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Zitiervorschlag:

Ernest Jones an Edmond Beales, 31. Mai 1866. In: Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe digital. Briefe. Hg. von der Internationalen Marx-Engels-Stiftung. Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin. URL <https://megadigital.bbaw.de/briefe/detail.xql?id=M0004858>

Ernest Jones an Edmond Beales, 31. Mai 1866

Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften (BBAW) Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe

Handschrift: Handschrift: RGASPI f. 1 op. 5 d. 1659

Handschriftenbeschreibung:

Kopie des Briefes von Ernest Jones an Edmond Beales vom 31. Mai 1866.

Archivsignatur des Moskauer Marx-Engels-Instituts (IMÉ): „Rj 1577d“ bzw. „Rj 1576e“.

Absender: Jones, Ernest

Schreibdatum: 1866-05-31

Empfänger: Beales, Edmond

| Copy

47, Princess St^r Manchester
May 31. 1866

D^r Sir,

Do not let us drift into a personal difference. You greatly misinterpret my letter if you suppose that I attribute to you all the evil resulting from the policy adopted by the Executive of the Reform League.

What I wrote was this:

“You say that yourentireCouncil, with three exceptions supports the Bill. You add that, at the Meetings called by you, & by the Branches of the League formed & I may say inspired by your Council” [[mark—Council not Counsel]] [,]the policy of supporting the Govern^t Bill is strongly endorsed & that yourLeague might become a nullity were you to oppose it.”

You will therefore perceive that the “you” & “your” applied to your Committee, your Council, your entire official organisation & not to yourself alone personally. But I cannot withdraw from you personally, your proportionate share in the observation generally applied in my former letter.

You say you advocated Manhood suffrage at the interview with Lord Russel & at divers Meetings & Conferences. Of course, you did! Who ever denied it! Not I! You would not otherwise have been elected President of the Reform League or, having been elected, retained your office.

But this only renders the course pursued by you, & your colleagues, more to be lamented. For a Whig or a sham Liberal or even a Tory to recommend the People to support the Govern^t Bill, I can readily understand & such recommendatⁿ from such quarters would be — comparatively harmless! But for, the President of a Manhood Suffrage Association to support a Bill such as that issuing from the Govern^t, is suicidal, & forgive the word, politically criminal, however sincere & good” (as doubtlessly it was in your case) the original motive may have been that led to such a fearful error.

Of course, you at the same time advocate Manhood Suffrage—of course you tell the Members of your League, that you will still agitate for Manhood Suffrage, & that the Govern^t Bill is not to be taken as a final Measure” of course you do! you could do nothing less. But that just makes the poison more dangerous, | which you administer when you add: “Support the Bill—it is good as far as it goes—it is a step in the right direction & will lead to more”, etc.

That the people are not with you, that you have no sway over, no hold on, the healthy upright common sense of the Workingmen of London, the signal failure on Primrose Hill sufficiently indicates.

By that failure you have done a great injury to the cause of Manhood Suffrage; for its enemies will construe the non attendance of the Workingmen on WhitMonday into evidence of apathy as regards all Reform—Whereas in truth it merely shews their repudiation of the Policy you so strongly advocate in your letter to me. That repudiation is further evidenced in the constantly increasing number of letters I have been receiving ever since a few lines from me on the suicidal policy of supporting the Govern^t Bill appeared in the three Manchester Papers. I mention this merely to shew you that you are much in error as to the feelings of the Working Classes on the subject.

I trust nothing I have said in this or any other letter, may prove personally offensive to yourself or any Gentⁿ connected with the League. I do not intend that it should be so. Do not let it produce any ill feeling between us. Let us remain friends. I hope we shall yet be able to work together for Manhood Suffrage, when the present hallucination has passed. Let us then try to repair the evil that has been done, without recrimination and without any bitterness of feeling.

As this correspondence was public from its commencem^t and your first letter was sent, as was my reply, thro’ the Secretary of the League, I conclude the public nature of the said correspondence still continues, & send this thro’ the same channel, requesting you to lay the entire correspondence before the Council. I am

Dear Sir

Faithfully yours

Ernest Jones

Edmond Beales Esq^{te}

Erläuterungen

Kritischer Apparat