainly valuable for science to correct his work, it should always be understood within its historical context. Although Humboldt revised his predecessors' studies, his own work is subject to the same process. Another common criticism in this volume concerns Humboldt's local sources, who are claimed to have greater expertise in their specific areas. This is very likely to be true. However, at this point, it is important to understand Humboldtian Science, which was based on a methodology that effectively connected data and bodies of knowledge across different disciplines and experts in those fields. Humboldt coherently integrated insights from various specialists and elevated the combined, revised, and updated information to a higher level.

The united response from Hispanic academic circles to the "Humboldt cult," as published in this volume, adds a valuable perspective to the discussion. However, overall, it remains unclear what specific "game-changing" contribution this collective volume makes to scholarship and which myths about Humboldt have not been addressed before. Over the past decades, the involvement of Hispanic science with Humboldt's scientific project has been thoroughly examined, and there are publications that openly criticize the existing "invention of Humboldt," although these are unfortunately not mentioned in this volume. Therefore, the claim that such a critical approach has "passed over in Eurocentric narrative and historiography" is unjustified. Hopefully, this volume will pave the way for future studies that offer a more balanced analysis of the reasons behind the appropriation and heroization of Humboldt, which have occurred on both sides of the Atlantic from his time to the present.

University of California San Diego / University of San Diego Sandra Rebok

Facing Washington's Crossing: The Hessians and the Battle of Trenton.

By Steven Bier. Westholme Publishing: Yardley, PA, 2025. 333 pp. \$32.50.

As the United States celebrates the 250th anniversary of its *Declaration of Independence*, few events of that period of the American Revolution could be more significant than George Washington's decisive victory over the armies arrayed against the Colonial forces in December 1776 in Trenton, New Jersey, and in January 1777 at nearby Princeton, New Jersey. Following a series of defeats and retreats from New York City though New Jersey to Pennsylvania, Washington was able to turn the tide by his surprise attack first on the

three German regiments from Hessen-Kassel stationed at Trenton on December 26 and then on the British forces at Princeton in a second engagement in early January. While not viewed by the British as significant, these two Colonial victories after a series of defeats and retreats reinvigorated the cause for American independence, saved Washington's Continental Army to continue the fight and destroyed the reputation of the German auxiliaries—known broadly nowadays as “Hessian mercenaries”—in the British forces as an invincible force.

Steven Bier creates a narrative of the recruitment, training and deployment of German auxiliaries to the fighting in the American Colonies by relying heavily on the published translations of diaries of three individual soldiers in units from the *Landgrafschaft Hessen-Kassel* in the then Holy Roman Empire. The ruler of this *Landgrafschaft* at the time of the American Revolution was Friedrich II, connected to the British royal family through marriage—his wife Mary was the aunt of George III. Friedrich was by far the most eager German ruler to provide soldiers to his uncle—at a price—to pursue the demise of the American Revolution and at the same time to fill his coffers with hard currency. Thus for better or for worse, we get the bad reputation of the word “Hessian” as one typically hears in modern English usage.

With chapters devoted to the recruitment and deployment of the regiments from Hessen-Kassel, Bier paints a detailed picture of both the poor bedraggled peasant as well as the adventuresome professional soldier in these Hessian regiments as they prepare to deploy for service under the British flag. A terrifying account of their ocean voyage from the mouth of the Weser River to the American Colonies reveals the extreme hardships they endured. But with their arrival on Staten Island in the late summer of 1776, the march to success for these Hessian soldiers begins with early victories in the battles for New York, leading to Washington's abandoning New York and eventual retreat across the Hudson River through New Jersey to Pennsylvania in the fall of 1776—just a few short months after the Declaration of Independence. With matters seeming to be collapsing for the cause of American independence, Washington then strikes the Hessian garrison at Trenton on the day after Christmas and literally changes the course of the American Revolution. Bier follows the daily life of these Hessian soldiers through the ups and eventual downs of that fall 1776 campaign and then follows the aftermath of their captivity, parole and eventual continued service in the British army for many of these Hessians.

Bier's narrative begins and ends with Emanuel Leutze's famous painting *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1851): In the preface, Bier states he wants to tell the story of those Washington intends to attack—the Hessian

regiments whom most Americans regard “as convenient villains” (x). In his epilogue, Bier describes the origins of the original painting in Düsseldorf and attempts to link the display of the painting in the United States in 1851 as well as the visit of Hungarian revolutionary Louis Kossuth to the U.S. as an attempt to gain support for the Democratic revolutions of 1848-49 in Europe. For this reader that connection was not clear since the revolutions in the German states and Hungary were essentially over by the summer of 1849 and Kossuth’s visit to the U.S. did not begin until December 1851.

For the interested reader of our *Yearbook*, please check the following related items: *Wahrheit und Guter Rath, an die Einwohner Deutschlands, besonders in Hessen* (1783) by Karl Friedrich Führer (YGAS Supplemental Issue 1 [2003] edited and translated by Christoph E. Schweitzer) which was an appeal by a Hessian officer to his comrades in America to not return to Europe but to remain in the newly independent United States and also “The Hessians and Who?': A Look at the Other Germans in the American War of Independence” by Albert R. Schmitt (YGAS 18 (1983): 41-61), which examines the role of Germans in the war beyond the Hessian auxiliaries, especially the soldiers of the Royal Deux-Ponts Regiment of the French army at the Battle of Yorktown largely from the Palatinate (Zweibrücken). Both items available online at *Journals@KU*.

University of Kansas

William D. Keel

Immigration / Emigration

Rootedness and Acculturation: Experiences from German Immigrant Communities in the USA, 1883-1918.

Edited by Tristan Coignard and Pierre-Yves Modicom. Wetzlar, Germany: transcript Verlag, 2024. 216 pp. \$55.00.

Rootedness and Acculturation is a collection of essays authored by historians and linguists from Germany, France, and the United States, that address the German American experience between 1883, the bicentennial celebration of the first German settlement in Germantown, Pennsylvania, and 1918, the end of the First World War when Americans questioned the loyalty of German Americans to the United States. Collectively, these essays evaluate the differences between cultural pluralism and cultural assimilation, as well as update several of the myths and misperceptions about German immigrants.

Individual chapters in the first section of the book address how German Americans viewed themselves within American society. For example, idealistic Forty-Eighters, who had fled their German states after the failed 1848/1849 revolutions, were very disappointed with the reality of the political and social conditions in the United States, especially the threat that slavery posed to the survival of the American republic. Their perceptions of the United States as an ethnic melting pot and as a country built by ordinary people informed their insistence that they should learn American culture and language as well as preserve German culture and language in order to protect ideals of democracy and advance human rights. As experienced freedom fighters and displaced exiles, Forty-Eighters saw themselves as uniquely positioned to fight for the abolition of slavery not just in the United States, but in more abstract terms as abolishing slavery in all its iterations globally. Evidence, however, also demonstrates that antislavery Germans held ideals that were contrary to the principle of emancipation, such as supporting the forced assimilation of Native Americans through boarding schools and opposing true racial equality.

The two remaining chapters in the first section examine the question of loyalty from both the American and German perspective. Americans recognized the importance of economic and political contributions by German Americans, but viewed persistent cultural traits, such as speaking in German and maintaining ties with Germany, with suspicion. The editors assert that historian Walter Kamphoefner's conclusions about German Americans and their experience during the First World War were "quite unexpected and refute some deeply anchored assumptions" (11). Kamphoefner's extensive evaluation of letters written by German Americans revealed that World War I had a much lower impact on the decline of German culture and language than previously thought. Descendants of German immigrants served in the US military at nearly the same rate as Americans, yet their tombstones also contained German inscriptions. While the immigrant generation still wrote letters to relatives in Germany and expressed support for the German people—not the Kaiser—the second generation no longer maintained these ties with Germany. Nevertheless, if this second or even third generation served overseas, they could still write letters home to their immigrant parents in German. As Kamphoefner convincingly argues, writing in German had nothing to do with loyalty to America.

The second section of *Rootedness and Acculturation* focuses on the debate within the German community to what degree they had acculturated to the American way of life, what their contributions were to the United States, and how they could reconcile a dual identity of being German as well as American. According to Tristan Coignard, the publications of renowned historians of German Americans, Heinrich Armin Rattermann and Julius Goebel,

at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century show that Germans felt ignored despite their contributions to American society, economy, and politics. At the same time, these historians also laid blame for the lack of recognition within the ethnic group. Goebel, in particular, suggested that Germans were too passive and insisted that combatting assimilation required the teaching of German culture and language in school. Only then could German ideals contribute to not only the success of the ethnic group, but to the prosperity of the United States, as well.

The remaining chapters in this section discuss historian and linguist Heinz Kloss, who published several books during the 1930s that aimed to understand the adjustment by German Americans to the United States. He argued that teaching language by itself did not contribute to the preservation of culture (or the lack thereof to the demise of culture). Instead, the lived context of history, economics, politics, and dialect spoken at home that each individual German immigrant experienced also factored into the conscious or unwitting construction of personal identity. At the same time, he also blamed German immigrants for failing to maintain a united German community to combat assimilation and thus they were responsible for the decline of *Deutschum*.

