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Emigration and Settlement Patterns of
German Communities in North America

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**New Germany in North America:
Origins, Process, and Responses
1815-1860**

by

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**Emigration and Settlement Patterns
of German Communities in
North America**

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Abstract

The **liberal-national** movement of the 1830s and 1840s attempted to concentrate the mass **emigration in colonies** so to preserve "**Germandom**" abroad. Many settlement projects were made, only few executed. Largest among them those of the Gießen-Society and the **Texas Association**.

(The paper is based on my dissertation
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Mass Emigration, National Group Settlements,
and Liberal Colonialism, 1815-1860"
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Quotes from German sources have mostly been translated.)

(1) Introduction

When the young German poet Ludwig Börne in his Paris exile in the year 1832 was asked to join an acquaintance of his in emigrating to the United States, he jokingly replied:

I would be rather inclined to do that, if I wasn't afraid that, as soon as there were forty-thousand of us on the Ohio, and there would then be formed the new state, thirty-nine thousand nine-hundred and ninety-nine of those good German souls would pass a resolution to send for one of their loved young princes in Germany to be their Head of State.¹

In a nutshell, Börne here described all the problems involved with the idea of forming a German state, a "New Germany" on America's frontier. How come Börne immediately associated the idea of a German state with the prospect of emigrating to America's West? And was he right in assuming that Germans would cling together and prefer being ruled by a monarch rather than becoming members of the American republic? What was so ludicrous about the whole idea?

This paper explores two main theses: firstly, the idea of forming a New Germany in North America was a projection of the dreams of a united, strong, prosperous, and culturally dominant Germany, which could not be fulfilled in Europe at the time. Secondly, in so doing, the schemers almost entirely disregarded the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the emigrants and misjudged completely the reality of the North American continent.

(2) Origin and character of the idea of a New Germany

The idea of a New Germany had been born in the late 1810's out of a mixture of statesmanly paternalism and romantic adventurism. The first wave of mass-emigration from the devastated southwestern German states to North America in 1816/17 had not only put into question the existing state of affairs in the petty German kingdoms but had also aroused the patriotic spirit of some observers. Among them, the young administrative accountant Friedrich List and the representative of the Netherlands at the Bundestag in Frankfurt, Hans Christoph Baron von Gagern.

Friedrich List

List was charged by the Württemberg government to report on the reasons for and conditions of the unheard-of mass emigration.² The young man's observations led him to conceive of the role emigrants could play in advancing the German national economy. As he later admitted, in the mid 1820s, he toyed with the idea that the Germans in North America could keep their language and customs and could become both producers of raw-materials for the home-country as well as consumers of manufactured

¹ Ludwig Börne, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 13. Theil: *Briefe aus Paris, 1832-1833*, 5. Theil (Paris: L. Brunet, 1834), 32/33.

² The report is printed in parts in: Günter Moltmann, ed. (with Ingrid Schöberl), *Aufbruch nach Amerika: Friedrich List und die Auswanderung aus Baden und Württemberg 1816/17. Dokumentation einer sozialen Bewegung* (Tübingen: Wunderlich, 1979), 120ff.

goods from Germany. List even planned to found a German settler-colony on his own account in the Michigan territory.¹ When living in the States, he quickly lost interest in the project. Nevertheless, he integrated the idea of emigrant-colonies in his theory of world trade. The possession of settlement colonies to him was a natural outflow of the superiority of the "germanic race" over other races, the settlers were to spread material civilization and political culture over the globe. While England concentrated on Africa and Asia, List in 1846 thought Central- and South America (including Texas) to be natural pray for the Germans.²

Trade and emigration

List exemplified the curious combination of liberal political thought with a pre-imperialist expansionism, which came to be a hallmark of the liberal-national movement in the 1830s and 1840s. The economic profits made by the different trades connected with the emigration were felt most strongly in the places of embarkment such as Bremen and Hamburg. The Hanse towns welcomed the opportunity for passenger traffic on their ships sailing across the Atlantic. It cheapened the back-freight consisting of tobacco, tar, or cotton.³ Hanseatic trade companies also established branches in the American seaports and slowly developed a network of associates in the inland towns. Quite naturally, they contributed to greater sales of German products.⁴ Some were so enthusiastic about the prospects of trade in the wake of mass emigration that they proposed the German Customs Union should negotiate protective agreements with the United States government. German settlements were to be given special rights concerning the importation of German goods.⁵ Others demanded the installment of warehouses in connection with the creation of special emigration consuls sent by the German states to all major American cities.⁶ Needless to say, nothing came of those plans.

As the mass-emigration set in again after 1830, a whole wave of pamphlets, articles, and other public announcements began to espouse the idea of organizing the emigration along national lines. Those liberals interested

¹ Draft letter to Martin Van Buren (Oct. 21, 1930), in: Friedrich List, *Schriften, Reden, Briefe*, vol. 2: Grundlinien einer politischen Oekonomie und andere Beiträge aus der amerikanischen Zeit, 1825-1832, ed. by William Notz (Berlin: Hobbing, 1931), 303.

² Friedrich List, *Ueber den Wert und die Bedingungen einer Allianz zwischen Großbritannien und Deutschland* (1846; repr. Leipzig: Reclam, 1920), p. 25.

³ Rolf Engelsing, *Bremen als Auswanderungshafen, 1683-1880* (Bremen: Schönemann, 1961), 49-85.

⁴ Friedrich Prüser, "Bremer Kaufleute als Wegbereiter Deutschlands in Übersee," *Koloniale Rundschau*, vol. 32, no. 2 (July 1942), 75. Cf. Walter Struve, *Die Republik Texas, Bremen und das Hildesheimische: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte von Auswanderung, Handel und gesellschaftlichem Wandel im 19. Jahrhundert. Mit den Briefen eines deutschen Kaufmanns und Landwirts in Texas, 1844-1845* (Hildesheim: Lax, 1983), 11.

⁵ Eduard Süskind, *Die Auswanderung und das deutsche Vaterland: Ein Wort an das deutsche Volk* (Ulm: Heerbrandt & Thämel, 1845), 14.

⁶ Carl August Spiegelthal, *Die Organisation des Auswanderungswesens und ihr Einfluß auf die deutschen Handelsverhältnisse...* (Leipzig: R. Hartmann, 1851), 24 and 27f.

in the social effects of emigration demanded individual freedom to move and called for national remedies. In that sense, they contributed to a slow but certain advancement towards safer and healthier transportation, legal guarantees etc. On the other hand, they thought the emigration to be a huge loss of manpower and capital. In consequence, the Germans abroad had to be organized in ways useful to themselves and the mother-country. At least their "Germandom" should not get lost to the nation.

Hans Christoph Baron von Gagern

No one possibly did more in arousing the public's eye to the necessity of so doing than Hans Christoph von Gagern. In the late 1810s he had written several memoranda to the German *Bundestag* asking for unified action. He also sent his cousin Moritz von Fürstenwärther on a mission to the United States in order to garner more reliable data on the conditions of emigrating and settling. Gagern surely was a patriot, and convinced that the Germans could fare better in the New World if they stuck together. In fact, one of his instructions to Fürstenwärther was to be on the look-out for areas particularly suited to German group settlements.¹ As a life-time member of the Upper Chamber of the Grand-Duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt, Gagern continued to raise the subject of emigration and the necessity to organize it nationally well into the late 1840s. At the same time he became the spiritus rector of many emigration associations. But Gagern was never a proponent of a completely separate German community in North America. Rather, he wished the German settlers in America to become a colony of Germany in the ancient, Greek way. They were to be seen as autonomous spin-offs of the mother-country, bringing German culture to the prairies and generally raising America's conscience of and friendship with Germany.² The concept of such an informal kind of colony received wide support by many of the writers on emigration matters. Germans were to penetrate the western part of the United States and thus to achieve at least a regional predominance. In the literature of the day there is a strong undercurrent espousing the idea of the Germans' cultural superiority. It would thrive even if the Germans were to americanize in more superficial ways. On the other hand, there was also an element of conscious departure from a repressive political system. The New Germany was to fulfill the republican ideals of many liberals.

Romanticism and the agitation for a New Germany

It is the romantic notion of the "German fatherland" which reached "as far as the tone of the German tongue,"³ or which was "of a higher kind"⁴ that allowed contemporaries to watch the flow of countrymen going west and

¹ No. 14, "Instructionen für den Freyherm Moritz von Fürstenwärther (zum Behuf seiner Reise und Sendung nach Amerika), Abgereist von Frankfurt a.M., den 17. Juni 1817," in: M. v. Fürstenwärther, *Der Deutsche in Nordamerika* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1818), 6.

² Speech Gagern's in the Upper Chamber of the Grand-Duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt (Feb. 8, 1847), print. in: *Der deutsche Auswanderer*, no. 8 (1847), 117.

³ Ernst Moritz Arndt, cited in: Hagen Schulze, *Der Weg zum Nationalstaat: Die deutsche Nationalbewegung vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Reichsgründung* (München: dtv, 1985), 69.

⁴ W. Frank, *Deutschland in Amerika: Das einzig rechte Ziel aller deutschen Auswanderer* (Kassel: Luckhardt, 1839), IV.

believing optimistically in an expansion of the German nation. In 1847, the liberal professor Robert Mohl thought the German people would never fulfill their mission, if they didn't do their bit in the current spreading of "European morals and nationality over the other continents." Germandom was equally worth to expand like the other "Culturvölker."¹

The notion of "colony" in the early 1800s vascillated between the meaning of what was sometimes called the "old" versus the "new system" of colonization. The old system was exemplified by the former British, Spanish or French colonial possessions. These were politically dependent entities settled almost exclusively by subjects from the mother-country. Trade was heavily controlled. This system broke apart beginning with the American Revolution. The new system of colonization was much more informal. Trade relations were based on the idea of a more or less free intercourse. The new system relieved the former colonial powers from administrative and financial burdens and still offered hefty profits while providing geographic outlets for the relative overpopulation at home.

