THE HISTORY OF LIBERTY IN GERMANY

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FOREWORD

THE AUTHOR OF THIS little book, Rudolf Olden, lived in a cottage in my garden for some five years after his escape from Germany and became to me an intimate and respected friend. He was a German Liberal of the best sort, rather more pugnacious than the average British Liberal, because he had more to fight against; ready always as an advocate to defend in the courts, with or without payment, the victims of political oppression, and as a journalist to champion Liberal causes in the *Berliner Tageblatt* or elsewhere. He incurred governmental suspicion first by a short article commenting on the death of a German aeronaut while testing his aeroplane in Russia at a time when Germany was by treaty bound to have no air force, but finally left the country in 1933 after the Reichstag fire. He was working at home when excited telephone messages came through from various friends; "The Reichstag is in flames. Be careful." "They have set fire to the Reichstag, and are arresting people right and left. You had better fly." He made light of these warnings, especially because he had a case to plead next day. This case was in one of the lower courts and went on peacefully till a message came to him that the Gestapo were waiting for him at the Higher Court, where he usually pleaded, and also at his home. He finished his case, got a message taken to his wife, spent the night with a friend and in a few days escaped, as if on a ski-ing expedition, through the forest to Czechoslovakia. His wife joined him some days later, carrying such money as she could collect in a glove which she held loosely in one hand while conversing cheerfully with the frontier officials. After some months in Czechoslovakia and France, they came to London and presently accepted an invitation to stay in our cottage. Here for five years he studied, lectured for the University, and wrote, especially for an anti-Nazi journal in Paris.

He was eager to serve the British cause, especially by means of broadcasting and propaganda to Germany. The Master of Balliol and I and other friends recommended him again and again for employment at the B.B.C. or elsewhere; we considered that as a real German, with great historical knowledge and no Jewish accent or revolutionary associations, he was eminently

fitted to speak to Germans without rousing unnecessary antagonism. But, for reasons which were never explained, every appeal was turned down.

Olden's health began to sink under this perpetual disappointment. He had hoped that Britain would come forward as a triumphant champion of tolerance and liberty, and that he would be welcomed as a fellow worker. Instead, he found himself regarded as a suspect "enemy alien." He felt rather bitterly the long period of "appeasement," with its climax at Munich, followed at the beginning of the war by our failure to give practical help to the Poles, our defeat in Norway and afterwards in Belgium. He became really a sick man, from nervous exhaustion added to pernicious anæmia.

On June 25th, 1940, when this country was in danger of invasion and the hurried internment of all Germans was in process, I was summoned at half-past seven in the morning: the police had come to take Mr. Olden and Judge Dienemann, who was also staying with us. The police were polite and considerate, but not able to grant any delay for appeal or inquiry. I had a telephone conversation with Olden next day by the kindness of a Commandant at Southampton, who was overwhelmed by a sudden influx of prisoners for whom he had no room. I will not dwell on the extremely unsatisfactory conditions which existed in some of the North-Country camps, roughly improvised at a time of great national danger.

By dint of continual appeals to people in authority, Olden was released on August 6th. I saw him in London next day and was shocked by his appearance. The last blow had been that, when he had obtained a permit to visit the United States in order to give a course of University lectures and then return, the clause permitting return was blacked out under his eyes. He was never to return to the country which he so much admired and had so longed to help.

He never did return. He and his wife set sail for America in the *City of Benares*, a ship for the most part full of children being sent to America for safety. The *City of Benares* was torpedoed in mid-Atlantic in stormy weather. A great many of the passengers were got away successfully, though with great hardship, in boats. Olden was in bed and too ill to stand the exposure. His young wife, pressed to come to the boats and save herself, refused to leave him. And there ends the tragic story, except that their one small daughter, "Kutzi," had gone safely to America some months before and found the kindest foster-parents in Mr. and Mrs. Jackson of Toronto.

Olden wrote this book at my invitation for the Home University Library, but many difficulties supervened. The first English translation was unsatisfactory and had to be re-done by Olden himself with the unsparing help of his friend, Werner Burmeister, and occasional comments from me. Then it was too long for the H.U.L. and popular feeling against Germany created an obstacle. His other book, *Is Germany a Hopeless Case?*, with a Preface by Edwyn Bevan, was published by Allen and Unwin, but the whole stock was destroyed by the great blitz in 1940. Both that book and this will, I think, serve to show that if the work of the old militarists, the Nazis, the two wars, the wholesale bombing and the consequent misery and famine have not succeeded in making Germany a hopeless case by now, it will be due not to violent revolutionaries and political heresy-hunters, but to the possible survival of a sufficient number of courageous, reasonable, and sincere "good Europeans," like my friend Rudolf Olden.

GILBERT MURRAY.

INTRODUCTION

A WRITER BELONGING TO ONE NATION has always some difficulty in his approach to readers belonging to another. Each nation has not only its own habits of thought; each is apt to take its own institutions for granted as a starting-point, so that a foreigner runs the risk sometimes of explaining what does not need explanation, but more often of leaving unexplained premisses which are essential to his argument. To some extent I hope I have learnt to surmount, or at least to recognize, this difficulty through the experience of giving courses of lectures in the University of Oxford, at the London School of Economics, to the Workers Educational Association, as well as occasional addresses to more popular bodies. This experience, which I owe to the kindness of certain English friends, has been of great value to me. The questions of my hearers have often taught me more than my answers can have taught them.

I had thought of giving this book the title used for some of my lectures, "The Rise and Fall of German Liberalism, 1807–1933"; but it seemed on consideration to be both too scholastic and not entirely accurate.

Liberalism means either the range of liberal ideas or the Liberal movement, i.e. Liberalism as a doctrine of a political party. But my book is not so much concerned with the development of Liberalism as with the history of the institutions which we are accustomed to consider Liberal—the growth and decline of Liberalism as a factor in the political organism.

The lectures were often nothing more than an attempt to give a brief and concise answer to the question so often put to me about the Hitler revolution by English people—doubtless also to other Germans enjoying hospitality in this country: "How was such a thing possible?" What is implied by this question? The idea that there, on the other side of the North Sea, a political community existed, which, in spite of various peculiarities, was, nevertheless, much the same as other States belonging to Western civilization: a State with religious freedom, a free Press, an unprejudiced attitude towards research and learning; with an administration subject to the law, and Law Courts whose independence was assured by legal statute; and with a sovereign Parliament as protector of all these achievements of civilization.

How then was it possible that all these cultural possessions, treasured elsewhere, could be swept away at one blow, at the coming of Hitler—*schlagartig*, to use a National Socialist expression—swept away from the face of the earth and apparently also from the consciousness of the German nation?

Since we are dealing with liberal institutions we will talk of liberal philosophy—of the trend of liberal thought—only in so far as it bears directly on the formation and maintenance of these institutions. Admittedly the *Gesinnung*, the opinion or principle held, is the foundation of every sort of institution. Even the power of the most unlimited despot is fettered by the *Gesinnung*. The possession of guns guarantees him no security if he cannot dominate the wills of those who fire the guns. Many a dictator has found a broken sword in his hand because the faith of his underlings in him had been shattered. It is opinion, or principle, which really maintains the laws upon which all liberal institutions rest. Admittedly the liberal principle is of a peculiar kind, and those who uphold it must often bear the reproach from their enemies that they lack principle. It is a principle without dogma; for an unprejudiced attitude is the first essential of liberty. If absolute truth and goodness are assumed to be known from the outset, the natural consequence of this supposed knowledge is that all are expected to subscribe to it—even those who hold other views. Those who know feel it incumbent upon them to force their knowledge upon the ignorant. In a free community, on the other hand, the freedom from prejudice goes so far that it is itself continually doubted, contested and examined. A state can only be free if decisions on all subjects are sought and obtained by a dialectic procedure—by debates on the reasons for and against the measure in which everyone concerned has an equal right to express his opinion. Just as in science every criticism must be admitted if progress is to be made and fruitful results obtained, just as in a court of law the accused enjoys the same rights as the prosecution—so in every public body, be it university, joint-stock company or municipal council, the minority enjoys the same possibility of obtaining information and of presenting a divergent opinion as does the majority.

It has often been believed that certain spheres of freedom, such as religion, science, freedom of the individual, could exist within an absolute state. Liberal philosophers have endeavoured to achieve their ideal by requesting the grant of such free zones from the absolute ruler. But they were mistaken, as the absolute ruler is himself the source of all law, and is not necessarily bound by the law. The law is in his hand and he can at any time annul

laws which he has made. Even an absolute monarch, like Joseph II of Austria, who was an enthusiastic supporter of liberal ideals, was only able to establish a despotism of his officials and not that balance of power and of law which must exist in a free state. The government of the state itself must be carried out by dialectic procedure, if freedom is to be assured in any single sphere of social life. No other way has yet been found to freedom, which we see realized only in democracy.

But democracy is not yet synonymous with freedom. Democracy can also assume the form of a dictatorship, in that the majority can bring force to bear upon the minority; for instance, the spiritual father of modern democracy, Jean Jacques Rousseau, demanded the death penalty for those who refused to accept the state religion. Everything depends upon the *Gesinnung*. An institution can always be misused, turned against the spirit which created it and therefore against itself. Cæsarism may grow out of a plebiscite, the Press can use its freedom to make propaganda for dictatorship, independent courts can defeat the ends of justice to favour the enemies of independent judges. Philosophers can use their freedom of instruction to inculcate the dogma of might, teachers to extol the happiness of the ignorant. They are not necessarily hindered by the consideration that in so doing they dig their own graves—that once the goal is achieved they have lost their purpose and calling, philosophers and instructors their appointments, judges their sure tenure of office, journalists their influence and subscribers—that they all, in fact, commit a subtle kind of suicide. Nothing of all this hindered them in Germany from working against that liberty which protected and maintained them.

Of all state institutions it is, in the very nature of things, the armed forces which most doggedly oppose the liberal principles of dialectics. Their functions demand quickness of decision and action, command and obedience, the application of force instead of argument, unlimited authority of the superior over the subordinate—at least in the moment of danger which is their real domain. These are all characteristics inconsistent with the spirit of the liberal state. Soldiers who are attached to their profession have, moreover, some cause to suspect that Liberalism may rob them of their career. Its tendency to replace force by the rule of law does not stop at frontiers; it would like to regulate inter-state conditions, to solve international conflicts, by a legal tribunal, and to brand war as a crime.

But as long as this project is not realized the liberal state must also make use of an armed force. To a certain extent Liberalism

has adapted the army to conformity with its ideals, in that it is an integral part of the population, or subordinate to it.

Even assuming that those individual spheres, religion, science, Press, independence of the judiciary, be protected by unequivocal laws, they will nevertheless be shattered like glass on a stone, unless the armed forces of the state be deeply imbued with the idea that they are themselves subordinate to the law. If in their innermost consciousness they realize that they are subordinate to the law, their commanders will not dare to use them against the law, nor against those institutions supported by the law. On the other hand, any commander, and also every rebel and evil-doer, will despise the law if he knows that the forces cannot be used against him. Therefore, in the English constitutional struggles of the seventeenth century the distrustful parliamentarians requested King Charles II to disband the standing army, pointing out that the troops were pledged to obey every command, even if such a command constituted a breach of the law. They wanted—they said—not a king at the head of the army, but a king at the head of the law. Here, briefly stated, is the essence of the danger, which threatens the liberal state through the army. Religious tolerance, free Press and science, independent courts, parliament and a system of law which protects all these —none can continue to exist if there are organized armed forces in the state subordinate only to their own rule of life and independent of the general code of laws. The armed forces will either gain influence over these institutions, thereby alienating them from their real character, or it will come to a conflict which will scarcely be decided in favour of the unarmed.

When the Greek philosopher, Archimedes, shouted to the marauding soldier: "*Noli turbare circulos meos*," the soldier killed him—this being the simplest solution. That would be the fate of anyone who wished to defend his individual sphere against an army with unlimited powers. For a hundred years the Liberals in Germany attempted in vain to limit the power of the army by incorporation or subordination. Herein lies a considerable portion of the history of liberty: the relationship of liberal forces to the force of arms, of liberty to power, by which liberty was finally vanquished.

Liberty has been vanquished, but it would be false to assume that the liberal idea has died out amongst the Germans. One of the best Germans living, the writer, Thomas Mann, has recently come out on the side of Liberalism in a magnificent profession of faith which he has called *Militant Humanism*. What importance is, after all, to be attached to the fact that Thomas Mann, who

formerly lived in Munich, now lives in Zürich? It does not prove that the love of liberty no longer exists in the German people. On the contrary, it seems to me as if the liberal idea, or faith, had gained fresh vigour of late, and not only because of Hitler's tyranny—that it is fresher than it has been for years, even during the time when some measure of freedom of speech and writing was still allowed in Germany and when, in the event of a conflict, one could fight for an impartial verdict.

But the social and political institutions, which taken together represent the conception of liberty—these have been annihilated. Their annihilation was necessary in order to make way for the "*Führergedanken*" of the "*Totalitarian State*" or, as many express it, the "Complete Mobilization," i.e. the control of the Press, the subordination of judges to the administration, and the subordination of religion to the race principle. The absolutism of "Gleichschaltung" is not daunted by the fear of ridicule: for instance, the theory of relativity is banned because it originated with the Jew, Einstein, and a "German School of Physics" has been founded. Further one cannot go. The significance of concentration camp, the imprisonment of political opponents without trial, the endless series of executions for high treason, the tainting of the private life of the individual by the spies of the Gestapo—in short, all the well-known weapons without which no despotism of ancient or modern times has been able to exist—all these pale in comparison with the use of force against Natural Science.

This is not a despotism the necessity for which is regretted by the tyrant himself, as, for instance, when Frederick the Great groaned that he was tired of ruling slaves: it is a despotism lauded to the skies as salvation and deliverance, as a virile, strengthening and joy-bringing principle. Furthermore, in this régime there is not just one single despot but—and this is in conformity with the "*Führerprinzip*"—there are many thousands. Everything takes place by command: even in those law courts where there are several judges there is no voting—the President alone pronounces judgment. For this reason this despotism must affect all free institutions more completely and more cruelly than any other. Beyond doubt, liberty, all liberty in Germany, is annihilated.

I know a criticism that will be levelled at the title of my book; a criticism from a quarter which has nothing to do with the present rule in Germany: that there can be no history of liberty in Germany, because liberty has never existed there. I am conscious that my title has limitations and is open to question. It is clear from the contents of this book that I do not deny the

limitations by which liberty was always fettered in Germany, where military autocracy remained immovable as a rock—with the exception of one single hour of which democracy failed to take advantage. It is just these limitations which form this subject, for I have to explain how it was that the intellectual life of Germany, rich and diversified in spite of everything, could all at once disappear as if by magic. This can only be explained by showing that its foundations were unsound—never firmly established—and in addition undermined by corrosive influences. On the other hand, it would not do to assert that there never had been Liberalism—never the comfort of free thought, never independent justice in Germany. What, then, would Hitler have had to sweep away? My pessimistic friends, voicing such exaggerated reproaches, are themselves the contradiction of their assertion. Did not they, before they were driven away by the terror, live, learn, teach, speak and write there? And certainly they would not have bowed down before any moral compulsion. They emigrated because they would not humble their consciences. Liberty was limited—where is this not the case? Not a few of them were in prison for their convictions before Hitler's advent, when it had already begun to grow dark in Germany. But I think that even their trials, although behind closed doors, were proofs of the liberty we once enjoyed, because they could plead unrestrictedly, and even bring counter-charges against their accusers. Since Hitler came into power no lawyer has dared to speak the truth in Court, and I am ashamed that my former colleagues still call themselves "Advocates of Right" (*Anwälte des Rechts=Rechtsanwälte*). What corruption lies in such misuse of words! In spite of the evil of those days we could still breathe, we lived, we could challenge all dangers when we denounced evil by its name. Where, then, is the liberty to which my critics refer? In France, which sacrificed hecatombs to liberty in the purifying process of her great revolution? In England, where liberty rests upon the hallowed tradition of centuries? In these countries radical spirits never weary of denouncing the limitations and infringements to which liberty is subjected, their denunciations themselves proving the very existence of that liberty. Whence shall we take our standard? From the heavens? Judged by that standard even those who are thirsting for justice will be found unjust.

It might have appeared more pertinent and have been more accurate had I spoken of civic liberty instead of liberty as such, for one can discuss liberty from many angles—in particular that liberty which is concerned with a man's own personal conduct,

independent of external political circumstances. Here, however, we are dealing with political liberty, upon which, in my opinion, all other liberty must be founded. The ideas of liberty which formed the basis of the liberal institutions of the last hundred and twenty-five years originated in the postulate that legal class differences should not exist—that everyone is equal in the eyes of the law, and that everyone has the rights of a citizen. This may be untrue in the light of a widely spread sociological conception, but that is not the point here. It is merely that we know no other kind of liberty than that with which I am dealing here. Perhaps this liberty is of no great value, is inadequate and cannot stand the test of socialist scrutiny. Let us admit it. But here again let me say that I am not judging by utopian standards. The data on socialist states show that there is greater social and economic equality than in the liberal state, but that its price is the curtailment of liberty. I will not debate the value of liberty here. One may despise it, but it always remains that liberty which has been won by high endeavour, the mighty surge of the human spirit, and the blood of many martyrs. It is the liberty which we know. From a historical point of view there is no other.

CHAPTER I

THE PRUSSIAN REFORM

IF ONE WISHES TO CONSIDER the history of Germany from any one standpoint, as we shall here endeavour to consider it from the standpoint of liberty, peculiar difficulties are met with at the outset, because Germany has experienced a more varied fate than other countries.

Where to begin and when? The problem cannot be solved without first giving a broad outline of the history of Germany.

Of the Holy Roman Empire with its mighty rulers, who gave to the whole a common bond of consciousness, no more than a faint reflection shines through into our own time. To-day we have the complete abolition of internal frontiers—in principle at least, and already far advanced in its realization.

The will of the "Führer" is to reach from the centre of administration to the farthest corner of the Reich, and to unify every detail of public, social, economic, religious, intellectual and private life. There is no longer room to differentiate between Prussia, Bavaria and Mecklenburg, nor between the inhabitants of the Principalities of Reuss, nor between Frisians, Rhinelanders, Tyrolese, Silesians or Mazurs. The iron hand of force is to level out everything which lent colour and variety to national life.

But when our story begins there was a map so full of colour that no palette could suffice to paint each independent scrap of territory in a different hue. At a time when Western and Eastern nations had long known and realized the integrating influence of a central power, the Germans still lived in numerous sovereign states, some large and some small, each of which was eager to develop and to preserve its individuality. More than three hundred and fifty independent territories were left within the borders of Germany when the Treaty of Westphalia ended the Thirty Years' War in 1648. The Peace had established the "Liberty of the '*Stände*,' " that is, the right of individual, separate states to make alliances with each other, and with foreign rulers. It is true that they still had certain institutions in common, as, for instance, the Imperial High Courts, but the strength of these was undermined by the will of the individual states, so

that they came to an end under the blows of revolutionary France, and the Empire ceased to exist even legally in 1806.

We must endeavour to convey an idea, in broad outline at least, of the way in which the various territories in Germany were distributed. In the south-east, Slavs, Hungarians and Italians were united with the Reich under the rule of the Habsburgs. This part of the country had its own individual destiny decreed by the central administration in Vienna. In the south and west there grew up an infinity of petty territories, and the governments of temporal and spiritual princes—Electors, Dukes, Margraves, Counts, *Reichsfreiherren*, heads of Orders, Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots and Abbesses—existed side by side with the republics of the free towns and villages of the Empire.

In the north-east of Germany a state grew up, formed by inheritance, treaty and conquest, small among the European Powers, but great and powerful among the German States; distinguished by its peculiar character. This land was Prussia.

The kings of Prussia also had possessions in Western Germany, on the Lower Rhine and in Westphalia—scattered territories, which had come to them later; and were handsomely enlarged after the Napoleonic Wars—and it was by the union of these with the east, in the war of 1866, that Bismarck's Prussia was formed. There West German and Prussian characteristics fused, but the outlying territories could never quite be made to assume the character of the original Prussia. Generally speaking, they are not included when one refers to Prussia, which is taken as meaning old Prussia, i.e. the original territory of Brandenburg and the lands along the Baltic coast now known as East Prussia, from which the name of Prussia is derived and which were originally Marches or military colonies along the frontier of the Reich. The real Baltic Prussia did not even belong politically to the Empire, and it was there that finally a Margrave and Elector of Brandenburg assumed the crown. To these territories must be added Pomerania, also Silesia, conquered by Frederick the Great, and the annexed portions of Poland; these were the Prussian territories on the other side of the Elbe. Old Prussia was therefore also called *Ostelbien* or "East of the Elbe."

The south-western German States on the Rhine, Main and Danube formed, within the German diversity of lands, the greatest possible contrast to East Elbian Prussia.

Nature and history have been generous to the south and west, but niggardly to East Elbian Prussia. To the south comes the warming sun in the spring of the year, whilst storm and fog still fill the air in the north. In the south-west undulating hill and

dale, murmuring streams and broad rivers diversify the country, in East Elbia stretches far and wide a flat, monotonous plain. It was to the south-west that the Romans brought the first gifts of civilization and here that Christianity disseminated its gentle teaching whilst primitive Slavs dwelt in Prussia in impenetrable forests among morasses until they were exterminated or subjugated by the armies of the knights from western Germany. Gothic Renaissance and Baroque generously displayed the beauty and dignity of their form in the south-west, while scarcely an artist found his way into Prussia. The sensuous cult of the Catholic Church dominated the south, whilst the relentless word of Martin Luther ruled in the north. One other great point of difference must be emphasized. The small states in the south and west were powerless: they kept their place by diplomacy. The Prussian north became formidable on account of its army.

The original and historical contrast existed in all its harshness when, as a result of the French Revolution, the urge for general civic rights awoke in Germany.

Nowhere in Germany was there liberty.

In the south and west there was some degree of freedom. Here there was great diversity, not only of scattered territories, but also of rights and privileges. However much these rights were graduated and varied in value, there was still some measure of justice for everyone. Of course there was no lack of petty tyrants, who in their little domains tried to emulate the despotism of the great kings of France, but they were always hindered by privileges or prerogatives which limited their territory and checked their powers. Princes, nobles, knights, rich burghers, guild craftsmen—their claims and duties were intertwined and had to be demarcated against each other and defended. Thus the conflict of rights never ceased. And so the supreme power of the Reich, until its fall in 1806, was always something more than a shadow. The legal profession had plenty to do, and these questions furnished the Imperial Courts with the majority of their cases. Legal procedure, even if slow and not altogether impartial, gives the individual a feeling of personal value and the possibility of its vindication: its very existence is the precursor of liberty.

Prussia was the complete antithesis to the diversity of southern and western Germany. In that flat country, which could only scantily provide for its thin population, no such abundance could have been produced as that which nature had lavished upon the more favoured parts of the Empire. Poor in art, in science and music, the country was also poor in social organizations. The independence of the peasants declined here earlier, and without

leaving any vestiges of the rights of the individual. The German peasants, who had come up here from the West, in the wake of the knights, had been oppressed by the rough soldiery of the Marches until they had sunk to the level of the native Slav peasantry. Not only were they bound to the soil, but the servitude in which they lived was scarcely to be distinguished from slavery. Those among them who were gifted with a stronger urge for independence had turned to trade and founded towns. Towns began to flourish in the fifteenth century, but prince and noble crushed the citizens with an iron hand and stifled the budding prosperity. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century it was impossible for them to obtain any rights whatever. The citizen was the object of the royal administration—he existed only to pay taxes. Finally, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the nobles were also deprived of their right of participating in the Government.

Eighteenth-century Prussia is often regarded simply and solely as the State of Frederick the Great. Through his victorious campaigns he had brought world fame to the name of Prussia. But his father, Frederick William I, more than Frederick the Great himself, had left his mark on the Prussian State. A somewhat questionable renown has remained his: he appears to posterity as an eccentric figure who collected tall men—"*lange Kerle*"—by cunning or by force, at home and abroad, for the Potsdam Giant Guard. To judge him solely by this idiosyncrasy is to underestimate his real significance. He was prudent, stingy, hard, cunning, timorous—a sort of exaggerated sergeant-major, a very drill-master, for all his pettiness. But he was an organizer and administrator such as is seldom found. The characteristic traits which his relentless energy stamped on the face of Prussia can be seen in modern Germany to-day. It was his energy which prepared the wars conducted by his more famous son. Thus Prussia lived at war for almost half a century, and at home the periods of preparation for war differed little from the time when wars were actually in progress. It was not war such as was carried on by other kings at that time—no majestic adventure in which the superfluous wealth of their country was squandered, but a war which involved and exhausted the entire resources of the people. It was the classical forerunner of the "total" war preached to-day by Prussian German philosophers.

