



Eurozine Review

Mittelweg 36 follows displaced persons; *Esprit* compares social politics; *Kulturos barai* advocates cultural heritage; *Varlik* celebrates laziness; and *Helicon* tells secrets.

Mittelweg 36 3/2005



Nothing in Germany is discussed more often and with more emotion than the extent to which German society is influenced and threatened by its Nazi past. The main theme of the new issue of "Mittelweg 36" is the politics of flight and expulsion in the aftermath of World War II. Most of the other contributions also

focus on these issues in one way or another.

The way Germany dealt with refugees is shown in the terminology used, says Klaus Naumann, historian at the Hamburg Institute for Social Research. The German term "Heimatvertriebene" — "those displaced from their homeland" — contains legal conceptions, political meanings, and claims all at once. It alludes to the idea that the expellees were driven out of their countries in a one-sided act of violence, and that the continuity with the homeland must be kept.

Klaus Naumann traces the politics of displacement through the dominant discourse on constitutional law in the Federal Republic of Germany. The problematic of German "Vertriebenenpolitik" can only be understood through the fact that the Federal Republic of Germany was not founded as a new state in 1949, but reorganized in certain respects in continuity with the German Reich, says Naumann.

Fifteen years after the collapse of the communist regime, the Czech Republic's relations with its German neighbour remain overshadowed by the controversy over the interpretation of the Benes Decrees. A dialogue that began in an open and self-critical atmosphere on both sides has since given way to a climate of suspicion, in which different cultures of memory collide. The historian and slavacist Jan Pauer looks into the role of the Sudetendeutschen, whose expulsion from the Czech Republic during WWII seemed dire from a German perspective, while the Czechs remember their high political involvement in the NS regime.

Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, historian in Lüneburg, examines the meaning of the discourse on expulsion for the self-understanding of Polish society. Not until 1993 did a public debate on the fate of German expellees from Poland emerge that also addressed the question of Polish guilt.

An article by historian Michael Wildt examines the meta-meaning of Götz Aly's new book, "Hitlers Volksstaat". Rather than commenting on its strengths, which have been dealt with at length by the German feuilletons, Wildt looks into structural weaknesses of the academic and thus public way of dealing with National Socialism which the book reveals: a deficit in self-reflexivity and the closeness to Germany's "reason of state": everything written about National Socialism in Germany is linked to the legitimacy of the German political order.

Also to look out for: cultural scientist Matthias Lorenz examines Martin Walser's early works, which are often drawn upon to relativize Walser's recent irritating remarks on the national; and in the "Literary Essay", Jan Philipp Reemtsma looks into the generational conflict between Wieland and Goethe, which was ignited by the Schlegel brothers' attack on Wieland for modelling his "Don Silvio" on Cervantes' Don Quixote.

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Esprit 7/2005



The French rejection of the EU constitution may have been the reaction to "too much Europe"; may have been France honouring its tradition "as the political nation *par excellence*"; the manner of the French *Non* may even have revealed the nation's deep desire for Europe. At any rate, it was a vote that put into focus the political schisms between Blairite neo-liberalism and the classic social-redistributive model. This month, *Esprit* compares the employment and welfare models in EU member-states to highlight the plurality of European social politics.

Robert Castel, in interview with Jacques Donzelot, describes how under-employment is a half-way house between the secure employment of classical social democracy and a strapped welfare state; Jean-Claude Barbier assesses whether the "Danish miracle" can be imported and concludes that this model is practicable only in a specific political and welfare system; and in interview, Zygmunt Bauman conceives of a type of globalization that would not imply the dismantling of welfare policies.

Jacques Chirac has assured the French public that he is determined to fight for the "French social model". But what exactly does this mantra-like and ill-defined phrase mean? Editor Marc-Olivier Padis suspects it might be a substitute for social democracy. In a climate of opinion polls and political hype, Olivier Mongin argues that today's political vocabulary is devalued currency. He is dubious of a "fickle discourse" that is neither the opinion of the individual nor the knowledgeable discourse of the expert.

Elsewhere in the magazine: articles on the recently deceased Paul Ricoeur, giant of hermeneutic philosophy and long-term contributor to *Esprit*; and an enquiry into the political and sociological aspects of the philosophy of Vincent Descombes, best known as a philosopher of mind.

