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## PRESENT DIRECTIONS OF GERMAN EXILE STUDIES IN THE USA

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**Abstract:** This essay considers the present state of U.S. scholarship on German exile literature, focusing on the recent move from a purely literary toward a social and cultural perspective. This move becomes evident in research projects on refugee children as well as in the growing interest for women in exile.

The article presents the abundant research opportunities in the U.S., but mentions also voices of frustration and fatigue. Perhaps the generational replacement among North-American Germanists contributes to bring forth a different attitude toward the subject of literary exile. In view of political shifts and technological changes, some reorientation in literary exile studies may be inevitable.

**Keywords:** German Exile Studies in the U.S.; Exile Children; Women in Exile.

**Resumo:** Este ensaio trata da presente situação dos estudos norte-americanos sobre literatura alemã de exílio, focalizando a volta recente de um enfoque puramente literário a uma perspectiva social e cultural. Essa volta torna-se evidente em projetos de pesquisa sobre filhos de exilados, bem como no interesse crescente em mulheres no exílio.

O artigo apresenta as oportunidades abundantes de pesquisa nos Estados Unidos, mas observa também indícios de frustração e cansaço. Talvez, a troca de gerações entre os germanistas norte-americanos contribua para criar uma atitude diferente em relação ao assunto do exílio literário. Em vista de modificações políticas e mudanças tecnológicas, uma reorientação dos estudos literários do exílio pode ser inevitável.

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**Palavras-chave:** Estudos norte-americanos sobre literatura alemã de exílio; Filhos de exilados; Mulheres no exílio.

**Stichwörter:** Studien zur deutschen Exilliteratur in den USA; Emigrantenkinder; Frauen im Exil.

## 1. Introduction

In North America, research into German exile began at an early date and was not limited to self-reflections by the Hitler refugees themselves. During the 1940s, the New York paper *Der Aufbau* printed articles about German language writers and filmmakers in exile in the USA (e.g., PRINTHUS 1944: 47, KAFKA 1944: 42). From 1944 to 1947, American-born HAROLD VON HOFFE, the author's teacher, published a series of essays on *German Literature in Exile* in the *German Quarterly*, the organ of the American Association of Teachers of German. These articles originated in New York and Los Angeles, the primary centers to which Central Europeans fleeing Hitler's Germany had flocked. In 1957, WILLIAM K. PEELER published *German Literature in Exile*, the first book-length study on the subject, in Nebraska, America's distant Middle West.

Since these mid-century analyses, many pages of American criticism and literary history about the German-speaking refugees of the 1930s and 40s have been written, in fact, altogether too many for a definitive assessment by a single chronicler. Nevertheless, this article considers the state of American German exile studies from their inception to the present, keeping in mind the special status of North American exile scholars and the politics of higher education. In the main, however, I intend to survey some past approaches and accomplishments, some new departures and criticisms, as well as some coming changes within American studies of German-language exile.

In addition to the sheer volume of American criticism devoted to German exile literature, some further factors hinder an adequate overview of the broad spectrum of exile research in the USA. American scholars may focus on the exiles within a variety of academic disciplines: Jewish studies or demographics, history or political science, sociology or economics, theater arts or belles-lettres, fine arts or philosophy. Clearly, these are too many fields to maintain in sharp focus. In addition, the American research professor tends to work rather individualistically; almost in isolation, a point to which I will return in more detail later. Many individual university researchers are thus moving in diverse directions, hampering our overview. The mesh of American and German collaboration, moreover, frequently complicates distinguishing between which portion of research was carried out on this side of the Atlantic and which was not. Ever since a first symposium on *Exile and Inner Emigration* was held at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in the early 1970s, interconnections have been apparent. A conference might be held in the USA with the proceedings published in Germany, as were the Madison results, and vice versa. Scholars from the two countries at least would join in an exchange of ideas and insights about common exile concerns.

