

1980

## Harry Thürk: Der Gaukler

Ursula Lawson  
*Ohio University*

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49, and revivals from 1973-77 (plus more than 60 unnumbered pages of photographs). One would have liked to see a lot more. Three other plays written about the same topic around this time (Hans Rehfisch, Frauenarzt, 1927; Carl Credé-Hörder, Paragraph 218, 1929; Alfred Döblin, Ehe, 1930) are barely mentioned, but not analyzed. Most unfortunate is the absence of all biographical information about Wolf himself his social background, his dual careers as a physician and a dramatist. His arrest and trial in 1931 on trumped-up charges of "abortion for commercial gain" are dealt with much too briefly and summarily. With adequate documentation, this could have been an invaluable contribution to literary and social history and to the "Year of the Woman." As it is, the text of the play alone still makes it highly worth while.

Herbert Lederer  
University of Connecticut

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Der Gaukler. By Harry Thürk. Berlin: Verlag Das Neue Berlin, 1979. 2 vols., 284/316 pages. 12.80 M each.

Harry Thürk's work has been called a "political adventure novel" by Wolfgang Predel (NDL, 7/79, p. 139). It is a spy thriller pitting the CIA against Russian communism; at the same time, it is a roman à clef in which the protagonist Wetrow, a Russian novelist and the "Gaukler," is modeled on Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, and the West German novelist Bortinger, aiding in Wetrow's flight from Russia, stands for Heinrich Böll. The author himself prefaces his work with the statement, "Sollte der Leser in diesem Werk der Fiktion Parallelen zu ihm bekannten lebenden Personen entdecken, so wäre lediglich er selbst für einen derartigen Vergleich verantwortlich. Da der Autor jedoch Respektlosigkeit und Spürsinn gleichermassen schätzt, versichert er jedem Leser, der im Zusammenhang mit Büchern solche Eigenschaften entwickelt, seine volle Sympathie."

Thürk portrays the ruthless CIA, assisted by Harvard experts, fighting against a Russia secure in the knowledge of its eventual victory over the imperialistic countries. The emphasis of the novel is placed on the development of the action, alternating at locations in the United States, Russia, and West Germany. The plot with an extensive cast of characters is developed by means of dialogue and interior monologue.

For the most part, Thürk peoples his novel with Americans and Russians. The Americans affiliated with the CIA are villains, and the Russians with the single exception of Wetrow and his very small circle of supporters--mostly misguided women, victims of his calculated exploitations--are good, honest people. Between the two camps the author places two Americans: a French born, attractive young woman, Cathérine Laborde, who is Harvard-educated and becomes the unwitting CIA tool of her admired Professor Sef Kartstein. It is her task to guide the dissident Wetrow in becoming a prominent witness against communism. She and her American journalist lover with sympathy for communism are destroyed by the CIA. Professor Kartstein ends in insanity, but the bright young men of the CIA continue their campaign against communism, whose eventual triumph is assured over the decadence of Western imperialism. Lack of purpose, drugs, alcohol, sexual depravity, racism, crime, and manipulations are the hallmarks of life in the United States while optimism based on integrity, honesty and ideological convictions prevails in the Soviet Union. There are no dissents to speak of except a few calculating, amoral, and asocial elements of no influence and consequence in their own country. Wetrow is one of the few, but thanks to the machinations of the CIA he becomes a tool of Western imperialism in its ideological struggle with the Soviets. Thürk knows how to tell a story; he keeps his readers in suspense in spite of his emphasis on the political message. He has no literary ambition other than supplying his readers with a well constructed thriller asserting that all is well for communism and its future in the world.

Ursula D. Lawson  
Ohio University

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"Deutsche Demokratische Republik" von Rainer Nägele. In: Geschichte der politischen Lyrik in Deutschland. Hrsg. v. Walter Hinderer. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1978. S. 338-360.

Rainer Nägele beginnt seinen Beitrag zur Geschichte der politischen Lyrik in Deutschland mit dem Hinweis auf die Schwierigkeit, die "bald dreißigjährige Geschichte der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und ihrer Kulturpolitik auf wenigen Seiten zu summieren..." Den-