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Kulturos barai 6/2005

KULTŪROS
BARAI

Lithuanian society is fast adapting itself to outside influences, and in the process, losing contact with its past. Contributions to the new issue of Lithuanian journal *Kultūros barai* discuss how Lithuanian cultural heritage can benefit the country in these times of social change. Philosopher Bronislovas Kuzmickas argues that historical, cultural, and political images of identity can be revived in order to support social solidarity; historian Eugenijus Manelis advocates a shared history of the twentieth century, and recommends "that civic society must treat historical facts with respect"; art historian and cultural manager Eva Pluharova–Grigienė reviews recent research on "cultural landscapes" and the role of the heritage sector in protecting cultural peculiarities and the values of earlier cultures.

Turning to the arts: Ausra Jurasiene reviews sculpture in the Jeruzale district of Vilnius; Lidije Simkute describes writing as a Lithuanian poet in Australia; Regina Urboniene welcomes the return from Paris of paintings by Lithuanian ex-patriot painter Pranas Gailius; composer Sarunas Nakas assesses the cultural scenes in Minsk and Tblisi; and Stasys Gostautas argues that critics will reconsider the origins of abstract art after seeing works by Lithuanian artist Ciurlionis (1905–2005), now on show in the US.

The [full table of contents](#) of *Kultūros barai* 6/2005.

Varlik 7/2005



Summertime, and the livin' is easy. Turkish literary journal *Varlik* dedicates its July issue to the summer activity *par préférence*: being lazy. The contributions, however, are far from lacking energy. In a frenzied essay entitled "The geometry of laziness", biologist Rahmi G. Ögdül attempts to instigate a rebellion against the regulation of leisure. The main targets for his attack are tourism and the mass media. Anthropologist Bülent Usta publishes "An idly written article" that sketches the history and politics of idleness, a history oscillating between polar interpretations: idleness as the source of all evil or a virtue distinguishing the free man from the slave?

In other articles, Vecdi Çiracioglu praises vagabonds, bums, and loafers, and architect Nalan Bahçekapili notes that the coffee house's historical function as a politically potent public space has to do with its being a place for idle conversation.

The Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk has lately received a lot of attention around the world. And rightfully so; his latest books — the novel *Snow* and the autobiographic portrait of his hometown, Istanbul — are among the most interesting contemporary literature you can get in a bookstore. However, Pamuk is not the only Turkish author around. Alongside an interview with the poet Kemal Özer on his latest book, "Meeting in love", "Varlik" publishes texts on and by, among others, Dursun Akçam, the poet Necatigil, essayist and translator Azra Erhat, and novelist Aziz Nesin. The really young literature is represented by the winners of the 2005 Yasar Nabi Nayir Award for Young Writers, Alper Gencer and Mehmet Erkan.

The [full table of contents](#) of *Varlik* 7/2005.

Helicon 67 (2005)

Secrets — religious, literary, and poetic — are unearthed in the latest issue of the Israeli journal of poetry *Helicon*.

In his essay "Secret doctrine", Hagay Dagan follows the path of esoteric Judaism — the secret aspect of Judaism given only to a select few — from its origins, through the development of the Kaballah, up to its new-age incarnations. As opposed to biblical stories, rites, and observances (the physical manifestations of Judaism), the "unwritten gospel" is considered by some to be the true heart of Judaism. Dagan suggests that, rather than constantly searching for an eternal mystery, it is perhaps better to accept things as they are.

The search for a book or codex containing the ultimate secret is a popular topic in detective fiction. Invariably these stories end in this invaluable book being destroyed or lost just before the hero has had the chance to read it. Michael Hendelzaltz argues in an essay entitled "What fools these mortals be" that no book can hold the "ultimate secret", but that every book holds a secret to be discovered — in some cases many secrets for many different readers.

In "The traveller in the woods, the rutabaga in the cardboard box", Tzvia Litavsky explores the mysterious heart of poetry that is never given to the reader explicitly, but is ever-present in every poem. Litavsky looks at two poems in her attempt to find this mysterious heart: one by David Fogel, where time is blurred and hidden in order to show the dark place where man stands; and one by Aharon Shabtai, where a list of household objects forms a basis for spiritual life due to the objects' lack of metaphorical significance — creating the possibility to experience "the thing in itself".

The [full summary](#) of *Helicon* 67 (2005).

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Published 2005-07-12
Original in English
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