

**Ernst Toller's *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Ausgabe*
[Complete Works: Critical Edition]**

by *Steven Schouten*

Ernst Toller, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Ausgabe*. Im Auftrag der Ernst-Toller-Gesellschaft herausgegeben von Dieter Distl, Martin Gerstenbäum, Torsten Hoffmann, James Jordan, Stephen Lamb, Peter Langemeyer, Karl Leydecker, Stefan Neuhaus, Michael Pilz, Kirsten Reimers, Christiane Schönfeld, Gerhard Scholz, Rolf Selbmann, Thorsten Unger und Irene Zanol (Wallstein Verlag: Göttingen, 2015).

- Ernst Toller, *Sämtliche Werke, Band 1: Stücke 1919-1923*, herausgegeben von Torsten Hoffmann, Peter Langemeyer und Thorsten Unger.
- Ernst Toller, *Sämtliche Werke, Band 2: Stücke 1926-1939*, herausgegeben von Bert Kasties, Karl Leydecker, Lydia Mühlbach, Michael Pilz, Kirsten Reimers, Christiane Schönfeld und Thorsten Unger.
- Ernst Toller, *Sämtliche Werke, Band 3: Autobiographisches und Justizkritik*, herausgegeben von Stefan Neuhaus und Rolf Selbmann, unter Mitarbeit von Martin Gerstenbräun, Michael Pilz, Gerhard Scholz und Irene Zanol.
- Ernst Toller, *Sämtliche Werke, Band 4.1: Publizistik und Reden*, herausgegeben von Martin Gerstenbräun, Michael Pilz, Gerhard Scholz und Irene Zanol.
- Ernst Toller, *Sämtliche Werke, Band 4.2: Publizistik und Reden*, herausgegeben von Martin Gerstenbräun, Michael Pilz, Gerhard Scholz und Irene Zanol.
- Ernst Toller, *Sämtliche Werke, Band 5: Lyrik, Erzählungen, Hörspiele, Film*, herausgegeben von Martin Gerstenbräun, James Jordan, Stephen Lamb, Stefan Neuhaus, Michael Pilz, Gerhard Scholz, Victoria Strobl und Irene Zanol.

This impressive and very ambitious publication is the fruit of long and intense research. It contains all of the published and unpublished work of the German Jewish playwright and intellectual Ernst Toller (1893-1939).



Portrait of Ernst Toller [n. d.] Courtesy of Wallstein Verlag

In addition, it contains documents about Toller's personality, creative work, and political activities, such as the interrogation transcripts of the trials following his participation in the Bavarian revolution and *Räterepublik* [Republic of Councils] in the aftermath of the First World War. Those interested in the life and the work of Toller will be absolutely delighted by the abundance and great diversity of material collected here.

It has long been a wish of various scholars to produce such an all-inclusive work. A first serious attempt to collect Toller's work after the author's death in May 1939 was a single volume edition of 1961. It contained Toller's autobiography, *Eine Jugend in Deutschland* [Growing up in Germany, 1933]; his *Briefe aus dem Gefängnis* [Letters from Prison, 1935]; four of his plays, i.e. *Die Wandlung* [The Transformation, 1919], *Masse-Mensch* [Masses and Man, 1919], *Die Maschinenstürmer* [The Machine Wreckers, 1922], and *Hinkemann* [Hinkemann, 1923]; two of his lyrical works, i.e. *Vormorgen* (1924) and *Das Schwalbenbuch* [The Swallow Book, 1924]; a text by the Austrian writer Stefan Großmann on Toller's trial after his participation in the *Räterepublik*; a very short bibliography; and a foreword by Kurt Hiller, a leading figure of so called Activist Expressionism in the 1910s—a movement that had profoundly

