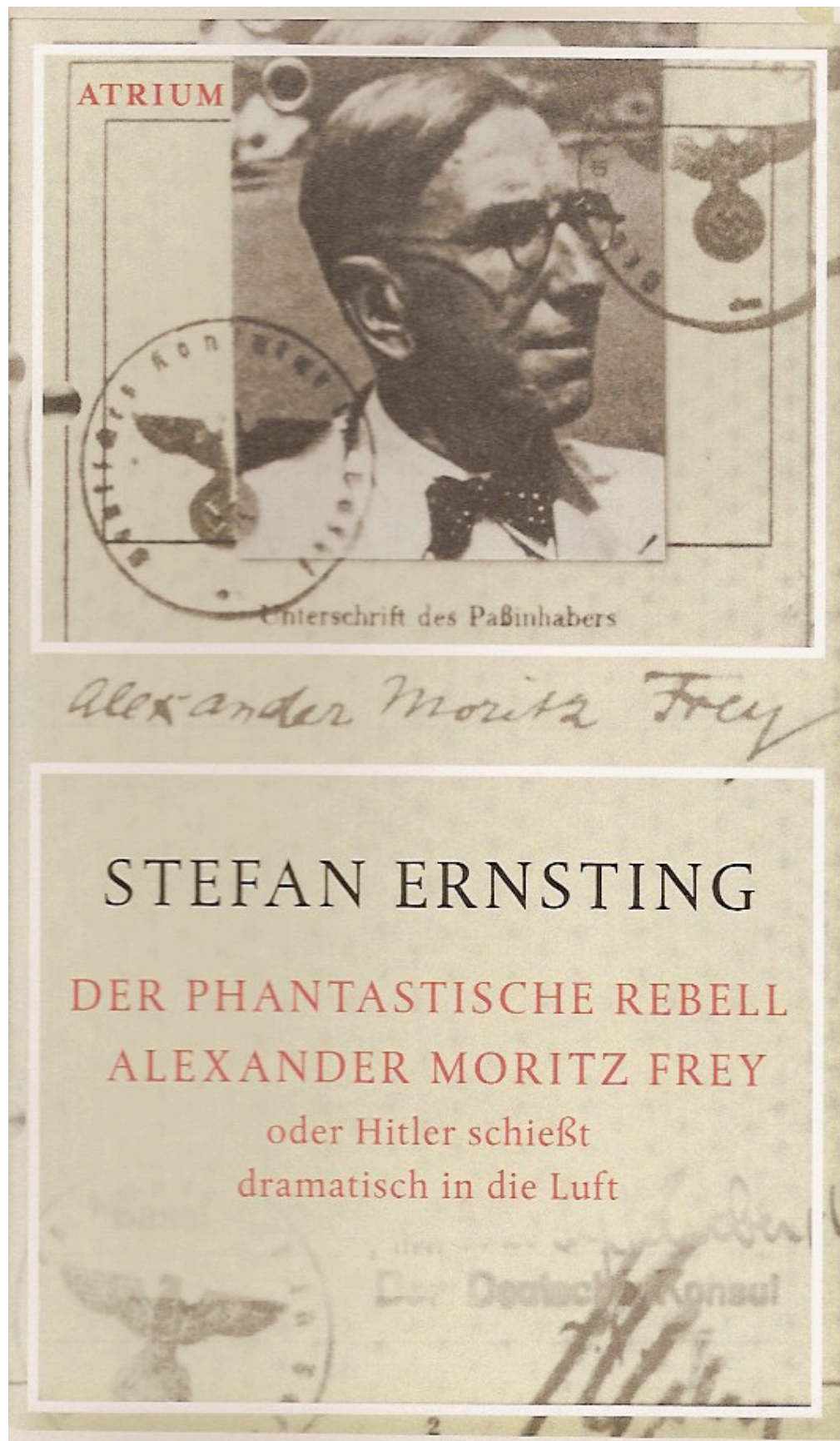


BOOK INFO



Stefan Ernsting

Phantastic rebel, The life of Alexander Moritz Frey or Hitler shoots dramatically into the air.

