

Introduction

The essays in this volume were contributed by leading international scholars to honor a man whose academic achievements and intellectual commitment to transnational dialogue have secured him distinction on both sides of the Atlantic. Ranging from current concerns about cultural politics and public policy to historical considerations of artists and writers in their function as public intellectuals, the topics represented cover a spectrum of knowledge and interests that testifies to the overarching principles in Alexander Stephan's own scholarship and to the wide net of research inquiry he has cast over the years. Like him, the authors assembled here write from one or the other side, in some cases both sides, of the Atlantic; like his publications, the collected essays alternate between German and English. Contributions in the first part of the book attest to Alex's overriding concern in recent years with issues of cultural diplomacy and public policy, Americanization and anti-Americanism; while those in the second section focus in the main on German artists and intellectuals associated with his research on Weimar Germany, anti-fascist exile, and literature after World War Two and the German division. By their choice of topics, as well as their direct or implicit expressions of regard for his person and work, the participants in our volume help us celebrate the life and work of this extraordinary scholar who has contributed so much to the intellectual rigor of our academic enterprise, to cultural understanding across national borders and continents, and to the humanistic principles of enlightenment and reason that give purpose to all our work.

Alexander Stephan was born in 1946, one year after the end of World War Two, in Liidenscheid in the Sauerland area occupied by the Western Allies, to where his parents migrated from Silesia which became part of Poland after the war. One might opine that this circum-

stance of belonging neither quite here nor there, yet in a sense 'everywhere', helped sow the seeds of his later intellectual quest - perhaps not so much for meaning per se as for the political and cultural factors that generate meaning, and those that generate its opposite: bias and ignorance. Surely he shared this experiential 'point zero' with others of his generation of West Gennans, but while there is much in Alex's biography that parallels the lives of his contemporaries, each quest is unique. His own would early take him on a school exchange to the United States, first to the state of Washington, then to Ukiah, California where he graduated with a diploma from the local high school. After returning to Lildenscheid he earned his *Abitur* and to avoid the draft soon departed for West Berlin where from 1966 to 1968, at the height of the extra-parliamentary opposition and student movements, he took courses in American Studies and German literature at the Freie Universitat. Then Alex returned to the United States - more or less permanently one might say. In 1969 he received an M.A. in German from the University of Michigan, in 1973 a Ph.D. in German literature from Princeton University (his advisor Theodore Ziolkowski is a contributor to this volume). It was during his graduate study and early teaching career that Alex became a husband and father. In 1969 he married Halina Konopacka, a native of Poland who came to the States in the 1960s, earned her Ph.D. in Russian literature from the University of Michigan, and as a professor of Slavic studies walked hand in hand with Alex through the subsequent stages of their separate careers. In 1977 Halina gave birth to their son Michael who grew up bilingually in California and Florida, went on to study medicine at the University of Heidelberg, and is now a physician practicing in Heidelberg.

The career path that Alex carved out for himself was extraordinarily productive from the start, and just as rewarding. His first book, on Christa Wolf (1976), the first on this author in any language and widely reviewed as groundbreaking, underwent three more editions. His second book, on German exile literature (1979), is a seminal work still considered mandatory reading in graduate courses here and abroad. In recognition of his scholarship his work was supported by major grants from NEH, ACLS, the American Philosophical Society, Alexander von Humboldt and Simon Guggenheim foundations, and

many more. But truth to tell his was a difficult and often lonely road. As a German teaching in the United States, Alex was young enough just to have missed involvement in the radical transformation of American *Germanistik* in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This was ushered in by 'voluntary' exiles from West Germany (where remnants of the Nazi era lingered in higher education till the late 1960s) such as Jost Hermand, Peter Hohendahl, and Frank Trommler. Spurred by the example and work of earlier German- and Austrian-Jewish exiles such as the historian George Mosse and the Germanist Egon Schwarz, they introduced interdisciplinary approaches to German Studies, expanding the canon to include left-wing and antifascist - for the most part Jewish - writers and the study of Weimar, exile, and East German literature. Alex also arrived in the States too late to have been part of the civil rights and anti-Vietnam protests of the 1960s that informed the politics of young American intellectuals who founded such journals as *Studies on the Left*, *Telos*, and closest to his field, *New German Critique*, a journal to which he nonetheless contributed early on. Though some of his publications were in English, his primary language as a scholar was German. It was in this language that his first six books appeared, in West Germany, where a now younger liberal generation of academics - his generation - also published. Albeit in the 1970s they 'marched through the institutions' more or less as one, just as Alex was making his way up the promotional ladder from Assistant to Associate to Full Professor at the University of California-Los Angeles where he taught from 1973 to 1985 - far removed from Frankfurt and Berlin and such centers of American German Studies as the University of Wisconsin, Princeton, or Cornell.