influenced the young Toller during the First World War.¹ John M. Spalek (b. 1928), who did much to establish the legacy of exile authors and that of Toller in particular, decided to expand this Toller-edition and aimed at a more complete version from the 1960s onwards. Spalek, a Polish-American scholar of German literature, edited the first bibliography, *Ernst Toller and his Critics: a Bibliography* (1968)— a first, serious attempt to an overview of all the work by and about Toller.² Together with Wolfgang Frühwald, moreover, he also collected Toller's work—a project that resulted, ten years later, in the publication of the *Gesammelte Werke* [Collected Works, 1978]. This five volume collection,³ published by the Carl Hanser Verlag, expanded the *Auswahl-Edition* of 1961 with other plays by Toller, i.e. *Der entfesselte Wotan* [The Unchained Wotan, 1923], *Hoppla, wir leben!* [Whoops, we're alive! 1927], *Feuer aus den Kesseln* [Fire from the Kettle, 1930], *Nie Wieder Friede!* [No More Peace! 1936], and *Pastor Hall* [Pastor Hall, 1939]; with his *Justiz-Erlebnisse* [Justice-Experiences, 1927]; and with some of his speeches, political pamphlets, articles, and poems. In addition, Spalek published a book, *Der Fall Toller* [The Toller Case, 1978], with selected and previously unpublished material on Toller's biography and political activities, such as the interrogation transcripts of Toller's trials in 1918 and 1919. A volume of collected letters by and to Toller remained unpublished at that time, as the editorial house wanted to include only a selected, rather than complete, volume of the correspondence. Spalek had selected some thousand letters, but the Carl Hanser Verlag was willing to print only three hundred. Spalek feared that the remaining letters would never be consulted by scholars, and therefore declined publication with the aim of publishing at a later date in some other venue.⁴

Spalek was aware of the need to update the *Gesammelte Werke*. He had published only a selection of Toller's plays. He also realized that the edition did not include new material about Toller brought to light by scholars after 1978. Ultimately, his aim was the creation of a 'complete' edition. In 1993, he discussed

¹ Ernst Toller, *Prosa, Briefe, Dramen, Gedichte*. Mit einem Vorwort von Kurt Hiller (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1961).

² John M. Spalek, *Ernst Toller and His Critics. A Bibliography* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1968; New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1973).

³ Ernst Toller, *Gesammelte Werke* (GW), eds. John M. Spalek und Wolfgang Frühwald (Frankfurt a/Main: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1978). Five volumes— 1: *Kritische Schriften, Reden und Reportagen*; 2: *Dramen und Gedichte aus dem Gefängnis (1918-1924)*; 3: *Politisches Theater und Dramen im Exil (1927-1939)*; 4: *Eine Jugend in Deutschland*; 5: *Briefe aus dem Gefängnis*.

⁴ Interview with Dieter Distl d.d. November 9th 2015.

the need for such an edition with Dieter Distl, the author of a political biography on Toller that was published in that very same year.⁵ Their conversation led to the idea of an Ernst Toller Society in Neuberg an der Donau (near Munich), a Society that was founded four years later, in 1997, with the aim of publishing an edition of all of Toller's work. Distl, who became the president of that Society, coordinated the first steps toward such an edition. Others like Toller-expert Stefan Neuhaus, for instance, joined the project.⁶ In 2009, Neuhaus became a professor in Innsbruck (Austria), and with the aid of the Austrian *Wissenschaftsfonds* (FWF) he opened a branch office of the Toller Society there. Thereafter, the editing process of the *Sämtliche Werke* [Complete Works, 2015] could truly begin.⁷ Moreover, the creation of this office took place in the year that the copyright on Toller's works—seventy years after his death—expired. Producing the *Sämtliche Werke* had before then been encumbered by the struggle over rights, a problem that was now resolved.⁸ Still, collecting all of Toller's published and unpublished material was very time consuming. As Toller's *Nachlass* had been dispersed as a result, amongst other things, of his forced flight from Nazi Germany into political exile after 1933, visits had to be paid to a variety of places, predominantly in Germany and the United States. According to Michael Pilz, one of the main editors, scholarship on Toller since the publication of the 1978 *Gesammelte Werke* had significantly contributed to the collection of this archival material, but all the sources had to be consulted by the editors themselves.⁹ Finally, in December 2014, the *Sämtliche Werke* were published by Wallstein-Verlag.

