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David Kettler, Gerhard Lauer, eds. *Exile, Science, and Bildung: The Contested Legacies of German Emigre Intellectuals.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. xii + 203 pp. $65.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-4039-6843-2.

Jean-Michel Palmier. *Weimar in Exile: The Antifascist Emigration in Europe and America.* London: Verso, 2006. xii + 852 pp. $55.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-84467-068-0.

Boris Schilmar. *Der Europadiskurs im deutschen Exil 1933-1945.* München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2004. 406 S. EUR 49.80 (cloth), ISBN 978-3-486-56829-5.

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Fort-Da: The Various Legacies of the Exile Generation

"Ich bin schon seit längerer Zeit der Ansicht," Marcel Reich-Ranicki recently stated about politically engaged literature, "dass dieses Engagement wenig bringt, vielleicht gar nichts. Die Hinwendung von der Literatur zur Politik ist ja meist eine Flucht. Eine Bewegung, die die Literatur verdirbt und die Politik nicht verbessert."[1] Whether or not Reich-Ranicki's assessment of German literary activity today is accurate, what is striking is how self-evident such a pronouncement has become since 1989. Not the least of the merits of Jean-Michel Palmier's magisterial overview of the German exile of the 1930s and 1940s, is that it brings back into focus what was at stake in the rise to prominence of an engaged literature in the first half of the twentieth century. Originally published in French to great acclaim in 1987, it was awarded the Académie Française's Prix Eugène Piccard for a work of modern history. Its publication now in English comes as a refreshing surprise. Although Palmier could not call upon archival sources that became available only after the collapse of East European socialism, what his work loses in archival detail, it gains in balance. After a decade and a half of revelations and revisions, this 1987 work, whatever its individual shortcomings of judgment, heralds a more judicious sense of proportion concerning the character of exile activities and aspirations, demonstrating that breaking down myths is not the same as establishing truths. At over 800 pages, it admirably fulfills its aim of orienting readers in a narrative history of a troubled period, rather than promoting cultural corrections for perceived excesses in literary righteousness or settling cold war political scores.

Because the exile cohort was so diverse, and individual exiles each had claim to be known by their work rather than their collective situation, most large-scale efforts on the period have been collections of essays on particular authors or thematic complexes. Palmier's study, by contrast, synthesizes this vast field in a sustained and lucid narrative. Although a single narrative, it is not arranged chronologically, biographically or even in terms of the themes associated with various authors. Instead, Palmier's rubrics include all of the above, as well as geography and such institutions as political fronts, publishing houses and refugee aid societies. This eclecticism characterizes the book's approach in general. While it allows Palmier to structure vast amounts of information without losing himself in terminological dialectics or biographical apostasies, it has drawbacks. Without a strong conceptual principle underlining them, chapter segments overlap and repeat themselves. The reader is provided, for example, with several accounts of KPD and SPD exile formations in Paris, Prague, London and Moscow (pp. 119, 138, 197, 301), as well as several mentions of founding publishing ventures (pp. 177, 369). Moreover, a variety of figures and organizations are introduced in lists or brief discussions before a reader encounters a sustained treatment of their significance. As a result, personalities are hard to assemble into coherent lives. Lion Feuchtwanger's material well-being, for example, is cited (pp. 101, 197, 239) with his views on the material hardship of exile (pp. 267-268, 388-389); Thomas Mann's generosity, like his indifference (p. 249), is mentioned without any effort at synthesis. The general significance of political actors like Walter Ulbricht, Rudolf Hilferding or Friedrich Stampfer is not easy to place. While the patchwork peo-

ple who appear here reflect an aspect of personality dissolution in exile, they also contribute to a disembodied account. The recurring lists of names reassembled into differing configurations leave a reader to wonder with what stringency one or another name appears or is left out of a given grouping.

In choosing his approach, however, Palmier emphasizes his concern with understanding exile not in terms of individual biographies, but generationally and holistically as it develops out of the crisis of Weimar. "This investigation of German exile seeks to grasp the fate of a culture," he writes; "It is impossible to analyze the richness of Weimar culture without raising the question of its destruction and survival after the advent of National Socialism.... It is astonishing that the extraordinary fate of this generation and its relationship to history has been so little examined" (p. 15). Moreover, "[i]f some works written between 1933 and 1945 may be read in complete ignorance of the lives of their authors and especially of their exile," he affirms, "the number of these is relatively slight in relation to all those that can only be understood in relation to this exile in its various dimensions" (p. 389). The contextual approach, moreover, tends to highlight what remains representative about Weimar's "fate," collectivizing the privileged individualism underscored by other narrative decisions, especially those that focus on the liberal humanism of so many refugees themselves, whose overall high status and intellectual attainment remain unique in the history of demographic violence. Despite the exiles' erudition and prestige in Weimar, the problems they encountered remain soberingly analogous to the circumstances of immigrants today. "Sympathy [for refugees], however, rarely spread beyond these progressive milieus, and rapidly came up against the hostility of the right-wing press and Nazi sympathizers," he asserts; "[t]he reasons that had driven so many men and women to flee their country were obscured by the imaginary danger they represented for the security and economy of the countries in which they sought refuge" (p. 268).