Thus the beginning agitation for a German settler-colony in North America came at a time when dependent colonies had come out of fashion. In addition, it was quite clear that neither the German Union nor any of its member states had the inclination and power to acquire colonial property. The agitation for a German colony therefore usually sought limited goals. Only in extreme cases did the authors phantasize about possible new empires. In 1830 or 1840, Germany's might consisted of human bodies seeking their luck elsewhere. If there was to be a larger role for Germany in the world, these emigrants somehow had to become carriers of Germandom. Thus the notion of "colony" by and large took on the meaning of settler-colony.

The character of such colonies was seen generally to fall under 3 categories. There was:

- (1) the idea of a "focal point," which would serve as a magnet to further immigration, eventually leading to the germanization of a whole region or state;
- (2) the plan to form a separate community (state) from the start but as member of the United States; and
- (3) the intention to create a German republic entirely independent from the United States and to provide a premium of interchange with Germany.²

Ludwig Gall, Karl Follen, and Gottfried Duden

In 1819, Gagern's activities spurred the young administrator Ludwig Gall from Trier to plan an emigration-society of his own. But the Prussian government was unwilling to charter it. Gall thus left for Bern and, in 1819, led about 240 emigrants to Indiana. He then travelled throughout the Pennsylvania and Ohio German settlements and formed the plan of creating

¹ Robert Mohl, "Ueber Auswanderung", [article of 1847] *Der deutsche Auswanderer*, no. 3 (Jan. 19, 1850), 41.

² Wilhelm Weber, "Die Zeitungen in den Vereinigten Staaten mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der in deutscher Sprache erscheinenden Blätter," *Das Westland*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1837), 200-202; Cf. "Gelegentliche Gedanken über die neueren deutschen Emigrations-Projecte," *Janus*, vol. 2 (1) (1846), 700/01.

a "Deutschheim," a German city, which should become the nucleus of further German penetration.¹ The political refugee Karl Follen who had been the leader of the radical Gießen based fraternity "The Blacks" in the early 1820s wrote a secret pamphlet describing his idea of a "free abode [Freystätte] for oppressed Germans and a source of income" in the form of a German university in the North East of the United States. Drawing many Germans to settle nearby, the university would, Follen hoped, develop into "a state which would be represented in Congress...[and] which would be a model for the mother-country."² When he arrived in the United States, Follen soon gave up the plan and became a professor at Harvard College instead.

The most well known German traveller to America espousing the idea of a New Germany has been Gottfried Duden. In 1824, Duden went to Missouri and experimented with a farm. It was to be his model for a successful settlement of his countrymen. Upon returning to Germany, he published a flamboyant report. Duden soon came in for a battery of critique, for he had given too romantic an image of life on the frontier. But at first, his talk of a "rejuvenated Germania" west of the Mississippi, of a "Pflanzerstadt" that could become the magnet of German culture in North America fell on fertile ground. At least five large emigration societies formed and actually went to Missouri (and onwards) as a result: associations from Berlin, Mühlhausen/ Thuringia, Frankfurt, Solingen, and Gießen.

Preferred areas of settlement

Beginning in the early 1830s, many authors delineated in some detail where Germans would find the best opportunity to settle in common and form a state of their own. For some, this state was to be part of the United States, others recommended areas in the far west. Jonas Gudehus in 1829 thought the western territories in North America to be best suited. If asked by a well-led emigration society, the American government would surely grant them a large piece of land.³ Karl von Sparre believed, the German nation should not forego colonies, shipping and sea-trade, nay, it should "give the world the example of what German strength and endurance" were able to achieve. The emigrants should be led to Texas, "form German colonies there and receive ordinances by the German cabinets."⁴ Traugott Bromme, usually quite sober an observer of American realities, had drafted a plan for a German settler colony in Michigan as early as 1834.⁵ In 1847,

¹ L. Gall, *Meine Auswanderung nach den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika im Frühjahr 1819 und meine Rückkehr nach der Heimath im Winter 1820*, 2 vols. (Trier: Gall, 1822), vol. 1, 375/76.

² The pamphlet exists as a copy in the Documents of the Central-Enquiry Commission of Mayence as part of the "Untersuchungssachen gegen den Gymnasialdirektor L. Snell zu Wetzlar (1819/20)," Zentrales Staatsarchiv Dienststelle Merseburg [ZStAM], Ministerium d. Innern, Rep. 77, Tit. 25, O. Litt. S. 14, sheet 184ff.

³ Jonas H. Gudehus, *Meine Auswanderung nach Amerika im Jahre 1822 und meine Rückkehr in die Heimat 1825...* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1829), part 1, 4-6.

⁴ Karl von Sparre, *Die Auswanderungen und Ansiedlungen der Deutschen als Nationalsache, insonderheit Preußens Betheiligung an der Auswanderungsfrage* (Gießen: Ricker, 1847), 26.

⁵ Traugott Bromme, *Plan einer in Nord-Amerika zu gründenden deutschen Kolonie* (Baltimore: C. Scheld, 1834), 13.

he still reminded his fellow countrymen, how easy it would be to unify the four million [sic] Germans in North America and establish a "new Germany" with them.¹ Another widely read author of emigration handbooks, Ernst Ludwig Brauns, asked whether "the German nation should never cease to see in her tribal folks abroad the apes and donkeys of all nations" and whether a guided emigration would not be able to create a new Germany on the regions beyond the Mississippi, in an area "where there is not yet another European or Anglo-american nation trying to impress their spirit to all other nationalities settling next to them."² For him, the southwestern Pacific coast of California was to be the blossoming "Neudeutschland."³ In 1846, the editors of one of the two major emigration journals, the *Allgemeine Auswanderungs-Zeitung* printed in Rudolstadt, were convinced that not even the nativist movement in America could prevent the Germans from "germanizing" the West and sending likable Representatives to Congress.⁴

Opinion during the 1848/49 Revolution

During the revolutionary year of 1848, the rhetoric regarding Germany's chances of acquiring colonies gained unprecedented fervor. The *Nürnberger Kourier* supported the idea of an exclusively German state in Northamerica's West because it alone could become a resceptacle for Germany's growing and dangerous proletariat which in turn would serve the mother-country's export interests and at the same time would spread the "germanic element."⁵ Even the composer Richard Wagner enthusiastically exclaimed: "Now let us sail across the sea in ships and found a young Germany there." The colony should be better than the English or Spanish ones' had been. "We want to do it German and gorgeous: from sun-rise to sun-set, the sun should behold a beautiful, free Germany..."⁶

Emigration societies

The year 1848 also marked a mushrooming of new emigrant-societies. The earliest ones had been founded as a side-effect of the 1830 revolution. Generally speaking, there were two types of societies: (1) societies, which

¹ Traugott Bromme, "Der Nationalverein für Auswanderung und Colonisation", *Der deutsche Auswanderer*, no. 9 (1847), 136.

² Ernst Ludwig Brauns, cit. by Hildegard Meyer, *Nordamerika im Urteile des deutschen Schrifttums bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts: Eine Untersuchung über Kürnberger's "Amerika-Müden," Mit einer Bibliographie* (Hamburg: Friedrichsen, de Gruyter & Co., 1929), 37.

³ Ernst L. Brauns, *Neudeutschland in Westamerika oder welches ist die zur Ansiedlung für auswandernde Deutsche geeignete Weltgegend?...* (Lemgo: Meyer, 1847), 77/78.

⁴ "Die deutsche Auswanderung und das deutsche Vaterland," *Allgemeine Auswanderungs-Zeitung*, no. 5 (Oct. 27, 1846), 37.

⁵ *Nuernberger Kourier* (April 1848), repr. in: *Allgemeine Auswanderungs-Zeitung*, no. 18 (May 1, 1848), 278, and *Der deutsche Auswanderer*, no. 21 (May 20, 1848), 322f.

⁶ Richard Wagner, Speech before the Patriotic Society of Dresden, print. in the *Dresdner Anzeiger* (June 14, 1848) and repr. in: Karl Friedrich Glasenapp, *Das Leben Richard Wagners*, 5th ed. (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1910), vol. 2, 532.

were set up by emigrants themselves in order to provide mutual assistance and which were usually disbanded once the the members had reached their destination [= mutual emigration societies] ; (2) societies, which were founded by people not intending to emigrate, but wishing to spread useful knowledge and to help individuals or groups actually emigrating. They were usually guided by altruistic or speculative motives or both [= support societies] . In the 1830s, the associations of the first kind were more numerous than the latter ones, in the 1840s the proportion was the reverse.

In both categories, the borderline between associations formed for pragmatic reasons and associations formed for patriotic ones was quite blurred. There is a slight tendency among the Germany based "support-societies" to favor patriotic motives more than the settler-run "mutuals." The most high-aimed society of the second kind was the "National Association for Emigration and Colonization" founded by the teacher Dr. Heinrich Künzel and the chairman of the Hessian Geographical Society, Lauteschläger, in May 1847. It was supposed to unify the activities of at least two dozen other emigration support societies all over Germany. It formed branches in many states. Künzel realized the spuriousness of forming dependent colonies and therefore supported the opinion of most of the other emigration authors who favored informal German settler colonies. F. A. Neumann, the president of the Silesian branch in Breslau wrote:

What the German needs is space--a new and larger field for his activities, and America offers just that in unlimited quantity.. He [the German] is welcome because there is space enough for everybody; the native is not jealous of him, since he knows that the augmentation of society will raise and improve the strength and life of the whole as well as of the individuals.¹

The mid-west, Texas, Upper-California and the Oregon territory would offer the space the Germans needed.

