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Francia. Forschungen zur westeuropäischen Geschichte
Herausgegeben vom Deutschen Historischen Institut Paris
(Institut historique allemand)
Band 17/3 (1990)

DOI: 10.11588/fr.1990.3.54303

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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

contributions, particularly the wideranging labor reforms often associated with Hans Freiherr von Berlepsch, who headed the Ministry of Commerce in the Caprivi and (until 1896) Hohenlohe governments. Most historians have dismissed the »New Course« program as politically inconsequential, crippled from the start by bureaucratic intrigues, anti-Socialist paranoia, and the personal unpredictability of the Kaiser. This well-crafted study by a great-grandson of the »Minister of Social Reform« does not fundamentally challenge the conventional view. It does, however, offer one of the most comprehensive analyses to date of domestic policy-making in the early Wilhelmine era, and in so doing it adds substantially to our knowledge of a period that is fast becoming one of the most fertile fields in German historiography.

As his title implies, Berlepsch regards the social legislation of the early 1890s as the raw material for a genuine and potentially far-reaching reorientation of official policy toward the working classes, one that proposed to replace repression (the Anti-Socialist Law) with integration (labor arbitration, trade-union rights) and supplement passive compensation (social insurance) with active intervention (health and safety protection, wage-and-hour norms, labor statistics). If the new approach fell short of its ambitious aims, he argues, the fault lay less with the policies themselves than with the manner in which they were implemented. In his view, the would-be architects of a new domestic course conceived of their task too exclusively in administrative terms – »sie bestritten, wenn man so will, den bürokratischen und nicht den politischen Weg der Sozialreform« (p. 434). By concentrating on the familiar routine of drafting laws, revising directives, and refining implementation procedures, they failed to exploit the latent popular consensus for change as an opportunity to nurture new political assumptions conducive to social reconciliation. As a result, despite an impressive array of specific legislative and administrative achievements, reform impulses became diluted and often rechanneled because of parliamentary maneuvering, the sheer complexity of many regulatory issues, and inconsistent enforcement by chronically overburdened and often politically vulnerable local officials. In the absence of effective countervailing forces, the pull of interest-group obstructionism and class antagonisms proved too strong to overcome; the »New Course« had become little more than an empty phrase by the time von Berlepsch resigned in 1896.

This is an exemplary monograph in all respects. Drawing upon a massive body of archival and published materials, Berlepsch provides a detailed and perceptive legislative history for each of the various components of the New Course program in turn. This organizational strategy serves to underscore his thesis about the weaknesses of a bureaucratic outlook that emphasized administrative procedure at the expense of political vision. It also entails some repetitiousness, to be sure, and often Berlepsch does not analyze Wilhelmine political culture directly so much as he observes it refracts across a host of specific technical issues. If his inquiry into missed opportunities has relevance for recent debates over the future of the welfare state, as he claims in passing at the outset, it also has considerable relevance for historians' ever-vigorous debate about the notion of a German »Sonderweg« since the nineteenth century. That Berlepsch does not address these issues except by implication detracts little from an accomplished and in many ways impressive work of scholarship.

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James C. ALBISETTI, *Schooling German Girls and Women. Secondary and Higher Education in the Nineteenth Century*, Princeton, New Jersey (Princeton University Press) 1988, IX-327 S.

Bildung – eine Chance zur Emanzipation? Von der Frauenbewegung wurde dies stets angenommen. Und so ist es nicht verwunderlich, daß die Erforschung der Frauengeschichte