The multiplicity of such conferences also escapes an individual's control. More than one and a half dozen have taken place since the early 1970s. Despite the general isolation of researchers, steps forward tend to emerge from these scholarly meetings. Initially, they pursued the urgent objectives of securing source material from aging writers, of identifying eyewitnesses and other survivors, of procuring documentation, and exchanging bibliographical data. The exile specialists amongst the readers know themselves how vexing it was, to be forced to formulate introductions to a sub-discipline that was groping for criteria and methods – all this at the very time the researcher was still gathering sources. As the first coordinators of German literary exile evolved, these conferences gradually yielded more

theme-oriented focuses. Only one conference was dedicated to a single literary genre; the 1976 meeting at Columbia, South Carolina, concentrated on *Deutsches Exildrama und Exiltheater*. Other generic studies were largely left to the wealth of emerging monographs and dissertations. Nearly half a dozen conferences pursued lines of demarcations: *Exile and Inner Emigration I and II* (1971), *German Exile Literature and Literature in the Third Reich* (1977), *German Exile Literature and Literature of the Post-War Period* (1979), and, finally, *Exile Literature and the Arts* (1988). Several scholarly meetings concentrated on historical aspects, such as a 1991 conference on *World War II and the Exiles* and the 1982 Houston event that endeavored to place the literary exile in the larger historical context of the epoch from the early 1930s to the mid-1960s. Another 1990 meeting in Texas chose an aspect related to history, the Spanish Civil War, but ultimately emphasized the aesthetics of exile, as did a 1983 forum in Los Angeles. Two conferences during the 1980s and early 1990s dealt with the reception of refugee writings: the 1984 Riverside, California, symposium on *Exil: Wirkung und Wertung*, and the 1991 Nashville, Tennessee, meeting on *Die Resonanz des Exils*. A sketch of the major American exile conferences which by and large were sponsored by the Society for Exile Research must suffice here. Any attempt to profile the numerous monographs authored by individual scholars and devoted to exiles, genres, and images of America in the works of refugee writers would take us too far afield. Here we may refer to Herbert LEHNER's works on Thomas Mann, James K. LYON's *Brecht in America* (1980), Jost HERMAND's numerous essays (cf. 1972, 1981, 1992), and the imposing multi-volume series on the exile centers of California and New York, edited by John M. SPALSK and Joseph STREJKA (1976, 1989), as paradigms for this branch of scholarship.

Rather than simply enumerating accomplishments of American research on German exile literature which must fall victim to constraints of time and space, I shall turn to some less charted terrain

and new directions which may ultimately yield more benefits to scholars weighing future options for their own exile studies in Central and South America.

## 2. Research on Exile Children and the Young

One trend from pure literature toward the social and cultural sciences becomes apparent in the new research focus on refugee children and youth and is evident in the following interview between exile scholar and Brecht specialist James K. LYON and the dramatist's daughter, Barbara Brecht-Schall.

"LYON: (...) About the German exiles in the USA we meanwhile know quite a lot. (...) About the exiles' children and their reception, experiences, acclimatization etc. we know only a little. How do yours compare with those of other refugee children (...)?" (LYON 1997: 18)

Here, Barbara Brecht-Schall recollects details from her pre-teen years in the Southern California of the 1940s. The parents shielded brother Stefan and her from certain "adult" issues of their exile existence. She neither knew that her father was under constant observation by the FBI, nor did she ever become aware of Brecht's extramarital relationships sensationalized by John FURER in his 1994 book *Brecht and Company: Sex, Politics, and the Making of Modern Drama*. Apparently both parents exercised discretion surrounding their "open marriage", mostly to assure stability in the life of offspring who had been subject to numerous dislocations during the family's flight from the Nazis (LYON 1997: 34-35). Both Helene Weigel and Brecht, as Barbara recalls them, were caring parents, with Brecht promoting serious family conversations over dinner. He took great interest in his children's schooling activities as well as in their extra-curricular pursuits (ib.: 26).

LYON's interview, of course, has abandoned the conventional autobiography, the literary record narrating a continuum of birth, childhood, youth and maturity. Instead many eclectic, non-synchronous snapshots document episodes from Barbara Brecht's childhood. These offer fragments of an exile topography: the home, initially furnished with Salvation Army furniture, the dinner table, experiences with parents and brother Stefan, neighbors, school and the lack of friends. Memories of earlier exile stations intervene. Time after time, the work of reconstruction clearly underscores the problems associated with biculturalism, especially the child's bilingualism creating self-awareness as the "other", while concomitantly further distancing herself even from the biological parents.

The acculturation of children of exiles has long fascinated social scientists and authors of autobiographies alike. As a forerunner of current research interest centered on refugee youth, Ruth NEUBAUER in the mid-60s wrote *Differential Adjustment of Adult Immigrants and Their Children to American Groups. The Americanization of a Selected Group of Jewish Immigrants of 1933-1944* (1966). The 90s raised the general public's awareness of children in the USA: Children and TV, children/youth and crime, youth and unemployment, children and economic exploitation became the new buzz words.