This collection of essays will be of interest to anyone who studies the German American experience in North America, ranging from scholars of the ethnic groups and its language to ordinary family historians who want to understand how their ancestors adjusted to and interacted with a new environment. Together, these essays demonstrate that German immigrants constructed various degrees of identities based on size of community and ability to combine old cultural traits with new ones. Along their own pathway of becoming Americans, they reconciled internal, personal, and external tensions to decide on their own whether to remain partially rooted in the old country or to acculturate to the new one.

Missouri University of Science and Technology

Petra DeWitt

Exil im Paradies: Von Marta Feuchtwanger bis Helene Weigel.

Von Ursel Braun. Berlin: ebersbach & simon, 2025. 144 Seiten. €20.00.

Als "klug und kurzweilig" preist der Verlag ebersbach und simon das Buch von Ursel Braun an. Um es gleich vorwegzunehmen: Es ist eine treffende Einschätzung. Leicht und unterhaltsam, ist es die passende Lektüre für einen ersten, eher oberflächlichen Eindruck zum Thema. Der Inhalt: Wie sechs

Ehefrauen, die ihren berühmten Männern vor oder während des zweiten Weltkriegs ins kalifornische Exil folgten, das Alltagsleben gestalteten, mit welchen Problemen und Schwierigkeiten sie konfrontiert wurden, und auch, ob und in welchem Umfang sie anderen Exilanten helfen konnten.

Mit Kalifornien verbindet man zunächst Sonnenschein, Wärme und Pazifik—positive Aspekte, kombiniert mit der Tatsache, dass man sich nun, teils nach einer furchtbaren Odyssee, in Sicherheit und weit weg von den Kriegsschrecken ein neues Leben aufbauen kann und muss.

Die Voraussetzungen dafür waren für die jeweiligen Frauen recht unterschiedlich. Da ist z.B. Katia Mann, die Frau des berühmten Nobelpreisträgers Thomas Mann, der auch im Exil über finanzielle Reserven und Einkünfte verfügt, von denen sein ebenfalls in Kalifornien lebender Bruder Heinrich nur träumen kann. Katia ist die große Organisatorin, wie zuvor und auch anschließend wieder in Europa: umsichtig, klug wirtschaftend und zuverlässig. Ein Glücksfall für den erfolgreichen Autor, dem sie komplett den Rücken freihält. Wie anders hingegen ihre Schwägerin Nelly Mann, der 1940 gemeinsam mit ihrem 27 Jahre älteren Mann Heinrich, dessen Neffen Golo und dem Ehepaar Werfel, die Flucht in die USA gelingt. Zwar unterstützte Thomas Mann seinen älteren Bruder finanziell, aber Nelly Mann hatte in der Familie einen schweren Stand, wurde als psychisch labile Alkoholikerin verachtet und erfuhr trotz ihrer vielfältigen Bemühungen, dem völlig unselbständigen Heinrich Mann ein erträgliches Leben zu gestalten, nichts als Feindseligkeit von Seiten der Familie. 1944 nahm sie sich nach mehreren missglückten Versuchen das Leben.

Helene Weigel, hochtalentiertete Schauspielerinnen und Ehefrau des Frauenhelden Bertolt Brecht, leidet sehr darunter, aufgrund ihrer mangelnden englischen Sprachkenntnisse und ihres starken Dialekts in Hollywood keine Arbeitsmöglichkeiten zu haben. Mit zusammengebißenen Zähnen und viel Geschick hält sie die Familie zusammen, zu der auch zwei Kinder gehören. Zu Weihnachten kommen jedes Jahr die Feuchtwangers zu Besuch. Nach ihrer Europa-Rückkehr 1947 ist Weigel dann noch einmal eine große schauspielerische Karriere beschieden.

Erstaunlich, wie auch andere Betroffene, wie z.B. Martha Feuchtwanger, die Liebschaften ihrer Männer zu tolerieren in der Lage sind. Die starke sportliche Martha stürzt sich in die Renovierung einer völlig maroden Villa und schafft daraus in jahrelanger Arbeit das Schmuckstück der 22-Zimmer Villa Aurora, wie sie noch heute Stipendiaten und Besucher beeindruckt. Ein guter Ort für Empfänge und gesellige Emigranten-Zusammenkünfte mit mehr als nur einem Hauch Europa-Atmosphäre. Anders als die Manns werden Feuchtwangers in den USA bleiben. Auch Alma Mahler-Werfel, deren dritter

Ehemann der weltberühmte Schriftsteller Franz Werfel ist, bleibt nach einem kurzen Abstecher nach Wien in den USA—allerdings an der Ostküste, wo sie bequem von den Tantiemen der Arbeit ihrer bekannten Promi-Ehemänner leben kann. Salka Viertel, die Ehefrau des Autors und Regisseurs Berthold Viertel, wird im Exil zur Drehbuchautorin und freundet sich mit Greta Garbo an. In großem Umfang setzt sie sich für andere Emigranten ein. Gemeinsam mit Brecht schreibt sie ein Drehbuch, das allerdings nicht zur Verfilmung kommt. Schlimmer noch, nach Kriegsende gerät sie—wie viele andere auch—ins Visier des FBI und wird unamerikanischer kommunistischer Umtriebe beschuldigt. Weder kann sie arbeiten noch ihren Exilanten-Salon weiterführen. Finanziell kann sich die Geschiedene kaum noch über Wasser halten. 1953 siedelt sie in die Schweiz über.

Die Quintessenz: Generell scheinen Frauen stärker, belastbarer, kreativer als ihre Ehemänner zu sein, wenn es um Lebensgestaltung unter neuen widrigen Umständen geht. Die meisten portraitierten Frauen versuchten mit großem Enthusiasmus, ihren begabten, oft aber alltagsuntauglichen Männern das Arbeiten in der neuen Heimat so einfach wie möglich zu gestalten, ohne sie mit Problemen zu konfrontieren.

Man liest diese so unterschiedlichen Portraits mit einer Mischung aus Bewunderung und Mitleid. Der flotte Schreibstil, das abwechslungsreiche Hin- und Herspringen zwischen den sechs Protagonistinnen und ja, auch die Skandälchen und Nähkästchen-Plaudereien sind spannend genug, um über gewisse Ungereimtheiten hinwegzusehen, die einem aber nur auffallen, wenn man sich intensiver mit dieser Thematik auseinandersetzt. So schreibt Braun beispielsweise bezüglich Katia Mann: "Das Vermögen der Familie hat sie von Anfang an klug angelegt; ein Teil des Nobelpreisgeldes von 1929 in Höhe von 200.000 Reichsmark liegt auf ausländischen Konten, sodass es der Familie auch im Exil an nichts fehlt und das Ehepaar Privilegien genießen kann, die anderen verwehrt bleiben." Im Literaturverzeichnis werden auch Katia Manns "Meine ungeschriebenen Memoiren" angeführt. In denen schreibt sie, dass sie im Anschluss an die Nobelpreisverleihung in Stockholm von einem Journalisten den Rat erhielt, das Geld im Ausland zu belassen. Diesen Rat hat sie anscheinend nicht befolgt, denn: "Wir haben es natürlich restlos mit allem übrigen verloren, als wir 1933 emigrierten" (S.65). Verwunderlich.

In einem Epilog wird in Kurzform das Leben der sechs Frauen weiterbeschrieben bis zu deren Tod—man erfährt dadurch auch, wer in den USA geblieben ist (die Witwen Martha Feuchtwanger und Alma Mahler Werfel), und wer zurückgekehrt ist nach Europa (Katia Mann, Helene Weigel und Salka Viertel). Schmales Büchlein, große Unterhaltung.

Unity Is Strength: German Immigrant Associations in New York, 1890s-1930s.

By Markus Bierkoch. *Migrations in History*, Vol. 6. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2025. 377 pp. \$76.99.

This comprehensive study of German immigrant associations in New York is focused on two main areas: German organizations as providers of social and economic services and as proponents of ethnic politics. The author chose New York as the research object given that the city had one of the largest populations of people of German origin in the world for the period under investigation, which spans the 1890s to the 1930s. In 1900, German-speaking immigrants accounted for nearly 20 percent of the city's population. Previous similar studies, most notably Heike Bungert's outstanding work on German American festival culture (*Festkultur und Gedächtnis. Die Konstruktion einer deutschamerikanischen Ethnizität 1848–1914*, 2016), have centered on assimilation processes and the construction of a German American ethnicity. Bierkoch, however, aims at bringing "the social, economic, and political facets of German immigrant associations into communication with each other," thus addressing a research gap (15).