While Palmier's accumulation of details helpfully resists the imposition of static typologies (such as conservative/liberal/radical labels), its ecumenism can also gloss over Weimar-era challenges. The National Socialist movement is characterized above all by its anti-intellectuality, from which it follows that Martin Heidegger, Ernst Jünger or Gottfried Benn could only have been deceived in their Nazi associations (p. 49ff). It is not admitted that it might have been cultural ambiguities–for example, around the political legitimacy of violence and myth–that made it hard for intellectuals to demarcate just what Nazism was as a distinct current in modernity; moreover, Palmier avoids the possibility that intellectual viability is not per se a reliable criterion of moral or political worth. His description of Weimar life, when his protagonists still held their citizenship, assigns the left a comforting innocence, even if also ignorance and naiveté, but it does not do justice to the Left's own assumption of responsibility for its fate, an assumption that in many instances included a claim to a historical right to violence. Palmier's vague treatment of the Left's relation to power, which is intended to lead into the discussion of a culture in exile, instead projects backwards a fate in which intellectuals eventually lost all connection to a state they rejected and that rejected them on pain of death. Ironically, this vagueness about state and party power is something to which Palmier objects in exile periodicals like Leopold Schwarzschild's increasingly anti-Communist *Das Neue Tage-Buch*, whose "interpretation of Nazism remained rather vague: it was regression to barbarism, a 'negative evolution of Homo sapiens back to Pithecanthropus', and irrational phenomenon which dragged Germany back to the Stone Age" (p. 366). Palmier's own interpretation of Nazism, while it alludes to Marxist theorizations and often quotes Brecht, is basically similar.

Outstanding points of the book include Palmier's discussion, in chapter 2, of intellectuals' desperation before Hitler's appointment as chancellor, evoking how helpless they felt when all possible vehicles of oppositional power seemed absolutely at odds with history itself, leaving institutions suddenly evacuated of potential to halt the rise of an unimaginably hateful force. The discussion of "Exile as Everyday Tragedy," in which Palmier reflects on the "emigrant *Dasein*" (p. 228), the anonymity, daily humiliation and mutual distrust, that accompanied the legal and territorial jeopardy of living in exile, is also helpful. His inclusion of important events not usually addressed in studies that are more strictly intellectual or political histories, such as the émigré propaganda efforts around the 1935 Saarland plebiscite or the extensive publicity activities of Willi Münzenberg, adds not only to the breadth of the book, but to its ability to establish the material and institutional contexts of the dissemination and organization of otherwise often vague antifascist ideals. The discussion of Münzenberg also provides counterpoint to the hostile account in Sean McMeekin's recent *Red Millionaire* (2003). The section on the "Birth and Decline of the Volksfront" has a superb evocation of the deceptive sense of limitless potential awakened by the famous Paris Congresses for the Defense of Culture in 1935. Unfortunately, organizations devoted to envisioning a post-

Hitler German government, like the KPD-dominated Nationalkomitee Freies Deutschland or the Internationaler Sozialistischer Kampfbund, while discussed, are not explored in a way that might have illuminated how deceptive and tragic the exiles' relationship to a future organization of power remained.

Part 2 of the book, "From the Second World War to McCarthyism," focuses on exile in America. Despite a short consideration of Latin America, most of the story of U.S. exile told here is familiar, certainly in English-language scholarship, and Palmier gets off to a less than promising beginning with his painful claim that "there was little connection between German and American culture outside the personal ties that Thomas Wolfe, Dorothy Thompson and Sinclair Lewis had with some writers in Munich or Berlin" (p. 478). On this basis, he builds up the contrast between European high culture and American mass culture for narrative effect, but does not supply any original analytical ground either for understanding the cultural developments that the European exodus set into motion or for reflecting back on the tensions between traditional humanist and mass culture in the Weimar period. Part of the problem is that Palmier remains caught up in exile perceptions and clichés and shows little interest in understanding them from a distinct vantage point. As it did for many hard-pressed refugees, the villainy haunting Weimar switches here from Hitler to "the encounter with American culture" (p. 524). If, in the wake of the Cold War, Weimar's leftist intellectuals have been facilely blamed for espousing positions understandable only in the wider context of the post-World War I European conflagration, then Palmier's great service in contextualizing these positions is weakened when he loses track of fascism and focuses on a monotonically bourgeois America.

