SUNFLOWERS AND THISTLES

by Elvire Bisle-Fandrich
translated by James Gessele

Allyn Brosz of Washington, D.C. writes, "I thought I was quite familiar with the history of the Germans in Bessarabia, but Elvire Bisle-Fandrich has taught me so much more in her engaging look at daily life in the German village in the 1930s: Sunflowers & Thistles. She reminds us that the 'good old days' had both sunlight and shadows; our ancestors were only human, after all. It's told with humor throughout and is truly an entertaining and informative read."

German critic Erwin Moritz writes, "Much of Elvire Bisle's Sunflowers & Thistles seems almost incredible when, on the basis of contemporary witness accounts, things come to light that have been kept closed-mouthed at all cost. Bisle should be recognized for her courage to expose events that her Bessarabian German countrymen have hardly dared write about until now."

Secondary school educator Elvire Bisle traveled about Germany, often accompanied by her father, conscientiously researching and collecting accounts, allowing her Bessarabian countrymen to have a say with their authentic stories. Adds critic Moritz: "Accompanied by a wealth of photos, the work is thrilling to read, sometimes even upsetting, particularly the drama surrounding the horrible flight in wartime and how the Bessarabian Germans had to endure it almost without exception. This book will prompt us to reflect. And well it should."

PUBLICATION PROJECT

NDSU Libraries' GRHC is excited to announce this upcoming publication. A translation project has been underway for two years and we are now seeking funding to complete the publication. The project is not possible without generous donations. If you wish to contribute, please note details on the reverse side on how to donate. Thank you!
Sunflowers and Thistles

Elvire Bisle-Fandrich

In coping with the Romanian government after 1918, the Bessarabian Germans had to be in top form. Albert N., a willful and enterprising personality, plays a prominent role in Bisle’s account.

At one point, Albert served a stint in the Romanian military. Eventually, he faced a promotion as orderly to his commanding officer but knew that superior officers were inordinately harsh with their German recruits. Albert dreaded the physical exam he had to undergo.

Albert pondered a scheme that would scare off the superior. With the knowledge that Romanians were terribly frightened by contagious diseases, especially ones causing skin blisters, Albert purchased a wire brush and commenced beating it against his back as far as he could reach. After three days of this, his back was nothing but small blisters and red welts.

Once the examining doctor saw Albert’s back, discussion about a promotion to orderly ended quickly and he was sent to the hospital where he spent fourteen days in “recovery.”

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