This media climate may have elevated the focus of scholarly awareness in exiles of this age group. As a consequence, two recent conferences united former exiles and scholars confronting this issue. *Kinder im Exil – Kinder im Holocaust – Kinder im Faschismus*, an international forum organized by Victoria Hertling, took place at the University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada, Oct. 3-6, 1996. Sonja Levin, well-known exile author of books for children and young readers, was the personal "eyewitness", offering readings from her works. The second event, an *Anschlußtagung* or sequel, entitled *Für ein Kind war das anders. Literarische und künstlerische Repräsentationsformen traumatischer Kindheitsfahrungen in nationalsozialisti-*

*schen Terrorsystem (im Versteck, Ghetto oder KZ)*, was chaired by the American and German team of Guy Stern, Wayne State University, Detroit, and Barbara Bauer of the *Institut für Neuere deutsche Literatur und Medien, Philipps-Universität Marburg*. The *Philipps-Universität* hosted this international symposium from May 22-25, 1997. Not having been present at either meeting, I am obliged to await conference reports and publications of the proceedings. What emerges from these exchanges, however, is a clear common denominator: the double focus on both exile and the Third Reich.

### 3. Women in Exile

A further departure concerns research on women in exile. In her 1996 essay, *Die Aktualität der Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung für die Exilforschung*, Sibylle QUACK states:

"Because women originally were not seen as autonomous beings in exile research, or at best marginally, and exclusively in relation to 'their' (famous) men, their biographies initially had to be processed and completed [aufgearbeitet]. This task has in no way been exhausted. We need to expand the above to include inquiries about the exile experiences of both women and men and integrate these." (33)

The very status of women in the traditional Western cultural canon may complicate QUACK's research agenda. Consider, as a case in point, Anna Seghers. Arguably the most widely read female German exile author, Seghers tended to prefer male protagonists, and critics have identified in her works the "masculine look" (Erika HAAS 1980). By contrast, Christiane ZEHLE ROMERO (1993) perceives an evolution in Seghers. She discerns a positive reassessment of the female both as provider and preserver of that routine domestic life or *gewöhnliches Leben* which alone may make the refugee existence bearable. Yet even this scholar concedes that Seghers never did publish

*Frauen und Kinder in der Emigration*, although this series of sketches was found among the novelist's posthumous papers (ib.: 61-62).

In *Women's Voices in American Exile*, Guy STERN and Brigitte SUMANN treat prominent representatives of the exile intelligentsia ranging from Hannah Arendt to Hilde Spiel. Their study, however, focuses only on women who wrote just fiction and poetry. The authors make frequent reference to early research such as Gabriele KREIS' seminal study *Frauen im Exil. Dichtung und Wirklichkeit* (1984), the *Women in Exile* Special Issue of the American journal *The Germanic Review* 62 (No. 3, 1987), and Renate WALL's *Lexikon deutschsprachiger Schriftstellerinnen im Exil 1933-45*, now in its 3rd edition (1995).

STERN and SUMANN reveal several demonstrable patterns characteristic of the biographic and literary activities of their exile subjects:

1. Female exile writers developed much later than their male partners, sometimes not until after reaching a different continent and occasionally not even until their husbands' death. As examples STERN & SUMANN cite Alice Herdan-Zuckmayer, Stella Hershan, and Gertrud Thieberger-Urzidil. Among refugees to South and Central America, Paula Ludwig and Anna Steuerwald-Landmann also wait past their return to Central Europe from Brazil and Chile, respectively, until they begin publishing. Hilde Domin underlines this pattern. In conversations with this researcher, she defined herself as *Bodenpersonal* or ground personal while fleeing from Hitler's Germany to Italy, thence to the United Kingdom, and, finally, in 1940, to the Dominican Republic. Her husband, Erwin Walter Palm, an art historian and recognized scholar of Iberian and Ibero-American cultures, himself published poetry, plays and many translations, especially from Latino and even Mayan sources. Indeed, Hilde Palm remained in his shadow until metamorphosing into the impor-

tant and productive poet Hilde Domin upon her return to Central Europe. Most exile researchers have come face to face with the bravery and astounding flexibility of refugee artists' wives who in their adopted settings re-invented themselves vocationally in jobs ranging from candy maker (Katja Arendt) to eye training specialist, frequently with low-skill employment simply to eke out a living for their families. Elisabeth Hauptmann, for instance, actually toiled in the Midwest as a maid. Elsewhere Hilde Marx worked variously as a live-in au pair and a retail shop clerk.

