

das arbeitet der Verfasser überzeugend heraus, wurde durch die desperate putschistische Politik der kommunistischen Konkurrenz geradezu zusätzlich provoziert, und gegen den Terror – der Verfasser druckt im Anhang ein Schreiben des ADGB-Bundesvorstands an den Reichspräsidenten ab, das erschütternde Einzelheiten enthält – war man wehr- und ratlos und glaubte, durch prononciertes Wohlverhalten das Schicksal der illegal Eingekerkerten und Gefolterten mildern zu können – gewiß schwach, aber doch ehrenhaft. Schließlich war da das von Göring und Ley lancierte Gerücht, die Freien Gewerkschaften könnten im Rahmen einer Einheitsgewerkschaft eine gewisse Eigenständigkeit aufrechterhalten. Das alles waren Faktoren, die die simple, aber verbreitete Theorie vom »Verrat« der Gewerkschaftsführer ad absurdum führen und statt dessen das deprimierende Bild einer verzweifelt um das Wohl der Organisation und deren Mitglieder bemühten, aber ratlosen und desorientierten, den Geschehnissen in keiner Weise gewachsenen Führungsgarnitur begründen. Also keine lupenreinen Übeltäter; für Brecht wäre dieses Kapitel unbrauchbar gewesen.

Aber im dritten Abschnitt findet der Verfasser wieder zur alten Form zurück. Die Mitgliedschaft der Freien Gewerkschaften ist »verraten und verkauft«. Dem Aufruf der ADGB-Bundesführung, sich am nationalsozialistisch verbogenen »Tag der nationalen Arbeit« am 1. Mai 1933 zu beteiligen, folgt zwar eine Arbeitermasse, wie sie Berlin noch nicht gesehen hatte, aber nur »mit Bestürzung«; »hunderttausenden deutscher Arbeiter«, zitiert der Verfasser zustimmend einen ungenannten Gewerkschaftler, habe der Mai-Aufruf der Gewerkschaftsführung »Tränen der Wut und des Zornes aus den Augen gepreßt«; er konstatiert »innere Zerrissenheit«, »stumme Trauer« und »verhaltenen Zorn«.

Hier sind wir wieder mitten im Lehrstück; daß ein erheblicher Teil der Arbeiterschaft, die sich am »Tag der nationalen Arbeit« beteiligte, dies mit in der Tasche geballter Faust getan habe, ist völlig unbewiesen. Das einzige sachliche Argument, das dafür ins Treffen geführt wird, die Ergebnisse der Betriebsratswahlen zwischen Februar und April 1933, die in der Tat ein bedeutendes freigewerkschaftliches Potential erkennen ließen, taugt nicht als Beweis. Betriebsratswahlen sind in erster Linie Persönlichkeitswahlen; hier werden altbekannte und -verdiente Kumpel, keine politischen Meinungen, gewählt. Die Einstellung der deutschen Arbeiterschaft zum »neuen Staat« nach der nationalsozialistischen Machtergreifung ist bis heute nicht unvoreingenommen und befriedigend untersucht.

Was auch immer man gegen die angezeigte Arbeit einwenden kann, auf jeden Fall besitzt sie ein unbestreitbares Verdienst: nachgewiesen zu haben, daß die interdisziplinäre Zusammenarbeit zwischen der Zeitgeschichte und der Dramaturgie noch in ihren Babyschuhen steckt.

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Henry Weisser, *British Working-Class Movements and Europe 1815 – 1848*, Manchester University Press / Rowman & Littlefield, Manchester / Totowa, N. J., 1975, pp. VIII, 226, hardcover, £ 7.50.

Historians of the labour movement on Britain in the nineteenth century have all too often adopted an insular approach to the subject and have failed to deal adequately with the links forged between English and foreign workers before the establishment of the First International. The appearance of a pioneer study of some of the forerunners of the International Working Mens Association is therefore to be welcomed. Henry Weisser has examined in some detail the relations of the Chartists with certain foreign working class leaders.

The Chartist movement as such does not appear to have had any formal association with workers' organisations on the Continent but certain Chartists had close contacts with foreign exiles in England, such as the Germans Schapper, Moll, and Bauer, who were leading members in London of the League of the Just which became the Communist League in 1847.

Julian Harney and Ernest Jones were left-wing Chartist leaders who played an important part in establishing an international organisation known as the Fraternal Democrats, which had members of many different nationalities, the most important being Englishmen, Germans, Poles, and Italians. The beginnings of this association are obscure but it was certainly in existence in September 1845 when a public supper was organised in London to celebrate the anniversary of the establishment of the first French Republic in 1792. It was not until March 1846 that the Fraternal Democrats established a rudimentary form of organisation with a fixed membership and the appointment of six secretaries, and it was not until the end of 1847 that a set of rules was adopted.

Between 1846 and 1848 the Fraternal Democrats held many meetings, the most assiduous speakers being Ernest Jones, Julian Harney, and Karl Schapper. The activities of the association were chronicled in the »Northern Star« which is the main source of information concerning the Fraternal Democrats. The resolutions passed at meetings of the Fraternal Democrats were less concerned with economic grievances – low wages and long hours – as with political issues. The Fraternal Democrats vigorously denounced the autocratic regimes on the Continent. Above all they supported the Poles and enthusiastically hailed the Cracow rising of February 1846.

Some historians have been interested in the Fraternal Democrats simply because Marx and Engels were associated with both Julian Harney and Ernest Jones. Engels had met Harney in Leeds in 1843 and had contributed to the »Northern Star«. In November 1847 Marx and Engels came to London in the hope of gaining control over the League of the Just. But if they failed they hoped that the Fraternal Democrats would serve their purpose equally well. Marx attended and spoke at a meeting of the Fraternal Democrats which was held to celebrate the anniversary of the Polish rising of 1830. However once Marx and Engels had persuaded the League of the Just (the Communist League) to accept Marx's socialist principles they lost interest in the Fraternal Democrats.

The Chartist movement was split between the physical force (left wing) and the moral force (right wing) Chartists. The right wing, led by William Lovett, established their own organisations for keeping in touch with foreign exiles, the most famous being Mazzini. These were two ephemeral associations – the Democratic Friends of all Nations and its successor the People's International League.

Weisser's attempt to trace earlier links between British working class movements and Europe between 1815 and 1836 is less successful. All that he is able to show is that there were articles in the extreme radical press in England attacking European despots and approving of popular risings such as those in France and Poland in 1830. There is little evidence here of any serious or sustained effort on the part of leaders of the workers in England and on the Continent to make contact with each other or to co-operate in any way.

There is an aspect of the problem to which Weisser pays no attention. Perhaps because he relies to so great an extent upon the evidence supplied by radical and Chartist newspapers, he fails to appreciate that English workers were earning their living on the Continent at this time and that it was by no means unknown for workers from the Continent to settle in England. In 1825 there were probably some 1400 skilled English workers in France and in 1841 about 5000 Englishmen and Irishmen were engaged in building the railway between Paris and Rouen. When the Swiss engineer J. C. Fischer visited Manchester in 1825 he met a group of young compatriots – such as J. G. Bodmer – who were completing their training in the textile and engineering industries. In the first half of the nineteenth century more skilled artisans were moving across the Channel – in both directions – than is sometimes supposed. The personal links that they forged between families in different European countries are no less significant than those forged by leading radicals or socialists.

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