If the time capsule of the re-appearance of Palmier's 1987 study in English in 2006 restores proportion to a field whose political origins and sympathies have subjected it to a battering in recent years, the achievement remains decidedly mixed. The holistic strategy succeeds where it connects organizational aspects of exile with cultural aspects, allowing readers to historically qualify intellectual judgments often cast as existential pronouncements. Since the scope of the study does not allow these judgments to be portrayed in depth, however, Palmier's book is neither a profound history of ideas nor an unsettling history of events, but a diverse chronicle of intellectuals and artists caught up in tragedy. While Palmier himself would object to the vague word "tragedy," his book, relying on the assumptions and perceptions of his subjects, does not aspire to the analytical distance that would make it more than this sort of chronicle. It is, nonetheless, an extraordinary achievement that brings events, personalities and commitments into epic correspondence. Despite its failings, this work will be an indispensable resource and stimulus for future scholarship into an era whose significance is far from settled.

Boris Schilmar's study, based on his 2002 dissertation, focuses on the political exile from Weimar and the ways in which the discourse of "Europe" developed from the initial enthusiasms of Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi's Pan-Europe movement and disappointments with Treaty of Versailles. Contemporary reference to developments in the European Union is clear and allows Schilmar's account of how and why exile positions developed the way they did to serve as a touchstone for a sharper understanding of what is at stake in debates over the EU political constitution and economic administration. Schilmar's organizing contrast of a planned, federated and economically integrated Europe versus a Europe based on geography and race is suggestive, especially as the element of planning in global systems is often misunderstood today. A sharper clarification of his key phrase "Widerstand durch Planung" (pp. 111, 341), however, would have helped draw out its implications in an era characterized by simultaneous calls for greater free-market liberalization and more formal legal integration.

Tracing the developing positions of various factions of the socialist left, as well as individual pacifists, liberals and national conservatives outside the workers' movement, Schilmar indicates how the basis of the contemporary European discourse was laid in a broad intellectual shift away from the primacy of state sovereignty, with its strong claims to self-determination and non-intervention, in favor of the fourfold goal of resisting Hitler, securing the conditions for future peace and–as the war drew to a close–promoting welfare and democracy through political and economic cooperation (p. 336). The ground for super-national identification in social categories like "the working class," rather than in cultural, and especially national or racial categories, was also established in exile discourse, even if socialist conceptions became ever closer to liberal ones in the work of economists like Gerhard Kreyssig, Walter Fliess and Hilda Monte.

After 1938, when war appeared inevitable and "der Europagedanke [war] von den machtpolitsch dominierenden Nationalsozialisten terminologisch besetzt" (p. 75), exile discussion was forced to become more conceptually and institutionally focused. The increasing

polarization of international relations between East and West, and the decreasing role for Europe in this world order became clear, however, following the December 1943 Tehran conference (p. 293ff). This new power-political reality opened up divisions in the emerging consensus, drawing the exiles away from their focus on Europe as a decisive postwar power center and eventually leading to the disappointment of many hopes. Schilmar divides proponents of the European idea into those who sought an orientation toward the Soviet Union, those who leaned toward integration with the United States and those who favored strict neutrality. The debates around these positions during the Cold War are familiar. By putting them into the context of the development of a European discourse among political exiles from Nazi Germany, Schilmar is able to shift discussion away from Cold War dogmas into a genealogical analysis. This is a great service. At the same time, Schilmar's move from a "group oriented" analysis to a "discourse oriented" analysis (p. 5), while a productive methodological aim, does not always live up to its potential, letting available discursive positions seem fairly homogenous and inevitable. The existentialism that crossed political lines from Martin Heidegger and Carl Schmitt on the right to Jean-Paul Sartre on the left might have been explored in the context of the "European idea," especially as it formed a foil for the thought of exile figures like Austrian economic neo-liberals and legal positivists such as Hans Kelsen–not to mention the followers of Leo Strauss–all intellectual streams that continue to exert such strong influence on both U.S. and European legal and economic institutions.

The volume edited by David Kettler and Gerhard Lauer, *Exile, Science, and Bildung* consists of thirteen individual contributions covering the George Circle, Frankfurt School and Bauhaus, as well as figures like Thomas Mann, Ernst Cassirer, Siegfried Kracauer and Paul Oskar Kristeller, among others. By organizing the volume around recurring motifs of antagonism between traditional *Bildung* and modern *Wissenschaft*, conservative and radical revolution, esoteric and exoteric thought, the editors have succeeded in bringing focus to a scholarly genre that tends to the haphazard. Helpful in this respect is also Kettler and Lauer's stress on the way the social displacement of exile illuminates the institutional factors conditioning the high-minded concepts of its intellectual protagonists, although this institutional analysis is picked up in differing degrees by the contributions.