The totalitarian system of the military state required also the abolition of the rights of the nobles. The historical elements of opposition with which the king had to contend were not so formidable as they would have been in other parts of Germany.

Independent nobility had never existed in the eastern Marches. The first colonists had come into the country as lieutenants subordinated to military leaders, and never became peers, even of this poor crown. Furthermore, connections with the western centres of feudal culture were few. It is true that the Prussian gentry liked to call themselves knights, but in general the name "*Junker*" was applied to them: in the South this name denoted sons of noble families who had not yet won their spurs. In Prussia the term came to be the half-contemptuous designation of the petty gentry which had little in common with the more splendid aspects of knighthood. As the Junkers were poor, and as in that far-away country there were few possibilities of education and the princes commonly called in as their councillors Germans from the South or West, the entire class was steadily sinking to the level of the peasantry around them when Frederick William entrusted them with the task of forming the Officers' Corps for his excessively large army.

Even more important was another measure which Frederick William adopted. He began to draw his recruits from the peasantry. Hitherto the prodigal sons of all countries had filled the ranks of his army. These he recruited from the highways, and from the inns of doubtful repute within the Reich, or even press-ganged or kidnapped them. But as the recruiting of foreigners proved too costly he began to press the serfs from the big estates into his regiments. This was also of great advantage to the commanders, who could send their local soldiers on leave for agricultural work for a large part of the year, and thus save their pay. At the conclusion of Frederick's wars almost half the army was thus composed of serfs.

In this way the social system of Prussia became complete and uniform. Peasant, Junker and king represented the same grades of military rank as soldier, officer and general. The whip of the landowner and the cane of the regimental provost supplemented each other in perfect harmony. The class rights of the nobility could not continue to exist under such a system. Their position as rulers over the peasantry remained: the right of the nobles to participate in the government of the state ceased. The king acted on the saying which has come down to us: "*Ich stabiliere die Soveranität wie einen Rocher de bronze und lasse den Herren Junkers den Wind von Landtag*," "I establish my sovereignty like a 'rocher de Bronze' and leave the hot air of the diet to my gentlemen Junkers," which means that Frederick William collected taxes and duties as it pleased him without the assent of the Landtag. The feudal liberties, which had been defended until this time,

perished in this machinery of war. The very name of the administrative authorities denoted the purpose of their activities, i.e. to collect funds for the army by taxes and from the Crown-lands. They were called the "War and Crownlands Chambers" ("*Kriegsund Domänenkammern*"); their higher officials were called "*Kriegsräte*" or War Councillors. Just as the estates were recruiting districts, so were the towns garrisons. In them the word of regimental commanders was law. Mirabeau said that war was Prussia's only industry. The brilliant Prussian military historian, von Berenhorst, who lived in the time of Frederick the Great, coined the apt phrase: "Prussia is not a State but the garrison of an army." Even the historian Heinrich von Treitschke, who did everything to idealize the old Prussian system, is terrifying enough in his account of the general opinion held in Germany of the Prussia of that time: "A youthful, immature form, bony and muscular, strength and stubbornness in his gaze, but plain and angular, totally devoid of charm and nobility. . . . The land of arms seemed to the German an enormous barracks; only the reverberating march step of the Potsdam Giant Guard, the harsh command of the officers and the miserable cries of deserters running the gauntlet echoed from the sullen silence of the huge prison into the Germany beyond."

When one speaks of early Liberalism in Germany the average educated German, as well as the Englishman, has Frederick the Great in mind. The stories of his tolerance, his respect for the individual rights of his subjects, are among the most popular fables, a hundred times contested and a hundred times disproved: the legend continues, however, throughout the generations, unaffected by historical research. Frederick is numbered among the "enlightened despots." But his enlightenment consisted solely in that he had freed himself from the restraints of religion. At the round table in Sans Souci he was wont to make fun of religion, but that alone did not make Prussia a liberal State. Lessing, the pioneer of German literature, who, unwillingly enough, lived for a time in Berlin, wrote on one occasion to one of his Prussian friends: "Don't talk to me about your freedom of writing and thinking in Berlin. It resolves itself solely into the right to scoff at religion as much as one pleases, and a fair-minded man is soon ashamed to exercise this one privilege."

One of Frederick's axioms which is often quoted is that each man must find salvation in his own way. It is amusing to discover in which connection these famous words were spoken: they meant nothing more than that the Roman Catholic schools for the children of his Roman Catholic soldiers were not, as a zealous

Protestant had suggested, to be closed. Even Frederick William's father, the ridiculed "*Drillmeister*," had been as liberal as this. The soldier kings were prepared to tolerate anything which helped to keep quiet their mercenaries drawn from all corners of the earth. In Potsdam there also was a church for the orthodox Russians and a mosque for the Mohammedans serving in the Guard. The secret of this kind of tolerance was very simple. It meant that in the place of the Christian God a war god had been set up, whose rights were paramount and maintained with barbaric severity. If a conflict arose between the claims of the war god and those of another religion, toleration came to an abrupt end. The Catholic chaplain, Faulhaber, was accused of having said to a soldier in the confessional that God could pardon even the sin of desertion. Frederick not only had him hanged, but even refused him the last sacraments.

The only Prussian to enjoy freedom in Frederick the Great's State was himself. He rebelled against God and against the Emperor. With the exception of this, the totalitarian system of compulsion which his father had established remained unaltered. The only difference was that the son favoured the nobility even more. He reserved all good posts in state service, and all army commissions for this class. The commoners who had been promoted from the ranks for bravery in his wars he later struck from the ranks with his stick when he saw them at military reviews. In his writings he lauded toleration and freedom of thought and pitied the fate of the serfs, but took no steps to alleviate the slavery of the Prussian land-labourers. Judges who passed verdicts of which he did not approve were sent to forced labour in his fortresses. The censorship we know from Lessing's letter, was as ruthlessly applied under his rule as in any other despotic state, with the exception that, in this case, religion might be ridiculed. His words: "Newspapers should not be molested," only meant that foreign governments could be criticized, certainly not his own. "The most enslaved land in Europe," was Lessing's word for Prussia.

After escaping from Prussia, the famous archæologist, Winckelmann, cursed his country with the words, "I shudder when I think of Prussia, for it is weighed down by the greatest despotism ever heard of, so that it would be better to become a circumcised Turk than a Prussian."

But it was not only scholars, townsmen and peasants who suffered under this oppression. Even the favoured gentry could not defend their rights. The peasants on their estates were their property, and they were absolute lords on their estates, but in

their relations to the king they were absolute servants, exposed to his whims and fancies like every other class in the State. He kept every one of his subjects in leading strings. An astute English observer, the ambassador, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, expressed the same opinion as such German men of letters as Lessing and Winckelmann: "'Tis incredible what care this Pater Patriæ takes of his people . . . they have really no liberty left but that of thinking. Compulsion affects all classes and distrust is expressed on every face. I think Hamlet says in the play: 'Denmark is a prison!'; the whole Prussian territory is so in the literal sense of the word."

Frederick the Great died in 1786. Court and Government, even more than the people, felt as if they had awakened from an unbearable nightmare. The great revolution, which began three years later in France, brought exultation and terror in one: a fiery sign that the foundations of the absolute system were no longer secure. In Prussia, too, there were numerous suggestions and attempts to alter the state of affairs. But under his successor, a man inclined to occultism and debauchery, nothing happened beyond a half-hearted attempt to replace the mocking atheism of his famous predecessor by a weak return to piety. Nothing was really changed in Prussia when it found itself suddenly drawn into the vortex of war by Napoleon's victorious advance. That was twenty years after the death of Frederick the Great, in 1806, and this is the point at which our story really begins.

So far we have dealt mainly with conditions in Prussia, and this we will continue to do. A word must be said in explanation of this procedure. It is not because the most characteristic expression of German life and character was or is to be found in Prussia: the contrary would be nearer the truth. The provinces east of the Elbe were established on Slav territory. Although the subjected Pruzzes, Wends, Sorbs, etc., have for the greater part adopted the German language, a few of them have retained their original nationality to this day. In addition these provinces are permeated with Poles, Lithuanians and Mazurs; some of them became assimilated and some not. Everywhere in these districts, even those which became completely Germanized, numerous villages and families still bear Slav names. With regard to culture, I need only refer to what I have already said concerning the differences between Prussians and South and West Germans. This difference, even in our day, is as great as that between a colony and a mother country, only that here the peculiarity is that the colony has become ruler over the mother country. But national life or character is not the point here. During the hun-

dred and twenty-five years, with the history of which we are concerned, the vital decisions in Germany were taken in the Prussian North-East. There, under the military kings, in the half-century of preparation and of war, arose that force which was to transform the face of Germany. This is what has been called "Prussia's Mission."

Let us cast a rapid glance ahead at the great changes of the whole period. Of the German countries it was Prussia who had the most important share in the victory over Napoleon in 1813: in the Revolution of 1848 Prussia's negative attitude as an active opponent gave her the decisive rôle. In the German War of 1866 it was Prussia who excluded Austria from the Empire, who conquered the southern and western countries, and annexed several of the western. The foundation of the Empire, which the Prussian Bismarck brought about in 1871, made the Prussian king a German Emperor and gave Prussia finally her dominant position. Strangely enough Prussia maintained this position in the Republic after the Revolution of 1918.

But what makes Prussia, i.e. Old Prussia, Prussia east of the Elbe, more important for the development of Germany than her war conquests is the internal penetration of Germany by the Prussian spirit. We have no space to go into this in detail, but it must be recalled because it cannot be separated from the history of civic liberty with which we are here concerned.

A little way back I quoted the words of Treitschke, in which he gave a picture of the Prussians as they appeared to the empire at large at the time of the soldier kings. It is superfluous to add that those who aroused such terror were not popular. During the period of history with which we are concerned, or even earlier, no writer has ever asserted that the Prussians had ever gained, or even sought, affection. The admiration which was aroused by Frederick the Great's victorious battles, particularly that over the French at Rossbach, did not outweigh the deep natural aversion for the Prussian system. The inhabitants of every additional territory which came under Hohenzollern rule entered unwillingly and fearfully into the new union. And how many scraps of territory were incorporated, first with Brandenburg, and then with Prussia, during the course of the century! The motto of the highest Prussian order was *Suum Cuique*. This was wittily supplemented by *rapit* and became *Suum cuique rapit*, "Let each have his own—robbed" which gave an accurate description of the character of the State: a state founded on war and power, which aimed at expansion, conquest and subjugation. The inhabitants of the countries incorporated into Prussia always regarded

the new rule as a yoke to which they had to submit. When they became Prussians under these circumstances they referred to themselves as the *Muss-Preussen* (Prussians by compulsion).

In spite of all this it is evident and incontestable—if anyone wished to contest it—that the lands so acquired, became with time semi-homogeneous—were soon reconciled to the fate which had been imposed upon them, and adopted elements of Prussianism. Not that they ever entirely lost their own characteristics: that is only true of the eastern acquisitions, not of those west of the Elbe. These, on the whole, have never been entirely Prussianized, although parts of them, or rather certain strata of the population, have become so. We cannot examine the process further, but shall refer to it again in its proper connection. But the word "strata" gives an indication of the nature of the astonishing development. Prussianizing only affected certain social classes. Let us take the Rhine Province as an example. The easy-going gaiety here is certainly in the strongest contrast to the prudent gravity east of the Elbe, so that the common people never lost their conscious or unconscious antagonism to the Prussian Government. Power—which is certainly the strongest means of persuasion—means most to the upper classes who have more to lose or to gain by it. Whether it compels or corrupts, it permeates and assimilates. To continue with our example. There always remained in the Rhineland an opposition composed of a certain section of the Catholic upper class (aristocrats and bourgeois). But generally speaking those circles which wished to participate in power adapted themselves to circumstances. Enough. It is this fact which is essential. Prussia's new acquisitions were always assimilated quickly and thoroughly enough to permit of their being thrown into the scale in favour of Prussia at the next crisis. Or, to put it more definitely, in opposing Prussia it was impossible to speculate with any prospect of success on dissatisfaction in the new provinces, or to reckon upon finding ready confederates in the newly acquired territories. If the development of Prussia has to be our main theme it is because Prussia played the rôle of destiny in Germany—this explanation is necessary to make the position clear at the outset.

German philosophy had been at variance with conditions in the State for some time. The equality of man formed the basis and starting-point of all teaching from the seventeenth century onward. Christian Wolff, who has been called the father of German philosophy, taught that in a state of nature all men are equal. Accordingly no one has a greater claim, no one greater

duties than his neighbour, and no one is entitled to advantage over another.

Kant, the greatest of the German philosophers, rejected hereditary nobility and hereditary servitude, both of which were the main props of the Prussian system of government. He advocated the freedom of the individual in a constitutional state; the right of the citizen to obey only the law which he has agreed to through his representatives, and to be under no other command than the law. The freedom of the Press to criticize; faith in the steady progress of mankind: an entire Liberal programme is to be found in Kant's political writings after the French Revolution. The coping-stone was his "*Traktat über den ewigen Frieden*" (Treatise on Eternal Peace), in which he envisaged a federation of republican states with an international Supreme Court as the *summum bonum* in the distant future of world history. It was the League of Nations which he demanded, a hundred and twenty years before Woodrow Wilson. This whole doctrine was thoroughly opposed to the world of absolutism founded on the dogma of divine right—it annihilated it. But the learned people, philosophers and their disciples, were so far removed from decisions of state that they never even thought of participating in the government. And yet in the long run they were not without influence. Lassalles' charming allusion to Kant, shows this: "In thousands of studies he lit quiet lamps and candles,"—but there could be no question of an immediate political effect. In fact there is no doubt that the professors could not have sat so quietly behind their desks had the gulf between the one and the other not been so great. Mighty events were necessary to bring philosophy and politics into close relationship.

Philosophical Liberalism at the beginning of the nineteenth century was concerned with the universe and with individuals. These were the broad, predominating tendencies. The individual was taken as a starting-point and liberal philosophy linked him directly with the whole of humanity. It was not concerned with the essentially political organizations which lay between; these were, in fact, definitely repudiated as far as the Germans were concerned.

Goethe warned the Germans against politics:

> "*Germans, in vain you are hoping to become a nation,*
> *But you can become freer men instead.*"

Schiller allotted to the Germans a far wider sphere of influence, beyond the narrowing limitations of nationality:

"Every nation has its day in History,
But the day of the Germans is the harvest of the whole of time."

He composed the Apologia of tyrant murder in his *Tell*, but this great drama had little connection with his times. The connection is rather to be found in his *Don Carlos*, when the Marquis Posa addresses to Philip V of Spain his poetic-political appeal: "*Sire, geben Sie Gedankenfreiheit*" ("Give us freedom of thought").

How characteristic are these often-quoted words of the nebulous relations of early German Liberalism to the State! The Marquis pleads for freedom—demands it, from the Despot himself. When, however, the terror of the French Revolution filled the intellectual world with horror, the poet uttered these words of warning:

" Where people seize their liberty
There can be no prosperity."

The first of the German liberals, from the political point of view, was Wilhelm von Humboldt. He grew up at the royal court in Berlin and, as a young man, entered Prussian Government service, but left it in disgust after a short time. Like Mirabeau, *la fureur de gouverner* seemed to him abominable. He counselled the future ruler of an ecclesiastical state, who had many schemes for the happiness of his people, in the following terms: "The idea that a Government has to provide for the happiness and well-being, physical and moral, of a nation is surely the worst and most oppressive form of despotism."

It was about this time that Kant also wrote: "A paternal Government is the worst imaginable form of despotism." Everything, so Humboldt believed—power, prosperity, etc., accrues to that state—which, by according the greatest degree of freedom, permits the real creative power, man, to develop, raise and ennoble himself. Even assuming that statesmanship can bring about the more rapid development of a country, with prosperity and a certain degree of enlightenment for its people, forcing upon them what it has decided is for their good—even then the way of self-development, though perhaps slower, is surer and therefore to be preferred. The state should not interfere either with regard to religion, to the improvement of morals, in the question of marriage, or in economic matters; even provision for the poor should be left to charity. It should be solely concerned with the promotion of voluntary associations by means of which all that is laudable can be better and more effectively accomplished. In short, the duty of the state is to make itself dispensable.

The voluntary associations should also, at will, cross the frontiers of states and extend beyond them.

As the culminating point of Humboldt's dream of liberty comes the wish for the dissolution of the state. By the time this point is reached all duties have been removed from the state, with the exception of one—the care for public safety and external security. Thus the old state reappears as the most vital part of a political system which aimed at anarchy. The beast, which should have been destroyed, remained; only its claws and teeth were trimmed a little. Humboldt knew nothing of a constitution, of a system of checks and balances extending to the highest position in the land. Humboldt left the despot in his place—he was only required to discipline himself. The beast was expected to become reasonable, to make no use of its evil faculties, because this would be the best course for the beast. That was asking a great deal.

This resigned attitude, at bottom non-political, which leaves power to those accustomed to wield it, is to be met with more than once in the seeming innovators in that part of German history with which we are concerned.

Humboldt's ideas on political tactics were always moderate and evolutionary. As a Minister he said: "It is never good to destroy anything until something new has been provided in its place." As a youth he taught that true wisdom only stirs power to activity and seeks to guide it. "At this point wisdom modestly stops. Constitutions cannot be grafted on to human beings, like shoots on to a tree. Where time and nature have not done the preliminary work it is as though blossoms were attached with threads—the first midday sun scorches them." For him the way of progress lay where some kind of freedom had existed before complete despotism had been achieved—in the re-awakening—the further development and the gradual transformation of feudal institutions. Judged from the standpoint of liberty, feudalism appeared to him far preferable to the absolutism of the Fredericks. "Instead of a single class enjoying freedom, as had been the case, all were now slaves."

These thoughts, although stimulated by the French Revolution, were written before revolutionary France influenced Germany. The time had not yet come for political philosophy to gain an influence on the formation of the State. This gulf between thinkers and rulers was keenly felt by Goethe:

"Deutschland, wo liegt es? Ich weiss das Land nicht zu finden.
Wo das gelehrte beginnt, hört das politische auf."

Germany, where is she? I cannot discover the country.
Where the sphere of learning begins, there the realm of politics ends.

But during the twenty years which followed, things in Germany began to move, influenced first by the example of the French Revolution, later by the Napoleonic Wars. A cis-Rhenish republic founded by Jacobins of the Rhineland was merely an episode. Then France forced its way into the country. The small states were defenceless. The Empire was only half-heartedly defended by Austria and Prussia. Napoleon brought the left bank of the Rhine directly under his domination. The petty princes who had lost their dominions were to be recompensed on the right bank of the Rhine. Thus the whole of the old system came up for revision. The ecclesiastical states came to an end. Larger states everywhere continued to exist at the expense of the smaller. Several hundred small sovereign states disappeared for ever.

The French system was imposed on the districts left of the Rhine: equality of rights for all denominations; a new division of territory into departments irrespective of historical frontiers; administration through prefects who received their instructions from the Central Government; a French Code of Law which recognized no social distinctions: in short, the rise of the middle classes, the levelling of feudal privileges and abolition of feudal oppression.

On the right bank of the Rhine larger states arose which were under French political influence and which reorganized themselves on the French model. At that time Bavaria became the most important of the South German States. Graf Max von Montgelas, a minister distinguished for his energy and powers of administration, governed in conformity with the views of modern France. The peasants were freed and their property assured: uniformity of taxation, equality before the Law and compulsory education were introduced. The monasteries were secularized, the country divided into provinces governed on the prefect system. Nothing resembling a constitution was created; government was carried on from above. Conditions in Württemberg and Baden were similar to those in Bavaria. Like Bavaria, they expanded by the annexation of small territories. In these States, however, more of the old German feudal freedom and privilege remained. Similar changes were also taking place in the northern territory to the right of the Rhine. The entire South and West adapted itself to the achievements which had been

attained in France, through the centralist absolutism and the great revolution. Only that in this case there was no revolution radically to reverse the order of things; nor did they ever quite lose a feeling of attachment to the old order of the feudal past. The reforms took place too quickly for this, and were carried through chiefly by command from above and without.

Prussia, on the other hand, remained obstinately unmoved. There was no lack of conviction that much would have to be changed, nor of men to draw up plans for the change. There were also disturbances: here and there the peasants, having heard of the liberation of their class in other places, seized their flails. But the Government, though alarmed, took no action. The shade of the great king who had made Prussia powerful and dreaded weighed heavily upon his successors. Military considerations were among the most important in favour of maintenance of the present régime. The Army, which under Frederick had so often defeated the armies of Austria and Russia, and even the French, depended entirely upon the existing political structure. In fact the whole of the State was adapted to the requirements of the Army. It was the fear of endangering Prussia's military prestige and external security which prevented any reform within the country.

The Prussian generals still believed they could defeat the French. They believed that the system which had come down to them from their forefathers was invincible, and their disappointment was the more poignant. On October 14th, 1806, Napoleon defeated the Prussian Army at Jena and Auerstadt, and the defeat was followed by a general *débâcle*, which was without parallel even in those times of violent change. It seemed as if the State itself were about to collapse. The withdrawal of the troops to the north and east was not a retreat, it was a rout. Sections surrendered as soon as they saw the enemy, fortresses opened their gates without even attempting resistance. In Berlin the Minister of Police posted up a proclamation which contained the classic words: "*Der König hat eine Bataille verloren. Ruhe ist die erste Bürgerpflicht*" ("The King has lost a battle. The first duty of the citizens is to remain calm"). In spite of the reproach and scorn heaped upon the wording of this proclamation, it was a true outcome of the spirit of the Fredericks who had aroused so much adulation. It was Frederick the Great himself who had insisted that "*der Bürger*" was not even to notice when "the nation was at war."

So the population remained in dull apathy. The only evidence of independence was manifested by those who welcomed the

French conquerors, believing that at last all oppression and tyranny would end; but even that was no more than a weak gesture. Within the narrow strata of the middle class, which played a negligible rôle in an almost entirely agricultural country, there was no evidence of a political will: there was certainly none amongst the exploited peasants, deprived as they were of all rights. The Junkers, the only Prussian subjects who had exercised any political rights within recent times, were for the most part chiefly concerned with retaining their own property in the general cataclysm. The majority of the Ministers were awaiting the entry of the conquerors into Berlin and gladly took their oath of allegiance to the Emperor.

The Minister of Finance, however, fled, salvaging the State funds. This man was Freiherr vom Stein.

Among the names of those who did most for liberty in Germany the greatest is that of Freiherr vom Stein. As far as Prussia was concerned he was the only statesman who appeared as a liberator. Bismarck said that in Prussia revolutions were always made from above: we will examine this statement later on. So much is clear: those political actions which can be described as "revolutions from above" were brought about by the ruling power either under pressure or to evade an awkward situation. The reasons which induced them were for the greater part connected with foreign politics. Stein alone acted conscientiously and from conviction. What singled him out from the average politician of that time was that he acted from moral motives. He was a practical man—a man used to dealing with facts—no "*Realpolitiker*" in the questionable sense that this word has come to have in German history. He has been compared to the English Puritans, and not unjustly so. Their sure confidence in God—and their angry scorn—were his; he spoke their language when he attacked his enemies and their works as "frivolous," "unclean," "corrupt" and "vile" while upholding all that was "noble," "good" and "true." Stein had the right to use such language.

Prussia was the most backward country as far as liberal institutions were concerned, not only in comparison with the European West, but also with the other German States. Even Austria, under her enlightened Emperor Joseph, had advanced much further with its many reforms. A new order was urged upon this backward, northern State from without rather than from within. The old order of things had persisted obstinately. We have already noted what was the chief cause of this: the Army, and the faith in its invincibility. This cause existed no longer, since the Army

had been defeated, and was, in fact, practically disbanded. A new task, far greater than the simple maintenance of the State, had been imposed by the defeat: to organize resistance to the conquerors, and later, when the greater part of the State had been conquered and occupied, to prepare the liberation. The one was bound up with the other. If the old methods had brought about the catastrophe, the new should bring salvation. It was an obvious conclusion, but not so obvious that none opposed it. In dull apathy the country allowed itself to be overrun by foreign soldiers. No movement arose either against the old authority or against the new one of the conquerors. It was therefore left to the absolute monarch to decide which course should be followed.

The king fled to the East—from town to town;,from province to province. He held councils on the way, awaited news of the enemy—news of possible allies, about the situation in the country. He was surrounded by his Privy Councillors and adjutants, adherents of the old régime, who had up till now acted as his advisers. Their inclination was still to alter nothing, to leave everything as it was: that meant the conclusion of an alliance with Napoleon, or rather, submission to him; incorporation in the European system of a French universal monarchy, in much the same way as the South German States which had formed the so-called Rhine Confederation. If they accepted gratefully that portion of the country which the Emperor was prepared to leave under the title of Prussia, they would be relieved of all dangerous obligations to reorganize internal conditions.

