
Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte
Herausgegeben vom Deutschen Historischen Institut Paris
(Institut historique allemand)
Band 16/3 (1989)

DOI: 10.11588/fr.1989.3.53693

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sofortigen Zusammenbruch bewahrt hat und der in Italien natürlich fehlte. Als er auch in Deutschland entfiel und die Republik ihre eigenständige Stabilität schon wieder verloren hatte, war auch hier das Ende der Demokratie gekommen. Die wirtschaftlichen Folgen des 1. Weltkriegs sind in beiden Ländern offensichtlich sehr viel weniger ausschlaggebend gewesen als die gesellschaftlichen Krisen, sie haben jedenfalls allein nicht ausgereicht, um Faschisten bzw. Nationalsozialisten an die Macht zu bringen. Wolfgang Schieder, einer der wenigen Historiker, die die italienische und deutsche Geschichte wirklich vergleichend behandeln und der sich dem hier angeschnittenen Thema an anderer Stelle gewidmet hat, setzte darum auch die Akzente auf andere Weise.

Eine letzte Anmerkung gilt der Landwirtschaft. Auch ihr wäre ein vergleichendes Résumé gut bekommen, denn schon vor 1914 gab es eine Reihe auffallender Gemeinsamkeiten, etwa im Hinblick auf die Rolle der Großgrundbesitzer im Nationalstaat und auf die Debatte »Agrar- oder Industriestaat«. Leider ist es dazu nicht gekommen, weder innerhalb der Sektion 1 noch am Ende des Buches (MORI ist Industriehistoriker).

Vor 300 Jahren tobte im Frankreich Ludwigs XIV. die »Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes«. Es ging um die Frage, ob es in Wissenschaft und Kunst einen Fortschritt gebe. Beide Seiten versuchten, ihre Beweisführung durch »Parallèles« zu stützen, durch das Nebeneinanderstellen von Antike und Gegenwart. Abgesehen von der Fragestellung selbst mutet auch das Verfahren heutzutage eher naiv an. Trotzdem ist man in der Geschichtswissenschaft (und in anderen Disziplinen) über die damals entwickelte Methode oft noch nicht hinausgekommen. Die beiden angezeigten Bände liefern mit den erwähnten Ausnahmen bestenfalls eine Serie von »Parallèles« und überlassen dem Leser die Mühsal des Vergleichens. Wenn dann noch gelegentlich regelrechte Ladenhüter aufgetischt werden, braucht man sich über mangelhafte Resonanz nicht zu wundern.

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Die Regierung Eisner 1918/19. Ministerratsprotokolle und Dokumente, bearbeitet von Franz J. BAUER, Düsseldorf (Droste) 1987, CV-486 S. (Quellen zur Geschichte des Parlamentarismus und der politischen Parteien, 3. Reihe: Die Weimarer Republik, 10).

The military collapse of the German Kaiserreich in November 1918 spawned a series of political insurrections throughout the land. None was more remarkable than the revolution in Bavaria, which turned out the Wittelsbach dynasty and established a republican regime under Kurt Eisner. As a former Berlin journalist, a Jew, and something of a social maverick, Eisner hardly seemed suited to become prime minister of the new Bavarian state, yet he managed to hold that post until the day of his assassination in late February 1919, when his disappearance created a political chaos out of which emerged the brief and disastrous experiment of a Räterepublik. In its broad outlines and in many of its telling details, this dramatic story has long been known. It is nonetheless useful for scholars to gain easier access to the available documentation of the period, a function which the volume edited by Franz J. Bauer, professor at the University of Regensburg, admirably performs.

Most of the space, about 400 pages, is accorded to the minutes of the Eisner cabinet, which met sixty-four times during the three and a half months in question. Of these sessions 39 are retained both in an official transcript and in personal notes recorded by Josef Grassmann, a Munich bureaucrat who served as secretary. Among the others, nine have only the Grassmann notes extant, twelve have only a transcript, and four have neither. Thus with only a few gaps, it is possible to reconstruct virtually day by day a record of the internal workings of the revolutionary government. One clearly sees a multitude of large and petty problems of administration, questions of foreign policy (especially Bavaria's relations with Berlin, Austria,

and Switzerland), and the perplexing issue of the revolutionary councils of workers, soldiers, and peasants. But the major theme told by the cabinet minutes is the political duel between the Independent Socialist Eisner and the Majority Socialist leader Erhard Auer. The dialectic of their lukewarm cooperation and personal antagonism is perfectly reflected in these documents, which reveal both the underlying tension of the revolutionary period and the reasons for its tragic resolution. If it is proper to speak of a failure to realize existing potential for democratic change in 1918, the central explanation lies here in the internecine struggle of Socialist counterparts. All of which is fully annotated by the editor and further amplified by nearly 60 pages of supporting documents taken mostly from the ›Bayerische Staatszeitung‹.

Exemplary as this edition is from a technical standpoint, the introduction to it by Professor Bauer is a disappointment insofar as it largely lacks an analysis of the volume's contents. Instead, Bauer attempts to summarize previous historiography of the Bavarian upheaval and to offer some suggestions of his own. His local patriotism is thereby placed unduly on display. He claims that a broad and serious scholarly study of these events was first launched by Professor Karl Bosl and his students in the mid-1960s and that a resulting anthology, *Bayern im Umbruch* (1968), represents the most comprehensive and best founded treatment of the subject. But in the name of objectivity (and not merely as special pleading by this reviewer) two caveats must be registered. First, one should surely observe that the work of the Bosl school appeared well after earlier investigations by Franz Schade and Allan Mitchell, both of whom had concluded their research by 1961. If anything, it was precisely the publications by these two outsiders that stirred Bosl's team to react. Second, although several of Bosl's students have produced splendid monographs – such as those by Willi Albrecht, Karl-Ludwig Ay, Wolfgang Benz, Georg Kalmer, and Peter Kritzer – none of them has as yet conceived a new synthesis of the revolution in Bavaria that supersedes that of the pre-Bosl authors. Nor does the aforementioned collective volume of seminar papers acquit such a task.

As for Professor Bauer's personal interpretations, they remain mostly in the realm of conjecture. Basing his opinion on a 1929 retrospective article by Johannes Timm, Minister of Justice in the Eisner government, he offers a ›reinterpretation‹ (*Neueinschätzung*) of the formation of the cabinet. Yet this version proves to be speculative and, in its claim to originality, overwrought. A similar search for novelty is also obvious in Bauer's inconclusive musing about a counterfactual proposition: what might have occurred if Eisner had not been assassinated and Auer severely wounded on the same day in the Ides of February 1919? Subsequent scholars would have been better served had professor Bauer confined his efforts to explaining what the cabinet minutes of the Eisner era actually do or do not contain. But at least they will now have the transcripts readily at hand to discover for themselves.

Finally, it is well to inquire about the permanent value of such an expensive volume as this. Is it no more than a convenience, saving historians from repeated forays to the archive, or does it point the way to advances in scholarship? Any response to this question must remain tentative and guarded. Yet one is tempted to anticipate that the assembled documents will only confirm what is already manifest about the political circumstances of the revolutionary period. By their nature cabinet records afford but a fractured and impressionistic perspective on the deeper and slower evolution of social forces that shape revolutions or are shaped by them. To check the details of their political narrative, future researchers will need to turn to Professor Bauer's capable edition. But to fathom the currents of social history, they are likely to look elsewhere.

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