

Frank L. Schäfer

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg
(Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg, Germany)
e-mail: frank.schaefer@jura.uni-freiburg.de

ORCID: 0000-0002-1023-878X

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The Polish Contribution to the Baden Revolution 1848/49

ABSTRACT

This essay examines the work of the Polish freedom fighters in the revolution in southwest German Baden in 1848/49 by identifying the personal connections between the uprisings in Baden and Poznań and identifying Prussia as a common enemy. In particular, the role of the Polish military officer Ludwik Mierosławski as general of the Baden troops is honoured. The goal is thus to determine the exact contribution of Polish fighters in the Baden Revolution and how they interacted with the Baden revolutionaries. Thus, the essay also sheds light on the help of Baden for the Polish fight for freedom in the form of so-called Polish associations. For this purpose, the essay presents the eyewitness accounts of the year 1849 from the perspective of Baden and Polish participants. Methodologically, the article extracts the specific events in Baden and Poznań from the general revolutionary history of the years 1848/49. Chronologically, the essay also looks back at prehistory up to 1815 and offers a look at the life of the revolutionaries after 1849. The events in Baden and Poznań are finally placed in a larger context, especially in the context of the European freedom movements, the international cooperation of the revolutionaries, and Poland's striving for independence.

Key words: Baden, Poland, Poznań, Rastatt, Revolution 1848/49, Vormärz

(...) for where the revolution is, there is the Polish man's fatherland, there he honestly acquired his civil rights through half a century of oppression, exile and martyrdom.¹

I. Introduction

German-Polish relations have gone through very different phases in the past, from close cooperation to hostilities on the German side. Large parts of the German population east of the river Elbe have West Slavic ancestors. In the High and Late Middle Ages, the German settlers and the native Slavic population in today's West Poland worked hand in hand to build new cities. The Magdeburg town law spread in large parts of Central and Eastern Europe not through German dominance, but as a visible sign of the rule of law. In 1683, Johann III Sobieski (1629–96), King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, saved the Holy Roman Empire from the Ottoman invasion. However, the German rulers proved to be ungrateful comrades in arms, if one thinks of the division of Poland in the 18th century or the German crimes against the Polish population during the Second World War.

That is why it is all the more important to recall the unifying elements of history. A fair historiography must certainly deal in detail with the crimes of the German occupation and the suffering of the Polish population. Nevertheless, Europe will only flourish as a community if we also highlight what has united us in the past. The involvement of Polish freedom fighters in the German Revolution of 1848/49 and the interest of German liberals in the Polish struggle for freedom are outstanding examples of what unites modern civil societies: People's sovereignty, democratic constitutions, and human rights. Since the author lives in the county of Rastatt in the German Federal State of Baden-Württemberg, it is only natural to select the Polish contribution to the Baden Revolution of 1848/49 as an example.² In addition, the democrats in Baden and Poland faced the same opponent: the Kingdom of Prussia as the guardian of monarchism and conservatism. Therefore, the revolutionary events in Poland in 1848 are also discussed.

The German Revolution began in Baden and in Baden the revolution found a bloody end. Baden was, measured by the intensive military resistance against

¹ A. Zurkowski, *Kurze Darstellung des Feldzuges in Baden und der Pfalz*, Bern 1849, p. 63.

² See: F. Engehausen, *Kleine Geschichte der Revolution 1848/49 in Baden*, Karlsruhe 2010; A.G. Frei, K. Hochstuhl, *Wegbereiter der Demokratie. Die badische Revolution 1848/49. Der Traum von der Freiheit*, Karlsruhe 1997.

monarchism, the heartland of the revolution. The proximity to Switzerland and France played a major role in this. For better orientation for the reader, I deliver a small overview of the Grand Duchy of Baden, which emerged from the ruins of the Holy Roman Empire in 1803: to the north is the industrial city of Mannheim, and right next is the university city of Heidelberg. In the south at the Swiss border lies the bishop's residence Freiburg. In between is the capital Karlsruhe, and a little to the south of it, the German Confederation built the federal fortress in Rastatt.