In chapter 2, the author concentrates on the social, physical, and economic infrastructure, clearly showing that the German-speaking community of New York was heterogeneous. The formation of associations was characterized by differences regarding class, occupations, and regionality. Bierkoch argues for example that "middle-class associations had strained relationships with organizations that identified with the working class and sympathized with socialist politics" (36). However, social mobility was possible, and the socially constructed borders were fluid, meaning that some associations also had a mixed membership. The chapter investigates both well-known German American economic areas, including the brewing industry, as well as other niches like the grocery stores run by German immigrants. Unsurprisingly, several associations had members directly involved in alcohol and liquor trade, which bound them together both economically and socially. German brewers had an interest in financially supporting the buildings of the *Vereine* (clubs) since these served as social spaces for networking. The second half of the chapter is devoted to the mutual aid these organizations provided. German immigrants sought out these associations to help get a start in the New World and often found jobs through these connections. In addition, New York's German immigrant associations offered benefits and health care. *The United German Societies of the City of New York*, an umbrella organization founded in 1902, "contained a great number of member associations whose primary purpose was to provide sickness and death benefits in 1904" (142).

In addition, around the turn of the century, organizations such as the Low German *Plattduetscher Volksfest-Verein von New York und Umgebung* (PVVNY) founded homes for the aged, such as the *Fritz Reuter Altenheim*.

Chapter 3 is dedicated to German organizations as proponents of local and domestic politics, as well as international politics and transatlantic crossings. In it, Bierkoch shows that the shared economic interests were not only often combined with membership in immigrant associations, as demonstrated in chapter 2, but also led to collective political action. Sociopolitical networks enabled and drove the German immigrant association's political mobilization in New York. The Democratic Party in particular, which dominated New York City politics between the 1890s and 1930s, depended on votes from immigrants. One major aspect that led to German American political involvement was their discontent over the Sunday laws and later Prohibition, which hurt their businesses. In this context, the *Steuben Society of America* (SSA) and the predominant German American political organization in the city, the *German Democracy* (GD), which was founded by leaders of the PVVNY, are analyzed. Bierkoch's investigations also extend to economic interests in the transatlantic sphere and the influence of the National Socialists on German immigrant associations in New York City in the 1930s.

Overall, the author successfully highlights the connections between the social and economic dynamics of German immigrant associations, and how, in line with their widely embraced slogan "unity is strength," these associations furthered political mobilization. Among the many clubs that are part of the study are singing societies (*Gesangvereine*), festival associations (*Volksfest-Vereine*), gymnastics clubs (*Turnvereine*), and many political and social organizations. The work largely excludes religious associations, which also were significant, but that could be the topic of another related study. This excellent book will be very interesting to students and scholars in the fields of German American history, immigration history, and social history.

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Viktorija Bilić

Moravian Studies / Amish Studies

Herrnhut: The Formation of a Moravian Community, 1722-1732.

By Paul Peucker. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022. 299 pp. \$54.95.

In June of 1722 Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf gave permission for three families who had fled Moravia because of religious persecution to

settle on his estate in Berthelsdorf, Saxony, Germany, and to establish the settlement of Herrnhut, which was to become the home of the renewed Moravian Church (*Unitas Fratrum* or Unity of the Brethren) or Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine or Brüder-Unität, as it is known in German. On the three-hundredth anniversary of the founding of Herrnhut, Paul Peucker, archivist of the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, published a reassessment of the formation and first decade of this Moravian settlement and how with Zinzendorf's help it was able to survive outside of the Lutheran Church. The author's thesis for this study is that when Zinzendorf discovered the similarities between the rules and practices of Herrnhut with the constitution of the Unity of the Brethren, he convinced the Moravians and other pietistic settlers who had joined them to organize Herrnhut as a Philadelphian group of believers outside of the Lutheran Church, thereby protecting the Herrnhuter community from government intervention and preserving the group's distinctiveness.

The focus of this study is on the ecclesiastical foundation of Herrnhut during its first decade of existence and not on its social organization, its industries, and its division of labor. The introduction reviews the latest research on the relationship of the Moravians with the Lutheran Church, locates the Moravians within the period of German Pietism, and shows how they were influenced by ideas of the Philadelphian movement that came to the Continent from England. Chapter 1 acquaints readers with Zinzendorf's three collaborators in founding Herrnhut, namely, Andreas Rothe, pastor of the Lutheran church in Berthelsdorf, Melchior Scheffer, pastor and member of the Pietistic circle in Görlitz, and Christian David, a carpenter who brought many refugees to Herrnhut from Moravia. Chapter 2 focuses on the early development of the Herrnhut community under the direction of the Brotherhood of Four, i.e., Zinzendorf, Rothe, Scheffer, and Friedrich von Watteville, a close friend of Zinzendorf, as well as on Zinzendorf's relationship with his former teacher in Halle, August Hermann Francke, who viewed Herrnhut's institutions, e.g., print shop, schools, orphanage, as "counter-institutions," and some of Zinzendorf's theological discussions with the Herrnhuter, e.g., the abolishment of confession, as worrisome. Chapter 3 covers the background and history of the crypto-Protestant settlers who emigrated to Herrnhut from Moravia and Bohemia, many of whom still identified with the Unity of the Brethren and practiced their faith in secret, and a group of persecuted Schwenkfelder, who were forced to leave Silesia in 1725. Chapter 4 surveys the major conflicts that arose among the Herrnhuter, their separation from the Lutheran congregation in Berthelsdorf, and the Herrnhut statutes, i.e., the rules regulating life in the community

and the Brotherly Agreement, which controlled its spiritual life. The author references an unpublished article of 1937 by German Moravian historian, Joseph Theodor Müller, found in the Unity Archives in Herrnhut, that shows that Zinzendorf intentionally added details or left out any material that did not fit his purpose in his free paraphrase or adaption of Comenius's history of the *Unitas Fratrum* in order to convince the Herrnhuter that their statutes resembled the constitution of the Unity of the Brethren (126-29). In fact, Müller goes so far as to call Zinzendorf's summary of Comenius's history a falsification, since he altered the text to suit his intent. Chapter 5 examines the beliefs of the Herrnhut community, where laypeople formed the spiritual leadership with women often playing a leading role, the establishment of communal households, and Zinzendorf's concept of a marital theology (*Ehereligion*), in which sexuality within marriage was considered free of sin. Chapter 6 looks at everyday life in Herrnhut, when and where religious services and prayer meetings took place, the importance of music in the community, the system of choirs (*Banden*), in which secular and spiritual life merged, distinctive Moravian worship traditions such as song services (*Singstunden*) and love feasts, and the use of the lot as a way to ask for God's guidance, all of which were unknown to the Bohemian Brethren. Chapter 7, the final chapter, entitled "The Herrnhut Model," examines how Herrnhut became the center of a religious movement that not only set up similar Moravian communities in Europe, but that also developed a successful mission program, especially to the New World. It again summarizes the author's thesis that Zinzendorf prevented Saxon authorities from interfering with Herrnhut's development or even threatening its existence by creating for it an identity as the reestablished Unity of the Brethren and the impression that it was affiliated with the Lutheran Church. To oppose both accusations of separatism and heretical beliefs, Zinzendorf came up with a Moravian heritage with Lutheran features, including Luther's views on private religious meetings and acceptance of the Augsburg Confession, thus making it more acceptable to the authorities.

This study is well documented from archival and published sources, includes three maps, two tables of offices in Herrnhut and of population and number of homes in the settlement, numerous portraits or images, many of which are found in the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, or in the Unity Archives in Herrnhut, and copious endnotes. While the endnotes provide much useful additional information, students or non-specialists, however, will find many endnotes rather bothersome since they do not follow the conventional footnote style of providing a complete reference to author, title, and publication information the first time an article or book is mentioned in a chapter, but they give only the author's last name, a shortened title if the author has more than one work referenced, and page number. The

reader is then forced to go to the bibliography for the complete reference, and if it is an article in a journal or chapter in a book, it may require a third step to find the complete reference.

This study of Herrnhut's formation and survival during its first decade, based on the author's extensive knowledge of primary and secondary sources, is an important addition to the history of the Moravian Church; it offers not only new and provocative insights, but also points out areas that still need further research.

A German version of this book with a slightly different title, *Herrnhut 1722-1732: Entstehung und Entwicklung einer philadelphischen Gemeinschaft*, was published by Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen, Germany, in September of 2021, but was not available for this review.

Stanford University

William E. Petig

All About the Amish: Answers to Common Questions.

By Karen M. Johnson-Weiner. Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2020. 119 pp. \$14.99.

What the Amish Teach Us: Plain Living in a Busy World.

By Donald B. Kraybill. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2021. vii + 182 pp. \$14.95.

These small-format books provide introductions to Amish life and culture, written by experts. Karen Johnson-Weiner, Distinguished Service Professor of Anthropology Emerita at the State University of New York-Potsdam, is a recognized authority on Amish and Mennonite language and culture. Donald Kraybill, Distinguished College Professor and Professor of Sociology Emeritus at Elizabethtown College, also served as director and Senior Fellow at the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies. Both authors have published well-received books on Amish life and culture.

Johnson-Weiner divides her book into seven parts that address general questions about the Amish. Part 1, "Who are the Amish?" presents Amish history, characteristics, demographics, and geographical spread. The second part, "What are Amish communities like?" introduces the primary sociocultural units of Amish life, the family, and the church-community (*Gmay*). In parts 3 and 4, "What does it mean to be 'Plain'?" and "What is it like to grow up Amish?", Johnson-Weiner describes how the Amish differentiate themselves from mainstream society, including religion, dress,

language, education, recreation, and technology. Amish young adulthood is covered in part 5, “What are Amish courtship and weddings like?”. The descriptive portion of the book ends with part 6, “What is life like for Amish adults?”, which explains male-female relations, work, ageing, retirement, death, and funerals.