Stein, however, opposed this. Round him grouped themselves others who preferred the stony path. It was on account of his personality that he formed the centre of the new group: he was a man of strong will, ruthlessly pursuing his objective and carrying others with him.

But, more than that, he was the complete antithesis of Prussia and its peculiar political system. Prussia is the East, Stein came from the Rhine. In the one the Junker ruled, in entire submission to those above him but a despot himself to those under him. But Stein was an Imperial Knight, owing allegiance to the Kaiser only, and ruling over hereditary tenants according to the old laws. Frederick's monarchy had grown great through rebellion against the Empire, through the alliance with the French kings. Stein's forefathers had been true servants of the Empire: like them he was a true patriot of the greater Germany.

It might be asked here how this man came into Prussian service. He had, as was the custom of such noblemen, prepared himself for service in the Empire. Why he altered his decision is

unknown. One of his father's friends, also from the West, introduced him into the State Mines Office, where he advanced rapidly. He was employed in the newly acquired western provinces, which could never be entirely assimilated by the eastern Old Prussia and where the tradition was similar to that of his old home. When he came to know the East, he was genuinely disgusted by the Junkers' methods of governing their estates. He compared the domain of a nobleman "who ruins his peasants, instead of improving their position," with the "den of a beast of prey, which lays waste all around it and surrounds itself with the stillness of the grave." He found the individual here "degraded to the level of cattle on an estate": their servitude was denounced by him as "the most oppressive relation of the peasant to the landlord and the least conducive to human happiness, morality, prosperity, and industry." The more valuable, therefore, appeared to him "the whole middle class or *Bürgerstand*, which supplies the State with the most enlightened and the most active individuals."

In view of Stein's attitude towards the whole basis of the Prussian State it was inevitable that he should come into conflict with it. This occurred particularly on the occasion of an offensive intrusion by the military into his affairs, but on other occasions too, where he did not temper his pride; and several times he drew down upon himself the king's rebuke. Nevertheless he rose, owing to his expert knowledge and enormous energy, and before the war, as Minister, he was responsible for the Finances and Economic Affairs of the State. He had also made friends amongst those who were dissatisfied with things as they were. With a few of them, shortly before the catastrophe, he attempted an attack which was to have far-reaching results. In a memorandum he demanded no less than the complete reconstruction of the higher administration. He requested his friends to resign with him should the king not accede to his demands.

The method and style of the memorandum betray the passionate character of the author. However, this is not of importance to us; it is the contents that matter. What did Stein demand? Up to this time the king had governed through his secretaries, "Privy Councillors," who advised him and communicated his decisions to his Ministers. The leading officials themselves rarely saw the king, or each other. They made no regular reports to the king, they had no common discussions, they were nothing more than instruments to execute the will of the king. That is the usual procedure in an absolute monarchy. What Stein wanted was the exact opposite: the creation of a cabinet, reports

made to the king before the assembled Cabinet, voting by its members, and decision by the king. This Cabinet was to replace the former method of government, and he demanded that the Ministers should be "lawfully and publicly appointed" and "entrusted with responsibility." At the same time he insisted that the present Privy Councillors, the confidential advisers of the king, should all be dismissed. He predicted that if his advice were not followed "the State would either dissolve or would lose its independence." That was written in May 1806, and in October came the Prussian defeat at Jena. Rarely has a prophecy been more quickly fulfilled than this one.

There can be no doubt that the reform was intended to curtail the powers of the king. It was also demanded that the Privy Councillors should not attend the Cabinet meetings, so that the king in the choice of his advisers would be limited to his Ministers. If they were unanimous they could always bring pressure to bear upon the king, as illustrated by the method adopted to secure acceptance of the proposed reform. To whom, then, were they to be responsible? The memorandum gave an unusual answer: it invoked "Public Opinion" and alluded to the fact that "the displeasure of the nation" makes the new order of things necessary. The memorandum further stated with obvious regret: "the Prussian State has no Constitution. The supreme power is not divided between the head and the representatives of the nation. . . ." It was therefore essential that there should be a "Constitutional form of Government." "Constitutional," "responsibility," "Public Opinion," "nation"—these were all new-fangled, extraordinary notions for an absolutist régime, and for an agglomeration of territories brought together by inheritance, purchase and conquest, which grew or dwindled according to the fortunes of foreign policy, alternatively comprising possessions in Poland, Westphalia, Franconia, Swabia and even in Switzerland, and which significantly enough had not even a common name: for the official title was "All His Majesty's Provinces and Lands."

Owing to the confusion of war Stein's impetuous warning had not been presented to the king before the catastrophe occurred. The first time the king held a Council after the defeat Stein brought forward his demands. It was the habit of Frederick William III, who at that time occupied the Prussian throne, never to give a direct answer, to yield partial concessions with the mental reservation that they might be withdrawn later, to make no definite decisions and to postpone everything as long as possible. He did this now. He promised the nomination of a

Cabinet, but he reserved the right to retain his Privy Councillors; he finally attempted to amalgamate the two. Stein resisted. At last the anger of the feeble king flared up at the "diabolical" insistence of this Minister who seemed so convinced of his higher right. The king wrote to him that he was "insubordinate, a wilful, obstinate and disobedient servant of the State, who, relying on his genius and talent, was far from seeking the welfare of the State—that he was guided by whims, and acted from passion and from personal animosity and bitterness." Stein left immediately for his estates in the West. The king was driven farther east, finally out of his domain altogether. Another battle was lost. He suffered one humiliation after another. Nearly a year passed, and then Stein was at last recalled, because in that time of dire need it was impossible to do without him. And so he was able once more to fight for his demands and, finally, to carry them through. He was the first leading Prussian Minister worthy of the name. He limited absolutism and introduced the first constitutional features into the Prussian political system. It was the essential first step towards reform of the State.

The task which Stein and his fellow workers achieved is known as the "Reform." It was a process which, in spite of the hope, enthusiasm and inspiration which marked it, produced no real transformation of the Prussian political system. A "revolution from above" is no revolution. It does not destroy the existing order, it does not turn things upside down. But the traces of those events have never disappeared again. Prussia moved a big step forward and began to develop in the direction of a modern state. That it was able to play its leading rôle in Germany was to no small extent the result of the untiring work which was carried on at this time.

Stein was only for a year leading Minister in Prussia. He was then removed by an order of Napoleon, who had hoped to win him over but had then discovered the enemy in him. But that one year was full of untiring effort: a programme was drawn up, which dealt with every aspect of public life, was summarized in decrees and brought nearer to fulfilment. Stein was not alone; even his enormous energy would not have been sufficient. He was surrounded by a circle of friends, adherents and admirers. His best helpers were two officers, Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, neither of them "original products of Prussia," to use Bismarck's words, who found the "native Prussian stock no longer as productive of talent as in the time of Frederick the Great." There were also a few high officials, followers of Kant and admirers of Adam Smith, whose chief concern was the economic develop-

ment of the country; and a few Prussian nobles with progressive ideas, in opposition to their own caste.

The "Reformers" or "Patriots," as they were called, were no Prussians, at least as far as their actions were concerned, and their objective was not Prussia: their intentions were non-Prussian—even anti-Prussian—in foreign and in home policy.

The Reformers were the war party who wished to carry on a "fight of Germanity and humanity" against Napoleon. The Prussians who opposed them wanted to compromise with Napoleon. The Reformers wanted the Reich—the re-birth of Germany: the Prussians were ready to abandon the German South and West to French domination, and would have been content if the Prussian Crown had been recompensed with Polish provinces. "I know only one Fatherland and that is Germany," affirmed Stein. "First and foremost we are Prussians," declared one of his opponents, Ancillon, a Councillor of State. Prussian policy in the past had not infrequently been to play off France against the Emperor and the Reich. The Reformers, although they were in Prussia's service, were prepared to go over the head of Prussia and to make Austria the leading factor in the Empire, so long as Germany might be freed of the French yoke, and of its internal fetters. Indifference towards Prussia could grow into hatred against her if she threatened to become a stumbling-block to such bold plans.

When the king, after Stein had left his service, continued his hesitating, compromising policy, the latter burst out: "Prussia will perish ingloriously and unlamented, and men will praise God that this power which at the outset convulsed Europe by her ambition, unsettled it through her intrigues, and failed to fulfil her obligations to herself and to the community of European states, has finally ceased to be."

The programme was non-Prussian, anti-Prussian, even internally. The Government was based on uncontrolled authority, keeping the nation in a state of pupilage. "*Selon la forme de notre gouvernement, le roi y fait tout*" (according to our form of government, the king must do everything), wrote Frederick the Great to his successor. And so things had remained until Jena. It even devolved upon the king to decide whether, in some small provincial town, the sexton should be permitted to act as night watchman. Education of the people was hampered rather than advanced; as late as 1803 a Government decree stated: "The children of the working classes are to read the Catechism, Bible and Hymn-book; to fear and love God and act accordingly; to honour authority. Whoever attempts to stuff them with

more than this, sets himself a useless and a thankless task."

Such tutelage had resulted in lack of self-reliance and in apathy; according to the Reformers that had been shown by the defeat and the mute resignation which succeeded it. The omnipotent bureaucracy had obeyed the French decrees in the same way as they had formerly obeyed those of the king. The commandants of fortresses had opened their gates to the conqueror without attempting to resist. For this reason everything now was to be based on self-reliance, spontaneity and voluntary action. The shackles were to be taken off, all privileges and class subordination to be abolished. The rule of law and education were to give the people a common bond of consciousness and to train them for self-government. All privileges of the nobles were to be abolished; their preferential treatment in the administration, their special right to own baronial estates, their prerogative to hold commissions in the army, their monopoly of brewing and selling liquor, their exemption from general taxation, their authority to act as judge and police on their own domains. The abolition of hereditary servitude and the liberation of the peasants from the absolutism of the landowners were among the first things to be dealt with. In the towns similar changes were taking place. The monopoly of the Guilds ceased; the government factories were handed over to private persons; bureaucracy was to give place to self-government in the town as in the country. A House of Representatives was to head a system of Town Councils, District Councils and Provincial Diets. The population was to be educated to make use of its new rights. The University of Berlin was founded in this time of dire need. The thoroughgoing legal organization of the State was in keeping with the foregoing: a comprehensive budget, income tax, separation of the judiciary from the administration. Humboldt added a demand for the independence of judges and their secure tenure of office. Until this time each province had had its special minister in Berlin: these provincial ministries were now abolished, the administration was centralized and extended over the entire territory of the State. In complete contradiction to this unification—reminding us of our own times—Stein demanded autonomy for the Polish provinces.

Everything that was planned and achieved in Prussia at that time was done under the pressure of the French enemy, who occupied a large part of the monarchy, who continually increased his demands for reparation, and whose commands to the king had to be carried out—who had to be flattered, and against whom war was being prepared in secret. But a comprehensive plan had

been drawn up—a great reform prepared. The details were not contradictory, they were supplementary. The removal of shackles was not a mere piece of ideology: it was to be the means of making the State and the people stronger and richer; this was all to be accomplished by liberty. If a portion of the king's domains had to be separated from the State and offered for sale, if a general tax was decreed, if the price of estates was driven up because it was now permitted to sell them to the bourgeoisie, there was reason, financial reason, for these measures. The State needed money. The last vestiges of "natural economy" (payment in kind), the monopolies of the landowners on the estates, compulsory labour by the peasants, had, therefore, to give way.

Reform of the army was also part of the plan. The old army had reflected the old State: the officers were Junkers, the soldiers serfs or foreign mercenaries without rights. The new army was to be a nation in arms, every citizen a defender of his country, appointments open to all according to their merits—that was the principle. It was also a practical necessity; for the conscription of mercenaries had become financially and politically impossible. The Reformers, however, who were preparing for war, were anxious to have as many soldiers as possible. Secretly—because Napoleon had reduced the Prussian Army to a minimum—volunteers and conscripts received military training and were sent back to their homes. The small standing army could not contain so many soldiers within its narrow limits. A reserve army was therefore formed—the Landwehr—that again was in accordance with the principle that citizens should act independently in all spheres, animated by a common spirit. The example of the French revolutionary armies had its effect in this connection; also the example of Spain, where Napoleon for the first time encountered stubborn resistance, not from armies but from the inhabitants of the conquered country, who fought a guerilla war on their own account. Some of the Reformers would have been only too glad to renounce the standing army entirely; they mistrusted professional army officers who had been so disgracefully defeated.

Another technical and military reason influenced the matter in the same direction. The army which was shattered at Jena was still the army of Frederick the Great, or, even more truly, the army of his father, the mighty drill-sergeant. Its tactics were those of the rigid line—members of a whole held together by extreme compulsion—its battalions were like batteries composed of human beings, a marching and shooting machine which, with marvellous exactitude, could carry out the most complicated

orders, but was in danger of disintegrating into useless fragments as soon as there was a failure of leadership. The origin of these people could not be disguised. They were mercenaries and serfs pressed into the regiments without inward incentive to fight against the enemies of the country. The standing evil of the Army was desertion. In the last war of the great Frederick, a quarter of a century before Jena, one-third of the army deserted in a campaign which only lasted a few months, and in which not a single battle was fought. The armies of the eighteenth century were all held together by compulsion; the Prussians excelled in that their compulsion was the most severe. The soldiers advanced rigidly and unflinchingly into the firing-line—but they could not be marched when it was dark, unless carefully guarded on all sides; they could only camp in a guarded mass; they had to be provisioned from depôts. Every relaxation of compulsion brought the army to the verge of dissolution. Discipline was only maintained by a system of cruel punishments. Even before the battle of Jena, Scharnhorst, a friend of Stein, who became the creator of the new army, said of the old order: "No soldier has been so pitilessly beaten and has accomplished so little as the Prussian."

Prussian officers of the old tradition had looked down with contempt upon the armies of the French Revolution, because they lacked what one was accustomed in Prussia to regard as military qualities. The crowds of conscripts could not compare with the Prussian professional soldiers as regards precision o movement, but they felt themselves citizens and they went into the campaigns of the young Republic to the inspiring air of the "Marseillaise." They believed too, at that time, that they were carrying with them a message of salvation, and the effects of this faith were enduring. They were not dependent upon accumulated supplies but lived by requisitioning from the country which they conquered. They were not sections of a battery; each individual was a rifleman who carried on the fight on his own initiative.

This sharp contrast between the Prussian "*Linear*" and the French "*Tirailleur*" tactics has been questioned by military experts, but the military Reformers took that view and acted upon it. The plan to dare once more to take up arms against Napoleon necessitated the utmost exploitation of all forces; the calling up of all men capable of bearing arms and infusing into them the spirit of patriotism. Serfs only had been liable for military service hitherto. It had not been possible to free the peasantry because it was feared that freedom to move from one place to another would depopulate the recruiting districts.

Military service was looked down upon, in fact it was used as an additional punishment for criminals. Now the State demanded universal military service, even from the well-to-do and educated classes. A closer relationship between the citizens and their State was to be established—a principle quite in opposition to those of the Fredericks. As voluntary obedience and voluntary courage were demanded, the system of corporal punishment had to cease. The Reformers proclaimed the "*Freiheit der Ruecken*" (Freedom of the backs). This was perhaps the most far-reaching change which took place in old Prussia. If the peasant, as a soldier, was to become a free man, he could no longer remain a serf on the nobleman's estate; thus each change necessitated other changes.

The same trend went through both political and military Reform: self-confidence and reliance were to be awakened. The individual was to be linked with the community. Education was to be extended, rights accorded, liberties granted, duties imposed —all this was intended to bridge the gulf between the authorities and the subject, for it was considered that this gulf had contributed to the downfall of the State. The ideals of antiquity, the model set by England, the example of the French Revolution, the memory of the great days of the Empire: all these played their part in the endeavour to awaken and unite the latent forces of the people for a new war.

Napoleon's downfall was to bring about the unification of Germany: the goal of the Prussian Reformers was "a Constitution for Germany founded on Unity, Strength and Nationality." Prussia was to liberate Germany and then to be absorbed into Germany. People cared even less for the continuance of the South German dynasties which were allied with the French oppressor. In a "Catechism for German Soldiers" the poet, Ernst Moritz Arndt, Stein's literary collaborator, announced: "*Das ist teutsche Soldatenehre, dass der Soldat fühle: er war ein teutscher Mensch, ehe er von teutschen Königen und Fürsten wusste.*" "It must be the Germanic soldier's pride to have known himself a German before he ever heard of German kings and princes."

In spite of the fact that everybody made preparations for a national war the cosmopolitan idea had never entirely disappeared. To be only German appeared to these fighters for liberty to be un-German. Even Stein, who was often filled with wild hatred of the French, dreamed of a European League of States which was to succeed the French hegemony. In one of his ministerial decrees it was laid down that each was to exercise his trade or profession "for the good of the community to which he, as a citizen of the State and of the World, belonged." This was not

felt to be incompatible. It was in harmony with the cosmopolitan thought of the philosophers of the eighteenth century, and the universalism of the mediæval Empire.

On the other hand, in this rapidly growing German nationalism there developed racial ideas such as have become common in our time. There was a certain "*Deutschtuemelei*" (Teutomania) as it was called. Circles were formed in which the memory of the old Germans was sentimentally fostered; imported words were eliminated from the language; Western education (and soon education in general) was scorned. It was not sufficient to be German, one wanted to be Germanic, because the old word sounded more worthy of veneration. We have already seen that curious word in Arndt's address to the soldiers, as he also occasionally inclined to such tendencies. Secret societies like the "*Tugendbund*," "League of Virtue," were formed. Here manners were rough and radical, great oaths were taken to track down traitors and to terrorize the apathetic. A circle of young men gathered in Berlin around the grotesquely brilliant Frederick Ludwig Jahn, who considered that the basis of all liberty lay in the development of the muscles, and who was therefore known as "*Turnvater*" ("Father of Gymnastics"). The spirit here was also democratic, but not liberal and not cosmopolitan. Teutonic *List* (cunning) was eulogized in the place of Truth, there was a tendency to appeal to compulsion rather than to enlightenment and persuasion. Even in the anti-Semitic question which so often is the acid test, opinions were divided. The *Teutschen*, completely hostile to strangers, were anti-Semitic; the Reform, on the other hand, afforded the Jews certain rights, although not yet complete emancipation: they were to be assimilated by instruction and education. What was even more important in those days was that they were accepted in the army; many of them were commissioned on the battlefield. The Teutomania was not important and it disappeared in the general tendency of the time, which was definitely liberal.

It has often been contested whether or not Stein was really a Liberal, and the point has not yet been settled. The Liberal German historians at the end of the last century claimed him as their own, though with reservations. Ruggiero, the historian of European Liberalism, declared him, without more ado, to be a Liberal. Later German biographers, on the other hand, rank him among the Conservatives and adherents of feudalism.

Stein was a descendant of feudalism, an aristocrat by birth and breeding and that, as well as his superior intellect, may have enabled him to consort, as an equal among equals, with the great

ones of the earth—with the King of Prussia as with the Emperor of Russia. There are in his life many manifestations of pride towards the mighty, but never towards the lowly and, more important still, wherever he came across feudal institutions he always opposed them—endeavoured to loosen them, to release their hold—never to preserve or strengthen them. I have tried to show, by reference to Humboldt's theories, that feudalism, where maintained in its pure form, is not necessarily wholly opposed to liberty. But this did not apply to Prussia, where the military kingship and a warlike absolutism had been imposed upon feudalism and had transformed it into a rigid despotism. It was this brand of feudalism which met a dangerous enemy in Stein.

Stein has also been counted among the Romanticists. It may be asked whether it is possible to draw a line of demarcation here. Their desire to revive mediæval rights was prompted by the wish to extend, or to re-establish liberty. What separated him principally and definitely from the Romanticists was that their misty eyes wandered among the transcendental and mediæval, whilst his unwavering gaze was turned towards reason, rationality and the future.

Stein was certainly a product of tradition, and he endeavoured to build on the past wherever possible. But small indeed was the possibility, because absolutism had stamped out the greater part of the past. He wished everywhere to arouse, revive, stimulate the natural forces, which he hoped were only latent; to this end he endeavoured to break the shackles of obedience, dependence, subjection—to give to the whole intensity, interest and activity, and then to let human nature, in which he believed, do the rest. He hoped, in addition, by educating the lower and upper classes, to train men to understand the value of fellowship and solidarity. This all appears to me to be liberal, and certainly Stein considered himself a Liberal. A few months after his removal from office, looking back upon his time as Minister, he wrote to Gneisenau: "The improvement in the state of the lower classes and the liberal ideas concerning the Constitution, which have been started, will remain and develop." This may be considered Utopian, but it is a Liberal Utopianism. Old and disappointed by the progress of German affairs, he still said: "One must not lose courage but await everything from the forces of progress which dwell in the human spirit." Such confident optimism, such faithful trust in the good in human nature—an important feature of Liberalism—can alone inspire the courage to grant liberty to mankind.

If Stein is considered a Conservative it must be asked what that word means with regard to his time and place. He respected tradition certainly—his own tradition of Western Germany. But he was transplanted to the Prussian service, and when the western provinces of Prussia were lost he was cast adrift in the Old Prussia east of the Elbe. That was the sphere of his activities as statesman. Everything he did there was in direct opposition and calculated to destroy the past and the present which he found there. Reichsfreiherr vom Stein was certainly an aristocrat. But the Prussian Junkers were not aristocrats and had never been considered as such in the Empire: they possessed none of the characteristics which commonly denoted nobility—with the exception of one, bravery in the field—and even in this they had failed completely at Jena. Stein's verdict was: "The Prussian nobility is for the most part an encumbrance to the nation, for the greater part poor and hungry for salaries, offices, privileges and advantages of every kind." He found the Junkers "arrogant, uneducated, crude," and would have preferred to have abolished them entirely. "The predominance of one class over its fellow citizens is a disadvantage—a disturbance in the social order—and should be abolished." He genuinely scorned the Prussian "Half-Nobility": "What can one expect from the inhabitants of these sandy steppes, from these cunning, heartless, wooden, half-educated creatures, who are only fit to be corporals and pay-clerks," he wrote to a lady of his acquaintance.

At home Stein might be considered conservative: to the east of the Elbe he was hated by the privileged classes as a revolutionary. They did not want the reforms and did not fail to make their wishes known by emphatic complaints and active opposition. More than anything else they feared the liberation of the peasants, which took place in October 1807 and put an end to their absolute rule on the estates. "I would rather have three battles of Auerstadt than one October edict," exclaimed one of the Junkers. When Stein said: "the will of free men is the unshakable support of every state," he was answered by a protest of the Junkers east of the Elbe that: "the intoxicating feeling of grandeur at having become a direct citizen of the State, outrages moral order." The Junkers and the bureaucracy together tried in several places to suppress the hated edict or to prevent its execution. A flood of memoranda broke over the king; he was entreated to leave the Junkers undisturbed as lords of their estates.

Their best brain was von der Marwitz (1777–1837), a Brandenburg country squire, an excellent stylist, exceptionally keen and

aggressive, an able representative of their own tenacious and egotistical caste. In his "Last Appeal" for his district he asked the king with indignation if "our old and dignified Brandenburg-Prussia is to become a newfangled Jew State?" It was he who coined the classic phrase that "Too much learning kills the character," and who warned against the "fallacy that talent is more valuable than birth." At the same time his opinion of his colleagues, the Junkers, differed little from Stein's: he called them "miserable creatures," who "showed neither shame nor honour and therefore deserved what was coming to them." Marwitz fiercely summed up his opinion of the Reformers in these words: "These were the traitors and Stein was their chief. It was he who began the revolutionizing of the Fatherland, the war of the have-nots against property, of industry against agriculture, of the mobile against stability, of crass materialism against God's established order, of (illusory) gain against Right, of the Present against the Past and the Future, of the individual against the family, of speculators and counting-desks against fields and trades, of Science and puffed-up talent against Virtue and Honourable Character."

Stein's speech on another occasion sounds like the confirmation and answer: "Only by stirring up and fermenting the minds of the people can one bring about the development of all their moral and physical forces."

It has been suspected that Stein's Junker opponents played into the hands of the French Police to overthrow him, and this suspicion has never been dispelled. Napoleon called him a Jacobin, the Junkers agreed; they rejoiced when, in 1808, by a decree of the Emperor, he was forced to resign. One of them, General von Yorck, wrote: "One viper's head has been crushed —the rest of the brood will perish in its own poison. . . ."