(Der phantastische Rebell Alexander Moritz Frey oder Hitler schießt dramatisch in die Luft)

PUBLISHER: Atrium Verlag, Zürich 2007, 240 pages, Hardcover
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About this book

“The vision had its origin in protest - it knew better than the newspapers 'how it really was'. Better because it possessed a stronger logic, more colourful expression, a looming veracity.” (Alexander Moritz Frey, 1929)

Following the book burnings on the 10th of May, 1933 German literary life largely went into exile. One of the least known authors forced to leave Germany at this time was Alexander Moritz Frey. He fled across the Austrian border in 1933, hidden in the boot of a friend's car and never returned to Germany. He died in exile in Switzerland in 1957.

Alexander Moritz Frey is the great unknown of German literature. His anti-war novel "Die Pflasterkästen"(The Cross Bearers, 1929) was mentioned in the same breath as "All quiet on the western front" and his book "Solneman der Unsichtbare"(Solneman the Invisible) is considered one of the great classics of the early years of phantastic literature. Both books are now out of print.

Frey wrote a great number of novels, novellas, short stories, poems and countless reviews in daily newspapers. He was a good friend of Thomas Mann, Heinrich Mann, Max Reinhardt and Hans Arp. His visionary satires and merciless taking to task of 'machine war' made him a well-regarded man, in Munich and beyond. Yet, attempts to find him in the relevant encyclopaedias will likely be in vain; at best he will appear in the lists of exiled authors that have were 'not amenable to reintegration into German literary history', as German bureaucrats would put it. Is there a reason why virtually no trace remains of the existence of this important author, a man who was highly lauded by Kurt Tucholsky, Peter Surkamp and W. E. Süßkind? Perhaps a former acquaintance has something to do with this, a certain choleric Austrian who Frey later described as a "gobbling turkey"?

From 1915 to 1918 Alexander Moritz Frey was a medic in the trenches on the

western front together with runner Adolf Hitler. In his private notebooks, an essay published after the war ("The unknown soldier") and fictional forays he provides us with a sober, ironic account of Hitler, a Hitler that already attracted attention with his opportunistic rabble-rousing. In various documents from his literary estate he paints a precise picture of lance-corporal Hitler, tales from the frontline that have thus far scarcely been used as primary source material.

"Phantastic Rebel" is a search for the traces of Alexander Moritz Frey's life, the life of a man who did not acquiesce to the demands of the Nazis and called in his novels for passive resistance. His deeply human way of opposing fascism, the playful wit of his books and his unusual tale of exile await this long overdue rediscovery. This book also analyses the cultural and political functions of German phantastic literature at the start of the 20th century and its influence on a cultural climate of irrationality which later manifested itself in the belief in an infallible and omnipresent leader, Hitler.

Links

Spiegel Online English review with excerpts:

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/0,1518,478359,00.html>

A.M Frey on MySpace: www.myspace.com/amfrey

German extract: www.perlentaucher.de/buch/26212.html

German excerpt: news.antville.org/stories/1445021

Press and reviews:

"How wonderful that this life, this writing and this wonderful man are being remembered again."(Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung, 10.07.2007)

"Alexander Moritz Frey is today just one of the unknown exiles whose story is being unearthed again 50 years after his death. Stefan Ernsting accomplishes this with his dedicated research and attention to detail. (...). The bibliography extends our knowledge of his published materials in a comprehensive appendix that lists all of his published works. This account is still rich in detail where little concrete information regarding Frey's life is to be found. Stefan Ernsting, author of the successful book "The Red Elvis. Dean Reed or the curious life of an American rockstar in the GDR", understands how to use general information about the lives of exiles living Switzerland and information about the lives of Frey's friends to fill the story out." (Lesart Nr.1/2007)

"Ernsting not only describes this author's life, he also describes the society of the Weimar Republic and its susceptibility to seduction by the Nazis. Following defeat in the First World War broad swaths of the population were addicted to fantastical myths(...). An enlightening biography that not only honours an important writer but

also investigates the influence of fantasy on German society at the close of Weimar Republic. Lastly, this is also an illuminating account of Hitler's road to power. " (ZDF_Aspekte: <http://www.ZDFde/inhalt/30/0,1872,5254334,00.html>)

"Stefan Ernsting's intimate account of this 'Phantastic Rebel', of his life and times is peppered with illuminating documents, rich materials and awakens curiosity in Frey's somewhat inaccessible works" (Literaturen Nr 2/2007).