Johnson-Weiner depicts a culture that is not nearly as strict and homogeneous as mainstream people might assume. For one thing, the Amish embrace individual free will; for instance, membership in the church results from voluntary adult baptism. Additionally, because important decisions tend to be made by autonomous *Gmays*, there is a spectrum of responses to challenges presented by the secular mainstream. Twice-yearly negotiation of individual communities’ rules (*Ordnungs*) by all baptized members ensures a variety of rules that reflect acceptance, accommodation, or rejection in response to changing economic, legal, and social circumstances in mainstream society.

Part 7, “What Will Amish life be like in the future?”, considers the potential effects on the Amish of largescale internal shifts, for instance, the increasing abandonment of farming in order to pursue more financially rewarding work, as well as external influences, for example, the growing ability to access the mainstream via smart phones. Johnson-Weiner notes that the Amish manage these threats to their way of life skillfully, “redraw[ing] the lines that separate [them] from the world” (102). The book concludes with the author’s observation that, as the Amish continue to thrive by defining themselves against mainstream society, this rejection enables them to remain cohesive and present a “visible alternative to modern society” (103-104).

Kraybill’s book also espouses the notion that the Amish lifestyle represents a positive and healthy option to modernity, offering readers a “critique of modern culture” with the Amish playing the role of “silent social critics” (x). The author derives the book’s twenty-three short essays from lessons learned over forty years of research, including fieldnotes, conversations with hundreds of Amish people, and introspection about his research experiences and encounters (xii-xiii). He focuses his musings on the Amish present, covering many of the same sociocultural topics as Johnson-Weiner: family life, the church-community, religion, education, technology, childhood, adulthood, ageing, retirement, and death. Kraybill enhances these discussions with thoughts about the role of dense personal ties in ensuring “an identity, a secure place, and a sense of personal dignity” for all community members (25). These ties within small communities, enforced by shunning (*Meidung*) and excommunication (*Bann*), bind the Amish to their communal lifestyle and reinforce separation from the mainstream. Kraybill praises Amish religious and cultural values such as modesty, humility, tolerance, patience,

forgiveness, nonviolence, free will, and submission (*Gelassenheit*). Especially compelling are discussions reflecting on the interplay between free will and *Gelassenheit*. For instance, young adults are free to join the church through adult baptism, and 85% of them do so. *Gelassenheit* requires that they then submit to their *Gmay's Ordnung* for the rest of their lives.

Kraybill concludes his book with a longer essay on negotiations within and outside the Amish community, indicating the tension that exists between individuals' choices and their *Gmays'* rules as the Amish react to the many complications inherent in their dealings with the modern secular world. He illustrates this tension and negotiation through the group's creative response to the telephone, whereby all but the most conservative church-communities prohibit ownership of telephones yet tolerate their use outside the home. He contrasts this reception of "solid technology" with the acceptance of "liquid technology" such as smart phones into Amish life. Most communities have reacted to smart phones with acceptance, rejection (shunning or even excommunicating owners of smart phones), or negotiation (limiting their use to mobile telephones without smart applications). However, some Amish have persevered in using smart phones, which are small, portable, and concealable, in spite of the rules imposed by their *Gmays* (146-149).

Both Johnson-Weiner and Kraybill present the Amish in a very positive light as a viable alternative to mainstream lifestyle and values. While Kraybill provides more scholarly depth than Johnson-Weiner, his essays are tinged with a palpable negativism regarding mainstream society, presenting it as a "self-first," "speed at all cost," and "hate-filled world" (17, 94-95, 138). While readers can discover much to admire in the small Amish communities and their dense ties, neither author mentions the constraints under which individuals participate in Amish communal life. For example, James A. Cates, a psychologist who serves the Amish, has written about the problems of Amish homosexuals in *Serpent in the Garden: Amish Sexuality in a Changing World* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020). Individuals who deviate from Amish heteronormative values must either suppress their desires or leave the *Gmay*, which functions as a source of identity, acceptance, and security. Similar costs are borne by victims of familial sexual abuse who must submit to the community's requirement that they forgive and continue to live with offenders. A more balanced description of the Amish ought to encompass both the benefits and the costs of communal life for communities and individuals in order to accurately and fairly shed light on both Amish and mainstream culture.

Literature and Art

The Master of Contradictions: Thomas Mann and the Making of *The Magic Mountain*.

By Morten Høi Jensen. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2025. 248 pp. \$28.00.

Since the unsealing of Thomas Mann's papers and diaries in 1975, scholarship devoted to Mann has more often than not focused on biographical, psychological, and philosophical aspects of his life and work rather than on a literary analysis of a specific work. There have been studies of his politics, focusing most often on the break with his brother Heinrich and the publication of *Reflections of a Non-Political Man* (*Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, 1918), and studies of his relationship with his children and his wife. Jensen's relatively slender volume may well be the first "biography" (dust cover) of one of Thomas Mann's novels, indeed of his most revered, yet problematic and somewhat mysterious work. As such, *The Master of Contradictions* is a unique contribution to Mann scholarship.

In 192 pages of text, consisting of seven chapters averaging thirty pages each, preceded and followed by a prologue and epilogue of approximately the same length, Jensen narrates the genesis and development of *The Magic Mountain* within a framework which mirrors the structure of the novel but tracks the development of Mann's thought rather than the sojourn of Hans Castorp at Berghof. In doing so, Jensen provides the historical, political, philosophical, and personal context for Mann's work on the novel over more than a decade marked by extreme disruptions and changes in Europe and the world more broadly (1912–1924).

Jensen's volume is both a compelling read and an adroit assemblage of a wide variety of sources, ranging from contemporary authors of the pre-war and Weimar periods to today's historians and scholars, as well as excerpts from Mann's diaries and correspondence. The various sources are woven together in a narrative which is almost seamless. As a narrator, Jensen is well spoken but not intrusive. Although it is apparent in the pro- and epilogue that Jensen sees in the novel many parallels to today's political issues, his narrative voice rarely intercedes in the debates which Mann and the novel undertake. In the later chapters, as he details the "snow" subchapter (VI, 7) and the introduction of Mynheer Peeperkorn, Jensen's commentary reveals a personal sense of the importance or significance of a scene, but aside from an occasional valiative adjective (e.g., naïve), Jensen is generally able to assemble a remarkable number of sources to tell the story of the development of Thomas Mann's

greatest work without prejudice or polemics. The whole is a worthwhile and rewarding experience.

Loyola University Maryland

Randall P. Donaldson

Comanches, Captives, and Germans: Wilhelm Friedrich's Drawings from The Texas Frontier.

By Daniel J. Gelo, C.B. Hopkins, Christopher J. Wickham, and Bryden E. Moon Jr. Kerrville, TX: State House Press, 2023. 162 pp. \$29.95.

The accomplished authors of this publication combine once again their areas of expertise in Cultural History, Indian Ethnography, and the Texan Hill Country to write on German immigrants in the borderlands on the Texas frontier and their encounter with the indigenous Comanche population. While others of their books focus on the ethnological studies carried out by Heinrich Berghaus (2023), or Ferdinand Lindheimer's newspaper accounts (2024), *Comanches, Captives, and Germans* offers in-depth analyses of three drawings prepared by Wilhelm Friedrich, a young German immigrant to Texas, in the year 1848. Friedrich's sketches offer insightful glimpses into life on the frontier by featuring the people, the landscape, and the wildlife of the Texas Hill Country. They illustrate a large meeting of Indians and white men, including a little girl, capturing unique details of the interaction between Comanches and Germans as well as the surroundings in which this took place. It is a form of narration of this cultural encounter by artistic means and through the lens of an insightful observer, published by State House Press, whose mission is to make history accessible. In this case it partnered with the Texas Center at Schreiner University in Kerrville, an educational system offering opportunities for students and the general population to learn about Texas history, civilization, and society.

Daniel Gelo (Professor of Anthropology), Christopher J. Wickham (Professor of German), C.B. Hopkins (Architectural and Cultural Historian), and Bryden E. Moon Jr. (Communications Executive) use their profound knowledge to discuss the three drawings from multiple angles, taking into account every little detail and their different layers of meaning. The questions they seek to answer through these analyses are: Who was Wilhelm Friedrich? How did he come to Texas? What information does he pack into his drawing? How can we understand his work as art, as data about Comanche life and customs, and as a record of German values and priorities in the New World? Who is the captive girl? And why is her portrayal important today?