But things did not happen as Yorck wished. With the help of Stein's friends who remained in office, and of the Chancellor of State, Hardenberg, the new leading minister, the work of reform continued in the same direction, although not with the moral impetuosity of Stein. Hardenberg, brilliant and elegant, was an unusual figure for Prussia—he, too, was not a Prussian. He was by nature a *routinier*, with a few modern economic principles—and otherwise without principle: when he did work for liberty it was because the spirit of the time demanded it, and not because he believed in the invigorating force of liberty. Stein continued to influence the course of events: plans and projects were submitted to the great emigrant for his approbation.

When fate turned against Napoleon in Russia in 1812, Stein

immediately intervened in Prussian policy, this time with a revolutionary act: he stirred up rebellion in the province of East Prussia, which was separated by the French army from Berlin and was cut off from the king. It was a rebellion against the king, even if it was in his interest. This was also a "revolution from above" but without any legal authority. Only a few enthusiastic adherents of Stein participated wholeheartedly, the greater part hesitated—they were not bold enough to take a course demanded by circumstances, and of which they themselves approved, unless it was authorized from above.

That was at the beginning of 1813. The Prussian Reform merged into the European rebellion against Napoleon, which did not take place in the form of a popular rising, as the Reformers had sometimes expected, but through a coalition of monarchs. The King of Prussia, after much doubt and hesitation, called his subjects to the colours in conformity with the idea of national defence. It was left to private initiative, in cooperation with the administrative officials, to call up the militia, the so-called Landwehr. In the District (*Kreis*) Committees, which had been formed for this purpose, the peasants too had their representatives—the first political right which they exercised in all provinces.

The Landwehr had its share in the battles of 1813, 1814, and 1815, and in the final victory over Napoleon. But what was its share? That is contested, as is every aspect of the changes brought about by the Reform in Prussia. It has even been doubted whether the Landwehr was based on a new principle. Was it really new and determined by the revolutionary example of France—or was it founded upon ancient Prussian law? This is how Scharnhorst, creator of the Landwehr, had represented it to the king. But did he not try to persuade the weak-willed monarch to this opinion in order to render the radical innovation palatable? Did the citizens and peasantry seize their weapons, spurred on by the prospect of internal liberty and a liberal Constitution? Or did they come because the king commanded it, and because their country was oppressed by the enemy? Did they win the victory? Or was it merely won by the old officers' corps, anxious to wipe out the shame of its earlier defeat and to prove its wonted military qualities? The old army went to pieces after Jena: on June 16th, 1815, at Ligny, the new army was beaten, but two days later this army defeated the enemy at Waterloo. But had not Frederick the Great, without Landwehr, without general mobilization and without civil liberty, suffered far worse defeats and been victorious in spite of them? Was it not the

Landwehr which gave way? Was it not the aristocratic officers of the old army who saved the day?

These were the questions which were to occupy the minds of the Prussian politicians for some time to come. Would the State be safer and more powerful if founded on compulsion or on freedom? In the war of liberation and revenge (1813–15), revolutionaries and reactionaries had been united; but which principle was responsible for the common success? This question is of more than merely "historical" importance. History in the years that followed depended largely on the answer given.

Writing in the spirit of his time, as a Nationalist and a Liberal, Stein's admirable biographer, Max Lehmann, claimed at the beginning of the twentieth century that the legitimist European dynasties had remained unsuccessful in their struggle against the leader of united France, "as long as they were restricted to the traditional methods of eighteenth century statecraft," and it was "only when they obtained the help of the nations that the scales became weighted in their favour. The Spanish Juntas, the Russian peasants and the new Prussian army, built up on a magnificent application of the principle of general military service . . . all these it was who brought victory to the colours of the dynasties."

To me this interpretation seems a perfect example of a historical philosophy superimposed upon facts. A second answer, deduced from the facts, and therefore in greater harmony with them, is given by Erich Marcks, an historian of more conservative views. He speaks of "the two sources of the Prussian rebirth . . . the heritage of Frederick the Great . . . and the spirit of the times." He continues: "The Reform remained in the clouds. It could hardly have been any different; we must not imagine that the Prussia of 1807–1813 was deeply stirred by the new spirit. . . . It was the Reformers who evoked the national rising of 1813, but the battles were fought by old Prussia . . . and not by the spirit of the Reform." I think we may subscribe to this, with the reservation that the Prussian heritage came, not from Frederick "the Great," but from his father, the organizer and "drillmaster" and originator of the true Prussian spirit. It is his spirit which is still triumphing to-day, at the approach of the middle of the twentieth century, and still is far from being spent.

For had it been any different, and had the liberal historians been correct in their view, then the work of the Reformers would have transformed Prussia.

The Reformers had been impatient to change the despotic State into a free State. What has remained of their multifarious

activities? What was realized of all that they had hoped?

National enthusiasm had contributed to leading the armies of the allies to Paris, but this enthusiasm was not sufficient to unite Germany. Liberal patriots, returning from the battlefield, found the princes still upon their thrones. A conference of diplomats, the Vienna Congress, which restored order in Europe after so gigantic an upheaval, left some thirty independent states in existence in Germany. The old Reich was not set up again; its place was taken by a loose Confederation, the instrument of which—a Council of envoys—was in permanent session in Frankfurt. One basic political principle was proclaimed in Vienna—the old Legitimist one, which had been valid before the Revolution: the sovereignty of princes as the source of all powers.

The various German tribes continued their separate existence under the insecure roof of the Confederation.

The South German States gave themselves Constitutions. The old system of liberties had not been uprooted in imitation of French absolutism: old tradition mingled with the new régime of centralist bureaucracy and the levelling Codes of Laws. Parliaments grew up in Bavaria, Würtemberg and Baden, and, among the central German States, in Hesse, Nassau, Sachsen-Weimar and several smaller ones.

Prussia remained an absolute monarchy. More than once the king solemnly promised a Constitution. He did not keep his word. Only Provincial Diets with limited powers were created. Municipal administration remained as a preliminary to civic self-government. Universal military service and the Landwehr also remained. The liberation of the peasants could not be repealed, although many more of them lost their lands than obtained them as free possessions. An intermediate class of farmers grew up, insignificant in numbers: the mass of the peasants gradually deteriorated into proletarian farm labourers; their freedom consisted in liberty to run away from their miserable existence. In the following century millions of them availed themselves of this privilege and populated the growing towns in the German West as well as a large part of America. The autocratic rule of the Junkers on their estates continued, with some modifications and with gradually changing laws, as it has remained until to-day.

Much that was promised in moments of stress, such as the Constitution, for instance, was not carried out, but still there was a greater lack of new men than of new institutions. The race of men was not there which could have vitalized the new institutions and made use of Kant's political teachings, of Hum-

boldt's programme, of Stein's inspiring example, of the laws which he forced upon the king. Those very institutions, against which the Reformers had to fight every inch, ultimately benefited by the Reform: the throne was strengthened, bureaucracy was more efficient and confident than before: the army had won back its self-confidence, and was strengthened by the new blood which now came to it. Among the Junkers the inefficient were forced to sell their estates, whilst the remainder became richer than they had ever been before, and effort and persistency gained them a firmer foothold in the State once more. And they eagerly continued to label the Reformers "foreigners," "adventurers" and "Jacobins." But as economic life gradually became free there grew up a middle class, which had formerly been lacking.

For a few years after the war the National and Liberal movements still lived on in literature. In newspapers and pamphlets, all aspects of German union and liberty, were discussed and made public. The "*allgemeine Burschenschaft*" (a students' union), in which these political ideals were glorified, grew up in the universities. Public debates were no longer welcome to the newly established governments; the example of the French revolution was still a terrifying one. In some of the smaller circles disappointment brought revolutionary feeling, bitterness and anger. At a "*Burschenschaft*" gathering on the Wartburg excited students threw the detested symbols of bureaucracy and militarism—a bag wig, a corporal's cane, and the corset of a lieutenant of the Guard—on to a bonfire. This gave the reactionaries their opportunity: the harmless act was declared to be high treason and a threat to the security of the State. When a fanatical student named Sand assaulted and killed a much-hated reactionary writer, reputed to be a Tsarist agent, there began, under the leadership of the Austrian Chancellor Metternich, a persecution of the "demagogues" throughout Germany. The decision to suppress this political movement was made by the envoys at Karlsbad in Bohemia, and it became known as the "Karlsbad Resolutions."

No country was more zealous in its persecutions than Prussia. The Prussian Minister of Police stigmatized the goal of liberal patriots thus: "To kill real patriotism in order to indulge in love for the one and indivisable Germany, and to cause the various German States to disappear in the chaos." At this time the censor forbade the use of the word "Protestant," the word "Evangelical" was to be used instead—there was to be no question of protest of any kind in Prussia. It was forbidden to reprint Fichte's "Addresses to the German Nation," with which he had

inflamed the student youth of Berlin to resist Napoleon, because his work was addressed "simply to Germans." The patriots who had promoted the Prussian War of Liberation fared badly. Ernst Moritz Arndt lost his professorship; the patriotic Rhinelander Goerres was forced to flee to France; "*Turnvater* Jahn" was thrown into prison. Professors, lawyers, book-sellers, printers, were harassed by the police. The philosopher, Hegel, who was always on the side of the Prussian State authority, denounced "the vanity of the know-alls."

Metternich's programme became a model: "not to allow oneself to be forced to advance or to retreat one step from the established and recognized order of things, whether it be of older or more recent origin." This was the condition of which Heinrich Heine said: "A leaden and truly German lethargy weighed upon the people and, as it were, a brutal calm prevailed throughout Teutonia."

CHAPTER II

THE STRUGGLE FOR AND AGAINST A PARLIAMENT, 1819–63

THE PRINCIPLE OF OLD PRUSSIAN absolutism consisted in keeping the subjects as far removed from government and its duties as possible.

Stein and his friends—the men who reformed Prussia after the defeat of Jena—had set themselves to do exactly the opposite: to stir up the people and bring them to a state of ferment, so that national forces might be unloosed. The movement which they kindled was directed against the national enemy. This movement was joined by the old, aristocratic Officers' Corps, led by generals, both conservative and Reformers, and advanced across the Rhine until it reached Paris. Stein, Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, together with Yorck and Marwitz—who hated the Reformers—had triumphed over the tyrant Napoleon.

Was the growth of national power linked with the prospect of internal liberty? This question has over and over again influenced German decisions. The answer has varied according to political views and circumstances. It was, for instance, bitterly discussed in the first Prussian Parliament, the United Diet, thirty-two years after the battle of Waterloo. A young deputy, born in the year of Napoleon's defeat, the country gentleman Otto von Bismarck-Schoenhausen, declared angrily that he felt himself "forced to contradict the view which had been voiced inside and also outside the Chamber whenever demands for a Constitution were made, the view that other motives prompted the national movement of 1813 than the disgrace that foreigners commanded in our land. In my opinion such statements do ill service to our national honour. . . ."

When cries of dissent interrupted the reactionary gentleman and an old village mayor, a peasant representative who himself had been in the fight, informed Bismarck that according to his memory matters had been very different, Bismarck, who, apparently indifferent to the displeasure of the Chamber, had been turning over the pages of a newspaper, concluded: "I have always believed that the servitude against which we then fought existed abroad. But I have just been informed that it existed at home, and I am not very grateful for this explanation."

The very vivacity with which this problem was presented on the occasion of Bismarck's first parliamentary appearance showed that it was an enduring one—a problem which did not belong to the past alone.

Scarcely were the combined endeavours of the War of Liberation ended, than Liberty and Autocracy, the two hostile camps which had united, dissolved partnership and went their separate ways. During the years of preparation and hope, Stein had sometimes believed that in his German plans he would be able to overcome the difficulty of Prussia—that this enormous obstruction to national and to liberal development would disappear, leaving the path free for a reorganization of the Empire. But as soon as things began to crystallize again after the war, it was seen that the old order, though changed, was still intact. The last of the Reformers had to withdraw from the Government when, in 1819, the reactionaries, as a result of the "Carlsbad Resolutions," entered into complete control. Prussia went back to its old methods, which were to reserve the direction of all public affairs to the authorities and to relegate its subjects—if necessary with severity—to their own private sphere. When some Rhenish towns petitioned the king to introduce the promised people's representation, they were answered: "He who dares to remind the sovereign of the promise, which he gave freely and of his own will, wantonly casts doubts on the inviolability of his word and presumes to advise him with regard to the appropriate moment. . . ." The great Stein himself, who was indignant over this "gigantic step backwards" in that Prussia allowed itself to be put to shame by the South German States, warned in vain: "It is advisable to direct the flame before its powers become destructive." When in 1831, shortly before his death, he again warningly recalled the promise to create "*Reichsstaende*," a national representative body, he was denounced at the Court as a demagogue, and the petition which he had signed was rejected with marks of royal disfavour.

When we look back on the progressive institutions which the turbulent period of reform had left in Prussia, we do not find very much to requite the enormous exertions of the Reformers. The independent and responsible Cabinet, for which Stein risked his first personal revolt, remained, but the Ministers who formed it were now reactionaries. Moreover, a group of adjutants and courtiers soon formed a governing "Camarilla" which gained great power. *Landtage* (Diets) were set up in the provinces, and *Kreistage* (District Councils) in the districts, and representatives of ownsfolk and peasantry now took part in them. But the real

power in them was legally assured to the big estate owners. Nine hundred and seventy-nine urban representatives and nine hundred and seventy-five peasants were in the district Councils, as against 10,000 landowners. Moreover, all government matters were excluded from their deliberations—their sphere of action was greatly restricted. There remained, of course, the liberation of the peasants. Slavery—for it was nothing else—could not again be introduced, but the Junkers had retained the administrative and legal supremacy in their manorial districts. Stein was forced to retire too soon and so they remained, in effect, sovereign rulers. The laws concerning municipal reform also brought disappointment: state supervision was carried to extremes by the Central Government and municipal politicians were frequently narrow and petty in their attitude. But in spite of this some form of civil self-government developed.

The most important achievement of the reform, which became an integral part of the Prussian State for half a century, was the reorganization of the army. The Junkers would have been only too willing to put the clock back in military as in other matters, and would have liked—especially here in their own particular sphere—to have liquidated the work of the Reformers. But General von Boyen, one of the Reformers, the successor of Scharnhorst who had been killed in 1813, had acted quickly and, in the first flush of victory in Paris, had obtained the king's signature to the Army Bill, which secured the military changes. The privileges of the aristocracy with regard to army commissions were not reintroduced, and an examination to show a certain minimum standard of education was now necessary for an army career. This measure was very unpopular with the landed gentry, whose sons did not care for learning. Compulsory military service remained, the sons of all classes—aristocrats, citizens, peasants—had to enlist and marched shoulder to shoulder. The one modification created here was again a privilege of education and not of class: whereas all other soldiers served two or three years—the term varied according to the branch of the service and was changed from time to time—those who had attained a certain standard of education were only required to serve for one year. These were also eligible for the commissions in the *Landwehr*. According to the Army Act the *Landwehr* formed half of the army. The standing army "of the line" and the Guards had their corresponding formations in this civic army reserve, so that in the event of mobilization, a regiment of the line and a regiment of the *Landwehr* together formed a brigade. The *Landwehr* was composed of soldiers discharged from the standing army,

who had returned to their civil occupations. The Officers' Corps was supplemented by election from the former single-year service men who had qualified for commission during their year with the colours. In addition, former non-commissioned officers who had proved particularly efficient and had respected positions in civil life were eligible to become *Landwehr* officers.

Boyen, an idealist and a Liberal, believed that by basing the leadership in the army on education and by turning half of it into a body of uniformed citizens, he would be able to strengthen the country's defence and at the same time break down, once and for all, the traditional preponderance of professional soldiers in Prussia. But the new army system was not unanimously welcomed even by the citizens. The old army had not been very popular. It had been too much feared to attract the sons of the middle class, and many even opposed the new burden. A more intellectual reason for disapproval was given by scholars when, for instance, the Senate of Breslau University, in a memorandum to the king, warned that universal military service was "no less likely to ruin the country than to save it." With a clearness of vision that does honour to the Breslau professors, it was predicted: "General conscription, by transforming the citizens into soldiers and not the soldiers into citizens, gives the authorities a power such as they have never hitherto possessed." Even Gneisenau said gloomily that Scharnhorst had been mistaken: he had wanted to turn soldiers into citizens, but had turned the citizens into soldiers.

But even stronger than the criticism to which the reformed army organization was subjected from the Liberal side, was the antagonism which it aroused in the Conservatives. The king's brother-in-law, the Duke of Mecklenburg, Commander of the Guard, made himself the mouthpiece of the Junkers' aversion to putting this instrument of power into the people's hands when he argued: "The *Landwehr* officers have no *point d'honneur*": he would rather have a smaller army than have to endure this foreign body in the Prussian organism: in his opinion the numerous *Landwehr* regiments "would give umbrage abroad." The Minister of Police, Prince Wittgenstein, was still more to the point: "To put a nation under arms is to facilitate and organize resistance"; Marwitz complained that "it really looked as if the Minister of War, Boyen, had wished to form a special army for the event of a revolution, an army of which the king knew little and which was not under his control." Marwitz's fears, and the corresponding hopes that were entertained by some of the Liberals, who thought that the *Landwehr* would become the people's weapon

against the monarchist autocracy, were never realized. In spite of this it remained a thorn in the side of the Royalists, and a treasured achievement for the Democrats. The most consistent in his opposition to the *Landwehr*—and he persisted in it for a whole generation—was Prince Wilhelm, later king and first emperor. We shall see presently how this struggle gave rise to the great constitutional conflict. For the moment, however, the army remained as it was, the one vital part of the reform which was not interfered with. For it was the army which had wrested victory from Napoleon.

Prussia was, even in its territory, a different Prussia from pre-war times. The State had moved westwards: at the partition the Czar had retained the greater part of the extensive Polish provinces with their capital of Warsaw. Frederick William had received compensation on either side of the Rhine: whereas the kingdom had formerly possessed only insignificant scattered territories in the west, it had now become heir to those possessions of Napoleon which he, in his time, had acquired from the spiritual princes. The real old Prussians would have much preferred to have retained the Polish territories, which, socially and economically so closely resembled those of East Elbia, and which were consequently more easily brought under a common administration. After the Vienna Congress it was said that the Rhineland was a Greek gift, destined to break up the old Prussian totality; but this was not borne out by later events. Prussia's new situation, however, was complicated enough for the time being: the new western part of the country, which in size practically equalled the East Elbian from which it was divided by Hanover with its link to the English Crown, was very unlike the eastern part in character. The West was aristocratic and democratic, the estates were of medium size, industry was growing rapidly, the population was Catholic, educated, vivacious, versatile, liberal: in every way the antithesis of East Elbia.

Owing to its western acquisitions Prussia was now far more closely connected with the fate of Germany than had hitherto been the case. East Prussia, one of the original provinces, and the one to which the king's crown was attached, did not constitutionally belong to the German Empire. Up till now it had been possible to make plans among the East Elbians to barter the small and unwanted western provinces, and to establish Prussia as a great power on the Baltic, unconcerned with Germany and independent of Empire or Confederation. Such plans, however, could now no longer be discussed. The Rhineland bound the monarchy to Germany and, far more closely than

the Confederation, a common consciousness now unified the German peoples.

The Federal Constitution, which since 1815 had formed the political link between the German States, had failed to achieve what the Reformers and other patriots had hoped: "A Constitution founded on unity, strength and nationality." But after the war, the facts of political reality reasserted themselves and thwarted their hopes. Chief amongst these was the House of Habsburg, because the Austrian centre of gravity lay in the domination of Slavs, Latins and Magyars, whom it was impossible to absorb into any German Empire. Nevertheless, the basic principles of unity and Liberalism found a promising expression in a new federal treaty; according to which each federal state was to have a constitution, whose character was left purposely vague. Freedom to move from place to place and the free acquisition of property was now to be possible to all. There was to be no discrimination between Christian religions. The Jews were promised civic rights. Regulations concerning military service, shipping, trade and transport were to have a uniform basis. The technical possibilities were great enough, but they were never utilized, for in actual practice the egoism of the individual States proved a stumbling-block. We have already seen what came of the decision about the Constitutions, which were apparently to accord the same rights to all the people of the Confederation. The south-western States had drawn up Constitutions which were more representative, on the pattern of the French Royal Charters. Austria and Prussia and other North-German States had not carried out the terms and the Confederation did not urge them to do so; that would have been quite impossible in view of the actual distribution of power and of will.

The only decree of the Federal Constitution which was carried out by all was that concerning uniform regulations for the freedom of the Press, and this regulation became the opposite of what it was meant to be. In the enthusiasm of the War of Liberation, freedom of the Press was regarded as the shield of liberty. But the new regulations, demanded for the uniform protection of the Press, only led to uniform suppression. Modifications were only to be found in the south-western States, whose Press laws were much less severe. In addition to the permanent Conference of envoys, which represented the Federal Diet in Frankfurt, there now grew up a special permanent body of police, who exchanged information and cast a net of vigilance over Germany. This centre for the persecution of the "demagogues," i.e. the Liberal and National writers—whether revolutionary or not—was the most

important of the unified institutions created by the German States.

As opposed to this poor result, at once reactionary and pitiful, there grew up a national feeling, representative at least of the educated classes if not of the people as a whole, such as had not existed before the great period of revolution and war. Not that cosmopolitan ideals and objectives were forgotten—on occasion there were demonstrations in favour of "The United Free States of Germany and Europe"—but they had had a national example in France and, during the War of Liberation, they had experienced the results of national enthusiasm: that had left a deep impression. Were the desires which filled the minds of that time more national or more liberal? That can scarcely be decided. They were too closely intertwined and fused, and it was not really possible anywhere to discriminate between them. There was faith in the liberating and redeeming powers of the Constitution, of representation of the people, which—so it seemed at that time—had only been refused by the petty princes from base motives of territorial and dynastic egoism and from greed and love of power. In times of oppression and agitation there is always some system which seems calculated to solve all problems—an elixir which can heal all political and social ills: at this time it was parliamentary government. It was the heartfelt desire of all and many dedicated their lives to the hope of achieving it.

When I say that "all" desired it, this statement must not be over-estimated: I refer to the circles in which these ideas were alive. The German people on the whole were not politically conscious, and were not yet to awaken for a long, a very long, time to come. They were unaccustomed to civic rights and duties, the exercise of which was demanded by all the moderate reformers as the preliminary step. And so far, no revolution, no civil war, had stirred up the feelings and roused the lower against the upper classes. Since the Peasant Wars, three hundred years before, all movements had originated from the throne. It is impossible to say how deep was the liberal and nationalist longing, and how general it had become, but here again there was a difference between the south and west and the north-east. In the north-east the mass of the people were still apathetic and the complete re-establishment of the Junker domination had thrust them back into their apathy, even where they had begun to awaken. It was different in West Prussia, in the towns of the Rhineland, where the Napoleonic code of laws had completed social liberation, but where every word of protest was held back from fear of the "Corporal's stick." And things were different

again in the three southern States where there were chambers in which elected representatives of the people might speak, although their speeches were often forbidden to be published. It was from here, and especially from Baden, in the south-west corner of Germany, near to France and to Switzerland, that presently the most popular ideas were to emanate.

The historic period 1819–63, which we are reviewing in this chapter, extends from the time when, after the War of Liberation, efforts at reform were abandoned, until the moment when Bismarck paralysed the Prussian Parliament, established a dictatorship and started a new series of wars.

This period, which comprises nearly half a century, falls into two parts—the time previous to the rising of 1848, which began in March—and for which reason the first period is known as "*Vormärz*"(pre-March)—and the time after 1848 during which the Prussian Crown provided itself with a Parliament only to quarrel with it later.

The Reform had changed Prussia. It had, in particular, modified Prussia's social structure. At the end, as at the beginning, however, autocratic rule persisted. This was the same in the period with which we shall now be concerned. There were many changes, especially social changes, but at the end we again find autocracy firmly established. And—to anticipate—it was the same once more with the third period which began with Bismarck's dictatorship and ended in 1933.

If we speak mainly of Prussia it is because the force which always reasserted itself was a Prussian force. The rest of Germany had no individual history in the long run: it was drawn into the fate of Prussia. It is true that inspiration came from the west and south, because here Germany was nearer and more accessible to the western world, and that the Reformers, Stein, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, had all come to the north from western and southern Germany. But national decisions were made in the north, where, as far back as the eighteenth century, power had already been concentrated—this power, which was shaken at the battle of Jena in 1806, weakened in 1848, which disappeared altogether for a moment in 1918, but which always recreated itself again. In the period before us German decisions are Prussian decisions. Impulse and movement come from the south and west, but are dependent upon Prussia's participation. If Prussia refuses to take part, the most vital movement comes to nothing; the most decisive events are dependent upon Prussia's every move. In politics, as in other spheres, the heavier body determines the general course.