The "Central Emigration Association" in Cologne and Düsseldorf promised to pay particular attention to the "concentration of the emigration into certain states of America so that completely German colonies would form there, and that land be acquired in America's interior in order to resell it to the emigrants."² This last sentence points to the method by which these associations were meant to work: as long as one could not get ahold of government subsidies, private investors were supposed to provide the necessary capital. The associations then intended to send emissaries to North America where they were to find suitable land and acquire it.³ The land was subsequently advertized in Germany. Emigrants could then buy options on the land or--once arrived--pay the full price. For the settlers, this system had the advantage of not wasting time and money in searching for land. For the associations it would fulfill both the purposes of realizing

¹ *Der deutsche Auswanderer*, no. 28 (July 8, 1848), 435/6.

² Governor of the Prussian Rhine-Province Eichmann to Ministry of the Interior, Coblenz (July 18, 1848), Landeshaupt-Archiv Koblenz [LHA] : Best. 403, no. 7184, sheet 290.

³ Report of the "National Association for Emigration and Colonization," *Der deutsche Auswanderer*, no. 2 (Jan. 8, 1848), 22. Cf. By-laws of the "Central Emigration Association at Leipzig," *Der deutsche Auswanderer*, no. 34 (Aug. 19, 1848), 534.

profits from the resale of land and concentrating the settlers according to the liberal-national lore.¹

So much for the theory. In reality, very few German support-societies did purchase land, but most did their utmost in interesting emigrants for certain regions--so to at least achieve the germanizing settlement pattern they had emphasized in their by-laws and brochures. The Hessian branch of the "National Association for Emigration and Settlement" devised a full-fledged plan for a settler-colony,² sent emissaries and helped transport a few hundred emigrants to America--who apparently dispersed. The Württemberg branch commissioned the drafting of two settlement plans, one was done by the branch's founder and president, Johannes von Werner--who also held a high position in the finance administration of the kingdom--the other by the American consul in Stuttgart, Carl Ludwig Fleischmann. The latter's plan was naturally free of any patriotic sentiments and stressed the profit motive.³ The Baden branch of the "National Association" effected the resettlement of 944 persons.⁴

The nuances of all these plans are unimportant. What is important is to note that there was a broad movement for the organization of the emigration along patriotic lines. It was basically made up of middle-class intellectuals, writers, journalists, hobby-travellers, mid-level bureaucrats, teachers, and members of the professional class. Most of them shared a great belief in the ability of organizations to funnel the emigration into venues that could be useful for the mother-country. They also shared the demand that the governments should take up the issue and lend their support.

Cabinet-Governments

The call for the state was a typical phenomenon of the liberal-national movement. But the cabinets in the 39 sovereign states and city-states of the German Union with few exceptions did not regard the organization of settler colonies as within their duty, let alone power. But the agitation going on outside of the governments did not pass unnoticed. When Hans Christoph von Gagern in 1840, once again, called for some action in the Hessian Upper Chamber, he propped the Minister of State, du Thil, to give a full explanation of the cabinet's emigration policy. In the next session, du Thil declared that Germany lacked men of independent means and a broad horizon who would position themselves at the helm of colonization societies

¹ By-laws of the "Central Association for German Overseas Settlement," *Der deutsche Auswanderer*, no. 47 (Nov. 18, 1848), 740.

² "Plan einer geregelten deutschen Auswanderung und Ansiedlung in den vereinigten Staaten Nordamerika's mit besonderer Berücksichtigung unbemittelter Auswanderer," *Der deutsche Auswanderer*, no. 42ff. (Oct. 14, 1848), 662ff.

³ Johannes von Werner, *Plan einer deutschen Auswanderung und Ansiedlung in den Vereinigten Staaten Nordamerika's mit besonderer Berücksichtigung unbemittelter Auswanderer...* (Reutlingen: Mäcken, 1848). Carl Ludwig Fleischmann, *Plan für deutsche Auswanderung und Ansiedlung (beziehungsweise einer Reihe von Ansiedelungen) in den vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika...* (Stuttgart: Köhler, 1849).

⁴ Th. Mandel, *Die Tätigkeit der Auswanderungsorganisationen um die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Südwestdeutschland*, unpubl. Ph.D., Frankfurt a.M. (1922), 90/1 and 93/4.

as they did in Great Britain. In Germany, the time had come for the governments to take the place of private entrepreneurs and help organize the emigration in a grand style. Emigration was the preferred way to relieve the state from the dangerous overpopulation. The inauguration of American President Tyler had now given rise to the hope that an emigration-agreement could be reached with the United States. If the Assembly committed funds to the purpose, he, du Thil, was willing to immediately begin negotiations with Washington.¹ This was an unusual departure from received policies. Apparently, Hesse-Darmstadt did try to negotiate with the Tyler administration, but to no avail.²

Several prominent politicians in other state-assemblies also championed the case of the emigrants. Among them Karl Theodor Welcker of the Grand-Duchy of Baden, co-editor of the famous Brockhaus *Encyclopedia*, who in 1842 lamented that the Germans in North America lacked the sufficient unity required for a profitable interchange with the fatherland. He therefore demanded the founding of German settler colonies in northern Brazil.³ Another deputy in the Lower Chamber of the Duchy of Nassau's Assembly, in 1846 said the time had come when one had to take the patriotic dream of a German colony and a German fleet out of the hands of poets. Treaties with overseas powers should be enacted, and emigration-consulates set up by the German Union.⁴

None of these demands came to anything. In a way, that didn't matter much for the agitators. Since government support was lacking, the schemers continued to be free to rejoice in the most far-flung dreams of future success. They were never really in danger of having to prove their plans right. The situation changed with the advent of the revolution, or so it seemed.

The National Assembly of 1848/49

The freedom to emigrate was codified in section VI, art. I, § 136 of the Imperial Constitution of March 1849.⁵ But there were only a few delegates asking the central government to do more. Men like Professor Johann Ludwig Tellkamp, Carl Theodor Gevekoth, and Dr. August Ziegert wished to have the emigrants keep their right of nationality even abroad and argued for close relations of the mother-country with "Germandom" abroad. No one was more direct in his demands for a German colony than the high

¹ Memorandum of Minister of State du Thil, Darmstadt (Feb. 17, 1842), a copy in: ZStAM, Ministerium d. Innern, Rep. 77, Tit. 226, no. 73, vol. 1.

² Georg Smolka, "Auswanderung und auslandsdeutsche Kulturpolitik im vormärzlichen Preußen," *Jahrbuch des Reichsverbundes für die katholischen Auslandsdeutschen* (1933/34), 133.

³ *Verhandlungen der Ständekammer des Großherzogtums Baden im Jahre 1841/42*, Protokolle der 2. Kammer, 3. Protokollheft, p. 143ff., cit. by Hans Fenske, "Imperialistische Tendenzen in Deutschland vor 1866: Auswanderung, überseeische Bestrebungen, Weltmachtträume," *Historisches Jahrbuch*, Bd. 97/98 (1978), 353.

⁴ *Verhandlungen der Landes-Deputierten-Versammlung des Herzogtums Nassau von dem Jahre 1846* (Wiesbaden: Scholz, n.D.), [session of May 4, 1846], 266-273.

⁵ *Dokumente der Deutschen Politik und Geschichte von 1848 bis zur Gegenwart*, vol. 1: Die Reichsgründung und das Zeitalter Bismarcks, 1848-1890, ed. by Johannes Hohlfeld (Berlin: Wendler, 1951), 63/4.

school superintendent Friedrich Schulz from Weilburg. He advocated the sending of an expert commission to North America who were to acquire the healthiest regions there. Surely, the imperial government would face no difficulties "to get from the United States large sections of land under conditions more favorable than the individual could." Schulz actually preferred German colonization in the East, along the Danube river, but as long as there was no Greater Germany in sight, he recommended the emigration to the great streams of North America:

On the shores of the great ocean, a powerful and gorgeous New Germany can arise, which will strengthen considerably our natural friendship with the United States. But if we do not hurry, we might come too late even in America, at least for large scale settlements, which could exercise an independent influence.¹

Curiously enough, the assembly applauded enthusiastically but nothing practical was done in consequence. The only measure taken remotely connected with the colonial plans was to subsidize the tour around the world of German writer Friedrich Gerstäcker who had promised the Imperial Government to report on the conditions and prospects of German settler communities abroad. Gerstäcker in 1849 actually went to South America, but only briefly stayed in California before returning via the South Sea.² An explanation for the general acceptance of invectives such as Schulz's may lie in the fact that they expressed the newly kindled spirit of pride in the German nation. Germany now demanded her place in the world. It comes at no surprise that high hopes were connected with the attempted deployment of an Imperial fleet whose first purpose, of course, would have been to break the Danish blockade of the Baltic Sea.³ But some also thought the fleet could also be an instrument to protect German settlements and trade interests abroad.⁴

The plan for a Prussian California

¹ *Stenographischer Bericht über die Verhandlungen der deutschen constituirenden Nationalversammlung zu Frankfurt a. M.*, ed. by Franz Wigard (Frankfurt a. M.: Sauerländer, 1849), vol. 8, 5721.

² The pertinent documents are in the Bundesarchiv Außenstelle Frankfurt a. M. [BAFfm], DB 58/181. Cf. Günter Moltmann, "Überseeische Siedlungen und weltpolitische Spekulationen: Friedrich Gerstäcker und die Frankfurter Zentralgewalt 1849," in: *Rußland, Deutschland, Amerika*, ed. by G. Moltmann, Alexander Fischer, and Klaus Schwabe (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1979), 56-72.