2. Female exile writers in the U.S. concentrated on literary forms with relatively small marketing hopes. On the one hand, they worked in the genre of autobiography. This by itself, STERN & SUMANN suspect, may not have furthered their name identification in the face of a literary canon that tends to focus on other genres. Eva Lups's *Rebirth in Liberty* (1942) and Friedelind WAGNER's *Heritage of Fire* (1945) can serve as examples. The foremost illustration, however, may be *Blood and Banquets: A Berlin Social Diary* by Bella Fromm who wrote for both the *New York Post* and the distinguished *Harper's Magazine*. This autobiography first appeared in 1942 and was reissued in the 1990s both in hardcover and paperback. As an aside, let me mention here work in this sub-discipline of exile autobiography by former students of mine who concentrated on women in Latin America. After writing her dissertation on poet Erich Arendt, Suzanne SHIPLEY gave accounts of Katja Arendt's experiences in Columbia. Working on a broader spread of autobiographies, Katherine MORRIS continues to publish on *German-Jewish Women in Brazil*, pursuing autobiography as cultural history with a feminist bent (QUACK 1995 b: 147-158; also MORRIS 1996).

As a second genre, women exile writers favored poetry, again a format with low market appeal in the USA. In addition, among

poets such as Ilse Blumenthal-Weiss, Lisa Kahn, Lili Körber and Margarete Kollisch, some voicing proto-feminist themes (Vera LACHMANN, *Golden tanzi das Licht im Glas*, 1969) may have been ahead of their time and the general public's readiness for such tones. Like Hilde Dornin, Rose Ausländer, too, largely depended for recognition on post-World War II Germany (*Blinder Sommer*, 1965; *36 Gerechte*, 1967; *Noch ist Raum*, 1976).

3. Women developed a more successful bridge to American publishers and readers in youth-oriented literature. Adrienne THOMAS, a journalist for the New York *Free World Magazine*, wrote *Reisen Sie ab, Mademoiselle?* (1944). Patently more successful in the New World, Hertha PAULI published three books for children and juveniles which were destined to become all-American reading fare (*The Story of the Christmas Tree*, Boston, 1944; *Silent Night: The Story of a Song*, New York, 1951; *Lincoln's Linkest Correspondent*, Garden City, New York, 1952). Sonia Levitin's narratives likewise became standards in many libraries.

4. Exiled women writers also were active as scriptwriters for the Hollywood studios. Among roughly a dozen we can find the very same Hertha Pauli, as well as Erika Mann, Lilo Dammer, Lilly Hatvany and Victoria Wolff. Probably the most professional among exile film writers belonging to this group were Gina Kaus and Salka Viertel, both with many film credits. Viertel not only contributed centrally to almost half a dozen screenplays for Greta Garbo but also successfully cultivated at her Santa Monica home an integration of Hollywood and the German Weimar in exile (MOELLER 1976: 699). Successful film scenarists of the younger exile generation that had reached the New World as children not only included Salka Viertel's son Peter but also women such as Ruth Praver-Jhabwala (screen-

plays for James Ivory's *Room With a View*, 1986, and *Mr. and Mrs. Bridge*, 1989).

When leaping of an exile career like Hertha NATHORFF's, it becomes clear why a relatively high proportion of women exile studies focus on subjects other than literature or even the arts. Renate WALL relates that NATHORFF, a gynecologist from Central Europe, went to work for her husband, himself a medical doctor, and subsequently instructed other female exiles in the care of infants, children and the sick (WALL 1995: 136-137). Throughout she authored verse published in the press as well as in journals and anthologies. For her diary, *Das Tagebuch der Hertha Nathorff*, she earned several literary prizes. Following the death of her husband, she once again changed her profession, becoming a psychotherapist at a well-known sanatorium. A range of gifts, including her proven literary talent, reverberates in a memorable series of life roles and professions which repeatedly demonstrate NATHORFF's prioritizing family welfare over her own individual self-expression.