The authors' answers to these questions and their in-depth analyses of Wilhelm Friedrich's artistic work in this book led it to be selected as the winner of the 2025 Conservation Society of San Antonio Publication Award. This speaks in favor of their achieved collaborative effort to make the scholarly community aware of the three closely related and until then unpublished drawings that have come to the attention of these scholars. Let's have a closer look at the drawings and see in what specific ways the authors have extracted insights concerning the early days of German-Comanche interaction on the Texas frontier in 1847: The first drawing, D1, is a pencil sketch of a large meeting of Indians and white men with details of their interaction and surroundings; D2 is a pen and ink rendering of the same scene, elaborated by the same artist; and D3 depicts a different scene in a similar setting: a train of ox-drawn wagons proceeding on a trail, with mounted Indians watching from above in the foreground, again undertaken by the same artist.

The book is divided into 12 brief chapters, each of them offering insightful information from a different angle, all of them helpful to obtaining a deeper understanding of the artistic work elaborated by Friedrich. Chapter 1 ("The History") provides an overview of German colonization of Central Texas during the 1840s and 1850s; chapter 2 ("The Artist") presents biographical information on Wilhelm Friedrich; chapter 3 gives insights on the materials, techniques, and composition used for the drawings; chapter 4 talks briefly about the Germans in the Texas Hill Country; chapter 5 expands more in-depth on the Comanches and their horses; chapter 6 provides helpful insights by discussing the foreground and background of the drawings; chapter 7 does so by describing the main action, while chapter 8 focuses on the setting and explains details regarding the date and place of the encounter depicted in the drawings. The following two chapters focus on the people involved: chapter 9 talks about the "Comanche Captive" and chapter 10 gathers all information about the girl in the drawings. Based on all these insights elaborated on in different layers and from different perspectives, drawing together different areas of knowledge, chapter 11 ("Where?") sets the lens on the specific locations depicted, before the conclusion in chapter 12 brings all those strings of information together and presents the information obtained. With the same thoroughness, the authors also point to those aspects that require further examination, doubts that have been raised, and to the remaining vagaries where a final answer could not yet be presented.

A clear achievement of this scholarly work is to provide a successful example of interdisciplinary research endeavors and their usefulness. The book is well researched and combines convincingly the respective areas of expertise in order to extract all insights on German-Comanche cultural encounters on the Texas borderland that can be obtained from those drawings. While the book seems to have mostly a scholarly audience in mind, it can also be of interest for the

general reader intrigued by the broader topics it touches. The authors are well familiar with the literature in the field, as proved by numerous bibliographic references. They went to great effort to identify and explain all sorts of little details in these drawings that might be useful for the interpretation of the setting and the context of the encounter. The work is well structured, it is both analytical and descriptive, and it discusses the methodology used and the insights obtained. It furthermore includes a solid bibliography on the various topics it touches, as well as a useful index, and illustrations of similar or related artistic works that help to understand the broader context. Some of these illustrations are extracts from the larger drawing that depict details that might have escaped the attention of the observer. Bringing all those insights together, the book succeeds in its aim to recreate life in the Texas borderlands during this period of time through the three drawings. By embedding the depicted cultural encounter in its historic context, it provides much insight about the history of both Germans and Comanche Indians in the Texas frontier region.

University of California San Diego / University of San Diego *Sandra Rebok*

Biography

Edward A. Tenenbaum and the Deutschmark: How an American Jew Became the Father of Germany's Postwar Economic Revival.

By Carl-Ludwig Holtfrerich. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2024. xiii + 780 pp. \$59.99.

There are thick books on German history that one reads again and again. Peter Watson's *The German Genius* comes to mind. But the reviewer is not likely to read again the 630 pages of text of the book under review. Although this is an important piece of historical research and writing, it nevertheless makes substantial demands on the reader. It is repetitive. Moreover, one needs to know banking terms not usually at the command of the general reader. The author is a most diligent researcher, but he cannot resist including in his text all the information in his notes, even if that information has the most marginal relevance to the book's thesis.

And a most important thesis it is! Prof. Dr. Holtfrerich of the Free University of Berlin maintains it was not Ludwig Erhard who in 1948 fathered the *Deutschmark* which provided the financial stability on which the west Germans built their *Wirtschaftswunder* of the 1950s and 1960s, but rather,

Edward A. Tenenbaum, a Jewish Lieutenant in the American Army and currency advisor to Jack Bennett, financial advisor to General Lucius Clay, commander of the American Office of Military Government for Germany. The author devotes pages 11-93 to disparaging Erhard, the *Bundeskanzler* who followed Konrad Adenauer, as a man quick to change his economic advice to please whatever group was in power (including the Nazis and even the SS) and equally quick to take credit for the efforts of others.

Edward Tenenbaum was born in New York City in 1921 to Jewish parents recently arrived from Vienna but originally from Lemberg (Lviv), Galicia. Both parents had doctoral degrees—the father in medicine and the mother in botany and zoology. It is important for the reader to know that Edward grew up fluent in German (and became fluent in French), but giving the reader a page and a half of information on the German-speaking maid his parents hired when Edward was a boy seems a bit much.

Tenenbaum graduated from Yale in 1942, having been elected to Phi Beta Kappa in his junior year. His BA thesis, entitled “National Socialism vs. International Capitalism,” was judged the best of the year and was immediately published as a Yale University Press book. He went to work for the Office of Strategic Services’ Research and Analysis branch in Washington. He was drafted into the Army in December, 1942, but all through the war he remained on the OSS roster, even while in OCS back at Yale. The author includes 20 pages on the history of the OSS and its commander, “Wild Bill” Donovan.

Sent to London in July, 1944, Tenenbaum worked for the Research and Analysis division of the OSS, planning the economic objectives of the American bombing campaign. He was soon sent to Normandy, where he was also attached to the Psychological Warfare Division of General Patton’s Third Army. (Do we really need details about General Patton’s bull terrier?) Tenenbaum led a small intelligence-gathering patrol into the city of Coblenz *before* the city was captured by the Americans. On April 11, 1945, he was the first American officer inside the Buchenwald concentration camp. Within two weeks, he had “coauthored the famous Buchenwald Report on the internal inmate governing structure of the camp” (238).

In July 1945, Tenenbaum was assigned to the Foreign Exchange and Blocking Control branch of the Finance division of the (American) Office of Military Government for Germany. He interviewed non-Nazi Germany financial and currency experts. The German economy was at a low point not only owing to physical destruction of the war but also because the money supply was much too large in proportion to the goods and services being produced. Rather than leading to inflation, with fixed prices for goods and services, this situation led to weak incentives to work and produce as well as

a vigorous black market. To prevent starvation in their zones of occupation, both the Americans and the British had to send a great deal of food and raw materials to Germany.

The purpose of the German currency reform of June 20, 1948, was to reduce that oversupply of money and give Germans incentive to work and to produce. Tenenbaum was in the thick of the planning. In December 1946, he chaired a session of the Allied Control Commission's Financial Regulations Committee. It was Tenenbaum who chaired the seven-week conclave of eleven German monetary and financial experts from April 20 to June 8, 1948, in preparation for introduction of the new Mark on June 20th. Currency reform reduced the money supply in the western zones to 9.1 per cent of the old figure. With a secure currency, goods and services immediately appeared on the market. There was 20 per cent inflation of the new DM in the first six months, but this would likely have been less had all Tenenbaum's recommendations been followed. As was anticipated, the western currency reform did solidify the division of Germany, which was not repaired until 1990. With the agreement of General Clay, it was Erhard who lifted price controls on some 400 consumer items, thus moving western zones toward a free market economy.

Returning to Washington, Tenenbaum worked for the European Cooperation Administration (Marshall Plan). Later, he worked for the Mutual Security Agency on Greek Currency Reform. He advocated many of the measures taken in Germany, but it is not clear to the reviewer why 36 pages of information about the work in Greece are necessary. Returning from Greece in 1954, he founded his own international currency consulting company. This company occupied him until he was killed in a car wreck in 1975.

Altogether, Prof. Holtfrerich sets the record straight by presenting a great deal of information and informed opinion for the highly motivated reader.

Fort Smith, Arkansas

Robert W. Frizzell

Franz Boas: Shaping Anthropology and Fostering Social Justice.

By Rosemary Lévy Zumwalt. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2022. 648 pp. \$39.95.

At nearly 600 pages, *Franz Boas: Shaping Anthropology and Fostering Social Justice* is, in more ways than one, a sizable contribution to the already substantial existing corpus of Franz Boas studies. Yet, Rosemary Lévy Zuwalt's

ambitious book sets itself apart from the sweeping canonical biographies of George W. Stocking, Jr., Douglas Cole, Regna Darnell, and Ludger Müller-Wille if not through its scope, then through its archival method and integrative framing of Boas's personal and professional life. As a follow-up to *Franz Boas: The Emergence of an Anthropologist* (2019), which covers the early life and career of the father of American anthropology, the present volume draws on an extensive corpus of archival materials—business correspondence and personal letters, above all—to open a new view onto Boas's ascent in the academy and as a public intellectual. The author's stated intention is to let readers encounter Boas's life via his "passionate center," where his love of family, loyalty to colleagues and students, and commitments to science and justice were joined and drove him through life and work. To be clear, the volume is not a portrait of Boas's private life or professional passions, but rather a chronology of works and achievements that centers his various and deep emotional ties to people and causes. Its subject is not Franz Boas, the private person, but Franz Boas, the feeling person.