The strange bedfellows that result from the emphases in the volume, Stefan George and Walter Benjamin, or Erich Kahler and Arnold Schönberg–cut across Left-Right or conservative-radical dichotomizations, showing how difficult it has become to equate the exiles' political self-understandings with contemporary ones. Irving Wohlfarth's essay on Benjamin, coming upon Ernst Osterkamp's discussion of the George Circle, clarifies certain affinities, ironic to be sure, between the George Circle's frankly cultivated elitism and the idiosyncratic esoterism of Benjamin. The theme of occult knowledge, so often attached to either right-wing mysticism or popular superstition, emerges here as one of the most salient characteristics of the exile generation's thought, whether it refers to hidden connections between the Frankfurt School and the Paris surrealists (Laurent Jeanpierre), the opacity of the Davos encounter between Cassirer and Heidegger (Gregory B. Moynahan), the cultivated aloofness of the outsider among the dispersed members of the George Circle and the Institute for Social Research or the "cryptograms" of the insider, like Theodor Adorno in postwar West Germany (Alfons Söllner). The conservative cast of orientations often presumed to be archetypically leftist, especially as they crystallize around strategies of what Söllner calls in Adorno's case "political culturalism" (p. 186) also receives emphasis. By the same token, the haute bourgeois traditionalism of someone like Kahler, as Lauer brings out, takes on a "revolutionary" cast through a vitalistic cult of "the new man" (p. 67).

Another kind of reorientation that comes across in these essays is less dramatic, but perhaps more poignant. Just as Kahler found the scope of his intellectual vocation trimmed by the circumstances of American exile, so did the designer László Moholy-Nagy, as Anna Wessely shows, find that the polarizations of European cultural politics tended to translate in his American context into a more unthreatening engagement for international cooperation. In some cases these reversals of expectation are discussed with an undertone of irony. In other cases, the changes in assessment of an exile intellectual is an explicit theme of the analysis, as in Reinhard Mehring's treatment of Thomas Mann's changing critical fortunes, especially vis-à-vis the rising star of Adorno, and Jack Jacobs' and Thomas Wheatland's differently inflected accounts of the epistemological and tactical switches in the Institute for Social Research's scholarship, especially its increasing focus on antisemitism as a central category for understanding modernity.

As one might expect, inconsistent theses are put forth by various contributions, concerning, for example, the reasons for one exiled academic's or another's success, or lack thereof, in assimilating to the American academy. According to Kay Schiller, Kristeller and

Cassirer seemed to thrive precisely because of the evidence of their proudly traditional European *Bildung*, whereas the Frankfurt intellectuals apparently encountered a tension between their erudite self-identifications and an American institutional culture of empiricism suspicious of such cultivation. More problematically, the variety of similar terms like "new humanism," "third humanism," or "new cosmopolitanism" that appear in different essays might have been supplied with enough reference to allow comparison.

Beyond its explicit theme of *Bildung*, this volume reveals a humanistic face of exile studies that might be contrasted with the more political and commemorative impulses in Palmier and the more topical focus of Schilmar. These various faces of exile scholarship speak for its movement away from the polemics that accompanied its birth–a shift that reflects scholarly maturity, but also a certain exhaustion with engaged scholarship. Jerry Zaslove's essay on Siegfried Kracauer, invoking some of today's grander intellectual preoccupations, like the global public sphere, transnationalism and extraterritoriality, argues that "exile studies today … must be marked by a politics and ethics of recognition of statelessness" (p. 152). This gesture, of course, is the risk and challenge of exile studies. Its claims are not always persuasive, especially when linked to the prophetic or iconic power of one or another exile. The talismanic authority of Benjamin, Kracauer or Adorno to intervene in today's world has certainly been exaggerated. On the other hand, efforts like Palmier's to account for the complex relationship between glorified state power and intellectual aspirations to political significance in the first half of the twentieth century are especially valuable. Where Kettler and Lauer's thoughtful collection draws out aspects of the cultural dimension of exile that Palmier's format cannot give its due, Schilmar's study focuses on a political dimension that likewise exceeds Palmier's format. Nevertheless, these two works, valuable as contributions to exile research on their own, also underscore the need for a synthesis like Palmier's, however inadequate particular aspects of his discussion might be.

Note

[1]. Marcel Reich-Ranicki, "Engagement der Schriftsteller? Bringt wenig," *Frankfurter Rundschau*, September 6, 2006, accessed online at http://www.fraktuell.de/in*und*ausland/kultur*und*medien/feuilleton/?em_cnt=962640 (September 9, 2006).

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