In an essay in *Frauen und Exil (Exilforschung* 11, 1993), Heike KLARDOR has challenged an earlier (male) consensus that viewed such phenomenal female exile adaptability as less of a downward step on the social status ladder than it would have been for highly trained men. In *Überlebensstrategien statt Lebensentwurf* she demonstrates that in the extreme crisis of exile even women with professional qualifications placed survival before status; Nathorff thus appears almost the rule rather than the exception. Doris Dauber in Argentina, Ph.D. philologist, in her roles of maid, nanny, packer, and even toilet attendant at a nightclub (described in her *Eine Nacht – ein Leben*, 1945) could serve as a further example. According to KLARDOR,

"It was easier for women in times of crisis to subjugate themselves to generalities and imperatives, to create the elementary pre-conditions for survival, instead of dwelling in despair about their shaken identity." (26)

On the basis of this rationale, KLAPDOR promotes differentiating criteria that enable the researcher to distinguish the specific gender reactions to the conditions of exile. A parallel position is advocated by Sibylle QUACK who observes:

“Who today, for example, would deny that in the decision to emigrate not only age but also gender played an exceedingly important, indeed, often decisive role?” (1996: 33)

In his *Epilogue: The First Sex*, American cultural historian Peter Gay similarly emphasizes “adaptability” as a virtue that he finds in individual life stories of women exiles as well as in the scholarly writings devoted to them (358); he asserts that “women rallied – astonishingly and magnificently – in their new homelands” (359). He, further, states that “the time of the mute, inglorious women has come”, he would sooner recognize them than extol the Hannah Arendts and Anna Freuds. This is, of course, not the tenor of all research dedicated to women refugees. *Frauen und Exil*, the special 1993 year-book issue of *Exilforschung*, does feature more prominent literary figures such as Erika Mann, Nelly Sachs, Hermynia Zur Mühlen und Christa Winsloe. And respect is duly accorded in the same volume to non-literati, for instance, highly regarded dancer Lotte Goslar and historian Selma Stern. Still, the subtitle of this volume, “Zwischen Anpassung und Selbstbehauptung” [Between Adjustment and Self-Assertion], also underscores a social emphasis: “Great-woman history is as problematic as great-man history.” (GAY 1995: 355)

Correspondingly, recent researchers of exile have sought to identify the role of women refugees in the immigrant community, rescue and assistance agencies, and the American labor movement (QUACK 1995 b, Part II). In addition, their track record has been documented. The results shed light on women as aid givers: physicians, social workers, psychologists and psychoanalysts. In addition, the exile experiences of female refugee historians, legal professionals, former

*Reichstags* politicians from the Left, and even women farmers have been scrutinized (ib.: 215-340).

#### 4. Further Perspectives

Individual research projects in this sub-field in the 1990s have been augmented by collective ones yielding omnibus volumes and conference reports. An institutionalization is apparently under way. As an aside, let me recall a past episode from one of the early international conferences on exile. A colleague from East Germany and I were introduced to one another. At one point I tried to explain to him that exile studies at the University of Texas meant me alone, meaning that I was the only professor out of two dozen Germanists in this specialty. He persisted in asking about the institute of which I was a member. Wasn't there some official group comparable to the East Berlin Institute for Marxism/Leninism or an *Akademie*, some official body of which I was part? He could not fathom that American professors would be mostly on their own in their research focus and decisions, including even buying their own postage for research-related correspondence, and, of necessity, applying here and there for occasional funding. In their individualistic American notions of research, University of Texas clerical staff, on their part, failed to understand that any requests mailed to GDR or other Eastern European archives would not be honored unless submitted on official university letterhead stationery. On plain paper, even a professor simply would have been almost a non-entity in the East...

To return to our topic of institutionalization, there are now organized efforts promoting the advanced research in this specialty, however loose and individualistically American. Circles of shared interest are springing up. Take, for instance, the *Arbeitskreis Frauen im Exil* active since 1990 (QUACK 1996: 34, 43 footnote 28). It has

striven to convene for regular annual conferences, and true to its international "parent organization", the Society for Exile Research / *Gesellschaft für Exilforschung*, it has even held a meeting in Central Europe. It sponsored the 1996 Wuppertal event jointly with the Elise-Lasker-Schüler-Gesellschaft. Of course, such conferences have not been an American monopoly; we duly note the *Frauen im Exil forum* at the *Kurt-Schumacher-Akademie* (Bad Münsterfeld, FRG, Oct. 28-30, 1991; cf. *Nachrichtenbrief* 49-54; BENNINGHOFF-LÜHL 1991: 13-17). Other conferences include the 1991 symposium *Women in the Emigration after 1933*, sponsored by the German Historical Institute, Washington, D.C. Such group contacts and shared interests are apt to promote exchanges and further insights.