Zumwalt opens her book with a Preface and Introduction that summarize the high points of Boas's earlier life up to the period of focus and outlines Boas's core contributions and commitments that laid the foundation for American anthropology as he envisioned and practiced it. The following ten substantive chapters are framed with chronological sections, beginning with academic program building (ch. 1) and his early student cohorts (ch. 2). As a life's progress resists neat chronologizing, the central chapters are organized rather thematically according to certain chief concerns: Boas's thought on race and devotion to social justice (ch. 3), his actions to internationalize anthropology (ch. 4), his reactions and actions during the first world war (ch. 5), and the progression of his thinking about, and promotion of, women in anthropology (ch. 6). The book rounds out the chronology with chapters on Boas's loss and loneliness in facing personal crises late in life (ch. 7), his final student cohort (ch. 8), his work to rescue refugee scientists at the rise of National Socialism (ch. 9), and, finally, Boas's activity following retirement (ch. 10). From the start, Zumwalt's narrative is rich with quotations, from Boas himself and from family members, students, collaborators, and colleagues, substantiating with original voices what the author sees as the core substance of Boas's personal life and his life's work. Even alone, the substantial notes section and bibliography that close the book provide a rich resource for scholars hoping to take a deeper look into any of the issues or moments that Zumwalt thoroughly catalogs.

A reader entering into the chapters directly after absorbing the Introduction's promise of a view into Boas's "passionate center" may at first be disappointed to find an at times dry, repetitive or loosely connected

chronological narrative, plotted with lists of courses, students, institutions, or publications that would seem in direct contrast to the volume's aim to reveal Franz Boas, the feeling person. Yet, in order to contextualize the image of Boas as a person deeply connected to others, the author chooses to first establish the breadth and strength of his network and the deliberateness with which he built it, relationally and institutionally. Chapters 1 and 2 firmly anchor our view of Franz Boas as an adept and eager networker to support his professional and ethical aims and as an educator-mentor whose students reflected his devotion back to him. By the time the reader reaches chapter 3, the internal conflicts that can arise for a person of great scientific mind and principled passion finally come to center the narrative. For instance, Zumwalt borrows the frame of the "Boasian paradox," coined by Vernon Wililams, to direct the reader's attention to the tension between the nineteenth-century racial paradigm and Boas's liberal egalitarianism (97) that informed the progression of his thought and feeling about racism and justice. Further, in chapter 5, the reader becomes privy to the forces that shaped and pulled Boas's identity as a German immigrant, a father, an academic, a pacifist, and a public and private advocate for those threatened in wartime.

The role of direct quotation in shaping the biographical narrative is perhaps the most remarkable formal feature of this volume. To uphold its purpose of revealing Franz Boas's emotional substrate, the book homes in on utterances that convey feeling and affective response. *Franz Boas* is not an explicit contribution to the field of emotion studies, yet it holds promise for scholars of that interdisciplinary field, not by offering a theoretical framing for reading the Boas archive for emotion, but by selecting and ordering relevant archival content, and, through publication, making it accessible for future scholarship. For anthropologists and historians of anthropology, Zumwalt's volume covers much familiar ground, but its novel focus on emotion may ultimately transport the biography of Franz Boas to further scholarly audiences.

St. Olaf College

Amanda Z. Randall

Franz Boas: In Praise of Open Minds.

By Noga Arikha. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2025. 261 pp. \$28.00.

Franz Boas (1858-1942) is an iconic figure in anthropology, often referred to as the "Father" of American Anthropology. He is viewed as one of the founding proponents of "participant-observation," the method of

understanding a group of people by immersing oneself into their lives for an extended period of time, and he is known for his lifelong dedication to combatting racism in all its forms. For members of SGAS, he might hold special interest as a German immigrant to the US, who had strong ties with Germany, was strongly influenced by nineteenth century German scholarship and, after immigration to the US, was initially not comfortable speaking in English, continued to speak German in his household and participated in German American organizations.

Noga Arikha's book is a short and good introduction, providing useful descriptions of his personal life and covering his major scholarly contributions. Arikha covers his education in Germany and the influences of German philosophers, geographers, and proto-anthropologists in shaping Boas's thinking. The distinction between *Naturwissenschaften* and *Geisteswissenschaften*, and Boas's intellectual movement towards the latter, is important. He matured in a progressive, secular Jewish background that emphasized education, a liberal approach to politics, and he also experienced the growing tensions of having Jewish ancestry in nineteenth century Germany. I found her also very good at describing Boas's ethnographic field work and the impact of getting to know people from a very different culture, both in learning their cultural traditions but perhaps more importantly in a human encounter: *Herzensbildung* is the term she uses. She covers his recognition of phonology (a language's sound system) as being systematic and also perceived, laying groundwork for an understanding that all aspects of life are the results of learned and shared cultural shaping. Boas also argued for examining material artifacts and immaterial cultural behavior in their broader cultural relational contexts, which became fundamental in anthropology and is inherent in our "holistic" approach to human behavior. He set examples for scholarship in his systematic descriptions of language, art, folklore, and supernatural practices, among many other cultural practices.

Arikha does refer to a darker side to Boas's research. She describes how he somewhat reluctantly collected Indigenous skeletal remains in order to finance his research, and also with some reluctance he participated in some commercial presentations of Indigenous peoples to popular audiences, which he in frustration described as a "circus." As a curator at the American Museum of Natural History, Boas had a role in the very troubling staging of a funeral and burial to trick a bereaving Inuit/Inuk son, Minik Wallace, in order to attain the bones of Minik's father for study and display at the museum.

Arikha's book also describes the many challenges in Boas's life. Indeed, as I was reading the book, I kept thinking of the term that has become widespread today, "precarity." For years, Boas had trouble finding employment and there were constant issues with funding and finances. There was grow-

ing antisemitism in his homeland and some in the US. His finding that humans everywhere shared the same emotional and intellectual potentials found strong and widespread opposition from academics and the public that had entrenched eugenicist and racist theories about differing innate abilities between various “races.” At Columbia University, he was often at odds with the administration and there were professional jealousies with powerful people in other institutions and museums. He was a committed pacifist, not a good position for a German American during World War I, and in 1919 was censored by the American Anthropological Association for publicly objecting to our government’s use of anthropologists as spies in Mexico for political and military aims. That censorship was not officially rescinded until 2005. He suffered personal tragedies within his own family.

The book is a good introduction to his life and work, but I find some shortcomings, mainly resulting from a lack of examining Boas in broader historical and present-day contexts. SGAS readers may wish for more detailed analysis of what it meant for Boas to be a German American. From my perspective as an anthropologist, there could have been a broader discussion and contextualization of developments in anthropology as a whole in the twentieth century. It wasn’t all Boas. British anthropologists were moving in similar directions in emphasizing ethnographic field work, and respecting and relativizing cultural diversity. There also could have been more discussion of the influence of his students within the discipline, across other disciplines, and in the broader public.

The book would have benefitted from a consideration of how Boas fits into contemporary anthropological thinking. Of all the nineteenth century Germans who influenced Boas, it does not appear that Karl Marx had much, if any, influence. Marx was an evolutionist who was not a racist, and starting in the 1960s he came to have a very strong impact on many anthropologists. Notably and perhaps related to a lack of interest in Marx’s critical approach, Boas appears to have seen the cultures he was studying as on the brink of being “lost” as the result of contact with Western societies and technology. In their search for recording these fading traditional practices, he and his students often ignored the contemporaneous contexts of oppression and marginalization, and also preservation and revitalization. These Indigenous peoples, like all of us, continually created new cultural responses that are worthy of respect and understanding. After his death, Boas came to be criticized for developing a static, non-theoretical “historical particularism.” At present, moreover, there are very deep criticisms of the anthropology that Boas helped develop for being part of a colonialist, exploitative narrative that positions anthropologists as self-serving interpreters of the less powerful. I don’t agree

with these criticisms, but they should be recognized and perhaps addressed to provide a more contextualized understanding of Boas and his impact.

Despite its shortcomings, Arikha's book does an admirable job of showing how, through all the trials and challenges, Franz Boas developed and made significant contributions as a scholar and as a model for other scholars. And the book shows how throughout his life, in fact to his very last breath, he was relentless as a strong advocate of understanding and respect for all cultures and peoples.

Kutztown University

William W. Donner

Thomas Mann: Ein Leben.

Von Tilmann Lahme. München: dtv, 2025 (2.Aufl.). 592 Seiten. €28.00.

So viel ist über Deutschlands berühmten Schriftsteller bereits geschrieben worden, dass man meint, ihn recht gut zu kennen: seine großen literarischen Erfolge von den *Buddenbrooks* über den *Zauberberg*, Nobelpreis für Literatur, jüngerer Bruder des Schriftstellers Heinrich Mann, Ehemann von Katia Pringsheim, Vater von sechs Kindern, Exilant in verschiedenen europäischen und schließlich zwei amerikanischen Staaten, Mahner gegen das Dritte Reich, Schrankschwester—oder weniger salopp ausgedrückt, ein Homosexueller, der seine Sexualität nicht offen ausgelebt und sich um ein "normales," gesellschaftlich respektiertes Leben bemüht hat.