Until the appearance of the *Sämtliche Werke*, Spalek and Frühwald's edition had been the most complete and authoritative work in the field. The *Sämtliche Werke* have expanded the 1978 edition—with the editors of this new edition claiming a level of completeness that distinguishes it from the earlier one. Of

⁵ Dieter Distl, *Ernst Toller. Eine politische Biographie* (Munich: Bickel, 1993).

⁶ Stefan Neuhaus edited, amongst others, the following publication of the Ernst-Toller-Society: *Ernst Toller und die Weimarer Republik: ein Autor im Spannungsfeld von Literatur und Politik*, eds. Stefan Neuhaus, Rolf Selbmann and Thorsten Unger (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1999).

⁷ Interviews with Michael Pilz d.d. November 4th 2015, Kirsten Reimers d.d. November 5th 2015, and Distl d.d. November 9th 2015; "Editorische Nachbemerkung zur Werkausgabe" in Ernst Toller, *Sämtliche Werke (SW): Volume V*, 472.

⁸ Christiane Grautoff, Toller's third wife, had sold her husband's rights to Sidney Kaufman, a film producer and friend of Toller, and the rights were then inherited by Kaufman's daughter, complicating the publication of all of Toller's work.

⁹ Interview with Pilz d.d. November 4th 2015.

course, completeness, as the editors also write, is only an ideal— the new *Sämtliche Werke* do not claim to be all-inclusive.¹⁰ Excluded from this five-volume edition are, first of all, Toller's letters. Although the Toller Society has now amassed a considerable collection of the letters, it has decided to publish them separately in a two-volume edition—with publication still possible in 2016.¹¹ In the context of this two-volume edition of letters, the editors also found some small, additional publications by Toller, such as newspaper and magazine columns, that were not included in the *Sämtliche Werke*.¹² A new bibliography, intended as an update of Spalek's 1968 bibliography, has since been finalized and published as well,¹³ although this book, edited by Michael Pilz, is likewise not part of the *Sämtliche Werke*.

Another significant difference from the 1978 edition of Spalek and Frühwald is that the *Sämtliche Werke* published in December 2014 are not simply a reader's edition. They are, rather, a *critical* edition. They contain elaborate appendices with, among other resources, lists of various editions of Toller's works, directories of all variations made to those works, detailed comments, and scholarly afterwords. Here the editors have performed some truly meticulous research. The variations' directories, which are in my view among the most valuable *critical* contributions of this edition, reveal the changes made by Toller to texts (plays, poems, autobiography, etc.) and, thus, also reveal much about the way in which Toller continually fashioned and re-fashioned his work throughout his life. Marvelous and very labour-intensive work has been done with regard to the comments, too, although occasionally these comments are open to slightly varying interpretations¹⁴ and – albeit only on very rare occasion

¹⁰ Toller, *SW*, V, 471.

¹¹ *Ibid.*; Interviews with Pilz and Reimers d.d. November 4th, resp. November 5th, 2015.

¹² Interview with Pilz d.d. November 4th, 2015.

¹³ *Ernst-Toller-Bibliographie 1968-2012. Mit Nachträgen zu John M. Spalek: Ernst Toller and his critics (1968)*, ed. Michael Pilz (Würzburg: Köningshausen & Neumann, 2016).

¹⁴ For example, the editors argue in one of their comments (“4, 23,” 297) that the so-called *Kommis des Tages* in Toller's *Die Wandlung*, takes a Marxist stance and calls for violence. This interpretation corresponds to that of William Anthony Willibrand and others. However, it is unlikely that Toller modeled the *Kommis* on a Marxist. To be sure, Toller's play was more or less finished by December 1917 (see the typescript in the Landauer archive, IISG, Amsterdam), and the *Kommis* is already part of this first draft. At that point, Toller had not yet experienced the impact of the Communists (or, therefore, any possible equation between Marxism and violence), something that would become the case only during the *Räterepublik* in 1919. There are no signs that Toller was influenced by Marxist ideology at that time. Nor is there any indication that he was well informed about it. Toller writes that he first read the Socialist classics - Marx, Engels, etc. - in prison in February-April 1918, but there is no evidence of profound impact of these readings.