The refugee haven of the U.S. accommodated more women exiles than men – 53% versus 47% (QUACK 1995 a: 75-82). Whether the focus is on the everyday story in exile, the occupations, the arts in general, or on literature, specialists in the methodology of women and gender studies are now actively engaged in the field. Sibylle QUACK concludes a recent research report with the conviction "Ein großes Aufgabengebiet liegt vor uns" (1996: 41).

In addition to studies of exile children and women, other relatively smaller research trails have been forged. Official governmental relations to individual exiles, both those of the Third Reich and those of the USA, have become somewhat more accessible with the opening of sources. Studying some aspects of the German exiles in Mexico during the mid-1970s, I became aware of FBI surveillance of their correspondence with other German-language authors in the USA. Working on novelist Stefan Heym's New World writings at the same time and assuming that this similarly left-leaning exile might also have been under the watchful eyes of the same secret service, I wrote to the agency requesting his files. To my surprise I was indeed sent some material. But most of the records had simply been blacked out. The march of history, not to forget the relatively recent American

*Freedom of Information Act*, that entitles Americans to see certain official records, has changed this situation. Alexander STEPHAN, for one, has made good use of the new access and brought to light much new information culminating in his *Im Visier des FBI. Deutsche Exilschriftsteller in den Akten amerikanischer Geheimdienste* [In the Sights of the FBI. German Exile Writers in the Files of the American Secret Service Agencies] (1995).

Exploring government sources, for instance the American archives in Virginia and others in Eastern Europe, can be part of new exile research. Other desiderata include aspects of the refugees' return and reception. Wulf KOEPKE has raised the question as to the designation of Paul Celan, Erich Fried and Peter Weiss (and one could add Wolfgang Hildesheimer). They are generally viewed as members of the *Gruppe 47*, and thus as figures of West German post-World War II literary life. Has their exile status been adequately assessed? (KOEPKE 1996: 87) Are there similar cases of younger-generation writers who had fled to the USA? Or did all the representatives of this age group remain in America, as did Peter Viertel and Frederic Morton (cf. MOELLER & SANTNER 1989)? The larger question here is that of acculturation v rejection of assimilation. Other desiderata I would include – albeit at the risk of sounding pro domo – are additional cross-disciplinary studies, for instance, comparative literature perspectives.

These are but a few of many possible future research avenues within the exile field. At the same time, colleagues have warned of *Ermüdungerscheinungen* or fatigue in the field. In *Exilliteratur – ein abgeschlossenes Kapitel?* Bernhard SPIES does not just raise a rhetorical question, as he points to some voices of frustration with past research results (*Exilforschung* 14, 1996: 11-30). To him, however, if there is indeed a certain stagnation in exile studies, it would originate from methodological shortcomings. As a principal problem SPIES identifies what one could rightly term the false ideal of a quasi



“unified field theory” for exile studies. He detects in scholarly writing on the exile three underlying patterns:

1. the moral-political intent or, at least, character of committed art;
2. common literary exile aesthetics;
3. psychological-anthropological archetypes, such as Harry LEVIN’s ‘proposition of *Paradise Lost* as a fundamental formulaic model for all exile narratives (LEVIN 1966: 62).

According to SPES:

“The search for these principles has remained without results, but, unfortunately not without effect: literary exile studies have opened internally a field of tensions among one-sided positions which are as much mutually exclusive as they pre-condition each other. Methodologically, exile studies have gotten so entangled that their present status defines itself more on the basis of the problems they engender than with their theme.” (1996: 16-17)

To SPES, then, any stagnation would be largely of the discipline’s own making. This overbearing need to him, is, however, also historically motivated. He considers it on the one hand as a component of the epochal desire for a recognized “signature of the era”. On the other hand, it originated from a defensive attitude within this specialty in its initial stages when exiles, especially in the Federal Republic of Germany, tended to be regarded as verging on traitors. This *Legitimationszwang* or compulsion to legitimate the scholarly cause continued to be perceived even after recognition came in the 1970s.