II. Prehistory: Early Vormärz 1815–29

June 9, 1815 was a few days before the Battle of Waterloo. The participants of the Congress of Vienna signed the Final Act. German historians call the period from the Congress of Vienna to the Baden Revolution the *Vormärz* (in English pre-March).³ This designation derives from the beginning of the revolution in March 1848. Poland did not make a significant impact in the early phase of the *Vormärz*. Nevertheless, the events from 1815 to 1829 will be briefly outlined for a better understanding of the years coming after 1830.

The Congress of Vienna confirmed the existence and territorial acquisitions of the Grand Duchy of Baden, which had emerged from the ruins of the small dominions of the Old Empire. On 26 July 1815 Baden joined the newly founded German Confederation, a confederation of states in place of the Holy Roman Empire. Three years later, the Constitutional Charter for the Grand Duchy of Baden came into force, transforming Baden into a constitutional monarchy.⁴ The Baden Estates Assembly, the Baden parliament, with its two chambers was a first step towards the democratisation of society. It should not be forgotten, however, that the upper chamber was only partly made up of elected members and that the active right to vote in the lower chamber was initially limited to only 17 percent of the population.⁵ Before 1830, the liberal democrats in Baden conducted their dispute with the monarchy largely within the walls of parliament. Up to this point Baden had not been a revolutionary epicentre.

³ In detail: W. Bleek, *Vormärz: Deutschlands Aufbruch in die Moderne 1815–1848*, Munich 2019; D. Langewiesche, *Europa zwischen Restauration und Revolution 1815–1849*, 4th edition, Munich 2004.

⁴ See the various contributions of P. Exner and R. Brüning in: P. Exner (ed.), *Demokratie wagen? Baden 1818–1919*, Stuttgart 2018, pp. 22–65; H. Fenske, *175 Jahre badische Verfassung*, Karlsruhe 1993.

⁵ H.-P. Becht, *Wahlen, Wahlkämpfe und „politische Öffentlichkeit“ als Auslöser und Indikatoren politischen Wandels in Baden. 1818–1871*, [in:] *Wahlen und Wahlkämpfe in Deutschland. Von den Anfängen im 19. Jahrhundert bis zur Bundesrepublik*, ed. G.A. Ritter, Düsseldorf 1997, p. 17 (18).

III. Late Vormärz 1830–47: Enthusiasm for the Polish Cause

May 27, 1832 was a sunny Whit Sunday. About 20,000 citizens met at Hambach Castle and protested for freedom, democracy, and the unity of Germany.⁶ The castle was located in the Southern Palatinate, on the other side of the Rhine, thus west of northern Baden. Many citizens from Baden took part in the event. What the organizers had originally planned as a public festival turned into a powerful act of resistance against the monarchical regime and against the repressive policies of the German Confederation. Without a doubt, the Hambach Festival was the climax of the civil opposition before 1848. The Hambach Festival was also the birth of today's German national colours black, red and gold. Many participants of the festival wore black, red and gold tricolours as a political symbol. Johann Philipp Abresch (1804–61) made the first German flag for the festival in the order of colours used today, with the inscription "Germany's Rebirth". But why does Hans Mocznay's famous painting of the Hambach Festival⁷ show the Polish flag as well?

Let's look back. After the November Uprising of 1830, which was crushed by Russian troops, the rebels fled their Polish homeland and went into exile in Western Europe via the German states. The German population, which increasingly suffered under the absolutist rule in their states, greeted the insurgents against the powerful Tsar with sympathy and enthusiasm. The events ignited the so-called Polish Enthusiasm (German *Polenschwärmerei* or *Polenbegeisterung*), a countermovement to the Restoration and Biedermeier.⁸ The Germans organised themselves into so-called Polish associations (German *Polenvereine*). Citizens formed such associations also in the summer of 1831 in Baden in all large towns, initially mainly to collect bandages and financial donations and send them to Poland. Some of the women showed great commitment, such as Emma Welcker (1800–44), the wife of Carl Theodor Welcker (1790–1869), a law professor in Freiburg.⁹ The passage of the Polish officers to France in the summer of 1832 revived the enthusiasm for Poland. Festive welcome speeches, banquets, organisation of further transport: the Baden liberals regarded the Poles as heroes and role models. In retrospect, the Polish November Uprising gave the

