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**Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte**

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consolidation«<sup>15</sup> allein vom Primat der inneren Politik diktiert, wie man seinen Brief vom 25. 1. 1871 an Lord Derby entnehmen könnte<sup>16</sup>, oder entsprach sie in erster Linie den Bedürfnissen der seit eh und je bestimmenden »British interests<sup>17</sup>? Dieser hier pars pro toto gestellten, entscheidenden Frage englischer Außenpolitik im 19. Jahrhundert nachzugehen, aber dürfte der Forschung nach Platts gründlicher und ergiebiger Studie leichter fallen. Denn sie hat dazu beigetragen, der Hypostasierung des imperialistischen Zeitalters als einer gänzlich neuen Epoche innerhalb der nationalen Geschichte Großbritanniens zu begegnen, hat dem ökonomischen Faktor im Rahmen der englischen Außenpolitik seinen ihm zukommenden »Stellenwert« im Geflecht der britischen Interessen zugewiesen und hat die Kontinuität, ja wohl auch den Primat der – selbstverständlich und prinzipiell gesellschaftlich vermittelten – außenpolitischen »British interests« als über den Einbruch der »Großen Depression« und den Beginn des imperialistischen Zeitalters hinaus verbindliche Maxime englischer Außenpolitik betont.

Klaus HILDEBRAND, London

Joanna RICHARDSON, *La Vie Parisienne 1852–1870*. London (Hamish Hamilton) 1971, XXX S., 8°.

It was said of Thomas Gainsborough that he portrayed the British aristocracy in order to paint the landscape backgrounds of their estates. Joanna Richardson has established her reputation in England as an expert on the cultural history of Nineteenth Century France by her studies of Gautier, Verlaine and Princess Mathilde. Now with »*La Vie Parisienne*« she comes to paint the brilliant background landscape of the Second Empire.

She depicts it in its glitter and its sordidness, for there was abundance of both, and the book is richly illustrated in colour and photogravure. It is all there from Napoleon III with a Civil List of twentyfive million gold francs – a figure only now vouchsafed to the Queen of England after a century of intense inflation – to the laundress earning two francs a day. The court was splendid because the Emperor felt uncertain of himself and

<sup>15</sup> S. R. STEMBRIDGE, *Disraeli and the Millstones*, in: *Journal of British Studies* 5 (1965), S. 123.

<sup>16</sup> *Disraeli an Lord Derby vom 25. 1. 71*, abgedr. bei: W. F. MONYPENNY/G. E. BUCKLE, *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli Earl of Beaconsfield*, New and Rev. Ed., Vol. II, London 1929, S. 472.

<sup>17</sup> HILDEBRAND (wie Anm. 9), bes. S. 23 f. (Ms.).

while proclaiming democratic principles sought to win over the aristocratic and the conventional. Its life and etiquette are described in considerable detail. Napoleon himself is shown »plein de bonne volonté«, anxious to conciliate the extremes. His final programme in May 1870 for the Liberal Empire was unexceptionable, »in realising it our nation will advance the progress of civilization«.

Miss Richardson covers her vast canvas with skill, erudition and interest. She has, probably wisely, omitted to describe the domestic and foreign policies of the Empire, except insofar as they bear on her social and cultural theme. But if there is a lacuna which will be noticed by readers of *Francia* it is perhaps that she gives insufficient attention to the role played by Germans in the life of Paris under the Second Empire. Never was this greater, after all General Trochu expelled 80,000 Germans in August 1870 after the first French defeats.

The title of the book is chosen from the operetta by Offenbach depicting the feverish social turmoil which characterised the age. The music of the cantor's son from Cologne sung by Hortense Schneider, the daughter of a drunken German tailor in Bordeaux – *la Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein* – was to symbolise the gay delirium of an Empire which should eventually succumb to Prussian steel. These two with their backgrounds were representative also of so many of their compatriots who ranged from the effeminate ex-Duke of Brunswick to the hapless scavengers of Haussmann's boulevards. Few can have been quite as sordid or repulsive as *La Paiva*, the arch-courtesan, and Count Henckel von Donnersmarck whose strange »affaire«, here recounted, was fraught with so much humiliation for the French people. When the banker Bleichroeder suggested to Bismarck an indemnity of three milliards Henckel insisted on five. When every hôtel in the Champs Elysées was locked and shuttered for the German entry Henckel watched in full uniform from the steps of the *Hôtel Paiva*. When the liaison finally received benefit of clergy in the Lutheran church in Paris it was clinched by the gift of the flawless diamond necklace the Empress Eugénie had been obliged to sell.

Paris as this century has known it was the creation and the monument of Napoleon III – »a capital worthy of France...« For the eighteen years of the Second Empire it was the capital of Continental Europe, a centre for literature, music and the arts. »Only in Second Empire Paris could one drive down a brand-new boulevard by Haussmann to attend the première of *La Vie Parisienne*. Paris has never been more Parisian than it was in the days of Napoleon III«.

Godfrey SCHEELE, London