

German Literature in Bessarabia 11—Herbert Weiß

Source: *Deutscher Volkskalender für Bessarabien – 1935*
Tarutino

Press and Printed by *Deutschen Zeitung Bessarabiens*
Pages 142-144

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March, 2023

Source Location: <http://bit.ly/21v8lWY>
Under 1935 click — <urn:nbn:de:bvb:355-ubr13931-9>
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To have a better understanding of the following translation, it would serve you well if you were able to view German Literature in Bessarabia 01—Introduction.

[Note: Comments in square brackets in the document are those of the translator. I will be preserving the German in story (b) for reference to the Schwäbisch dialog.]

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[Translation Begins]

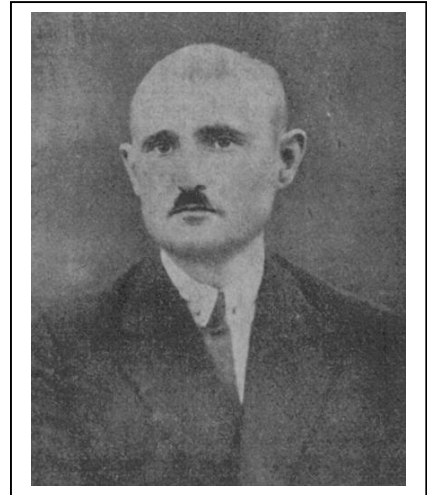
Herbert Weiß [Homo]

The author of the large Teplitz Chronicle is at the same time one of our best feature writers, his reports from Teplice not only have a local value, they are also at the same time valuable contributions to German literature. Born on 3 November, 1897, in Albota, where his father, Martin Weiß, was then a sexton-teacher, he attended the Tarutino German Boys' Grammar School from 1909 to 1916, where he was the best pupil of the Grammar School the whole time. Afterwards, he studied medicine for a year, but due to the war he could not continue his studies, so he became a folk school teacher. Since 1919, he has held this position in Teplitz.

a) European Balance of Power

Usually, there would be few new things to report from Teplitz; perhaps at most about the noteworthy natural phenomenon that some people also take care of internal humidification because of the damp weather, probably in order to preserve the "European Balance of Power". Lately, one sees on the streets, especially on market days, often again "swaying figures" (but not in the sense of Goethe), which do not exactly serve the village as a decoration. The fact that our

recruits have found it necessary this year to double the number of drums probably bears witness to a “warlike spirit” (if, for example, in Germany the boys would allow themselves such a thing, an interruption over the German danger would necessarily follow in the French parliament), but is difficult to reconcile with the stillness of Passiontide: The Russian says: шумим братци, снатшит диело дилем. In Teplitz, a boy’s prank has recently been discovered. A poor widow living with a homeowner noticed one day that the ceiling was getting damp and began to drip. The remarkable thing was that the drops spread a smell of wine. In order to determine the cause of this strange phenomenon (wine is known to be kept in cellars), she went to the floor of the house and, to her considerable astonishment, noticed a trickling wine barrel in the damp place. She reported the matter in the village chancellery, whereupon the mayor looked into the matter and stated the following: In the autumn, a Russian who had loaded a barrel of wine had spent the night on this farm. During his absence, a few enterprising young fellows ran about 10-12 buckets of wine into a barrel with the help of a hose and carried the same onto the “platform” (*Behne* [or *Bühne*]) to then have a friendly time with it in the long winter. But the fact that the barrel began to trickle was a prank of fate which was not considered in the program.



“Who did the mayor bring into the chancellery at the time?”

“What did they do, how was it announced?”

“The barrel brought it to light.”

b) Von der Kirbe und dem “Neuen”

Eins hätten wir wieder hinter uns. Und das wäre ein hochwichtiges Freudenfest, die Kirbe nämlich. Wie gewöhnlich haben wieder ganze Berge von Kuchen daran glauben müssen und hätte man den Wein, der an diesem nationaltage der biedereren Schwaben getrunken wurde, allen vorher gesammelt, so hätte man gewiß ein recht umfangreiches Faß dazu gebraucht. Während man am Vormittag in der Kirche dem Geber aller guten Gaben für die empfangenen Wohltaten dankte, wurde der Nachmittag fast aufschliesslich leiblichen Genüssen gewidmet. Warum soll sich der Bauer nicht auch einmal gütlich tun nach des Sommers Last und Hitze! Es ist nur einmal Kirbe im Jahr. “Ein Trunk in Ehren, wer wills verwehren? Trinkts Vöglein nicht vom Blütentau?” Na, so ganz harmlos wie der Blütentau ist der neue Wein übrigens nicht. Er verfügt bekanntlich über Bärenkräfte, gegen die sich selbst alle eingefleischten Trinker nicht behaupten können. Schon ein paar Gläschen genügen, um den Zecher in eine höhere Sphäre, wo alles in rosarotem Lichte erscheint, zu versetzen. Gar manchem geht dann das Gefühl für das Reelle ab und es heißt: “I weiß net, Hannes, seit wenn hosch denn du zwei Häuser ufm Hof, uf jedra Seit ois! Ich han doch noch gar nix drvo gehört, daß baut hosch... Ja, ja, mr kommt halt wenig untar d Leut... Und heut geht des mit dem Baua au viel schneller wie früher” — oder “Nochbr, i weiß nöt, worom i so schlecht auf de Füaß bin... No, wenn mr a bisle drübr nochdenkt, no ischs ja au koi Wundar! Was han i scho ällas durchgmacht... Der Kriag un no der Rheimatis... Na, ja, mr hots net leicht.” Es ist das ein ganz verflixt Kerl, der Saiber nämlich. Und gar sein Bruder, der Franzos, der hats faustdick hinter den Ohren!

b) About the Kirbe and the “New”

One thing we would have behind us again. And that would be a highly important celebration, namely the Church Anniversary Celebration (*Kirbe*). As usual, whole mountains of cakes (*Kuchen*) had to be made, and if the wine drunk on this national day by the sober Swabians had been collected beforehand, one would certainly have needed a rather bulky barrel. While in the morning in the church the giver of all good gifts was thanked for the benefits received, the afternoon was devoted almost exclusively to physical pleasures. Why shouldn't the farmer also once treat himself good-naturedly after the summer of stress and heat! It is *Kirbe* only once a year. “A drink in honor, who will deny it? Do not little birds drink from the blossom dew?” Well, by the way, the new wine is not as harmless as the blossom dew. It is known to have bear powers against which even all die-hard drinkers can not defend themselves. Just a few glasses are enough to transport the heavy drinker (*Zecher*) to a higher sphere, where everything appears in a rosy-red light. Some people then lose the feeling for the real and they say: “I don't know, Hannes, since when do you have two houses on the farmyard, one on each side! I have not yet heard anything about that, that you have built... Yes, yes, one comes very seldom among the people... And today things go much faster with construction than before” — or “Neighbor, I have no idea why I am not doing so good on my feet... Well, if one gives it a little thought, then it is not such a mystery! Of all the things which I have gone through... The war and now the rheumatism... Well, for sure, one doesn't have it easy.” It's a very devil of a fellow, that is to say the saber. And even his brother, the Frenchman, he is a sly dog [literally—he has a thick fist behind the ears]!

[Translation Ends]