⁶ In detail: L. Frisch, *Deutschlands Wiedergeburt. Neustadter Bürger und das Hambacher Fest 1832*, Neustadt an der Weinstraße 2012.

⁷ *Hans Mocznay* (1906–96), *Das Hambacher Fest am 27. Mai 1832*, 1977, oil on wood, location: German Historical Museum Berlin.

⁸ See: W. Michalka et al. (eds.), *Polenbegeisterung. Ein Beitrag im Deutsch-Polnischen Jahr 2005/2006 zur Wanderausstellung „Frühling im Herbst“. Vom polnischen November zum Deutschen Mai. Das Europa der Nationen 1830–1832*, Berlin 2005.

⁹ In detail: G. Brudzyńska-Němec, *Polenvereine in Baden. Hilfeleistung süddeutscher Liberaler für die polnischen Freiheitskämpfer 1831–1832*, Heidelberg 2006.

Baden liberals an even greater impetus than the French Revolution of 1830. In the Polish associations, the local patriotism of the Baden people merged with the internationalism of the progressive democrats.

IV. Spring und Sommer 1848: Resistance in Baden

5 March 1848, liberals and democratic reformers met in Heidelberg and laid the foundation for the coming German National Assembly in Frankfurt am Main. The huge wave of the European revolution had reached Baden. Among those present were numerous prominent Baden citizens, including the politician Lorenz Brentano (1813–91), the Heidelberg law professor Carl Joseph Anton Mittermaier (1787–1867), the Freiburg law professor Welcker (as mentioned before), and the two radical republicans Friedrich Hecker (1811–81) and Gustav Struve (1805–70).¹⁰ Hecker and Struve, both lawyers by profession, had been politically active during the *Vormärz*: Hecker as a member of parliament and Struve as a journalist.¹¹ Unlike the moderate liberals, they did not accept the monarchy as a legitimate form of government. They also demanded social reforms in favour of the lower class. It is obvious that contemporaries called Hecker and Struve radicals because they wanted to overthrow the established order. From today's point of view, they belong to the left wing of the reformers who supported republicanism and democracy.

After it became clear later in March that the moderate liberals were in the majority among the reformers, Hecker and Struve took up arms in southern Baden. At the end, they risked too much and lost everything. Both were inexperienced in military matters and commanded only a small militia. They faced the vastly superior regular troops of the German Confederation and of Baden. On the political level, not only the conservatives, but also the moderate liberals opposed their moves. This caused a rift in the reform movement, which decisively weakened its cause and contributed to its failure. Almost inevitably, the regular Baden troops crushed the Hecker Uprising (German *Hecker-Aufstand*, *erster badischer Aufstand*) in April 1848 and the Struve Coup (German *Struve-Putsch*, *zweiter badischer Aufstand*) in September 1848.¹²

¹⁰ S.G. Bantlin et al., *Declaration*, „Deutsche Zeitung“, 7 March 1848, No. 67, p. 529.

¹¹ Biographies: S. Freitag, *Friedrich Hecker. Biographie eines Republikaners*, Stuttgart 1998; A. Reiß, *Radikalismus und Exil. Gustav Struve und die Demokratie in Deutschland und Amerika*, Stuttgart 2004.

¹² See: K. Groll, *Eine verpasste Chance? Das Gefecht bei Günterstal in Augenzeugenberichten und Erinnerungen*, „Badische Heimat“ 1990, No. 70, pp. 567-576; E. Stärk, *Rund um den Struve-Putsch vom September 1848*, „Schau-ins-Land“ 1958, No. 76, pp. 110-119.