³ Public agitation for a fleet had been widespread for quite some time. The well established *Allgemeine Zeitung* from Augsburg carried many articles on the necessity of a German fleet, e.g. no. 335, suppl. (Nov 30, 1840), 266f.; no. 74, suppl. (March 15, 1841), 587f.; no. 197 (July 16, 1843), 1537. Cf. Max Bär, *Die deutsche Flotte von 1848-52, nach den Akten der Staatsarchive zu Berlin und Hannover* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1898); Günter Moltmann, *Atlantische Blockpolitik im 19. Jahrhundert: Die Vereinigten Staaten und der deutsche Liberalismus während der Revolution von 1848/49* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1973).

⁴ Ernst Dieffenbach, "Deutsche Auswanderung und Colonieen," Memorandum to the National Assembly at Frankfurt (May 1848), print. in: *Der deutsche Auswanderer*, no. 23 (June 3, 1848), 355.

It is an irony of history that the very same Danish fleet that was to be fought in 1848 played a prominent and positive part in the most far-flung colonial plans ever to be espoused by German politicians in the first half of the nineteenth century. This was the plan to acquire Upper-California from Mexico. The story began in 1837, when the Prussian chargé d'affaires in Mexico, Friedrich Baron von Gerolt, was asked by Mexican president Anastasio Bustamente whether the Berlin government would not like to purchase the northern-most province Alta-California. The Mexicans had just gone through the trauma of the Texan revolution, which had been a direct consequence of the influx of American settlers. They could expect the same thing happening to California. Before such an event took place, it was much more sensible trying to make a profit from the abundant land and establish a foreign buffer-state on one's northern border and thereby check the expansion of the hated "Yankees." Gerolt reported back to Berlin several times, mentioning the prospects of leading the German emigration to this part of the world in glowing terms.¹ But Prussia did not harbor overseas intentions, not in the least because she did not have a fleet.²

A few years later, the idea crept up again in the correspondence of the former U.S. Senator William Hogan from New York to his friend, the Prussian Consul in London Bernhard Hebel.³ Hogan also talked to the Prussian Minister at Washington, Friedrich von Rönne. Rönne himself had just visited the American West and had been impressed about the many German settlers there. Something, he was sure, could be done to concentrate them. So he enthusiastically entered into the scheme and started private talks on his own account with the Mexican Minister in Washington, Juan Nepomuceno Almonte. Rönne then sent private messages to his counterpart in London, Carl Josias Bunsen,⁴ who himself was a close friend of the new king, Friedrich Wilhelm IV. Bunsen, for his part, had just spent some time meditating about the growing social tensions in Britain and the ensuing necessity of finding a social safety-valve for the disaffected proletariat. He clearly saw the advantages Britain had with the possibility of sending large groups of people into settler colonies of her own, in Australia and New Zealand. So Rönne's recommendation came at the right time and was, after all, not so unusual.

Bunsen wrote to the king, describing all the advantages a Prussian California would offer for Germany's trade and social stability.⁵ He also vented Rönne's idea to employ the Danish fleet in order to secure the colonial possession on the Pacific. Denmark was to become a full-fledged member of the German Customs Union and, in turn, offer her gun-ships. The price for California was never mentioned in specific but later Rönne

¹ Gerolt to Ministry of exterior Affairs [AA] , Mexico (Oct. 1, 1837), Library of Congress [LoC] : Preußen, AA, Abt. III, Rep. 1, Auswanderungen außer Europa, no. 2.

² Minister of State von Werther to King Friedrich Wilhelm III. (June 8, 1838), ZStAM: Geheimes Zivilkabinett, 2.2.1., no. 13356, sheet 1ff.

³ Copies of the correspondence in Carl Josias Bunsen's despatch no. 55 to AA, London (Aug. 16, 1842), ZStAM: Min. d. ausw. Angel., 2.4.1., Abt. I, no. 5272.

⁴ Rönne to Bunsen, private, New York (Nov. 14, 1842 and Dec 12, 1842), LoC: Preußen, AA, Centralbüro, Abt. II. D., Acta betr. das Project der Acquisition von Californien, 1843, Nr. 5. The ZStAM does not have the originals any longer, probably they disappeared during WW II.

⁵ See note 42.

remembered the figure to have been 6 million Dollar.¹ Friedrich Wilhelm in 1842/43 was not an adventurous soul and his advisors were extremely skeptical about the viability of the project. Most likely it was the old Alexander von Humboldt, a regular guest at the royal couple's intimate *soupers*, whom the king consulted. Humboldt who was the only person at the court having first hand knowledge of California may have told him the story of his friendship with Thomas Jefferson. The venerable former president had written to him in 1813 that the beginning revolts in the Spanish colonies harbingered a day when all of the American hemisphere would be free from European influence: "America constitutes a hemisphere to itself. It must have its separate system of interests, which must not be subordinated to those of Europe."² Given the powerlessness of Prussia as a sea-faring nation, it is quite probable--although no direct proof exists-- that Humboldt reminded the king of Jefferson's vision. California really was outer-limits.

(3) National group settlements in practice

Germans emigrated to America as individuals, families, village communities, mutual support societies, religious sects, utopian societies, and, finally, as patriotic or "national" groups. All groups did have some motives in common. Traveling in company provided more security and social assistance. Whether the people had economic, religious, utopian, pragmatic, or national motives in mind--or a combination of them all--arriving and finding one's way in a foreign country must have been a more reassuring experience when countryfolks from the same area, same religion, same nationality were around.

General characteristics

Those groups driven primarily by a patriotic mission really only stick out of the rest because of the motives of their leaders. It is very difficult to prove in how far the members of patriotic group emigrations really partook in the optimism of the leaders concerning the creation of a New Germany. In the case of the two most prominent patriotic emigration societies, the Gießen-Society and the Texas Association, there are letters and other written statements suggesting that many members were in fact particularly appealed by the societies' patriotic goals.³ The number of people who emigrated as members of such societies came to approximately 10 000 in the decades from 1820 to 1860. Probably there were thousands more who would have participated if there had been no limits initially and if they had had good news from the settlements. In general, this was not the case.

¹ Rönne to Imperial Ministry of the Exterior, New York (Dec. 6, 1848), BAFm: DB 53/85, vol. 1.

² Jefferson to Humboldt, (Dec. 6, 1813), LoC: *Thomas Jefferson Papers*, Reel 47, Series 1, General Correspondence.

³ *Briefe von Deutschen aus Nord Amerika: mit besonderer Beziehung auf die Gießner Auswanderungs-Gesellschaft vom Jahre 1834* (Altenburg: Gleich, 1836). Of about 100 letters from "emigrants of the educated class" to the Texas Association checked, one-tenth mention the patriotic mission the authors felt. See Bundesarchiv Koblenz [BA] : [Microfilm no.] EC 1485 N, [doc. no.] CA 4 b 3, no. 13.

Throughout the period under discussion, the colonization projects underwent certain changes. The origins and aims altered with the development of German and American affairs in general:

- (1) Beginning with the early 1830s, a succession of politically motivated emigration groups left for America. Their leaders consciously strove to maintain the group's national identity while welcoming the political freedom within the United States;
- (2) By the mid-1830s, a wave of German-American settlement projects got under way, primarily as an attempt of ethnic self-assertion;
- (3) During the 1840s, German-American settlement projects primarily served the interests of land-speculators. Germany was a convenient field of recruitment and references to the settlement's homogeneous nationality were little more than a public relations exercise; (The colonization project of the Texas Association is in a category of its own.)
- (4) After the arrival of the Forty-Eighters, few new colonization projects were undertaken, and mostly they were inspired by socialist ideals.

Small emigration societies

The first patriotic group emigration has already been alluded to: Ludwig Gall's "Bern Society" at first intended to join the Swiss settler-colony of New-Vevay, which had been founded in 1804, but they apparently dispersed on arrival. Gall himself was appalled by the Americanization of the founding generation.¹ In 1819, his friend Friedrich Ernst from Hannover who at first had shared Gall's plan for a German colony led a group of about 300 emigrants to his favorite spot, **Vandalia** in Illinois.² The society soon disbanded and a year later Ernst died from "tropical fever."³

In the early 1830s, the state of Arkansas attracted quite a few groups for its abundant and cheap public land; also, its remoteness offered the sought-after seclusion. A group from Mühlhausen in Thuringia led by Christoph von Dachröden, J. A. Elzer, H. Hupfeld and J. A. Röbling (the father of the Brooklyn bridge's engineer) intended to establish a settlement there, inspired by humane principles. But the few dozen people who went mostly ended up in Pennsylvania. Some went on to Missouri and founded the town of **Sachsenburg**. Probably due to the impact of Gottfried Duden's travel account, a "Berlin Society" settled in the same area a few years later, founding the town of **Washington**. Other groups whose purpose was to settle in Arkansas came from Bremen,⁴ and Dürkheim, both in 1832.⁵

Renewed suppression of patriotic movements after the Fest of the fraternities on Hambach Castle led many nationally minded people to emigrate. There was a general hush going through the press about plans to

¹ Gustav Körner, *Das deutsche Element in den Vereinigten Staaten, 1818-1848* (Cincinnati: Wilde, 1880), 229/30.

² F. Ernst, *Bemerkungen auf einer Reise durch das Innere der vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika im Jahre 1819...* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1820).

³ "Die Nachkommen von Ferdinand Ernst und seiner Begleiter," *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter*, vol. 3 (1903), 9ff.

⁴ Traugott Bromme, *Rathgeber* (1846), 67 and 171.