After 1819 Germany was exhausted by her efforts and disappointments; in 1830 the symptoms of preparation for the coming storm began to manifest themselves. In the minds of the people the period from 1815 to 1848 appeared as one whole. A revolutionary song, sung in the year of storm 1848, which was called "*Das Heckerlied*" after the Democrat Hecker, ran:

"*Dreiunddreissig Jahre,*
Dreiunddreissig Jahre
Währt die Knechtschaft schon. . . ."

(*For three and thirty years,*
For three and thirty years
Has bondage found no end.)

And truly it seems to us to-day as if the years from 1815 to 1848 formed a single period of police oppression, of "brutal calm, a leaden and truly German lethargy," as Heinrich Heine said. This is, of course, only one aspect of the situation; seen from the other side—from the side of the princes, it was thirty-three years of peace, of the prevention of change within and without, but it was also a time of trembling anxiety lest something should stir—lest the revolution should find a repetition on this side of the Rhine.

In spite of the rigidity of the framework these years were not devoid of events—not of political, and certainly not of economic and social events. Elsewhere in Europe this period was filled with revolutionary conspiracies, movements, risings, civil wars, all more or less liberal and national in character, first in Spain, then in Italy and Greece. Then, in 1830, another impulse came from France, where the bourgeoisie completed its victory, drove out the feudal Bourbons, and replaced them by the bourgeois king, Louis Philippe. This time Switzerland, Italy, Poland and Belgium followed suit. The excitement even spread to Germany. Here again a double event took place, just as in 1817–19 there had been the Wartburg Festival of the Students' Association and the murder by the student Sand. This time, 1832–3, it was a solemn meeting of Liberals and Democrats at Schloss Hambach in the Palatinate, the "Hambach Festival," at which the phrase: "United Free States of Germany and Europe" was adopted; and the attack by conspirators upon the Frankfurt police headquarters, from whence it was intended to start the revolution in the West and South. The result was a repetition of the reaction

of 1819: again a central investigation committee was set up under the Confederation and a new wave of persecution swept over Germany.

However, something more was effected than mere demonstrations. The people of Brunswick, suffering at that time under a tyrannical and depraved prince, drove him out and called in his brother as successor. The same thing happened in the electorate of Hesse, this time in favour of the heir apparent, who was scarcely an improvement on his predecessor. Even though these were only local events, and their objectives monarchistic and loyal, they were practical examples of what Schiller had once said to the German people: "*Und eine Grenze hat Tyrannenmacht!*" ("There are limitations even to the power of tyranny"). The ruling powers viewed the successful rebellions with disapproval; their success was a contradiction of Metternich's basic principle: "Not to allow onself to be forced to advance or to retreat one step from the established and recognized order." The Confederation had proved incapable of altering conditions which were generally recognized as untenable, but it was naturally slow in adapting itself to methods of a revolutionary nature which infringed upon legitimist principles.

In Saxony and in Hanover there were also disturbances; popular opposition to aristocratic privileges, which finally ended in the princes granting the long overdue Constitution. There was an event connected with affairs in Hanover, which was so characteristic of the times that it is worth giving a detailed account of it. It was the story of the "*Göttinger Sieben*" (Göttingen Seven).

In 1837 Queen Victoria ascended the throne of England. According to German law, no woman had the right of succession, and thus one of her uncles, Ernest August, Duke of Cumberland, inherited the crown of Hanover. A grim old soldier, self-willed and malignant, and above everything a die-hard, he was a sworn enemy of the rights of the people. He could not even speak German properly, but he understood well enough that the political constitution which had been granted by his predecessor limited the royal privileges, and so he arbitrarily suspended it and released the civil servants from their oath to the Constitution. All submitted, except seven professors from Göttingen, who made representations to the Curator of the University that they felt bound by their oath. Among them were the brothers Grimm, famous for their collection of German fairy tales, and the historians Dahlmann and Gervinus, whom we shall meet again in the German Parliament of 1848. In the memorandum presented by the Seven it was emphatically stated that: "The whole success

of our activity depends no less on our personal honour than on the academic value of our teaching. If we should appear to our students as men who take their oath lightly, there would be an end to the good we might be able to accomplish through our teachings." The arguments advanced by the seven professors were academically well founded, more ethical than political, but they had the effect of enraging the monarch. He ordered these protesting professors to be instantly dismissed from their posts and even wanted to have them tried for their lives on account of their "revolutionary, highly treasonable tendencies." In his arrogance he maintained: "Professors, whores and ballet dancers can be had anywhere for money,"a view which, apart from those Seven, does not appear to be greatly mistaken.

A storm immediately broke over Germany which made him regret his severity. Wherever elected chambers existed there were loud protests. Even the censorship did not dare to intervene: the Press condemned the act of violence: lampoons were made about it. Hoffmann von Fallersleben, author of the German national anthem, composed a coarse popular song which ran:

> "*Frisch Knüppel aus dem Sack!*
> *Aufs Lumpenpack! Aufs Hundepack!*"
>
> (*Come on up, cudgels,*
> *Strike down the blackguards, strike down the dogs.*)

Pamphlets were written, including one by Dahlmann, and were read with the greatest interest, so that the king is reported to have said: "If I'd only known all the trouble the seven devils were going to cause me I should never have interfered in the matter." When an address, sent by the citizens of the town of Elbing to one of the professors, came into the hands of the Prussian Minister, von Rochow, he wrote: "It is not seemly that the subject should judge the actions of the Head of the State by his own limited understanding, and venture, in his ignorant presumption, to express his opinion in public as to the legality of these actions." From this time dates the oft-quoted phrase of "*beschränkten Untertanenverstand*" (the limited intelligence of the subject). This has been as little forgotten as the royal pronouncement concerning "Professors and whores" and both are more than usually characteristic of the "*Vormärz*," the "thirty-three years of slavery." But in spite of all protests and all sympathy, and although the academic qualifications of the Seven were well

known, they had great difficulty in finding other employment. Dahlmann, the most important of them, remained for some time without a post, and what was of more importance than the personal aspect was that the Confederation, although disapproving of this breach of the Constitution in Hanover, could not make up its mind to take any definite action in the matter. It had again been proved, by an example which was understood everywhere, that the princes were omnipotent in their territories, and it was useless for anyone in Germany to interfere with them.

In the same year, 1837, in which the protest of the "Göttingen Seven" aroused the liberal scholars and writers in Germany against the high-handed proceedings of absolutism, the absolutist State of Prussia came into conflict with its Catholic subjects. The Pope, and with him the Catholic bishops, demanded that an undertaking should be given by the Catholic partner before the consecration of a mixed marriage, that the children of such a marriage should be brought up in the Catholic faith. The Prussian Government wished to introduce another regulation, i.e. that children must follow the father's religion, even in cases where the Protestant father himself wished them to have a Catholic education. When this measure met with opposition the Prussian Government used the same methods as were adopted by the Prussian soldier kings when they wished to overthrow the verdicts of their Law Courts: the Archbishops of Cologne and Posen were arrested and confined to a fortress. This act of violence united two forces, Liberals and Catholics, which had often been in deadly conflict with each other. During the hundred years struggle for freedom in Germany they were often to find themselves on the same side, and were destined finally to suffer defeat together. A new flood of protesting pamphlets broke over the politically-minded. Joseph Goerres, who after the War of Liberation was driven from his Rhine-Prussian home into French exile, because he was an uncomfortable advocate of German unity, now protested from Bavaria, where he had found a new sphere of activity on behalf of the spiritual independence of the Church. In Baden the liberal historian, Karl v. Rotteck, raised a solemn protest "against the dictatorship of the State in Church affairs."

During the thirty-three years which followed the War of Liberation, there had been few political but many economic changes in Germany. The capitalist era, with its blessings and its cruelties, had dawned over the land to which development had come so slowly. That was not only the result of technical inventions, but also the consequence of Prussian Reform, which had made it possible for technical inventions to come into their

own. Here the successors of the Reformers had prospered: the Prussian officials, influenced by them, created the political conditions of economic development. In 1818 inland duties were abolished within the kingdom of Prussia, and Prussian State territory became one unified customs area. On January 1st, 1834, came the decisive act towards a united Germany as far as economic matters were concerned: the Customs Union was created which linked up practically all the German States. Only the north-west, the territory on the North Sea, remained for the present outside the Union. Austria, hindered by the interests of its eastern non-German countries, was isolated.

The rest of Germany, however, rapidly combined with regard to trade, transport and industrial organization. Whereas the Police State endeavoured rigidly to maintain the existing political conditions, economic and social conditions were caught up in the rushing stream of change. The length of the Prussian highways had increased fourfold between the time of the wars and 1842, while at the same time inland shipping reached a high state of prosperity and railways were under construction everywhere. In 1815 Prussia owned no engines, but in 1846 there were already 1,140 in the country. Iron production rose rapidly. In 1850 it had already attained 410,000 tons, the imports of iron from England rose tenfold during the same period. Frequent conflicts arose out of this industrial development. The large industrial concerns remained practically free from taxation and not until 1839 were the first half-hearted attempts made to limit at least child labour. The workers were forbidden to form associations, but the factory owners introduced the truck system and railway companies arranged between themselves to black-list any workers of whom they did not approve. In the Silesian weaving districts famine was a constant occurrence, emigration rose by leaps and bounds, and the first slums—terrible barracks for the workers—grew up in the industrial centres. At the same time the craftsmen began to suffer and the small tradesmen swelled the ranks of discontent.

For the present this tropical growth had very slight political results. The most important outcome was that the industrialists and merchants placed their newly acquired power behind the demands of the Liberals, for, as they were beginning to represent interests no less important than those of the landed proprietors, they were no longer willing to remain inferior. More, they began to ask for rights that had never before been given to subjects. They wished to have a voice in the legislation and not to be kept in bureaucratic leading strings in their own concerns. The other

result was that anarchist, communist and socialist ideas began for the first time to appear among the workers. The principle of free trade, which until recently had been regarded by people on the Left as a panacea which had been defended against the Conservatives although still far removed from realization in practice, was now regarded by the extreme Left as the source of all evil and derisively condemned. Even before the storm of 1848 broke, Marx and Engels proclaimed to the world: "A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of Communism." They asserted, long before the one or the other had been realized, that "the weapons with which the bourgeoisie had slain feudalism are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself." But that which they considered feudalism in Germany was still far from being slain, and the bourgeoisie had not yet begun the fight for power. The proletariat to whom they were speaking was in process of formation.

Since the middle of the eighteen-forties, the old order in Prussia had everywhere been undermined. No one believed in its continuance. Decades of suppression of public opinion had not been able to prevent its development in opposition to the existing order of things. Wherever pressure had been relaxed it was immediately seen that discontent was steadily increasing.

Unity and freedom, the watchword of 1815, had become the watchword of the century and of Europe, wherever nations were scattered and suppressed. One empire, one parliament, no more government by provincial bureaucracies, an end to the arrogance of the officers, freedom of the Press and of teaching, public justice, trial by jury—these were the demands of the educated middle class, of scholars and writers, of merchants and industrialists. Behind these stood, although their wishes were tinged with radicalism and socialism, lesser people—craftsmen, artisans, labourers, peasants—in as far as these were politically awake.

The existing order of things was supported first by the big neighbouring States: neither France nor Russia wished for a united and therefore stronger Germany in the centre of Europe. The Czars, in particular, were on the watch against all progress and against any change of power. Austria, too, was the protector of the existing order of things. The Habsburgs reigned over Italians, Hungarians and Slavs of every kind. Every national movement—the Italian, the Polish, the Hungarian—was directed against their régime. This was also true of the German national movement, which was bound to stir up the German crown-lands of Austria and threaten the monarchy with disintegration. The simplest solution which was conceivable was the re-establishment

of the old empire which, under Austrian leadership, had embraced all Germany and also the smaller neighbouring foreign States: but it was precisely this solution which was impossible for external reasons. All Europe would have risen up against it. There were also internal reasons against it, for the Prussian military State, which had grown up in opposition to the *Reich*, would have had to be annihilated before a Greater Germany under the Habsburgs could have been formed.

The petty princes were naturally in favour of preserving the old order: their sovereignty could not continue—at least not in its entirety—under a new order, and with them were in the main the nobility, officers and officials—although there were, of course, exceptions. Public opinion had in many cases influenced even members of these privileged classes; we find, for instance, in the far-off East Prussian province a group of liberal patriotic Junkers who lived according to the tradition of Stein, and we also find Liberals amongst the higher aristocracy of South Germany who had not lost their own sovereignty until the beginning of the century. This was especially the case with the western noblemen of the Empire. Finally, the bureaucracy was so closely related to the educated classes that it inevitably became influenced by their ideas. But these were all exceptions, however numerous, to a majority bound by instinct and interest to their conservative attitude.

Germany was to become united: that was the common wish of all Liberals. But in what form, by what means, and with whose support? Even Freiherr vom Stein had hesitated before the problem which had to be solved here. In an earlier period of his political activity he had thought that Prussia would never again rise from its dismemberment. He had no greater hopes for the States of the Rhine Confederation, which were on the side of Napoleon. It would therefore have been on the basis of the smaller communities, naturally without their sovereignty, that the old empire, reinforced, would grow up anew under the Habsburgs. Later when, thanks to him, Prussia was newly consolidated, he wished to have Germany divided into two zones linked by a permanent alliance, the northern under Prussian, and the southern under Austrian leadership—a plan more indicative of the hopelessness of finding a solution than a solution in itself. Finally, he proposed a partition into three: Austria, Prussia with the North, and the united South-west.

In the few years succeeding the Napoleonic wars, during which it was still possible freely to express opinions, and the re-formation of the *Reich* continued to remain the chief subject of political

discussion, no practical idea emerged. Burning was the despair over the failure, shrill the accusations against the petty princes who were ruining the *Reich*, but the proposals and the demands of the writers themselves were indefinite, nebulous, inspired with fervent hope, and the more fervent the more chaotic they became. When the Constitutional system of the South developed in sharp contrast to Prussian absolutism, the plan of a German "triad" again came to the fore: Austria for itself; Prussia for itself, with the small northern States; and the States of the South —"*das reine Deutschland*" (the pure Germany)—as a bloc with which the two large Powers were to enter into an alliance. In this way the petty princes of the South would best have maintained their independence, while their Liberal subjects would have been freed from the fear of Prussian predominance. In the South patriotic longing for a Greater Germany was perhaps even stronger than elsewhere. But opposition to Prussia was again as strong and active as it had been at the time of the soldier kings, when the great barracks spread fear and terror amongst Germans. The historian Rotteck, a firm Liberal of the Baden Chamber, exclaimed: "Rather freedom without unity than unity without freedom!" That meant, rather to remain alone in small Baden with a Constitution, than be great and powerful under the Prussian corporal's stick. At first the South German governments attempted to give the triad plan some kind of economic form. From 1820 to 1830, a whole decade, negotiations were carried on concerning a South and Central German Customs Union. But the forces were too equal, and no State could bring pressure to bear on the other. They were too suspicious of each other to come to any kind of agreement. We have seen that Prussia then settled the trade question in its own way. With its disproportionately large territory, it possessed methods of compulsion and inducement which the other States lacked.

Once, during the years of stagnation and deliberations, a liberal writer from Württemberg, Paul Pfizer, who had a clearer insight than all the others, correctly estimated the relation of forces and the future development. Pfizer was a realist, but at the same time he never lost sight of the ultimate goal, unity and freedom. Prepared to forgo Austria, he wished to make use of the great power of the northern military state, and to found the new empire upon it. But in order to achieve this, Prussia must resolve itself into provinces, "to merge into Germany," as it was later called. A constitutional South Germany without Prussia's protection would, he feared, end by being dependent upon France.

However strong the wave of sympathy felt by the German

Liberals for their western neighbour after the French Revolution of 1830, the Rhine Confederation of the first Napoleon (South and West Germany bordering on France) could not again take shape in a period when nationalism was triumphantly advancing. However often in the coming fifty years one might hear a Swabian or a Bavarian curse, that for his part he preferred the French to the Prussians, the old concept had become a mere shadow.

Although Prussian arms were absolutely indispensable for the external protection of Germany, there remained the alarming problem of how the Prussian spirit could be rendered harmless at home. In order to achieve German unity Pfizer would even have accepted a national German despot; despotism would not continue, because "no power in the world could prevent or arrest the progressive dissemination of liberal ideas and institutions." He would therefore have welcomed the unity of Germany, even under an absolute Prussian monarch. The despot was bound to become a liberal and constitutional ruler.

Although Pfizer was an adherent of constitutional ideas, he wished, in the interests of freedom, that Prussia should not yet receive a Constitution. Freedom of the Press was to be enjoyed, but beyond this Prussia was to be satisfied with her provincial Diets. For if Prussia became centralized by its own Parliament, it would follow that the Prussian people as a whole would dominate in Germany, "and may God in His mercy protect us from that." He condemned the Prussian spirit as severely as any Liberal, and spoke of the "fundamentally un-German Prussianism," just as Stein had found that "here already blows the wind from Poland." But a Prussia divided into provinces would contain no danger for Germany. For the Prussianism which was so feared in Germany, "that was like a threatening spectre in the background, robbing one of one's breath," as he said in one of his later writings, had its home only in the East Elbian Old Prussia, which in population and extent of territory was so greatly exceeded by the rest of Germany.

It was the outstanding merit of Pfizer and of a few others that they refused to be misled by appearances and formed an accurate estimate of the elements of the future. Pfizer possessed the audacity to contemplate a synthesis of apparently irreconcilable antagonisms. Not a few South German Liberals abominated and condemned Prussianism. They would have preferred to have kept their small States free and untrammelled as they had once been, and here they were at one with the Conservatives and Legitimists in all German States. But this was not the

objective of the large majority of the Liberals, the real representatives of the national idea. Among these the Swabian writer distinguished himself by devoting his great intellectual gifts to the problem of Prussia in Germany. In this he was aided by the duality of his sentiments, for together with his antagonism to the Prussian system of force and Prussian uniformity there existed his admiration for Prussia's power and prestige. To hate and to admire Prussian force at one and the same time was easier than to use it and destroy it simultaneously, and yet this was the task of any Liberal who was anxious to build German unity upon Prussia. To turn a tiger into a watchdog had already been part of the task which the Prussian military reformers, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Boyen, had set themselves when they made military service compulsory and formed half of the army into a *Landwehr*—a citizen army—and kept it severely separate from the professional army of the "line." Pfizer believed that Prussia's force was so unattractive and unruly because it was contained within the narrow limits of the present State, forced to maintain its position among the Great Powers. He hoped that the army would lose its harsh, threatening character when it could spread over the whole of Germany—dissolve into Germany. But to this end it was necessary that the Prussian State itself should merge into Germany. We shall see how these same ideas, so early and so clearly formulated by the Swabian Liberal, were later brought forward by others, at various periods of history, as a necessary outcome of the form which Germany had taken.

The unrest in the Germany of the middle forties had many causes and many centres, nearly as many as there were States and capitals. But, if we exclude Austria, we find two main theatres: the South-west as assembly ground of the liberal scholars, but also of the radical democrats; and Berlin, where the opposition of the Prussian West and the liberal East Prussian group converged. There was a general conviction that great changes in the national and liberal direction were necessary. Successive years of bad harvests, bad trade conditions, and famine in the distressed districts were the sources of this general desire. Apart from that, however, developments differed in the two main centres. In the South-west, where opinions could be more freely voiced, liberal thought found fuller expression in Press articles, speeches, resolutions taken in open conferences, and motions in the Chambers of Deputies, all of which often reached much further than the frontiers of the small States in which they originated. But the only results which counted were those achieved in Berlin, the seat of power.

The Frankfurt Federal Diet, the only constitutional instrument of the German people, gradually lost prestige during the eighteen-forties. Its deliberations became more and more involved in petty details and constantly less capable of coming to decisions. On the other hand, the private meetings of German scholars grew in importance as the intellectual unity of the Germans and their will for self-determination became evident. Natural scientists, philologists, agriculturalists, lawyers, singers, and writers united at meetings at which the national unity put to shame the dynastic disintegration. The black-red-gold colours of the mediæval Empire, which had again been adopted by one of the volunteer corps in the War of Liberation against Napoleon and then raised to a symbol by the National German Students' Association (*Deutsche Burschenschaft*), had been banned since the Carlsbad Resolutions of the Bundestag. Now the colours were again honoured at these Great-German festivals and recognized as the real banner of Germany. Historians and students of political law discussed the burning questions of the time at their meetings held in the Free Cities. At these meetings and at those of the liberal and democratic politicians in the South-west, there developed an all-German parliamentarism, whereas Prussia—also Austria and the small North German States—still held fast to absolutism. The *Deutsche Zeitung*, in which unity and freedom were discussed gravely and academically, had been published at Mannheim in Baden since 1847. That a German *Reichstag* (parliament) was to be created which should realize both these ideals was taken for granted: the discussion only concerned the how and where? There was no lack of warnings that a movement based only on ideas and convictions was bound to disintegrate at the first impact of reality. At a meeting in Heppenheim in Hesse, in 1847, a Liberal from Baden pointed out that a parliament without real political power was senseless and useless. A beginning should be made with a Customs Parliament: that indicated Prussia because the Customs Union, to which Austria did not belong, had its chief support in the Prussian State. But it was too late to tread warily the road of gradual development, and how was South-German influence to make itself felt in Prussia? The Federal Diet was really the only institution which represented the common interests of Germany. In February 1848 a Liberal in the Chamber in Baden moved that a German Parliament should be set up by the Confederation, and shortly afterwards the same motion was brought forward in the Chamber in Hesse.

This was the pan-German side of the double road of German liberalism. What of the Prussian side?

The Prussian king, Frederick William IV, who had been reigning since 1840, had been considering since he came to the throne if and how he should fulfil his father's promise to accede to the demands for a National Assembly, or whether he should temporize. He wanted to build on the former "estates," whose rights had been so much suppressed by his predecessors. He loathed the Liberals and feared the Democrats and refused to hear anything about a Constitution. Romantic and imaginative though he was, he failed to recognize, or refused to recognize that even the creation of a feudal Diet, if this were to be anything more than a sham, must of necessity imply a constitutional limitation of the sovereign's powers. Whether one was prepared to reconstitute mediæval institutions or to give way to modern ideas really came to the same thing, for it meant giving to a smaller or larger circle of subjects a voice in the government and more liberty. What the king desired was consolidation of the monarchy through the councils of representatives but without according any rights to the people. This was contradictory in itself and therefore impossible to carry out.

Little by little he was forced forward. The Provincial Diets, although biased by the preponderance of Junkers, were nevertheless almost unanimous in their desire for united representation. Their petitions could no longer be turned down with disdain, as had been the case in 1830 with Freiherr von Stein when he was Marshal of the Westphalian Diet. More than once such petitions had been rejected with paternal warnings and the petitioners reminded of their place. But the means at the disposal of patriarchal absolutism were gradually being weakened. The king's friends advised him to give way—saying that it was necessary to make concessions to the spirit of the time. Similar advice came from abroad. Prince Albert, the consort of Queen Victoria, and her half-brother, Prince Karl von Leiningen, sent memoranda to Berlin, in which they recommended national unity and a constitutional régime. Leiningen suggested that Prussia should place itself "at the head of the already powerful middle class." In a memorandum by the king himself, which he caused to be presented in Vienna, there were sentences which showed a marked understanding for the connection between nationalism and liberalism. "What has the Confederation done for Germany's consolidation and progress during the thirty-two years of its existence, during an unexampled era of peace? To that question no answer is possible. The great force of the present time, nationalism, has become a most dangerous weapon in the hands of the enemies of public order." But he found no way to make

nationalism and the middle class politically effective under Prussian leadership.

In the meantime the long and wearisome cogitations had led to one result: Frederick William resolved to call the Provincial Diets to a joint Council. The *Vereinigte Landtag* (United Diet) was opened on April 11th, 1847. The romantic king greeted the deputies with a long discourse in which he announced that no power on earth would move him to change the relation between prince and people into a conventional and constitutional one. Never would he allow "a blotted parchment to come between Almighty God in Heaven and this land as though it were a second Providence." Recalling the borders and the history of Prussia, he claimed that the country's destiny must lie in the hands of one man, just as one man alone had the command in the field. But the fact that he had called the United Diet, an act for which he himself was responsible, was stronger than his attempt to talk it away. Although the urban masses were not represented at all in the Provincial Diets, the peasants most inadequately so, and although the landed Junkers had an overwhelming majority, the pace was set by the Liberals, particularly those of East Prussia and the Rhine. The group of Legitimists, amongst them the young Bismarck, was in the minority. The loan intended for the construction of a large railway, which the Government had wished to have guaranteed by the meeting, was refused. The *Landtag* demanded freedom of the Press and, above everything else, regular sessions—the basis of every constitution. The king opposed them; but six months later, after the *Vereinigte Landtag*, the first Prussian Parliament, had been dissolved after a fruitless session, the king gave way and consented that the *Landtag* should be summoned regularly. That was on March 6th, 1848.