V. Spring 1848: Parallel Resistance in Poland

20 March 1848, the Polish National Committee in Poznań came into existence and set up a Polish legion to liberate Poland from Prussia and Russia. This was the beginning of the Greater Poland Uprising, also known as Poznań Uprising.¹³ The committee assigned the command to Ludwik Mierosławski (1814–78).¹⁴ His family had a military background, he had already participated in the November Uprising of 1830 and had been the leader of the failed Polish uprising in the Grand Duchy of Poznań (German Posen) in 1846. Two years later, since 19 April 1848, Prussian troops proceeded against the Poles. Mierosławski initially achieved remarkable victories with numerically inferior force, but in the end, he could not avert the Polish defeat against the overpowering Prussian enemy.

A few additional words about the bigger picture. The fate of Poland was linked to the German March Revolution. The German reformers had to address the Polish question for two reasons: firstly, there was the question of whether Germany should support the creation of an independent Polish state; secondly, far more Polish-speaking than German-speaking citizens lived in the Prussian Province of Poznań. So how was this province to be included in elections for the national parliament in Frankfurt am Main? On 31 March 1848, the German Pre-Parliament decided that Poland should be restored to make up for the injustice of the divisions in the 18th century. Nevertheless, the reestablishment of the Polish state should not be at the expense of Germany. They planned to incorporate not only West and East Prussia into the new German Empire but also the Province of Poznań despite the Polish majority.¹⁵ Until then, the Province of Poznań belonged to the Kingdom of Prussia, but not to the German Confederation. The Polish population in Poznań, however, opposed the accession to the German Confederation in April 1848. In May 1848 the Prussian King made a political decision: only the German-speaking areas of Poznań joined the German Confederation and took part in the elections to the National Assembly. The Polish-speaking rest of the province remained with the Kingdom of Prussia. Thus, Poznań was a divided territory until 1851.

¹³ In detail W. Bortnowski, *O powstaniu wielkopolskim 1848 roku*, Warsaw 1952.

¹⁴ Biography: J. Franke (ed.), *Ein europäischer Freiheitskämpfer. Ludwik Mierosławski 1814–1878*, Berlin 2006; C. Rieber, *Polenbegeisterung in Deutschland 1848/49? und „Wo die Revolution ist, da ist des Polen Vaterland.“ Ein polnischer Oberbefehlshaber 1849 in Baden: Ludwig Mierosławski, [in:] „... bis es ein freies Volk geworden ...“ 1848/49 Revolution*, ed. Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart 1997, pp. 6–13.

¹⁵ E. R. Huber, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte seit 1789*, Bd. 2, 3rd edition, Stuttgart et al. 1988, p. 639.

VI. Spring and Summer 1849: Baden-Polish Resistance in Baden

After the uprisings of Hecker, Struve and Mierosławski, the Baden-Polish revolutionary drama was not yet over.¹⁶ 16 May 1849, after the failure of the National Assembly in Frankfurt, a revolutionary government under Lorentz Brentano came to power in Baden. At first Franz Sigel (1824–1902), an officer in the Baden army, took over the military supreme command.¹⁷ After he had suffered injuries in a battle against Prussian troops, the new government appointed Mierosławski as the new commander-in-chief of the Baden troops. He had gained Europe-wide fame among the revolutionaries through his military skill in the face of a superior enemy. Beyond that, there was a special reason for his appointment. Since the revolutionary government in Baden was fighting against the same opponent, the Kingdom of Prussia, Mierosławski seemed to be the ideal leader for the Baden troops. He arrived in Karlsruhe on June 9, 1848. From there he went to the military headquarters in Heidelberg and delivered a speech to the Baden troops from which the following passage deserves special attention:

“As a stranger among you, with the only civil right which gives me the feeling of love for German liberty, without which I see no liberation for my own country, not knowing your language myself, so that I can show you the way to victory no other way than to walk before you without ever looking back, I am powerless without or against you. I tell you this freely and openly, brothers in arms. The military spirit must rise in you to the height of the revolution you have made. You must follow my orders and, through your accommodating fervour, spare me the impossible task for a stranger: to fight both the enemy and bad discipline.”¹⁸

Many Polish officers and soldiers came with Mierosławski. Some of these officers commanded the local troops, some formed a so-called Baden-Polish legion with local revolutionaries.¹⁹ However, the historical records are not entirely conclusive. A Polish contemporary witness speaks of a Polish, not of mixed unit.²⁰ Apart from that, the legion is said to have comprised 300 Poles with many former soldiers from the Piedmontese army.²¹ Stanislaus Brosznowski, Franz Freundt, Theophil Mniewski, Aleksandre Zurkowski, to name

¹⁶ In detail to all military actions: A. G. Frei, *K. Hochstuhl, Wegbereiter der Demokratie. Die badische Revolution 1848/49. Der Traum von der Freiheit*, Karlsruhe 1997, pp. 135–171.

¹⁷ See W. Blos (Hg.), *Denkwürdigkeiten des Generals Franz Sigel aus den Jahren 1848 und 1849*, 2nd edition, Mannheim 1902.

¹⁸ A. Zurkowski, *Kurze Darstellung des Feldzuges in Baden und der Pfalz*, Bern 1849, p. 63.

¹⁹ F. W. Hackländer, *Bilder aus dem Soldatenleben im Kriege*, Vol. 2, Stuttgart and Tübingen 1850, p. 301.

²⁰ A. Zurkowski, *Kurze Darstellung des Feldzuges in Baden und der Pfalz*, Bern 1849, p. 51.

²¹ M. Fellhauer, *Zur Entwicklung Daxlandens 1800–1871*, [in:] *Daxlanden: Die Ortsgeschichte*, ed. Bürgerverein Daxlanden, Karlsruhe 2007, p. 163 (192).

a few, were amongst its members.²² At the end of June 1848 General Mierosławski commanded, besides the Baden-Polish legion, six divisions with regular Baden infantry, artillery, dragoons, cavalry, as well as various militias (so-called Volkswehr, Freischar and Workers' Corps). In addition, there were professional soldiers from the Palatinate, since the region west of the Rhine had also rebelled, as well as Swiss and Hungarian revolutionaries.²³ All in all, a heterogeneous army with limited fighting power and discipline.

Despite this, the revolutionary army led by General Mierosławski achieved a number of tactical victories on June 15 and 16, 1849, at the height of Heidelberg against the Prussian troops advancing from the north. But only a few days later the war was already lost, as the Prussian troops advanced from the Palatinate across the Rhine to Central Baden. The now strengthened Prussian army achieved the decisive victories over the revolutionaries. With great difficulty General Mierosławski managed to bypass the Prussians and avert the impending embrace. South of Karlsruhe, the last battles took place at the end of June 1849, allowing the revolutionary troops to retreat behind the river Murg. The revolutionaries split up, as far as they had not already deserted: The minority defended the Federal Fortress of Rastatt, the majority withdrew towards Switzerland. General Mierosławski resigned on 1 July 1849 and also retreated to Switzerland. From a military point of view, the Prussians had thus defeated the revolutionaries. The siege of the federal fortress Rastatt and its capitulation on July 23, 1849 were only a footnote in history.

