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Institution, wichtig nicht zuletzt im Hinblick auf das Entstehen parlamentarischer Tradition in Preußen und in Deutschland, wissen.

Die Schwierigkeiten beginnen bereits, wenn man nach den Männern fragt, die damals die Geschicke des größten deutschen Einzelstaates bestimmten. Aus dem anfänglichen Versuch, Licht in das Dunkel der Biographien einzelner Parlamentarier zu bringen, ist im Laufe der Jahre – nicht immer zum Wohlgefallen seines Initiators – ein eigenständiges Forschungsvorhaben hervorgegangen. In seinem Vorwort bekennt Mann ganz offen, daß ihn im Laufe der Jahre mehr als einmal Zweifel überkommen hätten, ob sich ein derartiges Projekt tatsächlich realisieren lassen würde, bzw. ob hinsichtlich Aufwand und Kosten nicht andere Lösungen vorzuziehen seien. Angesichts der mit dem hier anzuzeigenden Handbuch vorgelegten Bilanz können alle an dem Projekt Beteiligten nur dazu beglückwünscht werden, über alle Einwände hinweg die Veröffentlichung der gesammelten Unterlagen gewagt zu haben.

Der Titel sollte hier nicht täuschen. Obwohl das Handbuch zu allen 2659 Männern, die dem Preußischen Abgeordnetenhaus zwischen 1867 und 1918 angehört haben, biographische Angaben aufweist, handelt es sich keineswegs um eine abgeschlossene Datensammlung. Mann und seine Mitarbeiter haben in erster Linie Parlamentsdrucksachen, Parlamentshandbücher, nationale, regionale und sonstige Nachschlagewerke herangezogen. Auf eine systematische Auswertung von Nachlässen und Archivmaterial wurde dagegen bewußt verzichtet. Insofern blieben einige der Angaben unvollständig bzw. mußten von den Bearbeitern mit Fragezeichen oder unter Vorbehalt aufgenommen werden.

Auf der Grundlage dieses Datenmaterials wurden mit Hilfe des Tübinger Rechenzentrums verschiedene Auswertungen vorgenommen, deren Ergebnisse in der Einleitung des Herausgebers anhand von insgesamt 37 Tafeln ausführlich vorgestellt und kommentiert werden. Hierbei wird deutlich, daß es sich bei dem Handbuch um eine erste Zwischenbilanz handelt. Der Benutzer findet neben den Kurzbiographien, Verzeichnissen der Präsidenten, Vizepräsidenten und Vorsitzenden der ständigen Kommissionen des Abgeordnetenhauses, der einzelnen Fraktionen und ihrer Mitglieder, der Abgeordneten, die zusätzlich auch dem Reichstag angehörten, einem Ortsregister sowie einer Liste der Legislaturperioden und Sessionen von 1849 bis 1918 ergänzend eine Übersicht nach Wahlkreisen, ein Verzeichnis der Wahlbezirke sowie last but not least ein Verzeichnis der landrätlichen und Stadtkreise. Wenn man bedenkt, daß es für diese Einteilung damals noch keine amtlich festgelegte Ordnung gab und vor allem in den Ostgebieten des Reichs die Schreibweise der Eigen- und Ortsnamen immer wieder Unterschiede aufwies, so ist die Leistung, die sich hinter dieser eher nüchternen Präsentation verbirgt um so höher einzuschätzen.

Für die Geschichte des Parlamentarismus in Deutschland im ausgehenden 19. Jh. setzt das Handbuch einen wichtigen Markstein. Bleibt zu hoffen, daß die Anregungen und Verbesserungen, zu denen Mann und seine Mitarbeiter künftige Benutzer ausdrücklich auffordern, zu entsprechender Zeit ihre Umsetzung finden werden. Auf die angekündigte Geschichte des Preußischen Abgeordnetenhauses, für die das Handbuch eine Vorstudie sein sollte, darf man mit Fug und Recht gespannt sein.

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Eberhard KOLB, *Der Weg aus dem Krieg. Bismarcks Politik im Krieg und die Friedensanbahnung 1870/71*, München (Oldenbourg) 1989, VIII–408 S.

There are two things that any reviewer of this interesting monograph should do: first praise Eberhard Kolb's scholarship and then question his assumptions.

»Monograph« is surely the proper term. Kolb presents us here with well over three hundred dense pages bristling with learned footnotes and archival references. His story begins with the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war in late July 1870 and terminates abruptly with the

armistice in the following January. Events before and after that six-month period are barely mentioned. The background of controversy over the succession to the Spanish throne is thus left aside, justifiably, since it was already examined in Kolb's previous study, *Der Kriegsausbruch* (1970). Besides, he has little more to add, convinced as he still is that the nervousness and undue aggressiveness of Bonapartist France were largely responsible for precipitating the conflict, whereas the provocative role of Otto von Bismarck is toned down. Accordingly, he rejects the countervailing interpretation, represented by the Augsburg historian Josef Becker, as simply an »exculpation« of the French (p. xi).

Kolb's methodology is strictly chronological, with each step of the political process analyzed in terms of a central problem. He reiterates that such analysis rests on »mountains of documents« (p. x, 364) drawn from archives in West and East Germany, Vienna, Paris, London, and Moscow. The result is a compact and thoroughly convincing »reconstruction« (his favorite word) of Bismarck's efforts to take advantage of Prussia's military victory and to establish the basis of an enduring peace. Because his account breaks off with the armistice, Kolb avoids a discussion of the Paris Commune and, unfortunately, of the negotiations in Brussels and the resulting treaty of Frankfurt in May 1871 that formally brought the war to a close.

