

canon may be open to some challenges, for instance because of the omission of syndicalism, but it is a thought-provoking and well-argued questioning of the usual ideological fault lines, where no partisan attempts at appropriation and exclusion appear to be at stake. Also of note are interesting nods to the striking presence of gender discrimination and anti-semitism within the movement. The study discusses Charlotte Wilson and Louisa Bevington, who are usually treated as background figures, and highlights the many instances when progressive ideas coexisted with backward positions on gender roles. Similarly, anti-semitic leanings are repeatedly pointed out, from Proudhon in the first chapter to Geddes in the final one, eventually hinting at a possible red thread in the anarchist tradition. These are also important sub-themes, calling for further exploration.

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FRÖLICH, PAUL. *Im radikalen Lager. Politische Autobiographie 1890–1921*. BasisDruck, Berlin 2013. 415 pp. Ill. € 29.80. doi:10.1017/S0020859014000558

The memoirs of Paul Frölich (1884–1953), a left-wing radical within the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) and a founder of the German Communist Party (KPD) in 1919, can be considered one of the true archive sensations of recent years. Written in 1938 at the request of the Amsterdam-based International Institute of Social History, the unpublished manuscript was lost during World War II and rediscovered only in 2007. While a French translation was published in 2012, this German edition by Reiner Tosstorff presents the text in its original language, adding sources on its origin as well as an afterword by the editor on Frölich's post-1921 political life. A list of abbreviations, a well-researched index of names, and an extensive list of annotations provide detailed contextual information and make this volume accessible to both scholars in the field of communist studies and a general audience.

Frölich's political autobiography covers the course of the German labour movement from the 1890s to 1921 and provides a detailed account of the birth of German communism. At the time of its writing, Frölich had been expelled from the KPD and had founded the *Kommunistische Partei Opposition* (KP-O), an opposition current ridiculed by his former comrades as “KP-Zero”. Frölich, who had himself been among the left-wing radicals within the SPD before 1914, was thrown out of the party because he rejected a new strategy known in Germany as *ultralinks* and internationally as the “third period”. It was guided by the view that in the third and final period of capitalism any reform would merely prolong its agony. Frölich, socialized as a radical since his youth, was expelled for being “rightist”. He left the party along with other protagonists from the “old guard” of the KPD, such as Heinrich Brandler, August Thalheimer, and Ernst Meyer – a process regarded by many scholars as marking the end of the Stalinization of German communism. Nevertheless, Frölich's memoirs avoid the dogmatism of the sidelined, and

instead present an astoundingly self-critical account that can be read as a treatise on the meaning, uses, and disadvantages of working-class radicalism. Hence the aptness of the title *Im radikalen Lager* [In the Camp of Radicals], which is taken from the manuscript.

Frölich opens his account with reflections on his youth and childhood in the working-class neighbourhoods of Leipzig, where his father was a member of the SPD at a time when the socialists were still banned. Even later, when Frölich was taking his first steps within the party, an illegal structure was being maintained in Leipzig – the *corpore*, a cadre of veterans who discussed critical issues before they were decided on in public assemblies. Interestingly, this secret backbone of the party was not hostile to certain opinions; it included opposing currents. Frölich's description of the *corpore* is a rare observation on a life inside the pre-war SPD that, owing to lack of sources, has rarely found its way into the historiography.

Being granted a scholarship, Frölich was able to attend the *Gymnasium* and pursued a career as a journalist for the socialist press. In imperial Germany this press represented a counterculture strictly divided from the rest of journalism, like any other activity undertaken by the socialist movement in a country where liberalism was weak and feudal hierarchies remained a strong ideological force. Describing his work for the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, Frölich writes about a process of modernization of a socialist journal, which involved overcoming the concept of a members-only press and accepting the idea of a newspaper for the masses that could help forge a proletarian counter-hegemony. His career as a journalist, and his growth into a role that Gramsci would later call an organic intellectual, is a recurrent theme of the book. Frölich's reflections are of interest not only to historians but also for contemporary approaches to a socialist journalism that educates its readers without manipulating them.

A turning point in Frölich's life was 4 August 1914, when instead of protesting at the outbreak of the war, the German SPD supported imperial policy by voting in favour of war bonds in the Reichstag, the German parliament. Frölich, who had been in opposition to the mainstream of his party before, continued his political activity in the new situation. Inspired by the Dutch socialist Anton Pannekoek and the younger Karl Radek, he became part of the Bremer Linksradikale, the "Bremen Radical Leftists", who were not limited to the city of Bremen but strong in Hamburg and other parts of northern Germany too. Frölich worked for its press, editing an anti-war journal, *Arbeiterpolitik*, before being commissioned as a soldier in 1916. There he was able to agitate within the imperial army almost without restraint because its officers relied on pre-modern principles of subordination, not caring about propaganda and the need actually to motivate soldiers for the national cause. Only later, when mutinies were common, did this change.

Back home, the Bremer Linksradikale refused to join the Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (USPD), which had split from the Social Democrats in April 1917 because of their stand against the war. While Rosa Luxemburg's Spartacus League worked within the new party, Frölich and the radicals maintained a distance from this new formation – not so much because of its centrist course, but because in Bremen the radicals had a majority within the old SPD and would gain nothing from a split. It was not until October 1918 that the radicals, whom Frölich describes more as a network than an organization, institutionalized themselves as the Internationale Kommunisten Deutschlands – the International Communists of Germany. On 1 January 1919 this group merged with the Spartacus League to form the Communist Party of Germany.