Let us listen to General Mierosławski himself, how he assessed the defeat. For the period after July 1, he reports on signs of disintegration, desertion, and disorderly retreat.²⁴ All in all, he gives a damning testimony to the revolutionary forces: „We had won almost every encounter with the enemy, had not lost a single cannon, not a single flag, and yet half our army was missing at roll call. The army was lost, scattered, without a single defeat being able to explain this deplorable fact. One third of the cavalry had joined the enemy, one third of the infantry had secretly gone to their homes, also two thirds of the Volkswehr.“²⁵ As indicated, the Volkswehr (literally translated: People's Defense) was part of the Baden militias, which consisted of civilians. In the long run, the Volkswehr was intended to replace the regular troops and thus democratize the military. Mierosławski spoke about the *Volkswehr* as an “instrument that was invented for the sole purpose of assassinating the revolutions that had already been overcome at the front”.²⁶ Specifically, Mierosławski blamed the defeat on Johann Philipp Becker

²² L. Häusser, *Denkwürdigkeiten zur Geschichte der Badischen Revolution*, Heidelberg 1851, p. 448.

²³ L. Mierosławski, *Berichte des Generals Mieroslawski über den Feldzug in Baden*, Bern 1849, pp. 14.

²⁴ L. Mierosławski, loc. cit., pp. 37 ss.

²⁵ L. Mierosławski, loc. cit. P. 26 s.

²⁶ L. Mierosławski, loc. cit., p. 51.

(1809–1886),²⁷ the commander of the troops at Heidelberg: For Mierosławski, Becker was a traitor who had prematurely retreated to Heidelberg and then to Karlsruhe.²⁸ Who was this Becker? He was one of the leading organizers of the Baden *Volkswehr*. After his escape to Switzerland, he became a social democrat and a leading member of the I. Internationale. Since the 1860s, he maintained a close friendship with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The latter had taken part in the battles himself and rated Becker's achievements quite differently from Mierosławski. He judged Becker's defense strategy near Karlsruhe to be "probably the most brilliant episode in the entire Baden-Palatinate campaign."²⁹ If we believe Engels, Becker held the battle line with barely 1000 men against an entire Prussian division for several hours to cover the retreat of the revolutionary army from Karlsruhe.

There are two underlying reasons for Mierosławski's frustration about the Baden military. Firstly, Mierosławski believed that Becker, by hasty retreat, had deprived him of a battle with the Prussian general Alexander Adolf von Hirschfeld (1787–1858). This general was an old enemy for Mierosławski. The Prussian general had distinguished himself by brutality in the Poznań campaign against Mierosławski's troops. However, Mierosławski was mistaken. He was facing his brother, General Moritz von Hirschfeld (1790–1859). Secondly (and this must by no means be hidden) the relationship between the people of Baden and the Poles had deteriorated considerably because of the imminent defeat. The Baden officers looked for a scapegoat and accused the Polish officers of cowardice in the face of the enemy. In military circles this is the greatest insult imaginable. Only with great difficulty a mutiny against Mierosławski was suppressed, in which Becker also took part.³⁰

VII. Aftermath

To this day, the terrible rumour persists in Rastatt that the Prussian army murdered the Polish soldiers trapped in the fortress without trial, since there were only three Poles on the Prussian prisoners' list. This would indeed be a gloomy harbinger of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, but the facts of the matter remain inconclusive to this day. On the one hand, according to Sigel's report only a part of the Poles remained in the Rastatt fortress. This could explain

²⁷ Biography: H.W. Hahn (ed.). *Johann Philipp Becker. Radikaldemokrat, Revolutionsgeneral, Pionier der Arbeiterbewegung*, Stuttgart 1999.

²⁸ L. Mierosławski, *Berichte des Generals Mieroslawski über den Feldzug in Baden*, Bern 1849, pp. 20.

²⁹ F. Engels, *Johann Philipp Becker*, [in:] *Werke*, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vol. 21, Berlin 1973, p. 319 (321).

