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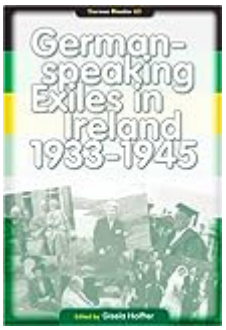

Gisela Holfter, ed. *German-speaking Exiles in Ireland 1933-1945.* Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006. 300 pp. EUR 62.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-90-420-2033-7.

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"Terra incognita"

The study of German exiles in Ireland is terra incognita. Beyond some work done by Gisela Holfter in Limerick and Hermann Rasche in Galway, very little has appeared to date. This volume, drawing upon the Seventh Limerick Conference on Irish-German Studies, held in 2004, thus represents a major step in the development of this aspect of German exile studies. It is a very welcome contribution.

The book is neatly divided into three sections. Holfter opens the first with an overview of the subject, in which she locates the issue of exile in Ireland within the context of Irish emigration since the nineteenth century and immigration to Ireland since the 1990s. A country that had long exported its population, and which had only in 1921 become (partially) independent, found it difficult to conceive of significant immigration in the 1930s. The numbers in question were small, and the obstacles put in the way of those who wished to come to Ireland were significant. Yet some succeeded in gaining admittance.

Holfter's introduction is followed by various approaches to the topic, beginning with the global overview offered by Wolfgang Benz in his survey of developments and trends in exile studies. From there the volume moves on to a specifically Irish focus. Dermot Keogh, whose book *Jews in Twentieth-Century Ireland* (1998) is the only major study of Irish Jewry as a whole in the last century, discusses Irish refugee policy up to World War II. The Irish ambassador to the League of Nations was instructed to defend an illiberal policy towards Jewish refugees, whom "Catholic" Ireland felt it could not welcome in any significant number. Almost half a million Jews emigrated from "Greater Germany" between 1933 and 1940, and less than three hundred were accepted as refugees by the Irish state. SiobhÃ¡n O'Connor, who recounts that the Irish ambassador in Berlin from 1933-39, Charles Bewley, was both an antisemite and a Nazi sympathizer, illustrates the obstacles placed in the way of potential refugees. He routinely invented excuses for refusing aid. When Viennese Jew Georg Klaar (George Clare) arrived in Berlin in 1938 to collect the visas for himself and his family that awaited them, Bewley made them wait six weeks, claiming that the visas had not yet arrived. The *Novemberpogrome* occurred during those six weeks, and Klaar and family were fortunate to survive and be able to leave for Ireland.

Raphael Siev's essay on the origins of the Irish as a mixed race and the sectarianism of immigration policy, which appeared to suggest to Jews that immigration might be gained in return for conversion to Catholicism, is thought-provoking. Other essays in this section cover Austrian refugees and problems of identity for German-speaking refugees. They shed useful light on the subject while also displaying familiarity with the discourse of exile studies in general.

The second section offers a series of biographical essays on individual refugees. Holfter discusses the life of Ernst Scheyer, a Silesian lawyer and respected member of the Jewish community there who arrived in Ireland in January 1939. Hermann Rasche relates the life of the Viennese scholar of Paleography, Ludwig Bieler, a Catholic who left Vienna on March 12, 1938, the day on which Adolf Hitler marched into Austria. In Switzerland, he met a Jewish refugee from Munich, Eva Clara Uffenheimer, whom he married in England and with whom he settled in Ireland in 1940. There he lectured at the National University and also received assistance from a Quaker family, the Bewleys, relatives of the Irish ambassador in Berlin (who had converted to Catholicism). Horst Dickel relates the life of eminent serologist Hans Sachs, a Jewish Silesian who was expelled from Germany in 1938 and served on the staff of the Medical Research Council of Ireland from 1939 until his death in March 1945. Colin Walker's moving tribute to his late friend, Robert Weil, is a fair portrayal of Weil's engagement with his adopted country (Ireland) even throughout the troubled 1970s and 1980s, when he taught and lectured in Belfast.

The final section is a set of personal recollections by members of the families of some of the refugees. John Cooke, grandson of Hans and Charlotte Sachs, draws on personal memories and family papers to discuss his grandparents' feelings on emigration and life in Ireland and their thoughts on exile and memory. Monica Schefold recounts childhood memories in Ireland from 1939-56 as the daughter of another Jewish exile, John Hennig, about whom Holfter and Rasche have written elsewhere.[1] Ruth Braunizer, daughter of the distinguished physicist and mathematician, Erwin SchrÃ¶dinger, presents excerpts from her father's wartime diaries, written in Dublin. Finally, Eva Gross, born in Kolberg, Pomerania, in 1919, recounts her life in Belfast since 1936. In that year Gross's father had converted from Judaism, not to any German Christian faith, but to Presbyterianism, thanks to the activities of the Irish Presbyterian Mission to the Jews in Hamburg, and refuge was sought and found for his family in Belfast. Gross herself had been baptized Lutheran long before her father's conversion. These intensely personal memories offer readers the flavor of refugee life rather than any analysis of the political issues surrounding the question.

The material presented here is both interesting in its own right and provides source material for a larger study of the whole issue of Irish attitudes towards immigration, and in particular, to Jewish immigration during the Nazi period, a study that remains to be written. The inclusion of chapters on Northern Ireland, a different political jurisdiction but closely linked to developments in the Republic, is a most welcome aspect of this book. Though the numbers of refugees were comparatively small, much can be learned about the nature of Irish society at this time by the study of its attitudes to refugees. The work also adds a new, albeit relatively small, dimension to German exile studies as a whole.

Note

[1]. Gisela Holfter and Hermann Rasche, eds., *Exil in Irland. John Hennigs Schriften zu deutsch-irischen Beziehungen* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2002); and Gisela Holfter and Hermann Rasche, eds., *John Hennig's Exile in Ireland* (Galway: Arlen House, 2004).

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