

Book Reviews

also among those who influence and implement the policies of the rich countries.

One of the most attractive features of this impressive collection of articles is its range and variety. Among the five articles in the section on Human Rights is one on "The rural women's work: overworked and underpaid." The section on cinema has five articles, one on ending Western dominance, the others on Arab, African, Chinese and Indian cinema.

Anyone with any interest in the Third World is bound to find a lot of fascinating information and analysis in this volume.

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Germany in Canadian eyes

by Josh Moscau

Perceptions of the Federal Republic of Germany edited by Robert Spencer. Toronto: Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto, 1986, 112 pages, \$9.95.

It is an easy guess that Germany's role and value in the world will change greatly in the future. Among the reasons: Bonn's fealty to Washington and East Berlin's to Moscow are both growing thin. The *raison d'être* of the two Germanies as necessary hinges to keep the two superpowers simultaneously apart and in dialogue is being superseded by the ultimately more rewarding objective of confrontation/cooperation. We see this in the Persian Gulf and in the fascinating tug-of-war over India's affections. Substantial change will also come as the now-real prospect of an accommodation on Eurostrategic arms takes on shape. So, what of Germany?

The University of Toronto's Centre for International Studies organized in early 1986 a 3-day seminar on *Perceptions of Germany*. Some seventy specialists, academics for the most part, wrestled with the question of what West Germany meant to the world and how Bonn was seen in Washington and Moscow, Ottawa and Paris.

It is worth noting that the conference was held in the wake of President Reagan's ill-fated visit to the war cemetery at Bitburg and — a singular Canadian focal point — after the Toronto trial of one Ernst Zundel. Two other Canadian "angles" probably contributed as well: the then ongoing War Crimes investigation by Mr. Justice Jules Deschênes and a curiously mismanaged teacup tempest over an editorial in *Maclean's* magazine. Barbara Amiel, an observer not always noted for even-handedness, had spoken of Germans as "a race of hideous murderers." This prompted a testy exchange between the German Embassy in Ottawa and *Maclean's* editors. *Maclean's* pointblank refusal to retract stung Germans, both inside and outside the Embassy.

Not surprisingly then, the volume presented now by Professor Robert Spencer of Trinity College, a longtime student of German affairs, reflects this immediate, though arguably peripheral and episodal backdrop. The Zundel/Amiel/Bitburg/Deschênes mix did, however, demonstrate one important point: that is still easiest to focus on the downside aspects of the German persona. Ottawa historian Robert H. Keyserlingk says in his candid appraisal that

It would be foolish for Germans to ignore this unpleasant image. It may be unpalatable, but the perception of large groups of Canadians . . . today is still deeply linked to fears and feelings about the Hitler regime.

Rather than shying away from this dilemma, he argues, Germans and German-Canadians should deal with the problem of the Nazi era.

Inevitably perhaps, there was a lot of handwringing over the continuing Canadian media failure to reflect a full and fair image of contemporary West Germany. Too much on Hitler diaries, Bitburg and all the rest, according to Keyserlingk, and entirely too little on the remarkable success of "cooperative German federalism" since 1949. And the Canadian failure, by and large, to "understand" such dramatic recent evolutions as the growth of environmental politics. There is also the deplorable neglect of the dialogue initiated by Pierre Trudeau and Helmut Schmidt during the late 1970s.

Canada's perhaps strongest ambassadorial advocate of closer relations and better understanding, John Halstead, rightly cites Trudeau's 1978 Bonn statement that

Canada's historic ties with Britain and France have obscured a realistic view of the continent, just as Germany's close association with the United States may have obscured to many German eyes the second reality in North America.

What we now know, is that the unique *Männerfreundschaft* (bonds of male friendship) of Schmidt and Trudeau was not sufficient to inject enough energy into the relationship to create stronger ties. Halstead says it is now "clear that the earlier momentum . . . has been lost." Today, he concludes with regret,

There are almost no unanswered questions about the future relationship between Canada and the Federal Republic. The elements of common interest remain, as does the potential for cooperation, but doubts persist about both the knowledge and the will to exploit them, on the Canadian side at least.

These are harsh words.

There seems to be a lesson here. On the strong evidence presented by the academics it is that Canadians generally love to retain many a clichéd (in this case negatively blinkered) view of the onetime adversary. But it is equally apparent that Germans retain (and even nurture) a distorted conception of Canadian reality. They choose to disregard the transformation of Canada into a modern industrial state, just as Canadians stubbornly refuse to acknowledge the emergence of a strong, reliable European ally, which has much to contribute to further development on this side of the Atlantic.

The whole discussion might have benefitted from participation of Canadian business executives who, in some cases, have developed impressive connections in Frankfurt and Dusseldorf, Hamburg and Munich.

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