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Alfred HEIT. *Elsässische Publizistik im Jahre 1848*. Frankfurt/M. (Peter Lang Verlag). 1975. 592 p.

Les études de la presse régionale française deviennent de plus en plus nombreuses. Tout naturellement Alfred Heit a choisi comme sujet de thèse l'analyse des journaux dans une région où le peuple lisait encore l'allemand à un moment où il est appelé à jouer un rôle essentiel. Contrairement à la plupart des historiens alsaciens, l'auteur a préféré choisir un bref moment de l'histoire et être capable de voir l'ensemble de la production du département du Bas-Rhin. A côté de Strasbourg, la »Publizistik« alsacienne avait également d'autres centres de production importants, Colmar, Mulhouse et Belfort. Dans la presse politique, Strasbourg jouait incontestablement le rôle de capitale et étouffait dans le Bas-Rhin pratiquement toutes les tentatives de création de journaux. Alfred Heit nous donne ici une solide présentation de la presse, y compris les journaux d'affiches et religieux. Non seulement les conditions politiques et économiques de la vie de cette presse sont analysées, mais même la vie des journalistes, leur travail, etc. On ne pourra plus ignorer cette remarquable étude pour évoquer l'Alsace ou la presse de 1848.

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Bernhard MANN, *Die Württemberger und die deutsche Nationalversammlung 1848/49*, Düsseldorf (Droste) 1975, 453 S.

In its historiography Württemberg has long been one of the relatively underdeveloped areas of Germany. Among the three major southern states it is the one, until very recently, whose modern history has received the least attention. For obvious reasons, an extraordinary number of historians have flocked to the Bavarian archives; and for sheer quantity it would be difficult to rival the disciples of Karl Bosl who have to their credit an impressive array of well researched dissertations. Yet if that is not surprising in view of Bavaria's size and importance in Germany's national affairs, one must observe that Baden has also attracted more than passing notice from several outstanding modern historians, of which three names come quickly to mind: Wolfram Fischer, Lothar Gall, and Josef Becker. Meanwhile, Württemberg has seemingly lagged behind. But there are signs that the balance is finally being redressed with the recent appearance of capable monographs by Dieter Langewiesche, Werner Boldt, and now Bernhard Mann.

The title of Dr. Mann's book betrays much about its contents. The word »revolution« is conspicuously absent, since it is his general thesis that a revolutionary upheaval on a national scale never had a chance to succeed in 1848. He dispenses with the old clichés that the Frankfurt parliament was inept, inexperienced, and therefore in the end ineffectual. The truth is, as he convincingly argues, that a German revolution was bound to break on the rock of particularism.

Much the same point was made long ago by the British historian A. J. P. Taylor when he observed that 1848 was a turning-point that failed to turn. Dr. Mann goes Taylor one better by contending in effect that a real turn was simply out of the question. That being the case, the enthusiasm for change in Württemberg was bound to come to grief; and the frustration in Stuttgart over the lack of progress in the National Assembly is therefore properly the central theme of the story.

The other clue in Dr. Mann's title is »die Württemberger«. That term is intended to indicate that Dr. Mann is writing not about the state of Württemberg but its people. In this attempt he succeeds only moderately well. The apparent limitations seem to be recognized by the author himself, since his infrequent references to public opinion (*Öffentlichkeit*) are invariably placed in quotation marks. The majority of the populace, the peasants, remain a shadow in the background; and the »common man« receives mention but is nowhere in sight. Dr. Mann is not the first historian to be defeated by this problem, but he might have assuaged methodological objections to his study by admitting that »die Württemberger« of which he speaks were actually the local notability: the lawyers and judges, newspaper editors and professors, businessmen and bureaucrats, ministers and bankers. These men of means, les notables wurtembergeois, are his real subject. He does succeed in demonstrating that constitutional history and social history were inseparable; but his discussion remains almost entirely in the parliamentary sphere and rarely descends into the streets or fields. He describes the relationship between Stuttgart and Frankfurt, not between capital and countryside.

The structure of the book is determined by the chronology of events. With some misgivings, to which he confesses, Dr. Mann has opted for an *Ereignisgeschichte* rather than for a topical analysis. Since his account is detailed and heavily documented, the result is sometimes to inundate the reader with trivia rather than to distinguish the important from the unimportant. One might often wish for less narrative, more clarity and clarification. Still, the plot emerges bit by bit; and the total impression of Württemberg's helplessness under the given circumstances of 1848 is unmistakable. Unwilling to choose between Friedrich Hecker and Friedrich Wilhelm IV, the Römer cabinet and the common folk of Württemberg were condemned to be immobilized and isolated. Of all the German states, Württemberg was probably the most ripe for a »liberal revolution« – but that, in the national context of 1848, proved to be a complete contradiction in terms. What might have happened if Württemberg had been free to act alone we shall never know, of course, because such a hypothetical circumstance never existed and could not conceivably be tested. In the nature of things, therefore, the end of Dr. Mann's story could only be inconclusive; and it is indicative that his monograph indeed offers no conclusion. It only has an epilogue describing the pathetic and ironic fate of the rump parliament of 1849, wherein those who had most keenly supported the efforts of the German National Assembly were left to preside over its burial.

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