⁵ Sigrid Faltin, *Die Auswanderung aus der Pfalz nach Nordamerika im 19. Jahrhundert...* (Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1987), 123/4.

found a new and better Germany abroad.¹ Individuals from around Stuttgart called for the creation of German colonies in North-America. The owner of a silk-hat plant, named Schworetzky, believed America was the place "where we will find everything we now miss."² People directly involved with the abortive attempt to set off a revolution in Frankfurt in April 1833, formed the "Frankfurt Society" and emigrated to the trans-Mississippian West. Some stayed in the vicinity of Duden's farm in Missouri, the majority moved north-east to **Belleville**, Illinois--among them Gustav Körner, Theodor Hilgard, and Ferdinand Jakob Lindheimer.³ Frustrated by the autocratic Prussian regime, Friedrich Steines, a teacher from Solingen, in February 1834 left as leader of 153 people. The Solingen group mostly ended up in Missouri, too.⁴

The Gießen Emigration Society

The largest and best known of the patriotic emigration societies of the early 1830s is the Gießen-Society, headed by the minister Friedrich Münch and the advocate Paul Follenius, a younger brother of Karl Follen. Having been members of the forbidden fraternity "The Blacks" in the late 1810s, they had always suffered from the lack of civil liberties in Germany. The combined effects of reading Duden, experiencing the frustrated hopes for a new beginning during the time of the Hambach Fest, and witnessing friends and other groups leaving for good resulted in their forming an emigration society with the explicit aim of "forming a German state" in North America. This state was to be a member of the United States "but with its own form of government [Staatsform], which would ensure the continued existence of German customs and the German language..."⁵ The community, it was hoped, would become a "German model republic."⁶

Münch and Follenius went about preparing the colony in minute detail. People from all over Germany and even Prague and Vienna were interested in joining.⁷ 500 people were chosen; They set off in two parties, one sailing to Baltimore, the other to New Orleans. The plan was to meet in St. Louis, Missouri (Arkansas had been envisioned but discarded because of negative reports). Both parties suffered from severe mishaps and lost

¹ Reprint of a despatch from the *Stuttgart Gazette* (Sept. 2, 1832), in: *Niles' Weekly Register* (Nov. 3, 1832), vol. 43 (whole ser.), 148.

² Cit. by Gerhard P. Bassler, "Auswanderungsfreiheit und Auswanderungsfürsorge in Württemberg, 1815-1875: Zur Geschichte der südwestdeutschen Massenauswanderung nach Nordamerika," *Zeitschrift für Württembergische Landesgeschichte*, vol. 33 (1974), 125.

³ The best account of the life of the Belleville Germans may be found in Gustav Koerner's *Memoirs*. Cf. G. Engelmann, "Die deutsche Niederlassung in Illinois, fünf Meilen östlich von Belleville," *Das Westland*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1837), 298ff.

⁴ William G. Bek, "The Followers of Duden," *Missouri Historical Review*, vol. 14, no. 1 (Oct. 1919), 30/1.

⁵ Cit. by Anton Eickhoff, ed., *In der Neuen Heimath: Geschichtliche Mitteilungen über die deutschen Einwanderer in allen Theilen der Union* (New York: Steiger, 1884), 337/8.

⁶ Friedrich Münch, *Gesammelte Schriften* (St. Louis: Winter, 1902), 99.

⁷ The story is told with a healthy dose of sarcasm by Münch himself in: "Die Gießener Auswanderungsgesellschaft," *Der deutsche Auswanderer*, no. 35 (1847), 545ff.

many a member either after quarrels or due to sickness; once they arrived, the followers of Münch and Follenius were so dispirited that no one thought of the glorious new republic any longer. They dispersed, some moved to Warren County in Missouri, together with Münch. The former minister here managed to stake out a living under hard conditions and later became a successful winegrower and state Senator. Follenius stayed in St. Louis and died of yellow fever.

German-American settlement societies

It comes at no surprise that the first wave of German intellectuals arriving in America as a result of these organized emigrations did have an effect on the German-American community life.¹ Most Germans intended to become 'good' citizens but keep their ethnic identity. As an outflow of these ethnically driven activities in the established German communities of the East Coast, plans were made to establish German settlements in the interior. German-American settlement associations were either motivated by the prospect of speculative gains on the sale of company land or they believed, some form of separation of the German element from the American mainstream was a desirable aim. That German sensitivities, German mores would go under if they had to survive in direct competition with the "Yankees" was a truism among most German-American leaders at the time. A separation that would still allow them to be members of the republic and exert some influence on the politics affecting them seemed to be the solution.

The Germania-Society of New York

The earliest such German-American settlement plan came about in 1835 when the first signs of a nativist movement in New York led to a new cohesion among the German community.² The "Germania Society" was formed with the aim of "further uniting the Germans living in the United States, in order to maintain and foster a strong German character, good German mores and German education among them."³ Also, there was an element of missionary spirit: as there were quite a few recent emigrés from the 1832 revolt, the wish to affect things back home was still very much alive.⁴ The best way to guarantee cohesion and yet become a model democratic community for the mother-country seemed to be to form a settler colony. Texas, Oregon or Wisconsin were discussed as possible sites. A memorial petitioning for a grant of land seems to have been sent to Congress although no copy of it has survived.⁵ In any case, the Germania-Society disbanded rather soon over internal conflicts and, possibly, lack of enthusiasm.

¹ See for example: Karl J. Arndt, "German as the Official Language of the United States of America?" *Monatshefte*, vol. 68 (Summer 1976), 129-151.

² Heinz Kloss, *Um die Einigung des Deutschamerikanertums* (Berlin: Volk & Reich, 1937), 190.

³ C. F. Huch, "Die Gesellschaft Germania," *Mitteilungen des deutschen Pionier-Vereins von Philadelphia*, Heft 9 (1908), 22ff.

⁴ G.Körner, *Das deutsche Element* (1880), 108.

⁵ Franz Löher's claim in his *Geschichte und Zustände der Deutschen in Amerika* (Cincinnati: Eggers & Wulkop, 1847), 282f., has been reprinted uncritically by most of the later authors.

Another "Germania Society" was formed in New York a few years later, and sometimes it is mistaken with that of 1835. But no direct connection seems to have existed. This time, the associates wanted to settle in the new Republic of Texas. They actually corresponded with the Texan president Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar and asked for both a land-grant and the setting apart of a large tract of land for future German immigration.¹ No answer is known but if there was one, it must have been encouraging enough for the Society to send a first group of about 130 colonists from New York to Galveston. When they arrived, a bout of yellow fever was ravaging the city of Houston. Many therefore returned to the United States, including their leader Dr. Schuessler, some settled as individuals in the vicinity of Houston.²

The German Settlement Society of Philadelphia

In 1836, the largest and most successful patriotic German-American settlement association in the United States was founded in Philadelphia by the editor of the *Neue und Alte Welt*, Dr. Johann Georg Wesselhöft. Many well-established German-American businessmen, journalists, advocates, and other professionals joined. Their aim was

to form a German settlement in a suitable part of the United States, possibly Pennsylvania, where a large number of Germans would have the opportunity to exercise and apply their industry and know-how in a way profitable and agreeable to them.³

The Society's president, Wilhelm Schmoele, was even more explicit when he said, the ultimate goal was to unify the Germans in North America "and thereby to found a new German fatherland." Then, "a great German nation could strive in America's free harbor ["Amerikas freiem Schosse"]".⁴ The Society very successfully attracted investors. During internal debates, the members rejected the proposal to ask Congress for a land-grant.⁵ Instead, the associates sent delegates to the West who acquired about 11 000 acres of land on the river Gasconade, not far north from Gottfried Duden's former farm.⁶ The first settlers arrived in the new town of **Hermann** in winter 1837-38. As usual, the beginnings were small and hard and the bank-crisis of 1837 contributed to a temporal decline in interest for the settlement. Soon, the actual settlers were also to discover that they would rather

¹ Theodor Frontin an M. B. Lamar, New York (Feb. 22, 1839), Texas State Archives: M. B. Lamar Papers, no. 1082; print. in: *The Papers of M. B. Lamar*, ed. by Charles A. Gulick jr. (Austin, Tex.: Baldwin, 1921), 460.

² Gustav Dresel, "Tagebuch von G. D. über seinen Aufenthalt in Texas 1837-1841," *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter*, vol. 20/21 (1920/21), 433.

³ Heinz Kloss, *Um die Einigung der Deutschamerikaner*, 192.

⁴ *Alte und Neue Welt* (Sept. 3, 1836), cit. by Adolf Falbisaner, "Hermann, eine Hochburg des Deutschthums," *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter*, vol. 1 (1901), 20.

⁵ John A. Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German America: The Germans in the United States of America during the 19th Century - and After* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1940), 116.

⁶ Still the best book on the Society is William G. Bek's *The German Settlement Society of Philadelphia and its Colony Hermann, Missouri* (Philadelphia: Americana Germanica Press, 1907). Cf. "Die deutsche Kolonie Hermann," *Der deutsche Auswanderer*, no. 38ff. (1847), 593ff.

manage their own affairs than be guided by the association in far-away Philadelphia. They formed their own board-of-management. When the Society dissolved in 1839, Hermann already sported 90 houses and 450 settlers. It continued to grow until 1860 when it reached its climax with 1500 inhabitants. Compared to other western cities, this growth was more than modest but the town enjoyed a healthy balance of productivity and cultural amenities.