If many Europeans exiled in southern California in the 1930s and 1940s shrank from the eternally pleasant heat and sun, Alex thrived in this climate but for that he always seemed to lack quite enough tennis partners who could keep up with him - an affliction that followed him to the University of Florida at Gainesville where he was Professor of German from 1985 to 2000 (for the first eight years also Department Chair), and from there to Columbus, Ohio where to make matters worse inclement weather in the winter months saw him obliged to serve his aces on indoor courts. But weather aside, Alex's engagement with the legacies of exiles in southern California and Mexico allowed

him to study problems of dislocation and migration that - while quite different from his own and also one or more generations removed proved felicitous for all concerned. Archival documents and interviews with surviving exiles or their kin in southern California provided Alex with a virtual treasure house for the study of a largely neglected cultural topography and era. This project soon brought him in contact with other scholars (many of them represented in this volume) who both here and abroad furthered the study of exile from National Socialism on an international scale.

Related to exile studies Alex has published ten books and innumerable articles; organized international conferences; served on the boards of leading journals; and been a principal member of the international Lion Feuchtwanger, Arnold Zweig, Anna Seghers, Peter Weiss, and Bertolt Brecht societies. His research on postwar German literature is equally significant, for instance in books and other publications on Max Frisch, Uwe Johnson, Anna Seghers, Christa Wolf, Peter Weiss, and many more. The research that famously brought him public notoriety as well as scholarly acclaim was his examination of FBI files related to the surveillance of German exiled writers in the United States and Mexico, first published by Metzler in Germany in 1993, by Aufbau-Berlin in a 1998 paperback edition, and by Yale University Press in an abbreviated English translation in 2000. Alex's study was given extensive reviews in all major German and European newspapers, and later in the English-language press; he was besieged by requests for radio interviews and television appearances, occasions to which he rose with his habitual grace and aplomb; and the book's revelations resulted in several television documentaries.

Alex joined the faculty of the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures at the Ohio State University in the fall of 2000 as the state's first 'Ohio Eminent Scholar' in the Humanities. The Ohio Eminent Scholar program provides start-up funds for selected departments to help establish fully-endowed professorships aimed at attracting colleagues with extraordinary scholarly accomplishments and potential to the state's institutions of higher learning. A special incentive that persuaded Alex to come to Ohio was the prospect of joining the 'Mershon Center for International Securities Studies' as a

research fellow in the area of cultural politics. Over the years this relationship proved to be highly beneficial for the Mershon Center, the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures, and for Alex, who now devotes about 45% of his time to the Center. Indeed, much of the continuous reshaping of his scholarly interests and enterprises in the last seven years can be attributed to his role in the Mershon Center. Initially, Alex started out with investigating post-war cultural transfers from the US to Germany to gain new historical insights into the development of US - German cultural relations (including postwar Anti-Americanism in the two Germanys). He then extended his scholarship to US cultural relations with Europe and is presently looking at US cultural politics in other areas of the world - under the general heading 'Americanization and Anti-Americanism'. The fruits of these six years of intense study are too numerous to be listed here. However, already the titles of the major conferences, symposia, and lecture series Alex has organized from 2002 to 2006 indicate the intensity of his scholarly engagement: 'Jeans, Rock und Vietnam:

Amerikanische Kultur in der DDR', 15-18 January 2002, Brecht-Haus Berlin, Germany; 'Americanization and Anti-Americanism', 18-20 October 2002, Mershon Center; 'Feuchtwanger and the European Emigres in California', 25-26 April 2003, University of Southern California; 'Cultural Diplomacy and the Image of the United States Abroad', 1 May 2003, Mershon Center; 'American Culture in Europe:

Americanization and Anti-Americanism since 1945', 27 September 2003, University of Oxford, UK; 'Das Amerika der Autoren: Beispiele aus der deutschsprachigen Literatur und Publizistik des 20. Jahrhunderts', 5-7 December 2003, Wissenschaftszentrum NordrheinWestfalen, Germany; 'Rius, Reagan, Rock'n' Roll: Zur Amerikanisierung der Kultur in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland', 16-18 January 2004, Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut Essen, Germany; 'American Culture and Anti-Americanism in the Middle East', 30 January 2004, Mershon Center; 'Die Amerikanisierung der (west-) deutschen Kultur seit 1945', 4-6 March 2004, Wissenschaftszentrum Nordrhein- Westfalen, Germany; 'Exile and Otherness: New Approaches to the Experience of the Nazi Refugees', 30 April-2 May 2004, Ohio State University; 'American Culture and Anti-Americanism in Russia', 7 May 2004, Mershon Center; 'Culture and

Security', 19 and 26 May 2004, Mershon Center; 'American Culture and Anti-Americanism in Latin America', 22 October 2004, Mershon Center; 'Japan and Germany: Two successful Models of Americanization?', 10 November 2004, OAG Zentrum Kobe-Okamoto, Japan; 'America in East Asia: American Influences in China, Japan, and Korea', 5 February 2005, Mershon Center; 'American Culture in South Africa', 12 May 2005, Mershon Center; 'Clash of Cultures? The U.S. and Europe in the 21st Century', 1 April 2005, 3 October 2005, and 27 February 2006, Mershon Center; 'Public Diplomacy as a Global Phenomenon', 28 April 2006, Mershon Center. Nearly all conference contributions have meanwhile appeared in volumes edited or co-edited by Alex - please consult his list of publications at the end of this volume.

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