³⁰ A.G. Frei, K. Hochstuhl, *Wegbereiter der Demokratie. Die badische Revolution 1848/49. Der Traum von der Freiheit*, Karlsruhe 1997, pp. 164.

the small number of Polish prisoners. Another contemporary voice refers to a refugee legion of 40 soldiers from France, Poland, Switzerland and Spain.³¹ On the other hand, recent bone finds in Rastatt could indicate possibly missing Polish soldiers.³²

At least the further fate of the surviving protagonists of the Baden Revolution is known. Many revolutionaries from Baden emigrated to the United States, where they became known under the title “Forty-Eighters” and supported the Republican Abraham Lincoln. Franz Sigel even rose to the rank of Major General in the Union Army. New York City dedicated an equestrian monument to him. However, only Hecker remained permanently in the memory of the people east of the Atlantic. After the revolution, he became one of the most important heroes of the radical German democrats and republicans. “Heckerhut” and “Heckerlied” are still known today between the river Rhine and the Black Forest.

Mierosławski went back to Paris after the failed revolution. In 1861, he went into the fight for independence for Italy. Giuseppe Garibaldi entrusted him with the supreme command of the international legion in northern Italy. Mierosławski last led the Poles against Russia in the January Uprising of 1863/64. Unfortunately, this attempt to liberate Poland also failed. Thereupon Mierosławski withdrew finally to France and died in 1878 in Paris. At this time Baden had become part of the Prussian dominated new German Empire. Nevertheless, Baden remained a stronghold of liberalism. Poland, on the other hand, gained its freedom much later in 1918. Since then, more than one hundred years and more than 170 years have passed since the Baden Revolution. What has remained is the memory of the joint fight for democracy and freedom. A memorial stone in the centre of Rastatt honours this alliance with the words: The Polish legion fought alongside revolutionaries from Baden for the enforcement of the imperial constitution.

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³¹ F.W. Hackländer, *Bilder aus dem Soldatenleben im Kriege*, Vol. 2, Stuttgart and Tübingen 1850, p. 445.

³² M. Fellhauer, *Zur Entwicklung Daxlandens 1800–1871*, [in:] *Daxlanden: Die Ortsgeschichte*, ed. Bürgerverein Daxlanden, Karlsruhe 2007, p. 163 (192).

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SUMMARY

The Polish Contribution to the Baden Revolution 1848/49

German-Polish relations have gone through very different and often difficult phases in the past, from close cooperation to hostilities on the German side. The involvement of Polish freedom fighters in the Baden Revolution of 1848 /49 and the interest of Baden liberals in the Polish struggle for freedom are outstanding examples of what unites modern civil societies, of the bright side of our common history. The Polish aid has a pre-history: after the Polish November Uprising of 1830, the Baden population greeted the Polish rebels with sympathy and enthusiasm. The events ignited the so-called Polish Enthusiasm (*Polenschwärmerei*) so-called Polish associations (*Polenvereine*). In 1848, both the people of Baden and Poland revolted against the monarchical order and against Prussian dominance in Central Europe. On the side of the Baden Revolution, Friedrich Hecker and Gustav Struve should be highlighted, on the side of the uprising in the Grand Duchy of Poznań, Ludwik Mierosławski. Both the Baden and the Polish uprisings failed in 1848. When another revolution broke out in Baden in the middle of 1849, the revolutionary government in Baden drew its consequences from the fighting of 1848 and turned to Mierosławski to enlist a professional military as its leader. Battle-hardened officers and several hundreds of Polish soldiers came with him. They commanded the Baden troops and formed with the locals a special military unit, the Baden-Polish legion. But even a brilliant strategist like Mierosławski did not succeed in defeating the superior Prussian army. At least he achieved a few tactical victories, which secured an orderly retreat for the Baden troops. Although the Baden Revolution failed in the end and the Polish officers were exposed to some hostility, the Polish contribution to Baden's fight for freedom against Prussia should by no means be underestimated. In the 1830s, the liberal Baden citizens demonstrated a much greater enthusiasm for revolutionary Poland than for revolutionary France, although Baden was on the Rhine border with France. Even in 1849, the revolutionary government of Baden called not for French but for Polish officers to help. Since then, more than 170 years have passed since the Baden Revolution. What has remained between Baden and Poland is the memory of the joint fight for democracy and freedom against Prussia. A memorial stone in the centre of Rastatt honours this alliance to remind all citizens of our common history.