On February 24th the Revolution had been victorious in Paris. The fire spread. Events in France were the prelude to a popular rising in Germany. Rebellion broke out in many places; one town kindled the fire in the next; the flames spread from province to province. After Baden—between Switzerland and France—came Würtemberg, Bavaria, the two Hesses and Nassau, Thüringen and Saxony, Frankfurt, Hanover and Schleswig-Holstein. The same demands were made everywhere: freedom (expressed in various forms) and unity, the liberal and nationalist objectives. In some places the demand was still for one *Reich*, in others already for a German Republic. Sometimes with the cry for one or the other was mingled that of the "right to work." Everywhere there were meetings, deputations, petitions, clashes with the

police and military, everywhere the ruling powers retreated and liberal ministries were summoned.

On March 13th enormous demonstrations with which the Government were unable to cope took place in Vienna. Barricades were thrown up; the students armed themselves and fraternized with the masses from the outskirts. State Chancellor Metternich, who had been so powerful in Europe during the decades of reaction, was dropped by the Court, and a new Ministry formed. But events in Austria had more than indirect importance for Germany. Such a change within the most conservative and greatest Power made a deep impression and moved Prussia still farther into the centre of the stage. The liberal development of the Danube Monarchy, like the reactionary development which immediately succeeded it, was marked by the establishment of an autonomous confederacy consisting of the various races and nationalities under its rule. The German provinces of the Habsburgs became still further dissociated from the rest of Germany.

But what took place in Berlin is more important for our consideration. We have seen that on March 6th, the king consented that the *Landtag* should be convened regularly—a concession which had long been refused. This did not, however, restore calm. There were deputations, meetings to discuss addresses to the king, tumults—the town was continually in a turmoil. The police began to take action, the military was called out, patrols marched through the streets—all this tended to increase the commotion. Clashes followed, people were arrested, there were wounded and soon there were killed. The trouble continued for twelve days and with ever-increasing fury. The middle classes, themselves the instigators of the movement, began to feel alarmed as they saw increasing numbers of artisans, workers and unemployed join the demonstrators. A civil guard was formed to maintain order, but simultaneously the generals called in troops from a distance. This only tended to increase the bitterness. Finally the quarrel centred more in requests for the withdrawal of the military than in political demands. One promise after another was wrested from the king. Finally, on March 18th, he issued a proclamation in which he agreed to everything: freedom of the Press, a liberal Constitution, the black-red-gold colours. Prussia's leadership in the national movement. He appeared on the balcony of the palace; the populace which had crowded into the open space in front of the palace acclaimed him with joy. But the people did not disperse. The soldiers attempted to drive them away; two shots were fired, no one knew by whom, and

the street battle started. Barricades were immediately thrown up in the streets surrounding the palace. The troops attacked, guns were brought up and fired, but resistance was strong: the soldiers could make no progress.

The incident of March 18th, 1848, was of great importance. Paris had just experienced the third revolution within half a century, had deposed another king and proclaimed a republic. But for four hundred years—since time immemorial that is—Berlin had known no public disturbances. In spite of all warnings the rising came as a great surprise. What terrified the ruling class most, however, was that the troops had proved unavailing. The Democrats considered the indecisive battle as a victory of the masses over the army—and the army represented, far more in the military State of Prussia than elsewhere, both backbone and marrow of society. For some time to come Democracy founded its claim to self-government on the supposed victory. Actually the troops had certainly not been defeated, to say nothing of the army as a whole. On the contrary, all possibilities were still open to them: they could make a fresh attack on the following morning, or they could retire from the capital, surround Berlin and retake it.

The struggle of March 18th had, however, another side which was no less remarkable than the continued resistance of the Berlin population. That was the unbroken unity of the troops. It was, it must be remembered, not the professional army, by means of which Prussia had grown powerful, but the army of general conscription, "a nation in arms," which had here been called in against its own people. The fear expressed by the Conservatives that "to arm a nation means to organize the Opposition" had not proved true. Brothers, sons, friends of the men on the barricades, had opposed them in uniform and, behold! they had thought neither of relationship nor of friendship, they had not fraternized with them, they had not gone over to them, they had not turned their rifles against their officers—no, on the contrary, they had carried out the commands of these officers, members of the Junker class. This was to be the case, if we anticipate, during the struggles of the coming years, both with the line regiments and with the *Landwehr*. Neither was the *Landwehr*, as Marwitz had once growled, "a special army for revolutionary purposes," but, except for isolated individuals, even those sections which originated in democratic provinces remained true to their military oath and discipline. That was the most important experience of the year of revolution. It was as if the same man possessed two souls, two different convictions, or at least

two opposing political attitudes. As citizen and elector he was liberal, constitutional, democratic, revolutionary; called upon to serve in the army he obeyed the commands which were given in the interests of royal autocracy.

At first, however, the king was alarmed; his counsellors were in confusion, they did not want to continue the struggle nor to force an issue. Vague orders came from the palace; the result was that the troops continued to fall back wherever the barricades were abandoned, and finally they left Berlin. The capital remained under the protection of its citizens, and in their midst the king, deprived of that military protection without which it had hitherto been impossible to imagine a king of Prussia. He called upon "his dear Berliners," with an effort at patriarchal reconciliation, to clasp his hand in friendship. He saluted the funeral procession of those men who had fallen in the struggle against absolutism, and on March 21st, to the amazement of Europe, he rode through an acclaiming populace, surrounded by princes and ministers, two generals and a town deputy, with a black, red and gold band on his arm—the prescribed colours of the revolution—and all his followers wore the same emblem.

The situation following the fight on the barricades was calculated to produce illusions. The only armed organization in Berlin was a weak, improvized guard of citizens. If the artisans and workers who had formed the majority of the barricade fighters had wished to carry the fight further the palace stood open to them—they could have taken possession of the king's person without having much opposition to fear. On the other hand, the troops who had retreated to Potsdam were intact, untouched by revolutionary emotions and fully controlled by their officers. Bismarck, the young ultra-Royalist, armed his peasants and rode to the commanding general to offer his and their services. The general declined: "I am strong enough to take Berlin, but then there would be more fighting. What's to be done, since the king has ordered us to adopt the rôle of defeated? Without orders I cannot attack." But to attack without the royal order was exactly what Bismarck wanted. He tried his luck with members of the royal family and with other generals, until one of them threatened to have him arrested for high treason. As the one party received no command from above and the other felt no urge to action from within, there was no more fighting. There can be no doubt what the outcome would have been in view of the unequal distribution of force.

On March 21st, the day of the histrionic procession, the king issued a proclamation in which he declared he was taking over

"the leadership of Germany during the days of danger" and in which unity and freedom were generously promised. He further agreed to "real constitutional government with responsible Ministers in the various States, public hearings in the law courts, trial by jury, equal political and civic rights for all religions and a truly liberal and popular administration." That was a great deal. But still more important was the mention of "a general German Diet," the establishment of a German Popular Federal Army, and also the sentence: "*Preussen geht fortan in Deutschland auf*" (From now on Prussia merges into Germany). At the same time an army order was issued that the German cockade was to be worn beside the Prussian; that is, the army was to wear the colours which three days earlier had been worn by its opponents in the street fighting. It is not astonishing to learn that the army complied with the order only grudgingly. If the king's speech was to be interpreted according to the usual political language of the time—and how else was it to be interpreted?—it could only be assumed that he made himself the instrument of revolution and actually wanted to allow Old Prussia to merge into a constitutional German Empire. For the present, however—so that the continuation of the law should be assured—the United Diet met again on April 2nd, after a new Ministry had been called in which Rhenish Liberals were the leaders. The *Landtag* resolved that a Prussian National Assembly was to be elected and this opened on May 22nd. The Assembly was to come to terms with the king concerning a Constitution for Prussia.

In the meantime, in the other theatre of events in south-west Germany, Liberalism continued to make progress. Several of the governments had sent special delegates, seventeen in all, to the Federal Diet: Prussia sent the historian, Dahlmann, one of the Göttingen Seven. The President among them was the Rhenish nobleman, Max von Gagern. On March 31st, a "*Vorparlament*" (Preliminary Parliament) met in Frankfurt, consisting of five hundred men whose only mandate was their sense of vocation to represent the German people. Acting on the motion proposed by them, the Federal Diet resolved upon the election of an all-German Parliament. The seventeen delegates of the Diet had constituted themselves as a Constitutional Committee and had discussed Dahlmann's "*Entwurf des deutschen Grundgesetzes*" (Draft of a German Constitution), which appeared in print on April 26th. It was to be laid before the German Federal Assembly. The elections took place and were followed by the opening of the German National Assembly, the first all-German Parliament, in Frankfurt on May 18th—a solemn moment in the life of the nation.

In Dahlmann's constitutional draft a clear line of demarcation was drawn between the affairs of the *Reich* and those of the States. To the former belonged: diplomacy, decisions concerning war and peace, all military matters, customs, posts, transport, the laws concerning public and civil rights, coinage, and the system of weights and measures. The political instruments of the *Reich* were to be an Upper House, consisting of princes and representatives of the different Provincial Diets, and a Lower House elected by the people. Under the heading "*Grundrechte des deutschen Volks*" (Fundamental Rights of the German People) nothing was forgotten that a friend of civic freedom could desire. But this *Reich* was still a castle in the air. Where was it to obtain basis and support? A majority of the seventeen decided in favour of a hereditary emperor, who was to be proposed by the German princes and elected by the German National Assembly. If that were to succeed, so wrote Dahlmann in the preface to his draft, "freedom and order will have clasped hands and become reconciled on German territory, never again to be parted." But what force was to lend backbone to this new order and freedom?

Everything that happened in Frankfurt—committees, assemblies, drafts, debates, resolutions—seemed to be nothing more than a continuation of the Conferences of scholars and notables, which had taken place in the years preceding the revolutionary rising. The Federal Diet, on which they depended, was itself—and that was just the trouble—never anything more than a powerless conference of diplomats. But however academic the whole activity of the liberal patriots was, the Frankfurt politicians were not so academic as not to have attempted to find support and strength for their lofty efforts. Thus the two main theatres of events, Frankfurt and Berlin, were brought together, and in accordance with the balance of power it was Frankfurt which made overtures to Berlin.

Immediately after March 18th, the day of the struggle, Max von Gagern went to Berlin urging the king to act. If Frederick William intended to abide by his proclamation of March 21st it had to be implemented by action. "The leadership of Germany," which he had promised for the days of danger, demanded courageous activity, initiative for the election of the German Parliament and for an agreement with the other governments. Gagern's efforts were vain; none of the promises were fulfilled.

The convening of the Prussian Diet was, it is true, calculated to improve the political reputation of the king as far as the Liberals were concerned, but not calculated to promote the unity of Germany. The result of constitutional development could only

be that the different parts of Prussia would become more united —how then could Prussia "merge into Germany"? It is extremely probable that Gagern called attention to this fact; the results, in any case, were negative.

In those eventful days Dahlmann pointed out very clearly to the king that he must become emperor. It was as if in his outstretched hands he offered Frederick William the empire, the constitution of which he himself had drafted.

There was of course opposition of various kinds to the great plan; the open displeasure of the Austrian Government, which wished to adhere to the old anarchical-despotic state of affairs; the agitation of the Radicals against the monarch to whom they attributed the guilt of the "blood bath" of March 18th; the opposition of Bavaria and of the other princes to being mediatized.

Frederick William's answer is interesting because it was dictated by considerations of principle and not of tactics. In the first place he would only concede to princes the right to make such a proposition; coming from the people it would "probably be answered with guns." Secondly, he drew up a constitution which, to satisfy his histrionic phantasy, was adorned with a great deal of mediæval pomp. A closer examination, however, showed it to be based on plain Prussian particularism. He wished to leave to Austria the hereditary imperial crown, *pro honoris causa*, asking for Prussia only the hereditary "*Reichs-Erzfeldherrnamt*" (Imperial Supreme Command of the Army), which again has a very mediæval ring but meant nothing more than the supreme command over the armies of the other German princes. He flatly refused what he had explicitly promised in the proclamation of March 21st, the German Popular Federal Army. For now he wrote: "I cannot and will not risk seeing my army, the first in the world, the creation of my House, merged into a '*teutsches Reichsheer*' (Germanic Imperial Army), even under an Imperial Roman Majesty. I dare suggest it neither to the people nor to the army. . . ."

The king's offer that the imperial crown should be left to Austria had a very definite political purpose. By this he hoped to prevent Austria's intervention while Prussia obtained possession of the real power in the rest of Germany.

What, however, did more to dash the hopes of the Liberals than the refusal of the imperial crown was the king's declaration that his army was not to be merged into an imperial army. How was the whole of Prussia to be merged into Germany while the army, the most important part of the Prussian system, remained separate? Unity in Germany, but with the continued existence

of Prussia meant—and it was a well-founded fear—not freedom in Germany but Prussian hegemony.

While letters were being exchanged between the king of Prussia and Dahlmann, risings of radical elements had taken place in several parts of south-western Germany and a German Republic had been proclaimed by them. They were overthrown without great difficulty. These events show all the characteristics that mark the entire course of what we now call the German Revolution of 1848 and 1849.

The two moving forces in Germany were the Prussian army and the German educated middle class. If their objectives, Unity and Liberty, were to be achieved, these two must amalgamate; the army must serve to carry out middle-class aims. Improbable, even absurd, as such a union appears, for one moment it did seem achieved; that was on March 23rd, 1848, when the king of Prussia rode through Berlin with the black-red-gold band on his arm, and proclaimed that Prussia would merge into Germany. It seemed as if he wished to place himself at the head of the Revolution, the Liberals had faith in him, the Courts in Vienna and in the south German States feared such a forcible revolutionary policy. How little Frederick William was in reality prepared for such a bold step is shown by confidential letters sent to his envoy in London, Josias von Bunsen. He compared Liberalism to "a disease, like spinal consumption," and bluntly called the Radicals "a band of rogues." The royal gesture on that March day was completely misleading, for the king was far from wishing to unite two forces which in the very nature of things were antagonistic, and thus it came about that during the subsequent course of events they continued to oppose each other. As the army had never been influenced by the revolutionary spirit and never disintegrated, it was bound to remain victor. It will suffice if we review the chief points of the complicated processes which were to make the coming period resound with their clamour.

There were only four days between the opening of the Frankfurt and the Berlin Parliaments. Each was called a "National Assembly," an imposing title which shows the absurdity of the dual arrangement; for although it was then usual to speak of the "Prussian nation," the chief object of the whole movement was nevertheless to make a political reality of the belief that there was only a single nation "wherever the German tongue is spoken." Very little is now known of the Berlin session; the meeting in the Church of St. Paul in Frankfurt lived long in the memory of the Germans. It has remained until to-day the only Parliament which

united all the German States. This was not a regular Parliament of professional politicians, of representatives of interests and secretaries of organizations; here were assembled the leaders of thought and of learning of that time, writers, scholars, lawyers, as well as nobles, army men and industrialists—some bearing names which are still famous to-day. All political problems of Germany, internal as well as external, were discussed by these men as seriously and thoroughly as has seldom been the case since.

For this reason the Church of St. Paul is still held in reverent memory by a large number of Germans. Others, it is true—the admirers of force—have never felt anything but scorn and derision for the "Parliament of Professors and Lawyers." It was the same in those days, for Bismarck has left us a vivid description: "Those who lived at that time in our eastern provinces will still remember that the Frankfurt negotiations were not taken as seriously by those in whose hands the real power rested—who in the event of conflict would have to use armed force or control it—as might have been expected in view of the high standing of the academic and parliamentary celebrities assembled in Frankfurt." The scorn of the Junkers can still be heard in these words. The reproach made by the critics with the clinking spurs was that the National Assembly never produced anything but paper and endless chatter. And in fact it was nothing more than the continuation of the free associations of scholars. "It resembled an academy of political sciences dealing with national affairs, in form like a sovereign power but in fact without any power at all," is the verdict of Ranke, the greatest among the German historians.

The men of the Paulskirche were themselves aware of the character of their assembly; they made a bold attempt to improvize a government and the forces which they lacked. The episode gives a clear indication of the situation. During the summer of 1848 the National Assembly set up a Central Power over the empire and appointed the Austrian Archduke, Johann, as Vice-Regent. By a special law he was invested with the highest powers over the individual States. An Imperial Ministry was nominated. The Imperial War Minister announced to the governments of the various States that the Vice-Regent was the supreme commander of the army, and ordered them to call out their troops to an allegiance parade. But neither Prussian nor Austrian troops paraded or promised allegiance. The parliamentary order was ignored. When, however, the National Assembly was itself threatened by revolutionaries the States eagerly offered military

assistance, and the barricades which had been thrown up in Frankfurt were soon shot to pieces.

The Berlin Parliament was far removed from the brilliance and fame of the Frankfurt Assembly. Nevertheless it was a real Parliament; it was elected by the orders of a government and remained face to face with it. This Parliament was not surrounded by a vacuum, and a certain measure of achievement can be claimed for its work of drafting a constitution for Prussia. For this very reason it soon came into conflict with the autocratic government. The Left wing, which had the leadership, wished to establish the sovereignty of the people as a basic principle, and to express the gratitude of the Fatherland to the combatants of March 18th; also to remove the words "by the Grace of God" from the king's title. The most characteristic step, however, was a motion with reference to the army. In the Silesian town, Schweidnitz, a clash had occurred between the civic guard and the military and a number of citizens had been killed. Thereupon one of the deputies demanded that the Minister of War should give strict injunctions to the officers to hold themselves aloof from reactionary movements, whilst another deputy suggested that it should be a point of honour with an officer to resign his commission if these instructions were in conflict with his convictions. It was a naïve thought that with such resolutions it would be possible to determine the attitude of the Officers' Corps. On the other hand, for the Prussian Legitimists, such an attempt represented a serious infringement of the royal prerogative; no representatives of the people had the right to interfere with the army. But the time for revolutionary advance was over, especially since the workers in Paris had also been defeated in a street fight lasting three days. In the autumn the king appointed a general as Premier and ordered troops to march into the capital. The Assembly was transferred to a small town and later dissolved. The royal authority, which had been weakened by internal instability, but never transformed in its character, was thus conspicuously restored.

Prussia was without a Parliament, so that its task of drawing up a Constitution and of coming to an agreement with the king could not be fulfilled. The Frankfurt Parliament was in session, however. It was an unforeseen opportunity to put an end to the discord of dualism. If Prussia was to be "merged into Germany" —to recall Pfizer's doctrine—it ought not to have its own Constitution and still less its own Parliament. Such opinions had been heard in Frankfurt before ever the elections to the Berlin Assembly took place. If thus the dissolution was due to Prussian reaction,

it nevertheless offered a prospect for furthering the designs of the Frankfurt Liberals. But scarcely was the tumult in Berlin over before this prospect seemed likely to vanish again, for the Prussian Government planned, since it had failed to reach agreement with the people's representatives, to impose a Constitution. Several leading men of the Paulskirche attempted to prevent the execution of this plan. One of them, Heinrich von Gagern, a brother of the Max previously referred to, had an audience with the king and did his utmost to dazzle him with the glory of the imperial crown, but in vain. On December 5th, 1848, the king granted a "Constitutional Charter for the Prussian State," and, to the amazement of all, this enforced Constitution was based on the principles which had been worked out by the committee of the recently dissolved Parliament. It was liberal beyond all expectations.

That Frederick William should have signed such a document was wholly amazing in view of his political convictions. He thoroughly disapproved of the Constitution, and wrote to his confidant, Bunsen, in London, that it was bad and gave him "the belly-ache." He had hesitated long enough. When he finally made up his mind it was simply due to the lively endeavours of the Frankfurt Liberals. The Prussian Ministry had already requested its dismissal because the king refused to sign; here the Frankfurt men acted as an "attacking column in the flank." What they did not want must obviously be of use to the king and the Prussian Legitimists in attaining their objects; by their very zeal they were thus instrumental in bringing about the contrary of their desires.

How otherwise is it possible to explain why the enforced Constitution was so liberal in character? The Government had the army and the capital well in hand—it could, if it wished, set up a military dictatorship, and had therefore no need to elect a Parliament, to which the king had now conceived a strong aversion. The deciding factor was that Prussia was unable and unwilling to relinquish her all-German policy. Whether Frederick William was to be *Erzfeldherr* or Emperor or "King of the Teutons" mattered little; Prussia's one idea was to dominate Germany, though without being merged in it. And for this it was necessary that Prussia should retain the sympathy of South and West Germany and, where possible, increase such sympathy. The support of public opinion would enable her to influence the smaller princes. Thus it must be regarded as an achievement of south-western Liberalism that Prussia received a Constitution, although the granting of that Constitution was intended as a

blow to Liberalism and was, in fact, the heaviest blow it sustained. Freedom could only be achieved and protected in a Germany in which Prussia was no longer an administrative and military entity. With a Constitution that linked its various territories more closely, Prussia was bound to become more firmly established. The course of events was strangely contradictory. It was the Liberals who tried to prevent the proclamation of the Constitution, and Frederick William who had insisted upon it. The Frankfurt politicians had acted in a seemingly reactionary manner in the hope of gaining a liberal objective. The king had acted in an apparently liberal manner and had thereby achieved a reactionary result.

Was the liberal sacrifice made by the king as considerable as it appeared? The "Rights of the Prussians" in the enforced charter were considerable; but the system of which they formed part had been adapted to suit the royal design. The nomination of ministers, the executive power, and the supreme command of the army had all been allotted to the king; the entire Executive, therefore, was at his unrestricted disposal, and the dialectical procedure of the checks and balances, to which we referred earlier, did not extend to the seat of sovereign power.

These limitations sufficed in themselves to uphold the autocratic principle, but a further guarantee was provided by the historical origins of the Constitution and by the events preceding its establishment. Had a Constitution been agreed upon by the king and the Berlin National Assembly, as had been envisaged before the Assembly met, the will of the people would have been an independent factor, like the will of the monarch, in the creation of the Constitution; it would thus have been based upon a contract between prince and people. By bestowing the Constitution, however, every appearance of a voluntary act was preserved; it represented the prince's gift to his subjects. The impression left by the March struggles was obliterated, and an act of absolute sovereignty took its place. But Liberty must have been fought for if it is to be enduring. "A dictated Constitution is no Constitution," said Welcker, an authority on Constitutional Law, in his encyclopædia. What occurred here was at most, to use Bismarck's words, "a revolution from above." This was fully realized in the king's entourage. He himself spoke of the Charter as "a scrap of paper," and the camarilla of his confidential advisers consoled itself with the idea that they would soon get rid of the bad Constitution. Speaking of the Chamber which was now to be elected, the Prime Minister said to Bismarck: "If it doesn't work we shall draw our swords and chase the fellows to hell."

Then came the last act in the tragedy of the "German Revolution." Although the act of imposing the Charter showed clearly to the outside world how the king stood with regard to Frankfurt, there was nothing for the National Assembly to do but once more to make a bid for Prussian favour. It completed its Imperial Constitutional Law and then elected Frederick William Emperor. It was only logical that he should refuse the crown. He wished to have nothing to do with the representatives of the people, and would negotiate only with the princes. To the delegation from the Paulskirche, who on April 3rd, 1849, offered him the crown, he said: "I would not be acting in conformity with the wishes of the German people, I would not be able to establish German unity, if I were to outrage most sacred rights and come to such a decision without the free agreement of the other crowned heads."

But in private conversations he spoke openly of the antagonism which existed between the newly consolidated State of Prussia, the outcome of the Charter, and the united *Reich* which was demanded in Frankfurt and which would have to conform to liberal ideals and desires. The king wrote to Bunsen a few days after refusing the imperial crown that "the *Teutschthümelei* (Teutomania) of 1848 has, on the whole, taken no root whatsoever, particularly in the large eastern section of the monarchy, and that my Prussians on this side of the Weser are for the great majority '*black-white*' (the Prussian colours), regarding 'Teutonia' as a possible acquisition and certainly not as a thing into which they could be merged. You can stake your life on that!" As a message to the former Prime Minister of England, Robert Peel, who had advocated the acceptance of the Imperial crown, he wrote a few weeks later that he did not wish to run the risk "of cheapening my honour by irrevocably dissolving Prussia, God's glorious creation in history."

Absolutism versus parliamentarism was therefore by no means the only issue at stake. The king himself had cited the feeling prevalent in Prussia east of the Weser—roughly equivalent to old Prussia or East Elbia—where his subjects might be willing to conquer and dominate Germany, but never to meet Germany on an equal footing, and to merge into it. This was Pfizer's argument once more, but applied by the other side. Not only the Liberals, but the real Prussians, and their king with them, felt very definitely the antithesis of "black-white" versus "black-red-gold," Prussia with or without a Constitution versus a German *Reich* set up in conformity with liberal ideals.