This is, then, frankly and relentlessly an exercise in solid old-fashioned diplomatic history in the tradition of Hermann Oncken and Otto Becker. After so much critical theorizing from Weber to Wehler and from Foucault to Habermas, it is bracing to pursue a narrative that reaffirms the primacy of documentation. Appropriately, as Kolb's main protagonist, Bismarck easily outpoints his opponents. Bismarck invariably knows better, sees farther, perceives more correctly, etc. His single misstep in the short term was to overestimate the possibility of a Bonapartist alternative during the armistice negotiations, but that error was soon erased by events that finally brought France's new republican regime under Adolphe Thiers and Jules Favre to the bargaining table. Throughout, the dark side of Bismarck's genius is nowhere evident, and he is allowed to perform undisturbed as a national hero who earned and deserved the admiration of his contemporaries.

The crucial test of this scenario is, of course, the annexation of Alsace and eastern Lorraine. Many twentieth-century scholars have condemned Bismarck's part in that decision and have underscored its importance as a seedbed of subsequent international conflict. Kolb demurs by stressing the immediate circumstances of the time: the general impression of French aggression, the genuinely felt need for military security in case of an attempted *revanche*, the widespread expressions of German national solidarity, and the insistent public demands for compensation and protection. To this must be added the desire of General von Moltke and other military advisers to bolster their southwestern flank, and naturally Bismarck's own concern to reconcile various interests and to reestablish his undisputed political authority. In this elaborate context Kolb sees the »restitution« (as it was then called) to the Reich of German-speaking territory beyond the Rhine as altogether comprehensible. The charge cannot be sustained that Bismarck had deliberately sought war in order to acquire Alsace-Lorraine, although Kolb concedes that such an eventuality was »predestined« once the military struggle began and Germany rolled to victory. At most, he writes, the annexation was a »latent« objective (pp. 123–24). Kolb rules the contrary view of Walter Lipgens – that Bismarck was guilty of unconscionable manipulation – out of court, and he thereby identifies himself with the now standard biography of Bismarck by Lothar Gall.

It is at this juncture that one must begin to formulate some queries about Kolb's methods and conclusions. They are principally three:

1) The book discloses a clear tendency to reduce the issue of annexation to a matter of German security (*Sicherheitsprinzip*) on the assumption that France would eventually seek retribution for defeat, no matter what peace terms were imposed. If so, why not take the high ridge of the Vosges? This action is further explained on the grounds that it was a normal part

of the war, and since Kolb long ago persuaded himself that Napoleon III was primarily to blame for that, the French in effect received the punishment they deserved. By weakening France, moreover, Bismarck forestalled the possibility of later European conflict, and the imperial chancellor can hence be portrayed as a great champion of peace during the ensuing two decades. Apart from the distinct odor of hagiography that hangs over this argument, it overlooks an obvious objection. The security that is being talked about is foremost a German security. The French certainly did not feel more secure after 1870, and they were not alone to be apprehensive about German might. The true core of Bismarck's policy was German supremacy. The Kaiserreich thus adopted the fundamental axiom of every aspiring superpower: what is good for my country is good for the world. One need not dwell on the troubling implications of such presumption when we look beyond the monographic context of 1870.

2) Closely related is a more abstract concern about the kind of historical understanding advocated by Professor Kolb. His case rests squarely on the proposition that we can only judge a political decision on the basis of what was known at the moment of its making, not by what we now know. Laudable as it is to reconstruct with care the historical record, as Kolb skillfully does with extraordinary diligence, we must worry about a relapse into an uncritical historicism that ignores conceptual analysis and too readily accepts moral relativism. There are hints that Kolb is susceptible to this inclination: he grants, for instance, that the settlement of 1871 was harsh, but he does not neglect to observe that the Versailles treaty of 1919 was far more so. This allusion as well as the praise for Bismarck's peacekeeping after 1870 are actually departures from Kolb's own canon of historical interpretation. The only real difference from less flattering versions of German annexationism is that Kolb employs future events to justify rather than to criticize it. Bismarck, he contends, erred only in his inability to foresee the failure of integration by the Alsations into the German empire. Can he be censured for not being a prophet? So long as we remain within the historicist mode, in other words, contemporaneous mistakes are easily forgiven. Kolb finds those who think otherwise to be guilty of »wishful thinking,« and he accuses them of »insouciantly playing in a sandbox« (pp. 190–91). These mocking expressions hardly do justice to many of Kolb's professional colleagues who have so fruitfully brought their differing skills, perspectives, and criteria to the historical enterprise.

3) Finally, we must also wonder about the eventual impact of Kolb's work. For him personally it was an act of immense courage to resume and complete a research project that was abandoned for nearly a decade. His tenacity has paid rich dividends in terms of thorough documentation and accurate reconstitution of specific events. This book exhibits in many ways the best traits of the historian's craft. Perhaps unintended, it represents a reproach to some of Kolb's fellow senior colleagues (not only in Germany) who have become so preoccupied by their own academic importance that they have long neglected to return to the archives, where every significant historical hypothesis must ultimately be validated. Yet one might ask if Kolb's study is really a compelling model for young scholars to emulate in a resurgence of the narrative style? Or is it merely another throwback to methods and assumptions that the historical profession has blessedly outgrown? In either event, it is a credit to the author that the vigor of his work unavoidably forces us to pose these questions.

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Hans-Jörg von BERLEPSCH, »Neuer Kurs« im Kaiserreich? Die Arbeiterpolitik des Freiherrn von Berlepsch 1890 bis 1896, Bonn (Neue Gesellschaft) 1987, 485 p. (Forschungsinstitut der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Politik- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte, 16).

Though scholars often advert to the social insurance legislation of the 1880s as the foundation of the German welfare state, they have paid comparatively little attention to post-Bismarckian