Settlements in southern states

During the 1840s, a few other settler colonies were founded by German-Americans, mostly in the southern frontier states: In 1842, the "Deutscher Bundes-, Cultur, und Gewerbeverein" established the town of **Hermannsburg**, Virginia on 15 000 acres of land.¹ The "Tennessee-Colonization Company" was a kind of joint-venture between American, Belgian, and German-American entrepreneurs. In 1844, they acquired 180 000 acres in Morgan County, Tennessee, and advertised the land, particularly in Saxonia. A first group of emigrants from the Saxon *Erzgebirge* arrived in 1845 and founded the town of **Wartburg**. By 1848, approximately 500 German immigrants had moved there.² Sixty wealthy German-Americans from South-Carolina in 1848 formed the "German Settlement Society of Charleston" and bought 20 000 acres of land in Occonee County in the Blue Ridge Mountains. A decade later the town of **Walhalla** had attracted about 1500 German settlers but remained the only German community of any size in the Carolinas.³

Socialist settlements

Socialist associations also tried to establish German settlements but they were not primarily inspired by national or patriotic aims. Some German intellectuals in New York in the early 1840s got together in an association called "Die deutschen Freiheitsfreunde" and advocated a settlement in the West based on liberty and equality. The colony was to be based "on the principles we fought for in Germany... the practicability of which we seek to prove in a small state."⁴ Apparently, no activities beyond this declaration of intent followed. The Turner of Cincinnati were more successful. Under the influence of Wilhelm Pfaender, a Forty-Eighter from Heilbronn, they in 1856 formed the "Settlement Association of the Socialist Turnerbund" and shortly afterwards acquired the township of **New-Ulm** in Minnesota, which had just been founded by the "German Land Association of Chicago."⁵ It was more a matter of convenient recruitment than ethnic exclusiveness which in its early years made New-Ulm a German town. The

¹ G. Körner, *Das deutsche Element* (1880), 72.

² Körner, *Das deutsche Element* (1880), 357. Cf. J. G. Häcker, *Bericht aus und über Amerika* (Leipzig: Beyer, 1849), 47-54; "Berichte über die deutsche Ansiedlung Wartburg in Ost-Tennessee," *Germania*, vol. 2 (1848), 102-109.

³ J. A. Wagener, "Die Deutschen in Süd-Carolina," *Der Deutsche Pionier*, vol. 3 (1871/72), 234.

⁴ Traugott Bromme, *Rathgeber für Auswanderungslustige - Wie und wohin sollen wir auswandern..?* (Stuttgart: Hoffmann, 1846), 174.

⁵ Alexander Berghold, "Geschichte von New-Ulm, Minnesota," *Der Deutsche Pionier*, no. 4 and 5 (1872), nos. 4-12 (1877); "Dokumentarische Geschichte des Turnerbundes und der turnerischen Bestrebungen in den Vereinigten Staaten," ed. by Heinrich Metzner, *Jahrbücher der Deutsch-Amerikanischen Turnerei*, vol. 1 (1890), 255f.

idea to found a German state, "great and important as it might be"--as the Turner said--lay not behind the founding of New-Ulm. The Turner wanted to restrict themselves to "practicable enterprises."¹

The Association for the Protection of German Immigrants to Texas

Finally, the activities of the Mayence "Association for the Protection of German Immigrants to Texas" have to be mentioned. The events can be summarized in a few sentences: Instigated by Carl Count von Castell, some two dozen noblemen from Germany in 1842 founded a society with the expressed aim of (1) providing a new home abroad to the poor masses in Germany, (2) creating a profitable trade between the settler colonies and the mothercountry; and (3) protecting those emigrants who have settled in the Association's colonies.² The Association sent two delegates, Count Joseph von Boos-Waldeck and Prince Viktor von Leiningen, to Texas in order to look for land and negotiate for a large grant with the Texan government. Except for the purchase of a small farm in the Republic's settled Northeast (Nassau-Farm), they came back empty-handed. In early 1844, a Frenchman and owner of a land-contract in Texas, Alexandre Bourgeois d'Orvanne, approached the Association. He would sell them his land titles if they provided settlers. The deal was struck. In June 1844, Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels was sent to Texas together with Bourgeois to prepare the arrival of the first immigrants. The Association had widely advertised and many hundreds of people from Germany were eager to go. Since they had to dispose of at least 300 Dollars, they were not exactly from the poorer rungs of society.

Meanwhile the Bourgeois-Ducos grant had expired and the Association was forced to find a quick remedy, which was offered to them by the new Texan consul in Bremen, Henry Fisher, who also possessed a land-grant. Situated in Northwest Texas, it was far away from any settled areas and thus seemed to offer the desired seclusion from Anglo-Texians. But the Association completely underestimated the difficulties in merely getting there, let alone creating a thriving community and profitable trade. So when the first few hundred settlers arrived in December 1844, Solms could lead them only to a way-station between the coast and the grant. They first founded the town of **New-Braunfels**. Solms left in May 1845, somewhat disgruntled with the ingratitude of the settlers who expected to be fed, housed and equipped by the Association and therefore seemed to lack the necessary initiative to lead a pioneer life on the frontier. Solms' successor, Hans Otfried von Meusebach (later "John O. Meusebach") didn't fare much better with the settlers, since he stopped most payments and services in order to relieve the Association's debt. Failing credit, bad weather, and the coming of the war with Mexico contributed to a catastrophe when about 3000 immigrants arrived in late 1845. Neither was Meusebach able to transport them into the interior nor was it possible to feed and house them properly on the shoreline at Indianola. Plagues ravished through the tent-city and about half of the future settlers died. With some of the survivors and former arrivals, Meusebach during the following summer at least achieved to found the town of **Fredericksburg**, close to the Fisher-Miller

¹ *Amerikanischer Turnerbund: Verfassungsentwurf des Ansiedlungsvereins des sozialistischen Turnerbundes* (New Ulm: May 24-25, 1858).

² "Statuen des Vereins," *Gesammelte Aktenstücke des Vereins zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer nach Texas* (Mainz: Fürstliche Rentenkammer Schloß Braunfels, 1845), 3-4.

grant. The Association's popularity in Germany sank immediately and there was little hope that it could continue to lead thousands to Texas. Although the Duke of Nassau sent about 100 000 Dollars to Texas as soon as he heard from the disaster, this money came too late to save the settlers and did not suffice to continue the colonization plan in a grand style.

After the Mexican-American war, the Association again managed to recruit several hundred new settlers annually until activities were terminated in 1852. All in all, a good 10 000 Germans had disembarked in Galveston during the time of the Association's existence, not all of them under her tutelage. Next to New-Braunfels and Fredericksburg, the Association founded the towns of **Leiningen**, **Castell**, **Bettina**, and **Schoenburg**; Comal as well as Gillespie Counties had become heavily germanized.

Texan independence and British diplomacy

Despite the obvious failures, the Association's activities had greater results than those of any other emigration society. Its appearance on the Texan scene had an importance beyond the dreams of a New Germany. For a short time it seemed the Association could become the tool of British (and to a lesser degree, French) world politics. Britain was eager to keep Texas independent from the United States, since she wanted to check both the Americans' expansion to the West and the proliferation of slavery. Moral recriminations, economic self-interest, and *Realpolitik* combined to favor Texan independence, which--after the rejection of the annexation treaty of 1844 by the U.S. Senate--seemed to be ensured, if Mexico also, and finally, agreed to recognize Texas' sovereignty. The Texans' inclination for annexation could be suffused if there were fewer people from Anglo-American stock. Therefore, the influx of German settlers could only be welcomed by the British government. This, the Texas Association knew and using their close family ties to the British royal family Solms-Braunfels as well as Prince Karl von Leiningen tried to receive British support for their settlement project. When the danger of war with Mexico became more acute, Count Castell hoped the Association's immigrant ships would be placed under the neutral protection of the British.¹ Both in the German and the Texan press, there were rumours at the time that England was pulling the ropes for European immigration.²

At least during the early stages of the undertaking, the Association members had put some hope on Texan independence. A Galveston newspaper on February 23, 1845, expressed why: "Only as an independent state, Germandom can achieve predominant power in Texas."³ In fact, Prince Solms once directly tried to have the British government assist the importation of 10 000 German settler-soldiers but this attempt was passed

¹ Castell to Solms, Mayence (Aug. 5, 1844), BA: EC 1493 N, CA 4 c 2, no. 2.

² "Der Verein zum Schutze deutscher Einwanderer in Texas in Bezug auf die Sklavenfrage," *Frankfurter Journal*, no. 196 (July 17, 1844). The Galveston Journal in its September 30, 1844 issue reported: "A new Republic is about to be established on our Western border." Cit. by William Kennedy in his private letter no. 8 to Richard Pakenham, Galveston (Sept. 30, 1844), Public Record Office London [PRO] : F. O. 701, no. 29.

³ "Die Deutschen in Texas," Correspondence from Galveston (Feb. 23, 1845) [clip without mentioning of source] , LoC: *Braunfels'sches Archiv*, Ca 4 b 3, Nr. 1.

over with silence in London.¹ The most Lord Aberdeen did in order to comply with a (possible) request from Prince Albert was to have Undersecretary of State Henry Addington write to consul William Kennedy in Galveston to do what he could to assist Prince Carl.² Kennedy personally liked Solms and wished him good luck. Nothing much more could be done. Still, the British Chargé in Galveston, Charles Elliot, speculated that Mexico could be won over to recognition of Texas if one could assure her of future immigration from England, Germany, and France instead of from the United States.³

Negotiations with the Texan government

The Texan government generally welcomed the Association's settlement project since every new immigrant meant more human capital. German settlers were known to improve their land in a systematic and lasting way. No wonder President Sam Houston as well as his successor Anson Jones personally expressed their welcome to any new immigration and to the Texas Association in specific.⁴ On the other hand, the Texan statesmen never for a minute doubted that the immigrants would have to become Texans. A separate German community or even political entity in their midst was inconceivable. Sometimes that didn't seem so clear to the Association.

