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Writer Encounters on the Baltic Sea: Cultural Diplomacy, ‘a Community of Fate,’ and a National Socialist Nordic Space Abroad

Bakgrund/Frågeställning

This paper explores how discourse related to the Baltic Sea framed the transnational writer encounters taking place between 1934 and 1939 at the German-Nordic Authors’ House in Travemünde, a resort town on the Baltic Sea coast. It argues that the organizers running the authors’ house early on sought in particular to instrumentalize the notion, popular in the part of the National Socialist movement affiliated with the party ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, that the Baltic Sea constituted a “community of fate [*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*].” Hence, the paper traces an attempt to create a “Nordic space abroad” in the Author’s House, yet one invoking a peculiar National Socialist version of the “Nordic”. In doing so, the paper traces how the Baltic Sea discourse, which had roots in 19th century *völkisch* thinking, was aligned with notions from the so-called Nordic Thought-movement (building on and propagating the work of the “Nordic race scientist” H.F.K. Günther), on the one hand, and invocations of traditions for German-Nordic cultural exchange, on the other. Thus, it is argued, the Baltic Sea was operationalized as part of the ideological framework sustaining one branch of National Socialist cultural diplomacy that engaged a significant amount of Nordic writers, as more than thirty Nordic writers visited the house for stays of various durations. The, mostly skeptical, ways in which these writers engaged the claims to ‘Nordicness’ at the Authors’ House will be discussed in the final part of the paper.

Metod och Resultat

Konklusion