But let us return to the events of 1849.

The German National Assembly received its death-blow with

the "No" of the Prussian king; their discussions could no longer have any importance since the attempt to establish the *Reich* had failed. Soon after this the governments of Austria and Prussia recalled their representatives and most of them left Frankfurt. A rump Parliament of the radicals continued to sit for a short time, then moved its seat to Stuttgart and was finally dispersed by the military. The terrible disappointment which followed their high hopes plunged Germany once more into rebellion. Only old Prussia, the country to the east of the Elbe, remained for the most part calm. There were risings on the Rhine, in Saxony, in the Bavarian Palatinate, and in Baden, not in favour of a Liberal Constitution but of a Democratic Republic.

But the governments, unlike those of the previous year, were no longer bewildered by events. In his speech to the Deputation from the Frankfurt Parliament, which offered him the Imperial crown, the king of Prussia had used words which clearly revealed his ultimate counter-revolutionary intentions: "If the Prussian shield and the Prussian sword are needed against enemies from without or from within, I shall be there and there will be no need to call me," or, as he himself explained his decision to Bunsen: "For those who talk of democracy soldiers are the best remedy: Adieu!" A very short time after this the Prussian army was required in many places in Germany; the Saxon troops were not strong enough to suppress the revolution, the Bavarians were in part unreliable, the troops from Baden in the process of being disbanded. The Prussian regiments of the line and the *Landwehr*, on the other hand, fought unflinchingly. The Prussian royalists welcomed this use of the army for internal purposes, for they wished for a definite re-establishment of royal authority. To the Bavarian Minister, who had come to take leave of him, Bismarck said: "God grant that your army, in so far as it is unreliable, will openly desert . . . the more the merrier. . . ."

Throughout May, June and July 1849 the fighting continued. The last resistance was in Baden, where Prince Wilhelm of Prussia, later the first German emperor, who was at this time known at the "Kartätschen Prinz" (Grape-shot Prince), was in command. Executions and hard-labour sentences imposed by courts-martial followed the fighting. Only a short time afterwards the rising against the Habsburgs was also ruthlessly suppressed; regiments belonging to the Czar, who here played the rôle of the Prussian king, were victorious over the Hungarian revolutionary army. Once again calm prevailed throughout Europe.

Prussia and Liberalism together were to have brought about the unity of Germany; although, of course, without the German

provinces of Austria. That had already been Pfizer's idea. We have heard that the Prince of Leiningen, the step-brother of Queen Victoria, submitted such a suggestion to Berlin. Furthermore, advice from London was not lacking; it was considered there that co-operation between the Prussian Crown and the liberal middle classes would be the best solution. But both Liberalism and middle classes were totally different concepts in Junker Prussia and in England. Absolutism was still too deeply rooted in Prussia to entertain any desire to share the supreme power, or even to accept the help of the subjects. To Frederick William the Frankfurt imperial election was nothing short of "revolutionary presumption." "One only accepts or refuses a thing which can be offered—and those there have nothing to offer. That is a matter for me and my equals." This was how he described to his London Minister his refusal of the Imperial Crown. The king wished to be elected by the princes so that, afterwards, he could "maintain order" as Supreme Commander of Germany.

But German unity was by tradition the province of the Liberals. To pursue at the same time a policy of national unity and of reaction was contradictory. Frederick William attempted it, after the defeat of the revolution, and failed. The Chamber, which had been elected on the basis of the Charter, was dissolved again in April 1849, because it had recognized the Frankfurt German Constitution, and that "bad" Prussian Constitution which gave the king the "belly-ache" was revised several times in the interests of the autocratic régime. We have seen that everywhere in Germany the Prussian army became the executioner of the counter-revolution. At the same time Prussia wanted to obtain from the princes what the king had refused to accept from the Frankfurt Assembly: the leadership of Germany. Probably the princes would have agreed, had they still been under pressure from their own Liberals. But since they had been freed from the pressure of the Frankfurt National Assembly and of the people by the Prussian armed forces, they no longer needed to subordinate themselves to the leadership of Prussia. Why should they mediatize themselves? And the unification of Germany under Prussian leadership would have had precisely this result. They preferred to follow the Austrian policy which, after the suppression of the Hungarian revolution, turned again to German affairs. Austria's interests, however, were best served by a resurrection of the Federal Diet, that combination of despotism and anarchy, which gave the Habsburgs the upper hand in Germany without requiring them to relinquish the rule over their non-German peoples.

Prussia had manœuvred itself into an impasse. In the end it had to choose between abandoning its objectives or making war on Austria. The European situation was, moreover, not favourable: the Czar did not wish for a united and consolidated Germany and the king himself had no desire to obtain an alliance with revolutionary France. The decisive factor was that the Prussian army could not fight against Austria, because considerable sections of the army were still scattered through South Germany: it was impossible to take the field simultaneously against revolution and against reaction. This dilemma was the secret cause of that theatrical parade on March 21st, 1848, when Frederick William, with hatred of Liberty in his heart and the black-red-gold colours of Liberty on his arm, addressed his "dear Berliners." In order to perform such magic, to exploit Liberalism and simultaneously work the will of the army; to leave Prussia untouched and at the same time to win over Germany—for this a political wizard was needed and that the king was certainly not. Nor did he wish to risk the passage at arms which alone offered him an escape. In the autumn of 1850 he capitulated to Austria and abandoned his German plans. Austria humiliated him, and for a long time the "diplomatic defeat," as it was termed, at a conference held in the Moravian town of Olmütz, weighed heavily upon the souls of the ambitious Prussians.

After the suppression of the revolution, when national hopes had been shattered, a lethargic calm again settled upon Germany. In Frankfurt, which had heard the brilliant debates of the National Assembly, a permanent Congress of Diplomats—the "*Bundestag*"—was again in session. The police of the German States again co-operated in the persecution of liberal and democratic writers and professors. It was a repetition of what had taken place in 1819 and in 1830. A breeze had once sprung up in Germany but it had not developed into a storm strong enough to overthrow the thrones. Order had been restored, but to the advocates of Unity and Freedom it was still disorder. Germany slept, guarded by thirty-six monarchs.

Since Olmütz—since Prussian sympathies amongst the Liberals of the smaller German States no longer promised any immediate benefit to Prussian politics, the government of King Frederick William had been endeavouring to restore things to their old order. Little enough had changed since 1848 and, in addition, the political wind had veered. Even before the revolution there had been a Chamber, the "*Vereinigte Landtag*" (United Diet), but at that time the left wing was advancing and popular feeling

was in its favour. Now the old powers had turned from defence to attack. Amongst the most important changes which the retrograde revision of the Constitution brought about, was a new electoral system, which divided the voters into three classes on the basis of taxable property. Each class represented one-third of the revenue from taxation and each class elected one-third of the electors. These electors in turn elected the deputies, so that a few rich people had as much say in the elections as the intermediate class of the well-to-do and the great masses of the poorer classes. But more significant than the electoral system was the ruthless exploitation of bureaucratic power—the *fureur de gouverner* again prevailed. As the voting took place publicly the voter was exposed to every form of coercion. The first Chamber, the "*Herrenhaus*," was nothing more than a duplication of the royal power, and of the three hundred and fifty members of the second Chamber two hundred and fifty were Conservatives.

Although there was now a Constitution to limit, theoretically, the extent of the king's autocracy, in actual fact the government was not less autocratic during the ten years following the revolution than previously.

In 1857 Frederick William fell ill; an apoplectic stroke paralysed his brain, and his brother and heir, Prince William, temporarily took over the government for him. With the change in the head of the State came a change in politics. Prince William, no less of an absolutist than his brother, was, at the same time, no imaginative romantic like him, but calm, consistent and clear-headed. He felt himself before everything else a Prussian officer. Before the revolution he had fought against the conceding of rights to the people and was a determined opponent even of the United Diet, of the "Nobles' Parliament," as it was called, of 1847. The events of 1848, however, made a great impression on him. When he was held responsible for the bloodshed of the Berlin street fighting and was forced to flee to London for a time, he said with melancholy resignation that old Prussia was dead and a new Prussia rising. Then he was brought into opposition to the government of his brother by the diplomatic defeat of Olmütz. The proud soldier could not forget that the Prussian army had withdrawn without drawing a sword. Because it was the reactionary Powers of the east, Russia and Austria, which had humiliated Prussia, he came under the influence of western liberal ways of thinking. Finally the Conservative camarilla offended him deeply by wishing to place the government again in the hands of the sick king. Prince William replied by summoning a moderate semi-liberal ministry. People on the Left thought

hopefully a "New Era" had begun. In the autumn of 1858 the new House of Deputies was elected. The Conservatives so far had relied more upon the influence of the bureaucracy than upon party organization. Civil Servants were not allowed to exercise the usual pressure in favour of the right. The Regent himself seemed to incline to the other side. The result was astonishing: of two hundred and thirty-six Conservatives only fifty-nine were returned. The two hundred and ten Liberals were now in the majority.

Altogether it seemed as if a political Spring was coming in Germany. The stagnation which had succeeded the years of revolution was over. The middle classes, which had been by no means resigned to their fate and whose inner strength had increased, began again to show signs of activity, of course, directed as before towards German unity, which was only possible in a free Germany. In the autumn of 1859 the "*Deutsche Nationalverein*" (German National League) was formed, which for many years influenced politics. Its programme was Prussian leadership, the centralization of power and a German Parliament. Union with the German parts of Austria was not abandoned, but postponed indefinitely. A whole series of similar all-German organizations arose. The "*Kongress Deutscher Volkswirte*" (Congress of German Economists) representing the point of view of the Free Traders; the "*Deutsche Handelstag*" (German Trade Conference); the "*Deutsche Juristentag*" (German Lawyer's Conference), scholars, marksmen, singers, athletes—once more imbued with national and liberal ideas. Finally, the liberal members of the different German Diets formed the "*Deutschen Abgeordnetentage*" (German Deputies Conference), which almost amounted to the rebirth of a German Parliament, but, like the Paulskirche, without power in the State and seeking to obtain it. The entire movement was inspired by the "New Era"; the liberal trend in Prussia strengthened the belief that the new Germany must be under the leadership of the Hohenzollerns. And yet it was precisely on the question of national unity that the Prussian Diet came into opposition to the Cabinet of the "New Era." In deference to the wishes of the Regent the Cabinet had declined to subscribe openly to the programme of German unity, and in this they were supported for tactical reasons by the right wing of the Liberal party. As a result there came a split in the Liberal party and the left wing founded the German Progressive Party in Prussia.

The old antagonism between the desire for the merging of Prussia and its continued independence once more became

apparent here, the whole fate of Germany was bound up with it. The Progressive Party, and with it the National League, both identical in leadership, had the same conception of unity as Paul Pfizer had had in the thirties: Prussia was to be merged into Germany. The idea emerged again and again, whenever German affairs began to move. Not only the argument for an organic government and administration dictated this; for a single large state united with others would, it was feared, gradually stifle the smaller ones; but there was also the old, deeply rooted antipathy to Prussian domination, to the rigid military State in the North, to the unyielding, brutal, arrogant Junker Prussianism which had so few friends in the South and West; of which, as we remember, Pfizer himself, who had fought for the Prussian solution, had said: it stands "like a threatening, terrifying spectre in the background." His original plans were now those of the German patriots, who wished to exploit the power of Prussia in the interests of Germany but at the same time to merge Prussia into Germany—to use all that was good in her and at the same time to render Prussia harmless. They wanted to be *Germans*, instead of Badeners, Hanoverians or Saxons; Germans, but not subjects of a Greater Prussia. Prussia was not to become a Power, following an imperialist policy on behalf of Germany, and the Prussians were to be purged of this ambition for ever. The Liberals did not wish to sacrifice Liberty to Unity, for the very reason that they could not imagine Unity without Liberty. But the merging of Prussia could not be the intention of the leading Prussian politicians, even if they shared the national ambitions of the Liberals. To them the strength of Germany seemed to lie in the continuance of Prussia. In a memorandum written in 1859 Bismarck said: "I would not wish to see 'Germany' replace 'Prussia' on our banner before we (Prussia) are more closely linked with our other compatriots." That was the precise opposite of the programme cherished by the Progressives. Bismarck's statement was in agreement with Prince William, who in 1849 had said: "He who wishes to rule Germany must first conquer it for himself . . . fiery enthusiasm is not enough." That was just what was feared in the south and amongst the Liberals in the north, that Prussia would conquer the rest of Germany, that Prussian military discipline, Prussian administrative drill, the Prussian corporal's stick would soon suppress the gayer and more colourful qualities of the other German peoples.

The next phase of the struggle for freedom took place within the Prussian State. Matters came to a head on a military question. For decades the *Landwehr* had been a thorn in the flesh to

Prince William. The dualism of the parallel existence of army and militia was opposed to uniformity, which he considered an essential condition for the efficiency of the army. The rapidity of mobilization was also in his opinion affected thereby, as in peace time half the field army was only a skeleton. The Reformers of the Napoleonic Wars, it is true, had carried out their reorganization in order to increase the defensive strength of the country; the mobilization of the people in special regiments was to supply the moral force for this defence. For a war of aggression, however, rapid mobilization might be essential, and Prussian military tradition had always been based on the offensive.

It was, however, not military reasons alone which caused Prince William to dislike the *Landwehr*. There were also political considerations which urged him to abolish the citizen army. The military Reformers of 1808, Scharnhorst and his friends, had wished to bring about complete agreement between the political and military constitutions: the military duties of the citizens were to be the counterpart of their political rights. They thought this the best way of safeguarding the State; but they never got further than compulsory military service for, as we saw, the Constitution was refused by the king. Prince William, on the contrary, believed that the *Landwehr* was only possible as long as an absolutist government continued, but that it could not be maintained if a Constitution or even freedom of the Press existed. Even before Frederick William had summoned the Parliament of Notables in 1847, Prince William had raised objections: "Under no circumstances must the petition rights of the 'estates' be allowed to extend to military matters. . . . If discussions and petitions of this kind are to be let loose in the United Diet and the Press is given an even greater degree of freedom than it at present possesses, the continued existence of the Prussian *Landwehr* . . . is a complete impossibility!" What he wanted was exactly the opposite of that for which the Reformers had striven—namely, the complete separation of military affairs from the civic rights. His counsellors in these plans expressed themselves more drastically. General von Roon was of the opinion "that one is not master in one's own house if in every conflict of opinions . . . one has to consider and estimate the effect which the disputed government measure, whether it concerns foreign or home policy, will have on the armed section of the people—the *Landwehr*." Or, as another officer of the same circle, Edwin von Manteuffel, expressed it: "It is intolerable to be dependent upon the goodwill or otherwise of fifty thousand peasant louts."

In the year 1859 Napoleon III and Piedmont made war on

Austria. Prussia also had mobilized her army. She was too late to take any active part in the battle, but the Prince Regent utilized the occasion to carry out his long conceived plan of reorganization. He almost doubled the number of Line regiments, and at the same time disbanded the cadres of the *Landwehr*. The soldiers who up till now had formed the regiments of the *Landwehr*, were, in the event of mobilization, to swell the ranks of the Line troops. The *Landwehr* officers, who had hitherto been independent in the leadership of their troops, were attached to the Line as reserve officers. The name "*Landwehr*" was retained as camouflage for a second reserve: the whole *Landwehr* system, which had enjoyed so much popularity since 1813, was annihilated at one blow. In addition, Prince William created a special body—a Military Council—to stabilize the independence of the crown, in its exercise of the supreme army command. This instrument of royal autocracy was destined to p ay a large part in Prussian-German politics.

Scharnhorst, the military Reformer of 1808, had concentrated all military matters in the Ministry of War. But now the Minister of War had to appear in the *Landtag*, was questioned by the deputies, and subjected to parliamentary criticism; so that in the interests of royal power it was better to remove from the minister's jurisdiction the more important appointments. The Chief of the new Military Council, the Edwin Manteuffel previously referred to, carried through a "purge" in the officers' corps: his ban fell in the first place on those officers who had been promoted during the War of Liberation, but who were not bred in the army tradition, long since re-established. Finally the Regent introduced three years' military service for the infantry and four years' for mounted troops, in place of the former two and three years' service respectively. This was a measure of questionable military value; such long military service was scarcely necessary for technical training. But in no other way, said Prince William, was "the true spirit of soldiering" to be cultivated, for in his opinion the Line regiments of short service had not always been fully satisfactory in 1848. This innovation pointed distinctly to counter-revolutionary plans. Dismay quickly spread amongst the Liberals. The historian, Heinrich von Sybel, angrily apostrophized the War Minister, von Roon: "You are mutilating the great work of 1814! . . . You hate the democratic idea behind the *Landwehr*. You want to create an army of a closed caste. The spirit of the War of Liberation has departed from you!" This was an apt description, although later Sybel chose to forget that he had spoken in this way.

The position accorded to the Constitution in Prussia may be judged from the fact that the entire military reorganization was settled by a stroke of the Regent's pen, without the *Landtag* being even informed. The *Landtag* only heard of it later when an increased budget was demanded from it—an additional expenditure which was by no means negligible, as the revenue from taxes was to be raised by one-fourth. It was the abolition of the *Landwehr*, however, which really affected the mood of the people, while parliamentary opposition finally centred on the question of the three years' military service, and it was this which provided the electioneering platform. Behind it lay the whole problem of Prussian and German politics in its full gravity: the problem not only of that time but of the past and of the future. The power of the king or the will of the people; bureaucratic despotism or civic liberty; federal unity of Germany or a Greater Prussia bent on expansion.

The Deputy, von Unruh, in 1848 President of the Prussian National Assembly, and one of the leading Liberals, wrote: "A centralized bureaucratic control over State and police . . . and a large standing army . . . facing an unarmed people, assures the crown of a supreme power completely independent of the Chambers, a power which can be exercised by levying taxes without annual consent. On these three pillars absolutism stands firm and assured, even if surrounded by Parliamentary mummery." These "three pillars" stood firm as ever in this "Liberal" New Era, although the majority in the Chamber was trying to upset them.

That was one, the inner-political, side of the problem; the other, the military and foreign political side, was not less important to Unruh: "Prussian arms will always be the decisive factor, but the spirit of 1813 must again awake and descend upon the whole of Germany so that, if need arise, we can lose Lützen and Bautzen, but win Grossbeeren, Dennewitz, Kulm, Katzbach and Leipzig, and not make peace after a second Solferino." That meant that the nation, even if a battle were lost, must retain its self-confidence and fighting power, and not collapse as it had done in 1806 after Jena: and this, in the opinion of Unruh and his friends (like Stein and the other Reformers before them), could only be accomplished by a nation free to choose its political destiny. The Liberal majority of the Chamber remained firmly in opposition.

On the other hand the Junkers and the military leaders were convinced that the *Landtag* must submit to the royal decision, or disappear. Prince William, soon to be king, was firmly convinced

that German unity must be conquered. The Prussian "*Volksverein*," an organization founded by the Conservatives in 1861, included in its programme: "Unity of our German Fatherland, but not after the fashion of the 'Kingdom' of Italy . . . no robbing of crowns and no nationality swindle . . . a personal kingship by Divine Right and not by the grace of a Constitution. . . ." The old-Prussian military standpoint of Minister von Roon was wholly intransigent: "In my opinion Prussia could do nothing worse than dissolve in this doctrinaire swindle. Out of the mud-bath of a revolution it might arise with new strength—in the sewers of doctrinaire liberalism it must rot without any hope of escape." His methods aimed at provocation, for he much preferred a bloody rebellion, where the guns were brought up, to peaceable discussion with a Liberal Chamber. Even a very moderate Liberal complained of Roon's manners, "contemptuous, frivolous, insolent, with all the arrogance of the Junker army officer." Bismarck, at that time Minister in Paris, agitated from afar against the Liberal Parliamentarians: "If these people mistake sham battles for the real fight and trespass, plundering and maurauding, on privileged royal territory, the time will yet come when the enemy will uncover his batteries and fire."

Fresh elections took place in December 1861. The result was an enormous victory for the Left wing: the three Liberal parties together won two hundred and sixty seats, the Conservatives only fifteen. In January 1862 the king signed a secret document, a plan for the civil war in which the troops were to besiege and take Berlin. In the autumn, however, the king was on the point of abdication. Bismarck was summoned by telegram. He had long cast greedy eyes at power and continually vaunted himself as the strong man. Already the last king had written in the margin of a ministerial list in which his name occurred: "Red reactionary, smells of blood, might be of use later." Now the moment had arrived.

But when the Chamber would not yield and the storm in the Press grew daily worse, the country became more and more agitated and the government began to grow anxious. Even Roon was ready to give way on the question of the three years' military service. He read the stories of Strafford and Latour, and remembered a prophecy which said he should "hang by the neck." The king said to Bismarck: "I can see quite clearly how this will end. There in front of the *Opernplatz*, under my windows, they will cut off your head and, a little later, mine." Bismarck answered: "Could we end more fittingly?"

He had no fear. He irritated and provoked the majority in

the *Landtag* as much as ever he could. The more obstinate the attitude of the Liberals, the firmer became his position with the king, and to be firmly established in the royal confidence was his primary aim upon which all his other plans were based. He had not been two weeks in office when he hurled his famous words in the face of the *Landtag*: "The great questions of the day will not be decided by debates or resolutions, but by *blood and iron.*" He was answered by a Liberal, Max von Forckenbeck: "In Prussia, in my opinion, the only Government possible is one which maintains the Constitution truly and faithfully, and to such a Government all the blood and iron of the nation would be available." Here again was the oft repeated promise of the Liberals to carry out every military demand made by the government, if the latter would only fulfil the old desires of the nation for Unity and Liberty. Treitschke, a more passionate Liberal, raged: "When I hear a banal Junker such as this Bismarck boasting of 'iron and blood' with which he wishes to subjugate Germany, it seems to me that the infamy of it is only surpassed by its absurdity."

Bismarck was right in not fearing the revolution. In the social struggle which merged into the struggle for power between king and Parliament, the Junkers, who dominated army and administration, were opposed only by the middle class; and the middle class could not count upon the masses, whether rural or urban, and there was no desire to bring these into a revolutionary movement. The plutocratic and peculiar character of the three-class electoral system contributed to giving the bourgeoisie the majority in the Chamber. As the maximum of taxation had been raised rapidly, the industrialists and merchants who had suddenly become rich had in many electoral districts outstripped the landed proprietors. The liberal trend had originated at the time of the Regent's own sympathies with Liberalism, and had spread to a certain extent even among the rural population. Conservative influence on public opinion was small in spite of its entrenchment in the ruling class, and the Conservative political organization was still in its infancy. Furthermore, polling was negligible; of the third class, those who paid the least in taxes, less than a quarter exercised their voting rights even in the stormy days of the conflict. In the medium-sized towns of the West rather less than one-tenth usually voted. In the first and second classes together not more than two hundred and eighty thousand persons were entitled to vote. On this small section, who were allotted two-thirds of the total number of electors who again elected the deputies—the decision depended. And it was just this small sec-

tion in which liberal and national ideals were alive. They opposed Prussian particularism because they hoped thus to break the predominance of Junker power. But they would not attempt to revolt; they knew, on the contrary, that they would be the first to suffer if once again, as in 1848, it should come to risings and barricade fighting.

At the height of the conflict Ferdinand Lassalle, the first German Socialist leader, advised the liberal bourgeoisie that it should "intervene and so transform the Army that it would never again be able to resist the will of the nation"—and that was in fact the only means of changing the course of policy. It was for this reason that the Crown and the Junkers, by reorganizing the army, made sure that they alone would control it. The attack of the liberal bourgeoisie was indeed directed against the Army, but they neither wished to employ the means recommended by Lassalle—to leave the *Landtag* and to bring the fight out into the open—nor did they dare to call for refusal to pay taxes, which would have been a weapon more appropriate to the middle class. In spite of successes at the poll they felt too weak to adopt either course and in this they were right.

Therefore Bismarck, correctly estimating the position, was able to triumph. He did everything to widen the breach. He left to the middle class, as Frederick William I had once left to the Junkers, "the hot air of the Diet," placed the Press under police supervision, expelled undesirable persons from Berlin, inflicted disciplinary punishment upon oppositional officials and *Landwehr* officers, censured all political utterances outside Parliament, broke the Constitution wherever necessary, levied taxes and continued his Greater Prussian foreign policy. That he was successful in his foreign policy was the decisive point.