"Stefan Ernsting shines as a meticulous collector and archive-hound." (Martin Ebel, Tages-Anzeiger, Zürich, 2.4.2007)

"Stefan Ernsting relates all of this in his recently published biography of Frey, which reads like a real page-turner"(Bernhard Setzwein, Bayerische Staatszeitung)

"In this book, journalist Stefan Ernsting (Berlin) really brings the personality and fate of the long since dead Frey (1881-1957) to life with lots of moving and historically interesting details"(Rudolf Grimm, dpa, 20.04.2007)

"Stefan Ernsting's rediscovery of Alexander Moritz Frey is a rediscovery of one of the classic authors of early fantasy writing.(...) Ernsting proves yet again his flair for unusual topics.(...) In a very readable style Stefan Ernsting follows the life of the author, who speaks for himself in extended quotations.(...) Frey was not interested in any romantic obfuscation of reality but rather provided a biting critique of it in his bizarre stories. Hence he did not succumb to the reactionary occult or esoteric ideas that were becoming increasingly influential in Germany at the time, ideas whose connection with the rise of national socialism Ernsting explains in short and pointed digressions" (Weser Kurier. 23.02.2007)

"This biography, which also includes a carefully assembled appendix of all the author's existing publications, provides a rich account, even when few concrete details of his life remain. Stefan Ernsting, author of the successful book "The Red Elvis: Dean Reed or the curious life of an American rockstar in the GDR" knows how to fill the gaps with information about the lives of exiles in Switzerland in general, and Frey's friends in particular"(Monika Melchert in "Neues Deutschland", 26.04.2007)

"Berlin-based journalist Stefan Ernsting's book really brings the personality and fate of the long since dead Frey(1881-1957) to life with lots of moving and historically interesting details". (Rudolf Grimm, Landeshuter Zeitung, 18.04.2007)

"One's interest in this repressed and forgotten author is awoken with quotes and previously unpublished passages and one hopes that this biography will be the start of an Alexander Moritz Frey renaissance." (Jörg Sundermeier, Berliner Zeitung, 19.04.2007)

"A rediscovery of A.M. Frey's work is long overdue! " (Bert Dahlmann, Westzeit, 02.04.2007)

"Alexander Moritz Frey has gone down in history as the writer who served in the

same regiment as Adolf Hitler in the First World War from 1915 to 1918. Hence he is one of the most important sources of information on the character of the dictator to be, already then a rabble-rouser. This acquaintance led later to doom for Frey, as he did not want to be pocketed by 'the movement'. The SA demolished his apartment in 1933 and Frey himself fled to Salzburg. For five long years Frey was a witness to the agonies of the young Austrian Republic. He described his experiences in the Salzburg novel "Heaven and Hell"(1954) a book, which on one hand is a roman a clef, on the other a work of magic realism. Frey's fantastical and humorous body of work unfortunately still awaits rediscovery. Stefan Ernsting's essayistic, relaxed biography is the first step"
(<http://rupertusbuch.at/buchtipps/buchtipps.htm>)

Other Reviews

- Daily Telegraph, London (07.05.2007)
- United Press International (07.05.2007)
- The Scotsman, Edinburgh (03.05.2007)
- Lübecker Nachrichten (03.05.2007)
- Bayerischer Rundfunk (03.05.2007)
- Spiegel International (03.04.2007)
- GlaubeAktuell.de (02.04.2007)
- Osthüringer Zeitung (24.03.2007)
- Tacheles, Jüdisches Wochenmagazin (16.03.2007)
- Neues Deutschland (22.03.2007)
- <http://blog.zvab.com/2006/12/13/alexander-moritz-frey-der-phantastische-satiriker/>

The book is still looking for foreign publishers.

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