In Frölich's view, the German revolution undertaken by the masses who were politicized within days or weeks suffered from a serious lack of experienced socialists to

guide them. He offers a remarkable account of the Munich Council Republic, where Frölich worked as an emissary for the young KPD, finding himself in the uncomfortable role of a young radical willing but unable to prevent a premature putsch. Only the second phase of the Munich Council Republic, supported, according to Frölich, by the workers' councils of the city's industrial districts, had any real power base. Frölich's reflections on the role of the KPD in the revolutionary year of 1919 are a unique source for historians, since the young party was outlawed for long periods and worked as much by improvising as by conspiracy, so that few documents were produced and even fewer survived. Later KPD propaganda, reproduced in Leninist historiography, has further obscured this year of ups and downs, which ended in a final defeat for the revolutionaries. It was a defeat, however, realized only retrospectively: for another four years the KPD believed that the next wave of revolution was just around the corner, and tried to launch armed insurrections in 1921 and 1923. The former, known as the *Märzaktion* (March Action), is described at length by Frölich, who shared the enthusiasm of those years.

Self-critically, he describes his post-revolutionary fervour in 1919 as "too radical", but nevertheless he was not among those to join the faction of the party that left the KPD to form the syndicalist Kommunistische Arbeiterpartei (KAP) in 1919. This split, enforced by Party Chairman Paul Levi, affected Frölich so much that he suffered a nervous collapse in the middle of the decisive party convention. Writing about Levi's role, Frölich is highly critical and accuses him of an unnecessary authoritarianism that estranged proletarian members. While crediting his intellectual qualities, rhetorical gifts, and political analysis, Frölich describes Levi as an intolerant personality who was unable to work in a collective and who, as an intellectual, gave way to polemics where constructive leadership was needed. Frölich applies the same criticism when talking about the *Märzaktion* of 1921, which ended in military defeat and left the KPD politically isolated: Levi criticized the *Märzaktion* in several articles, emphasizing the role of Moscow envoys, who had allegedly orchestrated the event.<sup>1</sup> For this, Levi was expelled from the party and formed a group of followers who later rejoined the SPD.

With Levi as a key witness, later historians have portrayed the events of 1921 as a purge, either a first step on the road to Stalinization or evidence that Stalinization was not necessary because the KPD had been authoritarian from the beginning. Frölich distances himself from the *Märzaktion*, which he had initially supported, but questions Levi's reports of massive Soviet influence and cites Levi's own authoritarian tactics in 1919 to question the legitimacy of his critique in 1921. Frölich's arguments include personal criticism of Levi, who held a doctorate in law and whom he accused of being an intellectual and "outsider" within the labour movement. However, his portrait of Levi is rather a reflection of different types of intellectualism within the communist milieu and refrains, all in all, from simplistic polemics. It should therefore be taken into account when discussing not only the political biography of Levi but also the Stalinization and the "roads not taken" in German communism.

Unfortunately, the manuscript ends with the troublesome events of March 1921. Frölich's reflections are limited to the founding years of the German communist movement. But concerning those years they should be treated as a key source for further research. The fact that Frölich's talents as a narrator match his qualities as a political

1. Some of his writings have been translated. See David Fernbach (ed.), *In the Steps of Rosa Luxemburg: Selected Writings of Paul Levi* (Chicago, IL, 2011).

observer captures the reader's attention and instils hope that an English translation will be undertaken in the near future.

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McKILLEN, ELIZABETH. *Making the World Safe for Workers. Labor, the Left, and Wilsonian Internationalism.* [The Working Class in American History.] University of Illinois Press, Urbana [etc.] 2013. xii, 299 pp. Ill. \$55.00. doi:10.1017/S002085901400056X

Not since Ronald Radosh published *American Labor and United States Foreign Policy*<sup>1</sup> nearly fifty years ago has an historian examined carefully the role played by the labor movement in the shaping of President Woodrow Wilson's foreign policy. Where Radosh's book examined labor's foreign policy initiatives from World War I through the depths of the Cold War and relied on the concept of "corporate liberalism" to explain the actions of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and its president, Samuel Gompers, Elizabeth McKillen concentrates on the Wilson presidency, places labor diplomacy into a transnational context, and focuses on critics of the AFL at home and abroad. Radosh and McKillen, however, share an ungenerous and critical interpretation of the policies pursued by Gompers and the AFL. For McKillen, Gompers's domestic and foreign labor adversaries represented the true advocates of working people and international comity. Socialists and anarcho-syndicalists serve as McKillen's virtuous subjects.

McKillen's introduction neatly summarizes what follows in the seven substantive chapters that trace Wilsonian diplomacy from the Mexican Revolution through World War I, the Versailles Peace Conference, and the political struggle in the United States over the treaty and the League of Nations. The book limns the partnership that developed between President Wilson and the AFL leaders from its tentative beginnings during the Mexican Revolution to its culmination in the creation of the International Labor Organization (ILO) within the framework of the League of Nations. As Gompers and the AFL shifted from criticizing Wilson's imperialistic interventions in Mexico to becoming partisans of his World-War-I-era diplomacy and peace-making, labor leftists in the United States, Latin America, and Europe refused to believe that Wilsonian internationalism furthered the interests of the world's workers. Because Wilsonian diplomacy conflated democracy with the interests of capitalism globally, McKillen asserts that labor leftists and their socialist allies opposed Wilson's policies toward the Mexican Revolution, preparedness for war, participation in World War I, and peace-making afterwards.

1. Ronald Radosh, *American Labor and United States Foreign Policy* (New York, 1969).