– provide some erroneous information.¹⁵ The afterwords analyse and interpret scholarly research on Toller’s work, some of the changes made to his work, and the reception of that work both during and after Toller’s life in literature and reviews as well as on stage. I find these afterwords, which are provided for the vast majority of the many sections in each of the edition’s five volumes, very insightful and well-composed. Yet, they are occasionally absent, as, for example, in the section on Toller’s unpublished poems (printed in Volume V).

The *Sämtliche Werke* are divided into five massive volumes. Each volume, as well as each section of each volume, is chronologically organized. **Volume I and II** include all of Toller’s plays. More specifically, **volume I** contains Toller’s first play, *Die Wandlung*, written in 1917-1918, and all the plays that were written in the years that he spent in prison from 1919 to 1924 as a consequence of his involvement in the ill-fated Bavarian *Räterepublik*. The prison plays include *Masse Mensch*, *Die Maschinenstürmer*, *Der deutsche Hinkemann* [The German

It is much more likely that the *Kommis* represents the kind of demagogue born out of the war—he is the one who propagates war for its own sake, and for its aesthetic aspect. In so doing, he is the antithesis of the protagonist of the play, Friedrich. He is, moreover, a counter-image of Friedrich in a phase that is not yet politicized—he is, in many respects, an apolitical figure. For this, see my dissertation: Frederik Steven Louis Schouten, “Ernst Toller: An Intellectual Youth Biography” (unpublished dissertation, EUI Florence 2007), 168. On the *Kommis* as a Marxist, see: William Anthony Willibrand, *Ernst Toller and his Ideology* (Iowa City, 1945), 40; Walter H. Sokel, *The Writer in Extremis. Expressionism in Twentieth-Century German Literature* (Stanford, California, 1959), 183 (relying on Willibrand); on the *Kommis* as a “man of the proletarian masses” (Mennemeier), see: Franz Norbert Mennemeier, “Das idealistische Proletariendrama: Ernst Tollers Weg vom Aktionsstück zur Tragödie” *Zu Ernst Toller: Drama und Engagement*, ed. Jost Hermand (Stuttgart: Klett, 1981), 28 resp. 76

¹⁵ Relying on a study by Maria Piosik, the editors wrongly write that Toller’s grandfather was the “merchant and factory owner Isaac Cohn” (*SW, III*: comment “105, 19,” 651). In truth, Toller’s grandfather was called Heimann Cohn, and he was a corn merchant and an innkeeper. Isaac Cohn was a relative, but not Toller’s grandfather. Moreover, referring to Wolfgang Rothe’s pioneering work on Toller, the editors falsely state that Rothe argues that “Max Sel” was possibly Wilhelm Rach (*SW, III*: comment “110, 29,” 651). Rothe does not equate “Max Sel” with Rach. It is likely, as I have argued in my dissertation, that “Max Sel” was Max Seligsohn (b. 1892). Seligsohn was a companion at the *Knabenschule* in Samotschin, Toller’s birthtown. On Heimann Cohn and “Max Sel,” see: Schouten, “Ernst Toller,” 46-47 and 56; on Rothe’s reference to Rach, see: Wolfgang Rothe, *Ernst Toller in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Reinbeck: Rowohlt, 1997), 125, footnote 21; for Piosik on Isaac Cohn, see: Maria Piosik, “Ernst Tollers Kindheit und Jugendjahre in Polen (1893-1912)” *Ernst Tollers Geburtsort Samotschin*, eds. Thorsten Unger and Maria Wojtczak (Würzburg: Köningshausen & Neumann, 2001).

