

Das wirklich Neue liegt in der Konzentration auf dieses Thema, die britische Haltung zu den tiefgreifenden Veränderungen in Deutschland. Deshalb noch einige Bemerkungen zur Methode. Sie beruht auf einer unglaublich dichten, kontinuierlich durchgehaltenen Quellenanalyse auf mehreren Ebenen. Es wird nicht nur nach Anhängern und Gegnern der harten Linie und internen Differenzierungen unterschieden, sondern auch nach Gruppen – Politikern, Militärs, Beamten und Sonderstäben der Ressorts, Journalisten etc. – bis hinunter zu Kleingruppen innerhalb dieser Aufteilung und zu einzelnen Persönlichkeiten. Dies ermöglicht eine sehr differenzierte und präzise Analyse des Entscheidungsprozesses. Zu Recht wird als Basis eine breite immer wieder aufgenommene Untersuchung der Information, Perzeption und Bewußtseinsbildung vorgelegt, und zwar von den führenden Exponenten bis zur mittleren Ebene der Zuarbeitenden und Ausführenden, von den amtlichen Schriftwechseln, Erörterungen, Auswertungen bis zu den privaten Stellungnahmen, Erlebnissen, Eindrücken und Stimmungen. Die »hohe Politik« wird so mit der alltäglichen Arbeit und Erfahrung verbunden (daraus erklärt sich die außergewöhnlich lange Liste der Danksagungen; denn es sind sehr viele private Nachlässe herangezogen worden). Erst diese ergebnisreiche Vorgehensweise macht die bedeutsamen Resultate so überzeugend: Die Chancen der jungen deutschen Republik wurden nicht nur durch deren eigene Fehler, sondern auch durch das Verhalten der in vielen Punkten entscheidenden britischen Regierung (die Empire-Vertreter, insbesondere Hughes, immer im Nacken) verdorben.

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Daniel ANSON, *Poincaré, l'acharné de la politique*, Paris (Tallandier) 1997, 442 p. (Figure de proue).

Raymond Poincaré is one of the few political figures to have exercised as decisive an influence on the first half of the Third Republic as on the second. In a political career which ran from 1887 to his death in 1934 he held most of the major offices of state both before and after the First World War. He played crucial roles in France's entry into the war, the organisation of the war effort, the peace settlement, the reparations question, the occupation of the Ruhr and the reorganisation of French finances in the 1920s. Yet as the novelist and essayist Emmanuel Berl wrote in his obituary in October 1934: »La France n'a eu envers Poincaré ni des élans d'amour comme envers Gambetta, envers Jaurès, ni des élans d'admiration comme envers Clemenceau«. He has remained a controversial figure. As »Poincaré-la-guerre« and »Poincaré-le franc« he has provoked opprobrium and praise. His role in the outbreak of the First World War and the sealing of »union sacrée« has cast him alternately as war-monger and saviour; his management of the occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 has been depicted as either a courageous effort to ensure German execution of the Versailles treaty or as evidence of visceral Germanophobia; his role in bringing order to French finances in the 1920s has led him to be portrayed as an austere deflationist or as one of France's twentieth century financial wizards. His identification with a certain number of values – order, dignity, politeness, honesty, thrift – which posterity has tended to view as unfashionable, and his association with the middle class, which claimed to incarnate those values and which historiography has not found exciting or treated kindly, has left Raymond Poincaré if not one of the unsung heroes of French history, then one whose political stature has not received the recognition it deserves.

This lack of recognition is reflected in the small number of modern studies on Poincaré either in English or French. This is partly to do with the decline of political history in France from the 1930s until the 1970s and the academic profession's desire to eschew the study of politically unfashionable subjects, especially those associated with the Right, in order to concentrate on worthier issues such as social history, the Left or the labour move-

ment. It is partly to do with the domination of the Annales school of history since the 1930s and of its perception of biography as an unscientific historical form for the emphasis it puts on the action of the individual as opposed to more profound historical forces.

There is only one full length biography of Poincaré in English – published by the author of this review in 1997 – and only two in French, the first published by Jacques Chastenot in 1948, and the second by Pierre Miquel in 1961. Despite their merits, neither those of Chastenot or Miquel provide the full apparatus of scholarship, neither had access to official papers, nor were their authors able to consult Poincaré's private papers, which since the 1970s have come into the public domain, notably his diaries kept at the Bibliothèque Nationale. The value of those papers in re-assessing Poincaré's place in French history is of considerable importance, notably on the outbreak of the First World War. Unfortunately, the biography by Daniel Amson, a professor of law at Lille University, does not use them, nor does it make use of any official papers of the ministries Poincaré directed. The only archival sources consulted are those in the Bibliothèque de l'Ordre des Avocats in Paris, which throw some light on Poincaré's writings as a boy and some of his legal briefs. The great wealth of secondary sources on the political, economic and social background to Poincaré's life, together with works and articles covering specific aspects of his career, have not been consulted. Inevitably the picture drawn of Poincaré does not vary much from that of Chastenot or Miquel, nor does it give any new insights into the great questions which have dogged Poincaré's reputation, most notably that of ›Poincaré-la-guerre‹ and its historiographical genesis. Consequently Amson tends to repeat the old clichés about the man, notably on his war-mongering (partly as a result of relying on the memoirs of his political enemies like Caillaux rather than on archival sources) which much modern historical scholarship has overturned. What Amson has added are a few insights into Poincaré's career as a lawyer, but there is virtually nothing for instance to explain his domestic life, his love of animals, his declared ›feminism‹, all of which can give a different interpretation to the rather hackneyed idea of Poincaré ›l'homme qui a une pierre à la place du cœur‹. Nevertheless Amson is to be congratulated for having drawn attention to one of France's foremost politicians of the Third Republic, a man of the republican centre who, for all his faults, contributed in no small way to ensuring the stability and prosperity of France's longest serving regime in modern times.

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Eberhard KOLB (Hg.), Friedrich Ebert als Reichspräsident. Amtsführung und Amtsverständnis, München (R. Oldenbourg) 1997, 317 p. (Schriftenreihe der Stiftung Reichspräsident-Friedrich-Ebert-Gedenkstätte, 4).

En l'absence d'un *Nachlaß Ebert*, il n'y a pas, jusqu'à présent, de biographie scientifique satisfaisante du premier président de la République de Weimar, le social-démocrate Friedrich Ebert. Seul un travail de ›fourmi‹, exploitant les sources directes et indirectes les plus diverses, permettra de mettre en évidence le rôle et la personnalité d'Ebert, dont la pensée est d'autant plus difficile à saisir que ses déclarations personnelles sont rares et qu'il ne se liait pas facilement. L'ouvrage réunit les actes d'un symposium organisé en 1993 à Heidelberg par la *Stiftung Reichspräsident-Friedrich-Ebert-Gedenkstätte*. Ludwig RICHTER, ›Der Reichspräsident bestimmt die Politik und der Reichskanzler deckt sie: Friedrich Ebert und die Bildung der Weimarer Koalition‹, retrace en détail les négociations entre les partis de la coalition de Weimar pour former le gouvernement Scheidemann, et publie en annexe les notes inédites du social-démocrate Paul Löbe. On constate que la question du programme n'est pas un obstacle majeur, dès lors que le Zentrum s'est prononcé pour la République, mais que, par contre, les questions de personnes et la répartition de la présidence de la