History evidently is easily tempted to have a hand in both exile experience and exile studies. SPES himself wonders whether or not any sense of stagnation among scholars might not also be inspired by changes in the general political climate. One may recall here that the student protest generation brought a dramatic upswing of societal

interest in exile. The former rise and current fall in public perception of that generation may then also, conversely, mark a decline for exile literature. And the public mood today is much more conservative and given over to national, rather than supranational concerns, namely exile.

Or can one instead detect the reason for this temporary or long-term sense of stagnation in financial constraints? American humanities faculties, and foreign language departments in particular, are caught in a pincer grip. First: Foreign language programs, especially those concentrating on European cultures, have experienced a considerable decline in the last five years, resulting in demonstrable cuts of state support. Second: The current financial fatigue within the ranks of American taxpayers of the 1990s, coupled with the increasing fortunes and strength of the Republican Party, have allowed politicians further to slash funding of higher education, especially at state universities.

Closely connected to this reduction in funding may be a generational change in research personnel with its wider ramifications. The American university system experienced a period of rapid growth in the late 1950s and early 1960s; the year 2000 will thus bring a massive change in the faculty profile. University administrations seized on the slump in foreign language enrollments and the funding crises to downsize and even terminate some programs. Some of the scholars recruited during the expansion and now nearing the traditional retirement age were forced into an early professional exit. Witness the case of John M. SPALDEK, one of the true pioneers and dynamos amongst exile researchers. This indefatigable author of standard source guides, to wit his *Guide to the Archival Materials of the German-speaking Emigration to the U.S. after 1933* (1978), and his many other related studies of exile, became a recent casualty when the flagship of the New York higher education system, the State University of New York at Albany, closed its Department of German and Rus-

sian. What will happen to the central archives which Spalek established there is anybody's guess. Elsewhere, important figures in this area have indeed retired or been accorded emeritus status. A considerable number of the older faculty were themselves either exiles or European immigrants who took advantage of the aforementioned expansion phase; their successors, in times of economic depression and closed national job markets, will be American-born. One of the former comments: "Even American German Studies, as they become more and more American, will lose émigré perspectives and will view the exile experience from a more remote vantage point" (KOEPEK 1996: 89).

Will this generational replacement involve a different attitude toward the subject of exile? Is the long-standing sensitivity favoring restitution, the *Wiedergutmachungsethos*, about to be eclipsed? In the words of Wulf KOEPEK:

"Again and again we hear voices which proclaim that exile literature must first and foremost be viewed and interpreted as *literature*. But it is precisely here that one becomes cognizant that such a reading disregarding temporal circumstances, remains incomplete or slanted. Accordingly, it becomes apparent that a special commitment is an intrinsic part of this particular area of study and that science, with a paradoxical justification, suspects in this specialty the encroachment of a sort of foreign body." (1996: 75)

A new concentration is presently emerging in American and other Western literary studies. A recent symposium at Washington University, St. Louis – where another grand old man of exile research, the venerable Egon Schwarz, taught – was entitled *Postcolonial German Literature*. Should the change visible in this new focus be a harbinger of diversion from the traditional focus on exile studies with their characteristic *Wiedergutmachungsethos*? This may well be another sub-discipline, interested, like exile studies, in cross-cultural subjects. Only time will tell. On the other hand, whoever witnessed the reception given Daniel Goldhagen in Germany, may think such

conjecture premature. GOLDHAGEN's controversial *Hitler's Willing Executioners. Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (1996) found an overwhelmingly positive echo there and among U.S. students of Germanistics, one which was at variance with professional criticism and the population at large.

Much more so than for other specialties, history, the political climate of the time, remains an intricate factor of exile studies. Concurrently, the radical technological changes of the information age also have their unique impact. What kind of effect will the World Wide Web have on exile studies in general? Will it, for instance, help overcome the individualist isolation of American researchers? Can we, perhaps, abstract a preliminary answer from current scholarly activity on women exiles? The feminist American WIG, Women in German, are establishing home pages (<http://macro.micro.um.edu/wig.html>), and officially supported German websites such as the *Frauen-Info-Netz* in North Rhine-Westphalia at the University of Bielefeld, concentrate on *Frauenforschung* (<http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/IFF/Fraueninfonetz/>).

In the face of political shifts and technological changes, we may have to brace ourselves to accept some reorientation in exile studies. Goethe was right, after all, when he wrote:

"There is no doubt (...) that universal history must from time to time be revised. The necessity of this derives (...) because contemporaries living within the march of time are led to positions from which the past can be both viewed and assessed in a new mode." (413)

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