Hinkemann, 1923]¹⁶, and *Der entfesselte Wotan*, all of which were also part of the 1978-edition by Spalek and Frühwald (as well as more or less part of the *Auswahlausgabe* of 1961). Volume I also contains some lesser known, ‘smaller’ dramatic pieces, i.e. *Die Rache des Verhöhnerten Liebhabers* [The Rage of the Mocking Lover, 1920], *Deutsche Revolution* [German Revolution, 1921], and *Bilder aus der größten französischen Revolution* [Images from the Great French Revolution, 1922], none of which had not been included in the 1978 edition. While most of these early plays deal with humanitarian idealism and politics, *Die Rache des Verhöhnerten Liebhabers* is about love and sexuality in 16th century Italy. The play, written in the Eichstätt prison (near Munich), has been characterized by one scholar (and co-editor of the *Sämtliche Werke*) as “a sublimation of Toller’s sexual wish-phantasies in prison.”¹⁷ First published in 1920 in the Expressionist monthly *Die Weißen Blätter*,¹⁸ it has received hardly any serious attention in scholarship. This is the first time that the play has been incorporated in a Toller edition.¹⁹

Volume II covers the plays written in the Weimar period after Toller’s release from prison in 1924 as well as those written in exile (1933-1939). It contains not only those plays that were already included in the 1978 edition, such as *Nie wieder Friede!* and *Pastor Hall*, but also those that Toller wrote with Walter Hasenclever – i.e. *Bourgeois bleibt Bourgeois* [Bourgeois will be Bourgeois, 1929] — and Hermann Kesten – i.e. *Wunder in Amerika* [Miracle in America, 1931] – as well as four smaller, lesser known works--*Berlin 1919* (Berlin 1919, 1926/27), *Der Autor Alwis Kronberg* [The Author Alwis Kronberg, 1933], *Des Kaisers neue Kleider* [The Emperor’s New Clothes, 1932], and *Forget Europe* (1936/37)--none of which had been included in the Spalek-Frühwald edition. Volume II also contains variations and different versions of the above-mentioned *Berlin 1919*, *Hoppla, wir leben!* and *Feuer aus den Kesseln*—variants of works that no previous Toller edition has ever before published in this form. In

¹⁶ This is the same play as *Hinkemann*; the first version of this play was called *Der deutsche Hinkemann*, and it was published in 1923, whereas *Hinkemann* was the title given to the next editions, from 1924 onwards. The 1961 edition choose to integrate the play as *Hinkemann*, the 1978 edition as *Der Deutsche Hinkemann*.

¹⁷ Kirsten Reimers, *Das Bewältigen des Wirklichen. Untersuchungen zum dramatischen Schaffen Ernst Tollers zwischen den Weltkriegen* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2000) 63.

¹⁸ Ernst Toller, “Die Rache des Verhöhnerten Liebhabers, oder Frauenlist und Männerlist: Ein galantes Puppenspiel in zwei Akten frei nach einer Geschichte des Kardinal Bandello,” *Die weißen Blätter: Eine Monatsschrift*, vol. 7 (Berlin, 1920) (Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Klaus Reprint, 1969), 489-504.

¹⁹ “Nachwort” to *Die Rache des Verhöhnerten Liebhabers*, Toller, *SW, I*, 340-352.

addition, and also unlike the 1978 edition, the volume contains *Die Blinde Göttin* [The Blind Goddess, 1932] —a play that was inspired by the trial of Max Riedel and Antonia Guala, a couple that had been falsely accused of the murder of Riedel's wife and that had, as a result, served years in a Swiss prison. The case inspired Toller to write an article, published on October 31st 1931 in *Die Weltbühne* (vol. 27, n. 41),²⁰ and a radio play, *Indizien: Drama für Rundfunk* [Evidence: Drama for the Radio, 1932], broadcasted on May 7th 1932 by the Viennese RAVAG.²¹ *Die Blinde Göttin*, a reworking of the radio play, was staged for the first time on 31 October 1932 in the Raimund Theater in Vienna.²² The play is one of many of Toller's works in which social (in)justice is central.

