This essay provides an analysis and a critique of Franz Carl Weiskopf’s poetics of travel writing in the context of Weimar-era aesthetic debates. Weiskopf (1900-1955) published three books about his travels to the Soviet Union: *Umsteigen ins 21. Jahrhundert* (1927), *Zukunft im Rohbau* (1932), and the photo book *Der Staat ohne Arbeitslose* (1931, co-authored with Ernst Glaeser). Weiskopf claims: “charakteristisch für diese neue Welt ist nicht das Sein, sondern das Werden,” and further, that the newly founded Soviet state is marked by continuous change. Travelers in his view must thus acknowledge that the *status quo* is a dynamic process and that an adequate interpretation must relate momentary observations to this process. In my paper, I analyze how Weiskopf integrates this *geschichtsphilosophische* perspective into his narrative approach to travel writing. I trace the relation of his poetics to contemporary debates on montage aesthetics and reportage (Lukács, Kisch), and I demonstrate how Weiskopf expands their scope on a temporal level by ascribing a temporal-indexical status to the fragmentary episodes in his work: they point toward the future. Taking into consideration both the aesthetic dimension and the fact that Weiskopf himself conceptualizes his journeys to the Soviet Union as time travels into the future, my analysis stresses the importance of time rather than space for understanding Weiskopf’s poetics of travel writing.

In the second part of the essay, I discuss the political and aesthetic implications of this poetics and illuminate a discrepancy between the political and the aesthetic dimensions of Weiskopf’s work. This travel writer’s reliance on a teleological notion of history undermines his aesthetic project, which promises to overcome a notion of “empty” time. Whereas the future-oriented presentation of the episodes in his travelogues sheds new light on notions of representation and allows for the reader to engage critically with the potential that is offered by the text, Weiskopf’s rather rigid *geschichtsphilosophische* perspective ultimately denies this potential by suggesting that the future is not negotiable after all. At the same time, however, Weiskopf’s aesthetic strategies put the teleological notion of history into question, thereby reinforcing the tension between the political and the aesthetic dimension of his work. This tension in Weiskopf’s writings is not resolved; that is what makes these writings especially
promising for their reconsideration in light of aesthetic debates of the 1930s, most notably regarding the role of Weiskopf’s works in the context of the aestheticization of politics and the politicization of the aesthetic.

The essay concludes with a discussion of Weiskopf’s poetics against the backdrop of Reinhart Koselleck’s concepts “Space of Experience” and “Horizon of Expectation.” I argue that Weiskopf – contrary to Koselleck – does not advocate for a reconceptualization of the relation between past, present, and future in modernity, but rather seeks to understand the present as a signifier of the time to come – a signifier derived from past prophecies. I thus propose the term “Space of Expectation” to delineate Weiskopf’s poetics of travel writing and its relation to futurity.