Man meint also ungefähr zu wissen, was einen von einer neuen Mann-Biographie erwartet. Und dann liest man Tilmann Lahmes Buch, nein, verschlingt es, und kommt aus dem Staunen nicht mehr heraus. Wie viel Neues hat dieser Mensch ausgegraben und entdeckt, wie spannend und klug er alles zusammengestellt hat! Dazu die vielen Fotos, amüsanten, teils leicht spöttischen und doch verständnisvollen Kommentare—beim Lesen ist der Gedanke, dass dieses Buch einmal zu Ende geht, bedrückend.

Thomas Mann wird vor 150 Jahren in Lübeck geboren als Sohn eines Kaufmanns und einer brasilianischen Schönheit, hat 4 Geschwister und ist ein lausiger Schüler. Insgesamt 3 Klassen muss er wiederholen—wie auch sein Freund Otto Grautoff. Beide schwul, beide damit hadernd, beide später Ehemänner und Väter. Die mittlere Reife schafft er knapp 19-jährig mit Ach und Krach, um, wie es im abgedruckten Zeugnis heißt, Versicherungs-Beamter zu werden. Das ist aber nicht sein Wunsch. Thomas Mann will schreiben, malt sich Ruhm und Anerkennung aus, und trotz eines eher schwierigen

Starts wird er diesen Weg unbeirrt verfolgen. In den Briefen an seinen Freund strotzt es von Grandiosität, Kritik an des Freundes Schreibversuchen und gegenseitigen Ratschlägen bezüglich dessen, wie die fehlgeleitete Sexualität, die "Hunde im Souterrain" am besten zu bekämpfen seien. Überhaupt ist letzteres der rote Faden, der sich durch die gesamte Biographie zieht. Homosexuell sind im Familienkreis, auch später dem angeheirateten, so einige. Auf drei seiner Kinder trifft es ebenfalls zu. Man schaudert, wenn man erfährt, wie verliebt der von seiner Familie liebevoll "Zauberer" Genannte in seinen eigenen pubertierenden Sohn Klaus war. Zum Glück war er in diesem Fall ein Zauderer, der Sohn blieb verschont, wenn auch nur knapp....

Sprung nach vorn: Im Jahr 1929 erhält Thomas Mann den Nobelpreis für Literatur. Endlich, ist man versucht zu sagen, denn Mann hat schon mehrere Jahre darauf spekuliert. Zu seiner Verblüffung wird ihm der hochdotierte Preis zuerkannt für seinen Roman *Die Buddenbrooks*, und keinesfalls, wie von ihm erhofft, für sein Gesamtwerk, inklusive den *Zauberberg*. Ehefrau Katia hält Thomas Mann den Rücken frei, organisiert, nimmt ihm alles ab, damit er sich sowohl in Deutschland, als auch später in den Exil-Ländern an seine unumstößliche Routine halten kann. Der Erfolg ist kometenhaft, Thomas Mann wird nicht nur gelesen, er wird gehört, er hat etwas zu sagen, und auch, wenn der Leser ihn als arroganten Schnösel, treulosen Freund und großen Narzisst ansehen kann—er hat zu Beginn des Dritten Reiches zumindest gelegentlich das Rückgrat, auf die Gefahren desselben hinzuweisen. Harsche Kritik, wie es sich für jemanden mit einem solch großen Publikum gehört, wechselt sich ab mit ängstlicher Zurückhaltung und Schweigen, und dem Tagebuch anvertrauten, durchaus antisemitischen Gedanken und Zweifeln an seiner Einschätzung der neuen Regierung, bis Thomas Mann später endlich eindeutig Position beziehen wird. 1938, nach zunächst europäischen Exil-Aufenthalten, leben er und seine Frau in Princeton an der Ostküste, bewundert und finanziell äußerst großzügig unterstützt, vor allem von der Mäzenin Agnes Meyer, die für ihn extrem lukrative Verträge aushandelt, in denen ihm viel Geld für wenig Tätigkeit zugesichert wird. Doch den Nobelpreisträger zieht es an die Westküste, wohin es schon viele andere schreibende Emigranten verschlagen hat. Der Bau eines 20-Zimmer-Hauses mit 400 qm Wohnfläche wird in Auftrag gegeben, von dem Thomas Mann aus weiter schreibt. Aber nicht nur schreibt—berühmt geworden sind auch seine sich über 5 Jahre erstreckenden wöchentlichen BBC Radioansprachen, die "deutsche-Hörer-Reden," in denen er Hitler auf schärfste Weise verurteilt und vor den Folgen von dessen Handlungsweisen warnt.

Sieben Jahre nach Kriegsende kehren die Manns mit ihrer Tochter Erika nach Europa zurück und lassen sich in der Schweiz nieder, wo der Schriftsteller 1955 achtzigjährig an einer geplatzten Bauchsclagader stirbt.

Einen überraschenden literarischen Leckerbissen findet der Leser im Anhang der Biographie: Dort sind erstmals die Aufzeichnungen der jungen Susan Sontag abgedruckt, die ihren Besuch bei Thomas Mann Ende 1949 beschreibt. Jedes Buch von Thomas Mann wird in Zusammenfassung wiedergegeben, auch die Kontroversen um seine Tagebücher und deren Freigabe erfährt der Leser. Das Buch platzt geradezu vor spannenden Informationen, die häufig die charakterlichen Schwächen Thomas Manns offenbaren, was ihn bei aller Bewunderung für sein literarisches Erbe und seinen Einsatz gegen die Nationalsozialisten doch in seiner Selbstherrlichkeit, seinem Egoismus und Arroganz, seiner Unzuverlässigkeit als Freund unsympathisch erscheinen lässt. Oder sollte man besser sagen: extrem vielschichtig zum Schlechten wie zum Guten hin?

Thomas Mann sagte einmal über Bertolt Brecht: Das Scheusal hat Talent. Man ist nach der Lektüre dieser Biographie versucht, dies auch über Thomas Mann zu denken.

West Bloomfield, Michigan

Susanna Piontek

Edgar G. Ulmer: A Filmmaker at the Margins.

By Noah Isenberg. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2014. xiv + 314. \$27.95

This paperback reprint completes the UC Press series “Weimar and Now,” which now numbers 48 volumes. This title, and others in the series, examines the German diaspora from Babelsberg in the 1920s and 1930s, and captures the importance of Film Studies for SGAS members. Isenberg has tackled a difficult topic in sharing his research about a key individual in that very overlooked area of influence in the interaction of both German filmmakers and the context of Hollywood in those decades. The bottom line is someone who directed fifty-five films over a span of thirty years, and managed to create five classic films. Ulmer’s method was rare in those two decades of work, but typical of film today. Isenberg traces his escape from *Leopoldstadt*, the Jewish district of Vienna, and how he eventually received his movie-making education in the atmosphere of Max Reinhart, Fritz Lang, and Otto Preminger. But even with five classic productions, “Ulmer remains something of a phantom figure, a *Phantombild*, as the Austrian film critic Stefan Grissman referred to him” (22). The facts surrounding his life from 1904-1972 remain sketchy at times, but he got his start by moving to Hollywood and getting an entry level job from Carl Laemmle, who eventually became head of Universal Studios.

Laemmle was famous for hiring German speaking staff, since he came from Laupheim, located west of Munich. Ulmer was in production, and worked on twenty-four two-reeler westerns from 1924-1928.

His crucial life decision was to return to Berlin, where he collaborated with Richard Siodmak in co-directing *Menschen am Sonntag* (*People on Sunday*). Billy Wilder wrote a very informal script, and the three filmed ordinary life for the youth of Berlin with only 28,000 Reichsmarks (equivalent to just under \$7,000!). Their loose, naturalistic style cast a very long shadow on Ulmer's career, and the sub-genre known as *cinema verite* in later decades, as seen for example in Robert Altman's 1975 film *Nashville*. Critics proclaimed *Menschen am Sonntag* an innovative film, free of any studio influence, and incidentally a great deal of money for the trio. A century later, "the film cannily blends avant-garde documentary and narrative cinema into something that is less abstract and far more improvised, natural, and romantic than its predecessors" (37). But what do you do at age 25, when you have co-created a masterpiece? Ulmer's decision was to return to Hollywood and the Studio System.

He returned to Laemmle and Universal and became a close friend of "Uncle Carl" Laemmle's son, Junior. The son was ready to start climbing out of his father's shadow and he hired Ulmer to direct *The Black Cat* in 1934 with staff who were professionals. Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi starred, and the result was the template for a generation of horror films. It was the biggest box office hit of the year for the studio. But after the release of his second classic film, Uncle Carl discovered that Ulmer had fallen in love with Shirley Kassler, who was married to Uncle Carl's nephew. Ulmer himself was still married at the time. Each divorced their spouses and married each other, but the affair cost Ulmer his studio contract and forced him to become a freelancer who was essentially "blackballed" for the rest of his life. He worked for anyone, anywhere, and occasionally got lucky. But his shortcomings and imperfections always showed up as an independent operator.