Volume III contains Toller's autobiographical work and critique of the legal system, i.e. Toller's *Justiz-Erlebnisse*; his autobiography; his prison letters; "short prose" ["*kleine Prosa*"]; interviews that have been conducted with Toller; and the interrogation transcripts of the trials following his participation in the January strike of 1918 and in the 1919 *Räterepublik*. The *Justiz-Erlebnisse*, a collection of articles, are about Toller's experiences of and reflections about the German legal system during his prison years (1919-1924). Toller's autobiography, *Eine Jugend in Deutschland* (1933), is an absolutely marvelous piece of work that reveals much about Toller's life, although it is often more a fictional than an autobiographical account. The "short prose" and the "interviews" contain several relatively brief texts by and about Toller. An example of the "short prose" is *Gefangenschaft und Sexualität* [Prison Life and Sexuality, 1932]. The text, first presented at a congress of the World League for Sexual Reform in September 1931 in Vienna, analyses the relation between prison life and sexuality on the basis of Toller's impressions and experiences in the Eichstätt prison—the same place, that is, in which he wrote *Die Rache des Verhönten Liebhabers*. The interrogation transcripts of the trials of 1918 and 1919 provide fascinating material for all those interested in Toller's role in the Bavarian revolution. They also contain interesting information on Toller's life before the revolution.

Volume IV, subdivided into two physical volumes (4.1 and 4.2), contains *Quer Durch: Reisebilder und Reden* (1930); Toller's early political pamphlets; publications during the Bavarian Revolution and official texts of the *Räterepublik*; speeches; essays; reviews; contributions to *Festschriften*; travel

²⁰ The article is printed in Volume IV.1: Ernst Toller, "Giftmordprozeß Riedel-Guala," *Ibid.*, SW, IV.1, 509-512.

²¹ Toller, SW, V, 420.

²² "Nachwort" to *Die Blinde Göttin*, Toller, SW, II, 753-772; also, Toller, SW, V, 420.

reports; parts of a book on Toller's Spanish relief project of the late 1930s; and some additional, not very substantial material. *Quer Durch* contains Toller's impressions of travels in the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as a section entitled "speeches and essays;" the latter section contains, amongst others, Toller's letter from 20 December 1917 to Gustav Landauer, his spiritual father during the First World War. The Toller-edition of 1978 had already integrated a selection of texts from *Quer Durch*, including Toller's letter to Landauer, but as a whole the book has never been part of a Toller edition.²³ However, the most interesting sections of volume IV consist, in my view, of the early political pamphlets and the publications and official texts of the Bavarian *Räterepublik*. Here lots of previously unpublished material has been printed along with more familiar material, such as the call (*Aufruf*) of Toller's *Kulturpolitischen Bund der Jugend in Deutschland* [Cultural Political League of the Youth in Germany, 1917]. The political pamphlets contain material on Toller's first public actions, i.e. those in student circles from 1917, those in the Munich strike movement of January 1918 and those in the Revolution and *Räterepublik* in 1918-1919.

Apart from being a brilliant writer, Toller was a brilliant orator— a talent that first manifested itself during his political career in Munich at the end and in the aftermath of the First World War, but that remained part and parcel of his public performance from that time onward. Apart from speeches held during the Bavarian Revolution this volume contains the speeches Toller held in his later life, including the speech he gave at the PEN-Club in London in 1936. The section containing Toller's essays includes previously unpublished material, but also such texts as the *Weltbühne*-article on the Riedel-Guala case (see above), which had also been printed in the Spalek and Frühwald edition. The "travel reports" of volume IV expand beyond Toller's reports on travels to the United States and the Soviet Union, which had been printed in the above mentioned *Quer Durch*, to include reports on travels to countries such as Denmark, Hungary, and Spain. Republican Spain, more than any other foreign country, held a special significance for Toller during his years of political exile. He had tried to aid this country with food in the late 1930s, and also selected material for a book about this project (printed in the last section of volume IV)—although the book never materialized. The Spanish relief project itself was also unsuccessful.

²³ Toller, *SW*, IV.2, 801.

