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Oliver Lubrich. *Reisen ins Reich 1933-1945: Ausländische Autoren berichten aus Deutschland.* Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn Verlag, 2004. 431 S. EUR 30.00, cloth, ISBN 978-3-8218-4742-9.

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Compiled with an excellent introduction by the literary scholar Oliver Lubrich, this anthology provides excerpts of varying length from the works of thirty-four foreign visitors to the Third Reich. These are arranged chronologically from Hitler's appointment as chancellor to Germany's collapse. The majority of Lubrich's contributors were either literary figures or journalists; many of them--such as Virginia Woolf, Jean-Paul Sartre, Christopher Isherwood, Albert Camus, Samuel Beckett and William Shirer--are well-known, others less so. The collection includes a smaller, mixed contingent of students, academics, businessmen, a returning exile and the daughter of an ambassador. With the exception of the Chinese student Shi Min, all the eyewitnesses hailed from other European nations or from the United States. Lubrich's purpose is to provide contemporary perspectives of German *Alltag* under the National Socialist regime from those whose very foreignness encouraged a critical distance. In addition, accounts in the anthology share the following criteria: their authors observed events derived from travel through or a stay in Germany; their contributions appeared in print not long after the events described; and their authors, much like ethnographers, engaged in a "thick description" of their daily interactions with Germans under Hitler.

Lubrich has incorporated some foreigners who remained Nazis or Nazi sympathizers to the bitter end. Nevertheless, the dominant theme in his anthology is the unsettling and increasingly frightening uniqueness of the Third Reich, which--in the view of most of the observers--set it apart from other dictatorships of the period. Obviously, foreign eyewitnesses whose ideological predilections caused them to reject National Socialism from the beginning were quick to note the regime's inherent minacity. Thus, in a letter to her brother in April 1933, the Swiss travel writer Annemarie Schwarzenbach complained that the German middle classes, so enamored of the Nazis' militarized "discipline" and restoration of "order," would soon recognize that the "class terror" from the right would be no better than that of the left (p. 52). The following fall, while on a trip to Berlin, the Swedish modernist poet Gunnar Ekelöf wrote of a decaying, morally bankrupt bourgeoisie

which, by ratcheting Hitler into power, had transformed Germany into the "sick man of Europe." Yet even foreign visitors whose Germanophilia predisposed them to find Nazism attractive grew disillusioned. The French novelist and playwright, Jean Genet, described a climate of existential oppressiveness during this visit in 1937. "Even when walking down Unter den Linden, I had the feeling that I was in a camp run by bandits" (p. 174).

Racism and antisemitism contributed significantly to bringing Nazi Germany's ugly distinctiveness into focus. While marveling at the matchless cleanliness of Berlin's streets as befitted the fascist sympathies of a Kuomintang supporter, the Chinese student Shi Min could not resist the ironic comment that even the Chinese, as members of the "racial category third class" were capable of enjoying the privileges of the *Herrenvolk*. The memoir of Martha Dodd, the daughter of the American ambassador to Germany from 1933 to 1937, documents the author's transformation from enthusiast to skeptic. Dodd's initially positive assessment of the Nazi regime drew from nostalgic images of half-timbered villages and friendly, uncomplicated people. Unable to read German well, as she admitted at the time of her memoir's publication (1939), she could not grasp the implications of antisemitic slogans that appeared in the streets. Even so, her first impressions conveyed her unease over the Germany's "warlike character" (p. 63). Because Dodd returned with her family to the United States in 1937, she did not witness *Kristallnacht*. Nevertheless, as Lubrich states in his introduction, she predicted shortly before the war broke out that the Nazi regime's persecution of the Jews would end in their liquidation.

A visit to Germany in 1936 shortly after the Berlin Olympics convinced the equally Germanophilic Thomas Wolfe to warn his readership of the dangers of Nazism. His novella, "I Have a Thing to Tell You," later serialized in the *New Republic* and derived from Wolfe's experiences on a train from Berlin to Paris, described the convulsive fear and suspicion among the Germans he met before his departure, the terror of a Jewish passenger arrested at the border as he sought to escape and the self-righteous antisemitism of another passenger in his compartment. Wartime travelers to Germany, all of them from occupied Europe or neutral states, heard screams in the darkness as the nightly deportations gathered momentum, as well as stories of mass shootings and gassings in the east. In the darkened compartment of a night train to Augsburg, an inebriated SS man, temporarily on leave from his duties in a concentration camp near Linz, unburdened himself of the crimes to the Swiss expatriate René Juvet: "in our profession," he admitted, "one needs alcohol. Otherwise we couldn't sleep or cope" (p. 338). The Swedish journalist Gösta Block, himself a Nazi sympathizer who in 1942 worked for the German radio in Berlin, characterized Germany as unmitigated hell for Jews and foreign forced laborers. The Danish author Karen Blixen's attempt to "orientalize" the Third Reich by comparing Nazism to the militarized expansionism of Islam ended with her recognition that Nazism stood for something that Islam did not--the cult of racial superiority.

For anyone remotely familiar with the scholarship of the past thirty years on popular opinion in the Third Reich, the observations of Lubrich's eyewitnesses might seem unremarkable. Thus, the "Hitler myth" is largely sustained, maintaining its durability even during the war, as the Danish journalist, Jacob Kronica, revealed. In March 1945, as the Allied bombing of Berlin wreaked its destruction and the Soviet armies closed in, the reporter sees a woman crazed by the death of her child rush to the Reich chancellery, only to be intercepted by the police: "my child is dead, my child is dead," she cries. "I must speak to the Führer" (p. 375). One the other hand, the regime's bellicosity created anxiety, despite the periodic rapturous enthusiasm that greeted the regime's alleged "achievements." The diary of the Swiss

academic, Denis de Rougemont, relayed the story of a woman, who upon hearing Hitler's speech announcing the remilitarization of the Rhineland, peered nervously out her window to see if French aircraft were on the horizon. Anxiety translated into demoralization as the war came home, disgusting the few, such as the Swedish SS volunteer Wiking Jerk, who remained sympathetic to the regime. Drunken German soldiers wandered the streets oblivious to bombs and shells, while the conduct of desperate civilians suggested complete "moral decay" (p. 389). While foreign writers gave expression to the occasional and isolated oppositional voices, the impression these excerpts collectively create is of a people unable and unwilling to resist, imprisoned by a combination of fear, coercion, and tacit consent. Yet if such a picture seems familiar in the nearly seventy-five years since the Nazi takeover, the immediacy to events that Lubrich's voices convey results in a consistently riveting and depressing narrative.

As Lubrich points out in his introduction, travel literature as a genre reveals as much about the preconceptions and symbolic topographies of the writers as it does about the subjects of travel narratives. Indeed, near-touristic images of quaint villages and rural landscapes shaped foreigners' interpretations of National Socialism, even if their conclusions differed sharply between those who saw Nazism as a modernist rupture from German traditions and those who saw it as the return to the medieval. Aside from giving us insight into the influences behind contemporary perspectives, however, this anthology is at least as valuable for what it conveys about the Third Reich. Even before the Nazi regime launched its war for ***Lebensraum***, the Third Reich was horrifying enough to create revulsion and a powerful sense of foreboding.

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