

Advance praise for James Retallack, *German Social Democracy through British Eyes: A Documentary History, 1870-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Dec. 2021)

“Here is a perfect reminder of why we need scholars who will do the unsung work of editing document collections and university presses to publish them. This engaging volume looks at German Social Democracy in its earliest decades through the reports of British diplomats, especially the enjoyably opinionated George Strachey in Dresden. No one is better qualified to assemble this documentary history than James Retallack, who contributes an excellent introduction and notes to this richly rewarding book.”

– David Blackbourn, Cornelius Vanderbilt Distinguished Chair of History,
Vanderbilt University

“Renowned as a leading scholar of Imperial Germany and for his special expertise on modern Saxony, James Retallack has done a stellar job editing this collection of British diplomatic reports on Social Democracy. His passion for discovering archival documents and his profound knowledge of Germany’s most industrialized federal state shine through in his erudite introduction and insightful historical contextualization. The book is a treasure trove for researchers and students seeking primary sources in English, and, indeed, for anyone who wishes to go beyond the Prussian view of German history before 1914.”

– Simone Lässig, Director, German Historical Institute Washington, DC

“Impeccably edited and helpfully annotated and introduced by James Retallack, this is a wonderful collection of detailed reports that has a great deal to tell us about Social Democracy in a leading industrial area of Imperial Germany from its rise in the 1870s up to the outbreak of World War I, as well as throwing new light on the British consuls who wrote them, their acute observations, their detailed knowledge of local and regional affairs, and their biases and prejudices: an indispensable source for historians of Imperial Germany as well as the British Foreign Office and Anglo-German relations.”

– Sir Richard Evans, Regius Professor Emeritus of History, University of Cambridge

“The history of Social Democracy, class conflict and German politics looks different when seen through the eyes of British diplomats who, between 1870 and 1914, regularly reported back to London from Saxony’s capital, Dresden. Their surveys shed new light on the German Empire which has recently become controversial again. James Retallack has done an excellent job in editing and introducing them to a broader audience.”

– Jürgen Kocka, Professor Emeritus of the History of the Industrial World,
Free University of Berlin

“James Retallack’s work on the struggles for democracy in Saxony is essential reading for anyone interested in Imperial Germany. This rich, well-focussed, and skilfully edited documentation is a valuable window into the topic, which will be rewarding for anyone with an interest in nineteenth-century Germany, labour movement history, or the history of contests over democracy.”

– Andrew Bonnell, Associate Professor of History, University of Queensland

“Retallack’s selection from the reports of British envoys, along with his historical contextualisation, details the rise of the socialist party in the German Second Empire, especially industrial Saxony. Add to this a critical portrayal of German parliamentary and ministerial politics as seen by knowledgeable British diplomats. The result is a rich representation of popular and elite politics, and of contrasting class and national political cultures.”

– John Breuilly, Professor Emeritus of Nationalism and Ethnicity,
London School of Economics and Political Science