Volume V contains Toller's published and unpublished poems; a section that the editors call "aphorisms and anecdotes"; narratives; radio plays; and film scripts. Toller was best known as a playwright and intellectual, but in his early life, especially before 1920,²⁴ he also wrote poetry. His first published poem, "Marschlied" ["Marching Song"], appeared in 1918 in the well-known literary magazine *Die Aktion*. Besides individual poems and a few translations of poems, Toller published three volumes of poetry, i.e. *Gedichte der Gefangenen* [Poems of Prisoners, 1921], *Das Schwalbenbuch*, and *Vormorgen*, as well as three so called *Chorwerke* [Choral Works], i.e. *Requiem den erschossenen Brüdern* [Requiem for the Brothers Who Have Been Shot to Death, 1920], *Tag des Proletariats* [Day of the Proletariat, 1920], and *Weltliche Passion* [Worldly Passion, 1934]. Toller's *Schwalbenbuch*, based on a visit of swallows to Toller's prison cell in 1922, is a beautifully composed work of poetry about a pair of swallows that challenge the authorities of Toller's prison, Niederschönfeld, with their liberty to settle wherever they want and with their repeated returns after having been chased away. Toller's *Chorwerke* are a contribution, as the editor of this section also writes in the afterword, to socialist poetry. Fascinating in this volume is the section of unpublished poems, most of which have been printed in James Jordan's *Previously Unpublished Poems of Ernst Toller* (2000).²⁵ However, I am skeptical about the attempt by this section's editor to date many of these poems by means of a somewhat uncritical acceptance of Jordan's interpretations. In my opinion, Jordan tried to date these poems in the above mentioned book on the basis of rather superficial historical analyses. The sections "aphorisms and anecdotes" and "narratives" contain, amongst others, the previously unpublished text "Der Tod einer Mutter" ["The Death of a Mother"] – the text, dated 1939 by John M. Spalek, reveals how much Toller fashioned his autobiography up to the very end of his life. It also suggests how central his relationship to his mother, Ida Toller-Cohn, was to his life. The narrative is a romanticized story of the way in which a (i.e. Toller's) mother defended her son's reputation against the Nazis until her death on 28 December 1933.²⁶

²⁴ "Editorische Vorbemerkung" Toller, *SW*, V, 295.

²⁵ James Jordan, *Previously Unpublished Poems of German playwright Ernst Toller (1893-1939). A Critical Translation* (Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 2000).

²⁶ On the date of the death of Toller's mother, see: Richard Dove, *He was a German: A Biography of Ernst Toller* (London: Libris, 1993), 248; on the significance of Toller's relationship to his mother, see for example: Steven Schouten, "Ernst Toller's Opfer," *Faltenwürfe der Geschichte: Entdecken, entziffern, erzählen*, eds. Sandra Mass and Xenia von Tippelskirch (Frankfurt am Main: Böhlau Verlag 2014), 159-179.

Volume V also contains Toller's radio plays, i.e. *Berlin, letzte Ausgabe!* [Berlin, Last Edition! 1930] and the above mentioned *Indizien*. While *Berlin, Letzte Ausgabe!* has received much scholarly attention, *Indizien* is largely unknown. As we have seen, this play was inspired by the Riedel-Guala trial and reworked in *Die Blinde Göttin. Indizien*, which is here first published in book-form.²⁷ It reveals not only the “ethical problems” of evidence-based justice, the editors of this section write, but also shows how reality is presented in a public sphere dominated by mass media—in this case by radio.²⁸ Interestingly, Toller thus used the radio as a medium to point to the dangers of that specific medium at the very same time. With regard to the film screenplays, finally, the volume includes, amongst others, *Der weg nach Indien* [The Way to India, undated]. The manuscript, written in American exile (probably between 1937 and 1938/39),²⁹ was never published as text or realized as film. As a screenplay writer, Toller was unsuccessful.

The *Sämtliche Werke* are a milestone in scholarship on Toller. Although the *Werke* cannot, of course, replace the original documents that are kept in the archives, scholars will find in this marvelous five-volume edition all the material they might need for further research on Toller. The texts provide not only Toller's creative work, but also information about that work, as well as about Toller's life and the issues of the age in which he lived. All this makes these works interesting not only for literary scholars, but also for historians and other specialists. Toller's reputation as a writer intersected with his social and political activism, and his work therefore touches upon a variety of social and political themes—ranging from political idealism to the search for social justice, and from the use and abuse of mass media to issues of love and sexuality.

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²⁷ Toller, *SW*, V, 421, 424.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 432.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 438.