Count Boos-Waldeck and Prince Leiningen in 1842 had tried to receive an agreement for preferential treatment with regard to trade, but this was asking too much.⁵ Prince Solms' set himself two major tasks in negotiating with the Texan government: (1) to achieve the repeal of the usual stipulation in acts granting land that alternating land-sections had to be reserved for the state; (2) to do everything he could to foster Texan determination to stay independent. In his view, both measures would best ensure the special status and cohesion of the German settler-colony. In fact, Solms derided the prospect of annexation and he besought his "lobbyist" with the Texan Congress, Henry Fisher, to

¹ Solms to William Kennedy, On board the Texan Revenue Cutter "Alert," Galveston Bay (Dec. 3, 1844), Ephraim D. Adams, ed., "British Correspondence Concerning Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* [SWHQ], vol. 19 (1915/16), 305f.

² Addington to Kennedy, separate, Foreign Office (May 20, 1844), PRO: F.O. 701, no. 29.

³ Charles Elliot to Percy Doyle, private, Galveston (June 21, 1843), Adams, ed., "British Correspondence....," *SWHQ*, vol. 17 (1913/14), 72. Cf. Doyle to Foreign Office, despatch no. 17, n.p. (June 24, 1843), British Library: Aberdeen Papers, MS 43184, vol. 146.

⁴ See President Houston's veto-message against a bill repealing his right to extend land-grants in: Texas State Library, Republic of Texas, Department of State, vol. 40, no. 299, cit. by. Rudolph R. Biesele, *History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861* (Austin, Tex.: Boeckman-Jones, 1939), 70. Cf. Castell to Prince Leiningen, Mayence (Jan. 23, 1843), Fürstlich Leiningen'sches Archiv Amorbach: *Akten des Texas-Verein*, I, no. 8. Jones to Smith, Galveston (March 9, 1842), in: George P. Garrison, ed., "Diplomatic Correspondence of the Republic of Texas," *Ann. Rep. of the Am. Hist. Ass. for the Year 1908* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1911), vol. II (2), part III (1908), 949/50 and 963.

⁵ See the report of the *Generalversammlung* in Biebrich (June 18, 1843), BA: EC 1483 N, CA 4 b 1, Nr. 3.

tell the Congressmen and anyone else you like, that I have defrayed considerable sums for this country, that I will spend even more, that I am going to build a planket road (double wooden rails) from the upper country [...] to the Bay--who else has done so much for this country as the Association--but only for the free Texas, for the territory of the United States not one cent.¹

But Solms' fervor for an independent Texas was not shared by his colleagues.

The incorporation of the Association's settlement did not pass the Congress smoothly. According to Meusebach, some Congressmen even held serious suspicions against "an association led by princes and noblemen."² When Texas had joined the United States, the former Texan consul at The Hague, Colonel William Henry Daingerfield, who had always been favorably disposed to the Association began lobbying both the U.S. Congress and the Texan State Assembly for favorable treatment of the Association's claims. He was able to report back to Count Castell that Congress would handle the claims "in a most liberal manner."³ The town of New-Braunfels was incorporated and made the county seat of Comal County. This gave the community a certain degree of autonomy. The Germans were allowed to run their own schools, publish local ordinances in German and vote their own judge and sheriff into office. In 1848, the Texan government appointed a "Commisioner for the German Colonies" who was to regulate the open claims, finally giving 320 acres of land to single and 640 acres to married immigrants.⁴

(4) American responses to national group settlements

When the German emigration societies appeared on the scene, the U.S. government had already established a policy towards group settlements ethnically different from the Anglo-American stock. In short, this policy was to leave open to anyone the purchase and sale of no matter how much private land; but when asked for favorable treatment with regard to the setting aside of public land or favorable credit conditions the answer would be negative.

American statesmen

Public sentiment towards immigration has always been ambiguous in the United States. Thomas Jefferson's rhetorical question of his first inauguration speech "Shall oppressed humanity find no asylum on this globe?" marks the traditional openness and generosity. On the other hand, even Jefferson himself had harbored serious doubts on the "expediency of inviting them by extraordinary encouragements"--and with him many

¹ Solms to Fisher (Dec. 28, 1844), LoC: *Braunfels'sches Archiv*, CA 4 c 2, Nr. 3.

² Report Meusebach to Association, New Braunfels (Nov. 10, 1845), BA: EC 1485, CA 4 b 3, no. 6.

³ General report of the Association's board-of-management for the year 1846, BA: EC 1483 N, CA 4 b 1, no. 3.

⁴ Dagmar Auspurg-Hackert, *Deutsche Auswanderung nach Texas im 19. Jahrhundert*, unpubl. Ph. D., University of Bochum (1984), 74.

other Americans.¹ There was the fear that immigrants might one day outnumber the old stock and endanger the political system.² When Börne joked about the Ohio-Germans yearning for monarchy, he in a way corroborated this traditional American fear. Both Washington and Jefferson have at different times expressed strong criticism of the Germans' tendency to cling together in secluded settlements. In 1817, the year of the first mass-emigration to America after the Napoleonic wars, Jefferson specifically referred to the Germans when he wrote the immigrants should be prevented from forming compact masses, "wherein, as in our German settlements, they preserve for a long time their own languages, habits and principles of government."³

Moritz von Fürstenwärther in 1817 was told by Secretary of State John Quincy Adams that "principle and conviction or national pride" would make Americans "greatly disinterested in foreign immigration" and the expectation would prevail that "the population of the United States would grow sufficiently without it."⁴ Immigrant groups "if they chose to become citizens" had to expect "equal rights, with those of the natives of the country,"⁵ and--as Adams added in a letter to Fürstenwärther--

[t]hey must cast off the European skin, never to resume it. They must look forward to their posterity rather than backward to their ancestors; they must be sure that whatever their own feelings may be, those of their children will cling to the prejudices of this country.⁶

Congress and land-grants: some precedents

Congress dealt with foreign immigrant groups only when faced with a petition. The legislators' opinion very much reflected the attitude of the administrations' highest officials. When in 1804 George Rapp petitioned Congress for a land-grant "of about Thirty thousand Acres of Land... in the Western Country" the Representatives were divided.⁷ During the debate of the bill in January 1806,⁸ Rep. Gideon Olin (Vermont) had calms handing out preferential credits to foreigners, and Rep. William Ely (Massachusetts) warned "such a body of one sect, of one language, will wish to seclude itself from the rest of the Union." On the other hand, Rep. John Smilie

¹ *The Complete Jefferson: Containing His Major Writings, Published and Unpublished, Except His Letters*, assembl. and arrang. by Saul K. Padover (New York: Tudor, 1943), 625.

² *Ibid.*, 393.

³ Jefferson to George Flower (Sept. 12, 1817), cit. by K. A. Arndt, "German as the Official Language of the United States...? *Monatshefte*, vol. 68 (Summer 1976), 146.

⁴ M. v. Fürstenwärther, *Der Deutsche in Nordamerika* (1818), 28/9.

⁵ Max J. Kohler, "An important European Mission to Investigate American Immigration Conditions and John Quincy Adams' Relations thereto, 1817-1818," *Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter*, vol. 17 (1917), 413.

⁶ Adams to Fürstenwärther, Washington (June 14, 1819), Bundesarchiv Außenstelle Frankfurt: Nachlaß H.C. von Gagern, FN 7 II/14. Printed in *Niles' Weekly Register*, vol. 17, whole ser. (April 19, 1820), 157/58.

⁷ Karl J. Arndt, *Rapp's Harmony Society* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965), 83-90.

⁸ *Annals of Congress* (9th Congress-1st Sess.), 463-478.

(Pennsylvania) found no objection in the fact that the petitioners were foreigners: half Pennsylvania was settled by foreigners. And Rep. James Holland (North Carolina) claimed a similar settlement as asked for, that of the Moravians in his state, was of much benefit. The final vote was 47:46 against the Rappites' petition.

The close vote shows that a fixed policy towards demands by foreign group-emigrations had not yet been established. During the next decade, some petitions were granted,¹ others rejected.² In 1818, three Irish-American Immigration Societies tried to receive a land-grant on an extended term of credit in Illinois territory.³ The attempt was quite unprecedented in that it was a sophisticated lobbying-effort. The Irish Societies even dress-rehearsed the Congressional committee hearing, practicing answers to anticipated criticism.⁴ In the end, Congress did reject the petition. Marcus Lee Hansen has called this decision the most far-reaching one in American immigration history. Compact foreign emigration groups now knew what to expect from the government.⁵

The policy of non-preferential treatment was now firmly established. When a Swiss group in 1820 desired to settle 3000 - 4000 families in Florida "on terms more favorable than the general law would permit" the House Committee for Public Lands drew up a report fully explaining the principle:

The establishment of a community of foreigners within our country, secluded by their habits, manners, and language, from an intimate association with the great body of our citizens, cannot be an event so desirable as to justify a departure from the general law. An unrestrained intercourse with the body of the American yeomanry, affords to the emigrant the best, and probably the only means of acquiring an accurate knowledge of our laws and institutions...⁶

A similar position was taken by the leading newspaper of the day, the *Niles Weekly Register*, when a delegation from Rhenish-Bavaria in 1832 inquired about a land-grant for their emigration society:

We should give all such as these a hearty welcome - but the idea of settling in a large and compact body cannot be approved... Most reflecting persons, we think, have regarded it as unfortunate, that in certain parts of the United States, the *Germans, Irish, or French* population (so called, though the large majority may be *natives*) are so located as seemingly to

¹ *American State Papers* (12th Congress-1st Sess.), no. 190 and no. 256 [Dec. 5, 1811]. Cf. *Annals of Congress* (15th Congress-1st Sess.), 566 and 711.

