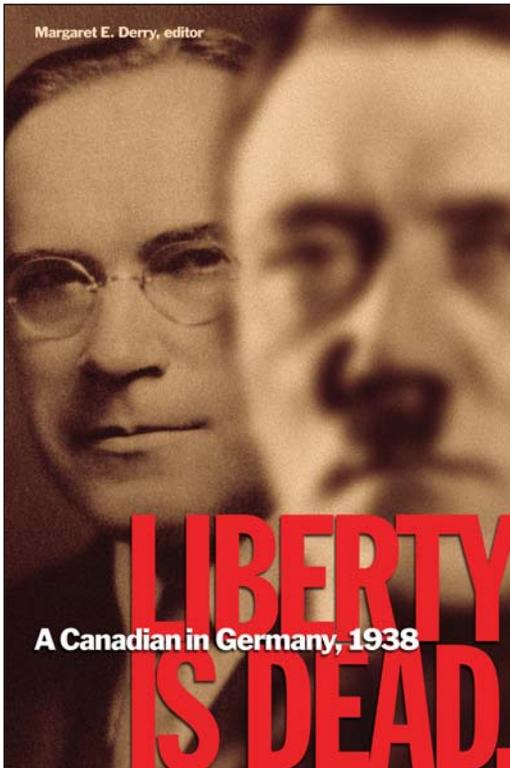


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## Liberty Is Dead: A Canadian in Germany, 1938

Margaret E. Derry, editor

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Much has been written about the Third Reich, but even today it is hard to fully comprehend the actions, views, and beliefs that led to destruction and war and to the hurting and killing of millions of people. *Liberty Is Dead*, the 1938 diary and correspondence of Franklin Wegenast about his travels in central Europe, gives voice to the perspective of a contemporary Canadian. Margaret Derry's careful editing and contextualization brings out a narrative that says as much about the political and ideological atmosphere in pre-World War II Germany and Austria as it does about views and beliefs held by well-educated and politically interested Canadians at that time.

– Mat Schulze, director, Waterloo Centre for German Studies, University of Waterloo

In the spring and summer of 1938, a third-generation German Canadian took an unforgettable road trip in Europe. Franklin Wellington Wegenast drove through Austria, Italy, France, Luxembourg, and Germany. He stopped to talk to people along the way and offered rides to those requesting them. He listened to what his passengers had to say about their lives, the conditions they lived under, and their views on what was happening in Europe. Wegenast heard Hitler speak in Innsbruck, and so witnessed first-hand Nazi power as Austria's independence crumbled. In his journal he noted "the sheer animal force in the cries of the crowd," and foresaw the "collision course" that was shaping up between the Germans who supported Hitler's ideology and the rest of the world.

Wegenast was unable to publish the journal he kept on his journey, and at the time of his death in 1942 it was in an unorganized state. It is published here for the first time alongside commentary that puts the entries in the contexts of Wegenast's life experiences, the prevailing attitudes of the day, both in North America and Europe, and modern scholarship on Germany in the 1930s. The book includes correspondence Wegenast had with a young German for a few months after his return to Canada, correspondence that reveals even more clearly the intensity of his feelings and his fear for the future.

Newly released government documents and diaries kept by Germans during the interwar period have meant a considerable outpouring in recent years of material on German sentiment in the 1930s. Wegenast's diaries and letters corroborate modern assessments of German thinking and add insightful commentary, providing an outsider/insider view on the brewing conflict.

**Franklin Wellington Wegenast** was a third-generation German Canadian but intensely loyal to Britain. After an early career as a music teacher, he became a lawyer and the author of several books on Canadian law. Wegenast had broad interests that encompassed French architecture and the history of religion; he also kept wild ducks and bred sheep. He travelled many times throughout Europe before his last trip in 1938.

**Margaret E. Derry** is a historian, artist, and livestock breeder. She writes about the history of agricultural breeding and has given lectures on the subject around the world. Derry has also written about the history of Georgian Bay. Her work on the Wegenast papers has taken her into the field of German history.

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