In the 1940s he had his last brush with luck. With the war ending, the cycle of noir films began and he was in on one of the most famous. His film *Detour* (1945) fit the definition of noir very well by being both cynical and dark, with moral ambiguity. This film is his only recognizable work which has appeared regularly on television. It was an "independent" director's dream: it cost only \$117,000 (or about \$2 million today) and took only six days for the crew to shoot. Ulmer produced a darkly cynical vision by filming action centered on a dusty highway in the middle of the desert. The film sounds harsh and shrill, and has a raw, tawdry feel to the sad, lost characters (117-118). The next year, Hedy Lamarr (1914-2000), originally from Vienna, insisted on Ulmer as her director for her next movie. The production had financial backing from Samuel Goldwyn Studios, and another seasoned crew of professionals. In the 1940s Lamarr was known "for her intoxicating

beauty and the sparkling elegance of a European diva” (164). She also had been trained by Max Reinhardt. But she lived a secret life as she used her intelligence to focus on experimental technology, leading to a U.S. Patent for what led to vastly improved radar in World War II. Ulmer signed his last year-long contract at \$1,000 a week (or \$14,000 a week in 2026 dollars), to direct *The Strange Woman*, starring Lamarr and George Sanders. The movie was a hit as a stylish noir. There were a few sunrises to come, but the next quarter century was barren of any fame, or recognition for Ulmer. And yet his classic films show the continued influence of the Weimar movie experiment on the future of Hollywood’s American values.

Scott Community College

William Roba

The Mushroom Girl: From Hitler’s Germany to Today’s Texas.
By Dagmar Grieder. Wimberley, TX: Stoney Creek Publishing, 2024. 140 pp.
\$16.95.

Dagmar Grieder, born near the town of Zabrze (then called Hindenburg) in Upper Silesia, has written a short and engaging memoir that focuses primarily on her childhood. She recounts her early years, her family’s flight through Czechoslovakia at the end of World War II, and her life as a German refugee in rural Bavaria during the postwar period. She chose the title *The Mushroom Girl* because of the crucial role mushroom foraging played in sustaining her family during their years in southern Germany. As Grieder proudly notes, “I got good at finding more and better mushrooms ... than anyone else, and I jealously kept my places secret” (70).

At the beginning of chapter one, “First Home,” Grieder openly acknowledges the limits of her memory concerning her earliest years. Some events, she concedes, may stem from family stories rather than direct experience. Born in 1937 in Upper Silesia near the Polish-Czechoslovak border, she grew up in a middle-class German household. Her father, Georg Janiel, an engineer by training, owned a growing business that manufactured and repaired steel structures. As a member of the Nazi Party, he initially benefited from the war economy. Her mother, Edeltraud Janiel (née Widawski), was partially of Polish descent. After the birth of her brother Michael in 1942, the war increasingly shaped the family’s daily life. Grieder spent considerable time in school preparing for air raids, and the scarcity of essential goods—especially food—became more pronounced. Several older male relatives, including her father, served at the front, and some did not return.

Chapter two, “Fleeing from the Russians,” along with the opening pages of chapter three, centers on the family’s flight westward beginning in the winter of 1944. They eventually reached the area near Terezín (then Theresienstadt), where some Soviet soldiers, unexpectedly, treated them with relative kindness. However, women in the family witnessed and suffered sexual violence perpetrated by Soviet troops later. Grieder’s mother ultimately decided to register the immediate family as ethnically German, a choice that resulted in harsher treatment by the local Czech population, including a months-long internment in a camp for Sudeten Germans. She later resolved to accept resettlement in the American zone of occupation in southern Germany.

Chapter three, “Deportation and Resettlement,” at roughly fifty pages, is by far the longest section and forms the core of the memoir. It provides a detailed account of Grieder’s life as a refugee from the east in a small Bavarian village in the Allgäu region southwest of Munich. One of her earliest impressions was the lack of welcome from the local family which was compelled to house them. Viewed as a burden, the refugees were subjected to insults and frequently labeled “Russians” (57). When another farmer offered to take them in, the family accepted, and their circumstances improved considerably. Nevertheless, life in the immediate postwar years remained difficult. Food continued to be rationed, making foraging for berries, nuts, and mushrooms a necessity. All family members worked on the host farm, performing tasks such as harvesting hay, milking cows, and picking fruit. The strong Catholicism of the local population manifested itself in regular church attendance and the celebration of name days, which locals often considered more important than birthdays. Over time, however, Grieder and her family relinquished hopes of returning east and accepted what she describes as a “change to a new kind of normal” (85).

The remaining four chapters are comparatively brief and outline Grieder’s later life only in broad strokes. After completing her education, she accepted a position as a secretary for a German organization in Istanbul, Turkey, where she met her future husband, a U.S. serviceman. The couple had two children before relocating—following military transfer orders—to South Carolina and later Texas. After their divorce in 1970, Grieder remarried. Looking back, she expresses little regret about her life choices and emphasizes her enjoyment of extensive international travel.

Within the broader body of memoirs by German refugees from Central and Eastern Europe, Grieder’s account offers few novel perspectives. Compared with works such as Irene Nickelburg’s *Remembering Volhynia* or Philomena Baker’s *Flight to Freedom*, her narrative is notably restrained in its depiction of violence and trauma and conveys relatively little of the

devastation experienced by many Germans from the east after 1944. Her time in a Czechoslovak camp, for instance, occupies only a few pages, and she characterizes local German attitudes in the postwar years as largely indifferent rather than overtly hostile. This tone may partly reflect the fact that her family originated in western Poland and therefore had to undertake a comparatively short westward flight. However, it could also be a function of retrospective distance. Readers might nonetheless wish for a more detailed discussion of her early years in the United States, particularly concerning reactions to her identity as a German woman within her husband's social circle. Despite these limitations, Grieder's memoir remains a worthwhile contribution, especially for scholars researching displacement, postwar German society, or personal narratives of flight and resettlement.

University of Missouri–St. Louis

Christoph Schiessl

Ein deutscher Revolutionär im Amt: Carl Schurz und der Niedergang der Minderheitenrechte in den USA der 1870er Jahre.

By Julius Wilm. Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2024. 78 pp. \$27.99.

The focus of this short monograph is on the years that Carl Schurz spent in Congress as the first German American senator from the State of Missouri (1869-75) and as the first German American cabinet officer, i.e., as secretary of the interior, in the administration of President Rutherford B. Hayes (1877-81). Although Schurz was hailed as a champion of abolition and a defender of democracy and human rights, the author feels that the hagiographic view of Schurz that developed on both sides of the Atlantic during the 1880s, and to some extent may even exist today, fails to take into account statements Schurz made with regard to the rights of Black Americans during Reconstruction after the Civil War and his words and actions regarding Indian affairs while secretary of the interior.

Organized into seven short chapters, the book begins with an overview of Schurz's views on giving Black Americans in the South the vote and the democratic integration of Native Americans into American society. Chapters 2 and 3 cover the time period Schurz serves as U.S. senator from Missouri, during which the author claims Schurz often seems to side with white Southerners with regard to Reconstruction, when he opposed the use of federal troops to protect Blacks in the South and when he voted against the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871 as an overreach of federal authority and tried to gain Southern support. Chapters 4 through 6 deal with the years that Schurz

served as secretary of the interior and focus on his handling of Indian affairs, his belief in a policy of forced assimilation through the allotment of parcels of reservation land and sale of surplus reservation land and the founding of boarding schools for Native American children. While many of his policies were criticized at the time, Schurz felt they were a better alternative than military intervention. The author examines in detail Schurz's handling of the conflicts with the Ute tribe in Colorado, where he withheld food rations in order to compel the tribe to hand over those who had murdered the Indian agent, and the relocation and eventual compensation of the Ponco tribe on the Dakota-Nebraska border. It must be remembered that supervision of the Bureau of Indian Affairs was only one of Schurz's many responsibilities as secretary of the interior and that there were serious problems in the Bureau when Schurz took office, and that he made considerable headway by firing corrupt Indian agents. The concluding chapter examines how Schurz as one of the foremost German American politicians has been viewed in Germany from the time of his death in 1906 up to the present day.

To help his German readers, the author translated all quotations into German instead of providing quotations in both the original and translation as is often preferred. In so doing, however, he does not let the reader hear Schurz in his own words and expressions; after all, Schurz had developed a remarkable fluency and distinctive style in English after arriving in the New World knowing virtually no English.

The book provides additional insight into the stands Schurz took and the policies that he implemented as U.S. senator and secretary of the interior, which could have improved the lot of Black Americans as well as Native Americans, and thus presents a more balanced portrayal of Schurz as a politician, who over time not only changed his ideas, but was sometimes inconsistent for political reasons. This study is well researched, and the inclusion of more reference material from Black Americans and Native Americans is especially welcomed. Not mentioned, of course are Schurz's major accomplishments as secretary of the interior, e.g., the badly needed reform of the federal civil service, establishment of the Geological Survey, and his efforts to protect the nation's natural resources, especially its national forests, which would have given readers a more complete picture of Schurz, but then those aspects were outside the parameters of this narrowly focused study.

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