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**Review of *A History of Migration from Germany to Canada, 1850-1939* By Jonathan Wagner**

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*A History of Migration from Germany to Canada, 1850-1939.* By Jonathan Wagner. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2006. ix + 284 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$85.00 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

German speakers have been important migrants to the Great Plains, but in Canada most came not from Germany, but from Eastern Europe. Given the low numbers that came to Canada from the *Reich* itself, Jonathan Wagner's study is more about explaining the country's failure to attract Germans than about their actual migration. According to Wagner, this failure can be explained by Canada's later and less complete industrialization, which meant that its "perceived needs could not win converts in the more industrialized Germany." While Canada was seeking immigrants to farm the wide-open spaces of the Canadian prairies, Germany was already an industrialized nation with few farmers left to be attracted.

Wagner's organization is chronological with chapters examining the 1850s and 60s, 1870 to 1890, 1890 to 1914, and 1919 to 1939. Each chapter examines the political and economic realities of the two countries, the methods of recruiting or restricting migrants, the agents and agencies that assisted them, and the conditions of travel. This organization contributes to one of the book's problems: excessive repetition. Wagner is forced to return frequently to the same conclusions: Canada's recruitment policies and promotional efforts were out of step with realities in Germany; its bias towards British immigrants prevented capturing a significant portion of the large flow

of Germans to North America. Although the much larger migration to the United States looms in the background of this study, it is seldom addressed explicitly. The one explanation offered—namely, that Germans did not come to Canada because there were few Germans already there—is somewhat circular and fails to satisfy.

Wagner is much more successful in analyzing the role of propaganda and immigration agents and agencies. He offers important and interesting insights into how an image of Canada, particularly the Canadian West, was created in comparison to that of the American West as portrayed in the widely read novels of James Fenimore Cooper and native German authors such as the popular Karl May, who emulated Cooper's style. The more "sober, peaceful Canada" portrayed by Germans who had travelled in Canada and had their reflections paid for and published by the Canadian government could not compete with this romanticized American West.

Wagner's analysis uses the framework of modernization as brought by industrialization and seeks to explain German migration to Canada in these terms. While his stated purpose may not be completely fulfilled, Wagner's study of German migration to Canada fills an important void in our understanding of host and sending countries' response to migration. In particular, his analysis of the production of images and perceptions of the migration process sheds new light on a neglected area of migration studies.

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