² House report [H.rp.] 242 (28th Congress-1st Sess.), *U.S. Serial Set*, no. 445, vol. 1; *American State Papers* (9th Congress-2nd Sess.), no. 13, 288 [Dec. 8, 1806] .

³ *Annals of Congress* (15th Congress-1st Sess.), 202, 1013, and 1053/4. Cf. *Niles' Weekly Register*, vol. 14, whole ser. (May 30, 1818), 232f.

⁴ Even Moritz v. Fürstenwärther cited the briefing-paper, which must have been leaked to the *General Advertiser* (March 4, 1818), see: *Ibid.*, *Der Deutsche in Amerika* (1818), 107ff.

⁵ Marcus Lee Hansen, *Die Einwanderer in der Geschichte Amerikas* (Stuttgart: Mittelbach, 1948), 132.

⁶ *American State Papers* (16th Congress-1st Session), no. 312, p. 437 [March 3, 1820] .

have different interests, or at least different views of the public good - remaining as *separated* classes of the people, and so liable to particular influences, which, perhaps, are sometimes prejudicial to the "general welfare"...¹

The only exception from the rule of non-preferential treatment that was made in the following years was in favor of a group of 250 exiles from the Polish revolution.² In this instance, the Public Lands Committee wished to "manifest a proper regard for the sufferings of the unfortunate... and thereby exhibit to the civilized world a glowing contrast between the arbitrary rulers... and the chivalry of the free people."³ The Poles received a township in Michigan territory, but no one ever moved there and, in fact, the grant aroused quite some anger among the American pioneers who had cultivated and claimed the area before. In 1842, Congress withdrew its grant once and for all.

Except for the petition by the Rhenish-Bavarian delegation and--possibly--the memorial of the "Germania Society" of New York, Congress never dealt with groups interested in founding a German state. The whole idea, it seems, has never been discovered by the politicians or, if so, been taken seriously. Only twice did any of the American consuls in Germany report on the activities of patriotic emigration societies. In 1832, Ernest Schwendler, U.S.-consul in Frankfurt, aired his view about the New Germany plans which had come to the notice of even the *Niles' Weekly Register*:⁴

The high sounding project to form a New Germany in the U.S., noticed in american prints - has indeed been planned last year by a small association of enthusiasts without any practical knowledge of the U.S.-

Their pious wishes and chimerical expectations were almost the only foundation of their plan and from what I learned by the managers, it appeared that they had neither the idea nor sufficient capital to purchase lands beyond the immediate wants of their small society consisting of abt. 50 families, but that they presumed most confidently that numerous similar associations would soon join them and that the nucleus which they intended to form in the Territory of Arkansas would rapidly, and like a snow lavine encrease to a complete State of the Union...⁵

One year later, Schwendler once more reported on a New Germany project, possibly that of the Gießen-Society. He labeled the project "preposterous."⁶

Public opinion in America, of course, was aware of the ever growing influx of Germans. The dominance of foreign immigrants in some areas of the larger cities gave rise to a nativist movement. Only seldomly, though, did

¹ *Niles' Weekly Register*, vol. 43, whole ser. (Nov. 24, 1832), 196. Italics in the original.

² *American State Papers* (24th Congress-1st Session), no. 1490, p. 587 [March 25, 1836].

³ *Ibid*, [23rd Congress-1st Session], no. 1237, p. 145 [April 29, 1834].

⁴ See note 56.

⁵ Schwendler to Edward Livingston, Sec. of State, Frankfurt (March 31, 1833), National Archives: Rec. of the Dept. of State, Consular Despatches from Frankfurt, M 161, reel T-1.

⁶ Schwendler to Sec. of State Livingston, Frankfurt (March 31, 1833), *ibid*.

the Anglo-American public take notice of the plans for a separate German state. Most often there were vague notions that foreigners might scheme in overthrowing the American form of government.¹ George Flower, a correspondent of Thomas Jefferson, in 1841 depicted the intention to seclude oneself from the American society as one of the main errors of the German immigrants.² Carl Ludwig Fleischmann, an informed American citizen of some public standing in Germany, in his 1852 emigration handbook admonished Germans that Americans would regard the idea of "transplanting German nationality or even the founding of a New Germany" with great suspicion.³ By 1856, however, the editors of the *North American Review* realized that the Germans' "ablest journals and... experienced men" had given up the idea of establishing a German republic within the United States.⁴

The closest the American government and public ever came to discussing the effects of German group immigration was when supposed British claims on Texas served as a catalyst of a furiously annexationist campaign. American newspapers ran articles on how Britain attempted to make Texas a colony by introducing capital and European immigration.⁵ Former president Andrew Jackson wrote an influential letter to Rep. Aaron V. Brown, claiming that the British could secretly lead 20 000 to 30 000 armed settlers into Texas.⁶ At the height of the anti-British campaign of 1844, even Senator Henry Clay, otherwise known as an anti-annexationist, aired a clear warning:

If any European nation entertains any ambitious designs upon Texas such as that of colonizing her... I should consider it as the imperative duty of the United States to oppose to such designs by... determined resistance, to the extent, if necessary, of appealing to arms.⁷

The warning was specifically addressed to Britain and France and in this sense would have applied to any real support the British might have given the Texas Association. As far as can be seen, such a relationship was suspected only once in an anonymous open letter to John Q. Adams in a Texan newspaper. Adams, the fiercest among the anti-annexationists, was told

¹ H. rp. 1040 (25th Congress-2nd Sess.), *U. S. Serial Set* no. 336, vol. 4, p. 91.

² G. Flower, *The Errors of Emigrants...* (London: Cleave, 1841), 47.

³ C. L. Fleischmann, *Wegweiser und Rathgeber nach und in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika* (Stuttgart: Scheitlin, 1852), 7/8.

⁴ "German Emigration to America," *North American Review*, vol. 82 (1856), 267. The editors claim this to be the first discussion on German emigration in an English- language paper.

⁵ Kennedy to Aberdeen, private, Galveston (Sept. 6, 1843), F.O. Slave Trade, vol. 479; cit. by Adams, ed., "British Diplomatic Correspondence Concerning Texas," *SWHQ*, vol. 17 (1913/14), 205. Cf. Justin H. Smith, *The Annexation of Texas* (1911; corr. ed. New York: Barnes & Nobles, 1941), 97, 205, and 163.

⁶ Jackson to Brown, Hermitage, Tenn. (Feb. 12, 1843) ["as sent to Martin Van Buren by Francis Preston Blair"], Washington (March 18, 1843), LoC: Martin Van Buren Papers.

⁷ H. Clay in the *National Intelligencer* (April 27, 1844), cit. in Ambrose Dudley Mann's letter to James Calhoun, Bremen (Oct. 31, 1844), in Franklin J. Jameson, ed., "Calhoun's Correspondence," *Am. Hist. Ass. Rep.* (1899), 982.

[a] lready contractors are in Europe for the purpose of bringing not their tens or hundreds but their thousands to this country; and we are well assured that so soon as things shall be measurably quiet here, that from England, France, Germany, and Belgium, thousands upon thousands will flock to the country... the day is not distant when a nation of Europeans, by the mere spirit of emigration, will be established on the continent of North America.¹

While not mentioning the contractors by name, the hint to Bourgeois or Fisher is obvious. When annexation had come, James Hamilton, former Texan Chargé in London and Paris, wrote to John Calhoun, only the large land contracts for foreigners--among them "the Empresarios of the Prince"--had made him an annexationist, too. In consequence of a large European immigration, slavery in Texas would have been abolished within five years.² Clearly, the fear of foreign immigration into Texas served as a major argument in the annexation debate.

(5) Conclusion

Leo Schelbert has called emigrants "agents of empire." Paradoxically, the idea of concentrating German emigrants in North America was based on the absence of an empire. In some sense, however, these patriotic group settlements were expected to become the nucleus of an informal overseas 'empire:' an empire more of mind than of matter. On the other side of the ocean, American immigration politics dealt with national group settlements in a way that would on one hand foster the inclination to expand further west (empire-building) and on the other hand limit the influence of any other ethnic group than the dominant Anglo-American one. During the final years of the Texan Republic, the German state idea briefly but never seriously did come into the play of British imperial policies.

In the end, the plans resulted in the actual founding of about a dozen towns but a German state did not come into existence--at least not formally. The German strip, which by 1860 had developed from Wisconsin down to western Texas, was the result of mostly other factors in settlement patterns, like chain-migration or availability of cheap land. At the time, many observers even in Germany criticized the plans for lack of foresight, practical skill, and hybris. Participants themselves later on clearly saw some of the inherent weaknesses they had not considered before: too often, the projects were laid out in too minute a detail. Too much effort and time was spent on bureaucratic niceties. Participants were lead to expect all remedies to come from the associations. Also, the patriotic fervor of the settlers had been grossly overestimated. In the absence of strong sentiments like religious beliefs, the groups regularly broke apart. Open space and unforeseen opportunities but also the traditional cleavages among the Germans themselves operated against the groups' cohesion. Upon arrival in America, a spirit of individualism often set in. Finally, the bulk of the German emigrants were guided by a homesteader-psychology. Their aim was not to revel in grand schemes but to find a decent piece of

¹ William Murphy to Sec. of State, despatch no. 11, confidential (enclosure), Galveston (Nov. 9, 1843), National Archives: Rec. of the Dept. of State, Consular Corr. from Galveston, T-728, reel 2.

² Hamilton to Calhoun, New Orleans (Feb. 18, 1845), in: Jameson, ed., "Calhoun's Correspondence," 1026/27.

land to make their new home on. In so far as they sought a new life, their home had become American.