CHAPTER III

THE EMPIRE

RANKE, THE GREAT GERMAN HISTORIAN, in a memorandum expressed the following opinion: "It can perhaps be said that King Connétable (the 'King-Marshal,' as Frederick the Great used to call himself) and his army are all that really counts in Germany." This was written in 1849, at the moment when the liberal middle classes in the Frankfurt *Paulskirche* had failed in their attempt to form the *Reich* on a parliamentary basis. A dozen years later the educated middle class had recovered again and formed a political group in Prussia in the Chamber and over all Germany in the *Nationalverein*, and had given fresh proofs of its vitality.

There was a third element of popular power, the lowest stratum of artisans and agricultural and industrial workers. It had given proof of its existence during the risings of the revolutionary years. Since that time it had had no further opportunity of political activity. The three-class electoral system gave these men no influence in the Prussian Chamber. When they suggested that the German National League should allow them to pay their contribution in instalments, so that they would be able to join, they received a polite but negative reply: they were to regard themselves as "honorary members by birth of the *Verein*."

The Liberal deputies at the time of the conflict were representatives of the moneyed classes. They were opposed to the extreme Democracy to which they attributed the blame for the catastrophe of 1849, and which they feared might again provoke a bloody victory for the reactionaries.

Bismarck, who became Prussian Premier in 1862, who created the Empire, who governed it for twenty years and whose personality over-shadowed Germany until the end of the Empire, was, above everything else, an autocrat. This he was by temperament, as a Junker and as a faithful servant of the Hohenzollerns. In order to carry through his far-reaching plans he made use of every political factor at his disposal. In the first place he used the monarchy, its Officers' Corps and its officials; he also used the liberal middle class, whose national desires he fulfilled (although in his own way); and lastly he did not even hesitate to make use of the lowest group, the fourth class. Its members

filled the ranks of the conscript army. As soldiers they were obedient enough, why should they not follow their king in political matters? The idea was not entirely new. The Empire of Louis Bonaparte had been built up on plebiscites, and Bismarck knew his Paris very well. In addition, Lassalle, the first German Socialist leader, disappointed by the Liberals in 1863, proposed to Bismarck an alliance between the working classes and the monarchy, to be founded on their common enmity against the bourgeoisie, on universal equal suffrage and social reforms. Bismarck, the great tactician, loved to have cards of all suits in his hand and to play them without scruple at the opportune moment.

For the present, as we have seen, he was engaged in a bitter quarrel with the Liberals, who were struggling with the king's Government for the control over the armed forces. He had abolished civic rights and privileges. In order to succeed with the reorganization of the army, against the stormy protests of the liberal Chamber, he had practically reintroduced absolutism.

The opposition of the Liberals would scarcely have gone so far, had they not mistrusted the German patriotism of the Government. The unity of Germany was the centre of all their plans—as it had once been expressed in the *Paulskirche* by a deputy who solemnly proclaimed that for thirty years all the longing of the Germans had been centred in the wish "not only for freedom, but for a political existence in the world." The Liberals of the Prussian Diet did not want to sanction the many new regiments and the three years' military service, mainly because they did not believe that the Cabinet would employ the forces at its disposal for national purposes. Bismarck was for them a bred-in-the-bone Prussian. Once previously a Liberal in the *Landtag* had called him "a prodigal son of Germany." It had not yet been forgotten that Bismarck, at that time a Conservative deputy, had answered: "Prussia is the home of my fathers, and I have not yet left my paternal roof. I do not know if the cradle of the speaker also stood in Prussia; if not, I must tell him that he has no ancestral home, and therefore is not able to leave it. Of his mansion only the first foundations are being laid, perhaps the first stones. . . ." At this a Silesian member, Count Dyhrn, shouted: "The house has stood for a thousand years!" That the old German Empire had always existed in spirit and only needed renewing politically was the belief which was commonly held in the south and west of Germany and amongst the Liberals. It had found impassioned expression in the famous words of Freiherr vom Stein, spoken at a time of the most intense disunity:

"I know only one Fatherland; its name is Germany." But Bismarck was wont to speak of a "national Prussian policy," and to say that "State egoism only and not romanticism" was worthy of Prussia as a great Power.

Bismarck's whole political past gave grounds for suspicion that he would sacrifice German interests in order to obtain advantages for Prussia. He was suspected of hazardous warlike plans, but of none calculated to promote German unity. Distrust went so far that rumours were circulated, and believed by serious men, that he wanted to relinquish the left bank of the Rhine to Napoleon and Kiel harbour to Russia, in order to buy foreign acquiesence for the enlargement of Prussia in North Germany. That was treason in the eyes of the patriots. Furthermore, Bismarck was a royalist reactionary. That the unity of Germany could be achieved by means other than those of liberalism and without liberty in Germany, was beyond the imagination of the patriots. The ideas of 1813, of 1848, still dominated them in 1860: the Prussian Government was to be constitutional and liberal; it would then win over to its side the people and the Chambers of the other States, and this popular feeling would overcome the opposition of the princes to Prussian leadership. National and liberal thinking still coincided.

Although anything but a Liberal himself, Bismarck made use of the liberal sentiments in the small German States for his purposes. As early as 1858 Bismarck said to one of the Conservative deputies that much might be gained by boldness and persistence, and that the Chamber and the Press could be made into powerful instruments of Prussian foreign policy. "Even though German unity could not be brought about by resolutions of the different Diets, by newspapers and by shooting competitions, nevertheless the Liberalism expressed in them brought pressure to bear on the princes, rendering them more inclined to make concessions to the *Reich*," wrote Bismarck thirty years later in his memoirs.

But Bismarck had a far lower estimate of the effect of liberal influence than had the Liberals themselves. In a letter to the Prussian Minister in Paris, dated December 24th, 1863, he wrote: "If the beer-shop enthusiasm impresses London and Paris I am delighted; it quite fits in with our plans: but for all that it does not impress me and gives us no shot and few pence for our struggle." That was said in the characteristic Bismarckian way —"Beer-shop enthusiasm" for the longing for unity and freedom, sacred things in the eyes of the Liberals—just as the famous saying about "iron and blood," which alone would decide the great questions of the day, was not a solemn pronouncement but was

tossed at the deputies in an indifferent, unceremonious manner.

Bismarck had for some time aimed at satisfying and exploiting the nationalist aspirations of the liberal middle classes, which he recognized and understood in his own way. In 1851 he had already expressed his view on this point: "The Prussian is loud-mouthed. If he is allowed to exercise this faculty to the outer world, one can do what one likes with him at home." He expressed the same view in a similar way a few years later: "We are a conceited nation—we resent it if we cannot brag in some way, and we are willing to put up with a good deal from a Government which gives us importance abroad." Bismarck expected to have no trouble with the citizens' demands with regard to home policy, the essence of their Liberalism, as long as he fulfilled their patriotic ambitions, or rather, the territorial substance of their patriotic faith. This faith he regarded solely from the Prussian point of view. They wanted to see Prussia merged in a united Germany, and thus conquered: he hoped to build up Germany by annexing the smaller States to Prussia. One of Bismarck's memoranda, written in 1858, was most characteristic of his programme: "There cannot be anything more truly German than the development of the right aspects of Prussian interests." He interpreted his opponents' motives very correctly when he attacked them in the Chamber as deniers of Prussia's position as a great Power and charged them: "If any conflict were to arise between democracy and the smaller states on the one hand, and the Prussian throne on the other, then your sympathies would be with the former." There could be no doubt that it was so. In his memoirs he treated as non-existent the conflict of ideas which was at the basis of the sharp constitutional conflict at the beginning of the sixties: "Whether one considered the matter from the Borussian standpoint, with the hegemony of Prussia as the main issue, or from the nationalist, with the unity of Germany as one's aim—both objectives coincided."

This was to oversimplify the issue. The two objectives coincided as far as the outer frontiers of the envisaged *Reich* were concerned, since the Liberals had, for the present, renounced union with the Germans of Austria. For the rest, however, there lay between them—between the "Borussian" objective on the one hand and the national and liberal on the other—the whole antithesis which existed and still exists within Germany, politically, territorially, in matters of religion and art, and in the German soul: the contradiction between militarism and citizenship, between Prussian collectivism and liberal individualism,

between the East Elbian Junker estates and the free cities of Swabia, between the covetous restlessness of North Germany and the quiet contentment of the South, between the policies of annexation and federation, between compulsion and liberty, between the drill of the Potsdam Guards and the spirit of the *Paulskirche*. The one aim common to both was German unity. It was, however, of crucial importance for the future which of the two forces would achieve this aim. But the day of the Liberals had been in 1848 and success had been denied them. Now it was the turn of Prussian leadership.

Already ten years before Bismarck became Minister he was convinced that the "Gordian knot of German conditions," as he wrote in his memoirs, could not be untied by love, but only "cut asunder by military measures." His programme was "to win over the King of Prussia, consciously or unconsciously," to his policy, "and with him the Prussian Army." He took over the Government at the very moment in which it had come into conflict with the Chamber on account of the Army. We have seen how he used all the means at his command to intensify the struggle and how he brought matters to a head, in order to render himself indispensable to the king. The anger of the liberal majority had little effect on him because he did not believe that they had any influence on the troops. He had no doubt that universal military service counted more than universal suffrage and that the political will of the subjects found stronger and truer expression in military service than in voting. Obedience in the army meant more than opposition at the elections. "The noise of the larger and smaller Parliaments" must be measured "by the barometer provided by the bearing of the rank and file or their attitude towards mobilization."

He had no other arguments, even for the inhabitants of the annexed parts of Poland, who, after all, had national grounds (and not only the theoretical principles which he held in such contempt), for enmity against the Prussian-German régime. He challenged the mandate of their deputies to oppose him because the Polish soldiers obeyed military orders. "It is clear," he shouted at them in the *Reichstag*, that "your electors are not in agreement with what you here proclaim, ostensibly in their name, and the matter is so notorious that I do not consider it incumbent upon me to prove my statement." Nevertheless he added the proof: "Your compatriots have fought with the same courage and with the same devotion as the inhabitants of any other parts of Prussia for that which unites us here." And of the united opposition of the Chamber at the time of the Prussian Constitu-

tional conflict he said coolly: "These tendencies did not reach as far as our regiments and their firing line."

Here lies the key to Bismarck's success and to the fall of German Liberalism. He relied on the Army, trusted it without and within, made himself the advance guard of its wishes and desires, and was in return carried forward by it. Liberalism had quarrelled with the Army. Things had been different in the time of the anti-Napoleonic Wars. After the defeat of Jena, in 1806, the army was reformed by the Liberals; they had introduced general conscription and created the *Landwehr* and thus had obtained the victory. At that time power walked hand in hand with liberty. During the years of revolution, 1848 and 1849, the army had marched against the people, it had been the instrument with which freedom was suppressed: in spite of general conscription and in spite of the *Landwehr*. During the Constitutional conflict in 1860 and the following year, the army remained loyal to the king, and for this reason Bismarck triumphed. It was still "a people under arms" as in 1813, but a people obedient in the hands of their officers who were not affected by liberal ideas. The same Prussian who, on election day, voted against the Government, obeyed blindly as soon as he had donned uniform; for this reason the Government could ignore resolutions adopted by the Chamber.

Since 1859 Bismarck had been working towards a crisis, which should culminate in an encounter between Prussia and Austria. Shortly before he became Minister, he offered his predecessor: "to deliver ready-made within four weeks, a German civil war of the best quality." Then, in 1864, while still allied with Austria, he suddenly marched against Denmark. The excuse was provided by the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, which were inhabited by Germans but reigned over by the king of Denmark. For a long time they had been the object of German patriotic feeling. In a completely unconstitutional position, with the resolutely hostile Chamber in his rear, Bismarck went to war. When the army, by a few rapid strokes, decided things in his favour, the entire public opinion of Germany ranged itself behind the Government. The parliamentary conflict had flared up, first of all to perfect the constitutional régime and secure the power for Parliament and, when that was achieved, to fulfil the nationalist aim of a political union of Germany—and then suddenly, after a few victorious battles fought by Bismarck the flame began to die down. The leader of the German National League, Rudolf von Bennigsen, of Hanover, complained: "In the North the Bismarckian spirit—worship of military power and diplomatic

successes—is gaining ground in the most alarming manner."

Everything happened as Bismarck had prophesied with unerring foresight: "We are a conceited nation . . ." and that the Germans would put up with anything if only their Governments would give them cause to boast. Summed up less scornfully, it meant that satisfied national ambition would soon obliterate parliamentary democratic aspirations.

The unity of Germany had always been regarded by the Liberals as the fruit of parliamentary resolutions and popular movements. Such movements, however, were not to turn into revolutionary risings because a revolution would menace the Liberals themselves and provoke the danger of an absolutist reaction. They had hitherto regarded the particularist aspirations of the various Governments and of the Conservative forces as the only obstacle to their activities. Now they were suddenly faced with an entirely new element—the tempestuous will of Bismarck who wanted to solve national problems in his own way. To drive out the Danes from the German territories of Schleswig and Holstein had been an old wish of the patriots: but the fact that Bismarck and the army fulfilled this wish, instead of the Volunteer Corps who had failed in an earlier attempt to do so, could hardly make it a less desirable achievement. Bismarck took from the nationalists' sails the wind which had hitherto carried their vessels forward. However, according to liberal opinion, the Duchies were to form a separate German State which could then, together with all the other German States, be fused into the Empire in the fulness of time. A prince was already there as Pretender; Bismarck made use of his hereditary claims—only to drop him as soon as the provinces were conquered.

Liberalism could not adjust itself to the new state of things; Bismarck moved too quickly along the road he had taken. He urged on the conflict with Austria, which was inevitable if the Empire were to be created under Prussian hegemony. The most important preparation for this were diplomatic moves to prevent any intervention by France or Russia, and the conclusion of an alliance with Italy, at this moment threatening Austria in the South. But the most astonishing step which the Prussian Premier took was the motion for the reform of the German Confederation which he introduced. On April 9th, 1866, in the Frankfurt Federal Diet, the day after the conclusion of the alliance with Italy, which assured an attack in the rear of the enemy, Prussia demanded the election of a Parliament by universal, direct and equal suffrage. After the experiences of 1848, it was certain that Austria, with her overwhelming non-German population, could

never risk such elections. What the motion really demanded, therefore, was nothing less than the exclusion of Austria from the German Confederation. That was almost paramount to a declaration of war.

But there was still more in this step to astonish the world: it was a threat to all Europe that a conflict between governments might develop into a revolutionary national war; the attempt to stir up the South and Central German democrats to bring pressure to bear on their own governments in order to force them to carry out Prussia's wishes; a blow at the obstinate Liberals with their own weapons; and lastly it was an appeal to those who had never hitherto voted—the workers and the socialists—to entrust themselves to royal leadership. It was the most comprehensive and daring *coup* that could have been attempted.

In his memoirs Bismarck has given reasons of foreign and domestic policy for this bold manœuvre: "It was necessary to be able to resort to revolutionary methods, if the worst came to the worst during a struggle against superior foreign power. In view of this I entertained no scruples about throwing into the frying-pan the strongest of the liberal arts, universal suffrage, in order to frighten off royalist countries abroad from putting their fingers into our national omelette. . . . The introduction of universal suffrage was a weapon in the struggle against Austria and other neighbours, in the struggle for unity, and at the same time an ultimate threat against all possible foreign coalitions." But his motives were not quite so simple when he hurled the bomb. "The strongest of the liberal arts . . ."? At that time he considered the democratic electoral system to be not exclusively "liberal." He wrote to the leading Bavarian minister: "I consider that direct elections and universal suffrage offer surer guarantees of a conservative attitude than any cunningly devised electoral law calculated to obtain artificial majorities. According to our experience the masses are more honestly concerned in the maintenance of order in the State than are the leaders of those classes which it is desired to favour by limiting the suffrage." According to his statement, therefore, he intended to achieve a conservative result, and not to promote the cause of freedom. His comment for London was that he considered "indirect elections as one of the most important aids to revolution," and when his London minister, in spite of this, reported to him the alarm which his bold proposition had occasioned there, he wrote in the margin of the report the extraordinary words: "In England only the upper classes are attached to the Monarchy and the Constitution, which represent their privileges and their dominion

over the country. The masses are rough and ignorant, and their attachment to the Crown is not of the same kind as in Prussia."

But the "guarantee of a conservative attitude," which Bismarck praised to the Bavarian Government, was not the only virtue which he found in the introduction of the democratic voting system, nor was it the threat against foreign monarchies, of which he speaks in his memoirs. But he remembered that Lassalle, the socialist and founder of the General German Workers' Association, had promised to the Crown the support of the working classes if it were prepared to transform itself into a "social and revolutionary popular monarchy." This transformation was to be demonstrated by a motion for the election of a Parliament on democratic principles. Lassalle was already dead when his advice was followed. "What a loss for Lassalle that he is as dead as a door nail," wrote Marx to Engels; "Bismarck would have made him his leading man now." But Bismarck liberated from prison his successor in the leadership of the Workers' Association, J. B. von Schweitzer, who was then serving a sentence, so that he might canvass for the coming Parliament, i.e. against the Liberals. To an intimate friend of Schweitzer's he granted a "loan without interest" of 2,500 thalers, and in so doing financed revolutionary agitation, which would in effect be directed primarily against the Liberal majority. He also wanted to take into his service Karl Marx, at this time an exile in London, but his offer was contemptuously rejected.

About Bismarck's real motives for his great *coup*—whether they were conservative or revolutionary, or whether he had his eyes on foreign politics—we have no authentic information. In his memoirs he wrote: "If it is a question of life or death one is not squeamish in the choice of one's weapons." On looking back over this period he spoke of universal suffrage only as a weapon against Austria and other countries, and held that if voting had only remained public, as he had intended, the allegiances of practical life—"Divine Realities" to use his own words—would have remained paramount. By this he meant that the authority of the officials and, in the country, the landowners would have assured the election of suitable candidates. But whether conservative or revolutionary or both; in any case the strongest of the liberal arts seemed calculated to trap the Liberals and to ruin them. Bismarck did not fear revolution. When Lassalle made his remarkable offer, Bismarck said: "It just depends which of us is the man who can best sup with the devil. We shall see." No doubt he considered himself that man. The idea of the *coup d'état* was familiar to him. As far back as 1849 he had pulled the strings

which moved Generals and Ministers at the other end. Since then he had studied Napoleon's methods of government at close quarters. We shall see that later he also entertained the idea of violent changes from above.

In the domestic sphere, that is in Prussia and in the rest of Germany, Bismarck was unsuccessful with his Parliamentary motion which was destined to be a complete failure. The term "Greek gift" is applicable here if ever: the gift was rejected because the donor was mistrusted. That this Minister should offer this political reform! The two were incompatible. It was too subtle, too sudden and, in spite of its astuteness, too obvious a trap. Lassalle's adherents numbered only a few thousands of no practical importance for the moment. Moreover, the history of the past three years spoke too plainly against the man who suddenly wished to appear as a protagonist of democratic unity; and who, in Prussia, was maintaining a completely unconstitutional régime. Just at this time—in January—a decision of the compliant Supreme Court had imperilled the right of the deputies to free speech. It is true that the king, naïve in the face of Bismarckian super-cunning, asked his Minister in horror: "But what you are proposing to me is revolution!" No one else in Germany, however, was taken in; Bismarck was answered with open scorn in many places. The *Kladderadatsch*, the Berlin *Punch*, wrote: "The Bismarck ministry appeals to the German nation and places its reliance on the people. Ha! Ha! Ha! Who was that laughing? All Europe and the neighbouring continents." A very serious South German paper, the *Stuttgarter Beobachter* (*Stuttgart Observer*), sneered: "The antics of the Devil when he falls into a font of Holy water are always amazing, but not more farcical than this last desperate jump of the noble Count. . . . Laughter is ringing through the whole of Germany to-day: Bismarck is convening a Parliament."

In spite of the persistence with which Bismarck wooed the Governments of the German States in the North and South—amongst other things he offered Bavaria supreme military command in South Germany, which, incidentally, was not his to award—Prussia remained alone. With the negligible exceptions of the smallest States all Germany was on the side of Austria. Bismarck endeavoured to persuade this or that Prince to remain at least neutral, but even that failed. The Princes were, in the very nature of their positions, opponents of such a close German community for which, as it seemed to them, a common Parliament would prepare the way; the looseness of the German Confederation was guaranteed by Austria in her own interests. Their

Diets, even where they had been ardent supporters of German unity, now exercised practically no influence in favour of Prussia: Bismarck's proposals had alarmed, not attracted them. The Prussian Liberals, who had experienced the constitutional conflict, the compulsion, the dictatorship on their own bodies, were least affected by sudden Parliamentary promises. They refused the war credits right up to the end. They expected, nay, hoped for the defeat, even for the dissolution of Prussia, as the better way to German unity.

At the very end, as the outbreak of war drew nearer, a few of the Liberals suppressed their antipathy to absolutist methods and yielded to the impression made upon them by the resolute use of power. Treitschke, who had called Bismarck the "*flachen Junker*," the shallow Junker, now realized how unfathomable that *Junker* was, and this advocate of German unity became a Prussian annexionist. But even he demanded that, first of all, there must be internal changes in Prussia. Finally, when the forces were gathering, war enthusiasm seized at least one section of the people who lustily cheered the parades. On the eve of battle one of the Prussian Liberals, a man of great integrity, the Breslau deputy, Franz Ziegler, called out at a public meeting: "The heart of democracy is everywhere where the colours of the country are flying." The time of the Reformers, 1813, the war of the *Landwehr*, lived again in his heart. On the other hand the friend and collaborator of Marx in his English exile, Frederick Engels, believed until the end that the opposition was stronger than the bond of loyalty. On May 25th he wrote optimistically: "If the Austrians are clever enough not to attack, trouble is sure to break out in the Prussian army." And on June 11th he prophesied with certainty the defeat of Prussia and rebellion by the reservists.

Karl Marx swore that the Prussians would pay for their pride. Both he and Engels were mistaken. The liberal opposition against Bismarck was, together with the dynastic forces, sufficient to put the whole of Germany against Prussia. But it could not reach as far as the Prussian firing-line. The Prussian army marched and fought as if no man had ever voted against the Government. The army was not influenced by politics, but it did, itself, exercise a most decisive influence on politics. On July 3rd, 1866, a double victory was won; the Prussians attacked and defeated the Austrian army near Königgrätz and on the same day elections took place for the Prussian Diet. Although no one could know how the struggle between the two great German States would terminate, war enthusiasm was sufficient to reverse the previous majority;

the conservative seats increased from thirty-eight to one hundred and twenty-three, and their radical opponents lost one hundred and five seats. The remnant split into two groups when, after the victorious conclusion of the war, the Government asked for immunity, for the subsequent approval of the unconstitutional military expenditure. Only fifty-seven deputies voted against the immunity motion. The king told a parliamentary delegation which presented an address that he had been obliged to act as he had acted and, if similar conditions occurred, he would act in the same way again. He spoke like an autocrat. But who could have protested against these words dictated by a royal sense of duty, and spoken by a monarch wearing the laurels of victory?

There was little talk of protest or even of defending the deeply infringed parliamentary rights. In view of the state of public opinion in the other German States, Bismarck needed a reconciliation with his own Liberals. But it proved difficult to convince the king even of the need for the Immunity Bill because of the Conservative opposition to its introduction. The royal privileges could have been much further extended in this time of victorious rejoicing. One of the Liberal leaders of 1848, the Rhenish merchant, Mevissen, wrote: "I am no admirer of Mars . . . but the trophies of war exercise a magic spell, even over the child of Peace. Unwittingly the gaze is arrested and the spirit dwells with those countless masses who are praising the god of the moment —Success." Even this confirmed Constitutionalist would, at this time, have put up with a few years of Bismarck's dictatorship. The Hanoverian, Behnigsen, founder of the German National League, resigned himself to the view that the nation could "for the present lay no well founded claim to have parliamentary government and the whole complex of liberties bestowed upon it by the grace of the Prussian Crown and the German Richelieu."

Treitschke, who during these years became the leading German political writer, predicted that "the immediate future belongs to moderate absolutism" although, owing to his liberal past, he regretted the fact, saying: "That spirit of Cæsarism which unfortunately has presided over this revolution from the outset, is not likely to yield immediately to a parliamentary spirit."

Only Catholic politicians, whose perception had been sharpened by their sympathy with Austria and their shattered hopes of an empire that would include Austria, refused to be influenced. One of their leaders in the Prussian Diet, August Reichensperger, confessed in his diary his desperation at the state of affairs: "that Law is only to exist for the small matters of life and that in the main force, cunning and deceit are to dominate." Another of

their leaders, Mallinckrodt, groaned: "The world stinks"; Prussia, he said, was "the camp of dishonesty." The Socialist, Liebknecht, exclaimed: "The oppressors of yesterday are the saviours of to-day, right has become wrong and wrong right. Blood appears indeed to be a special elixir, for the angel of darkness has become the angel of light, before whom the people lie in the dust and adore. The stigma of violation of the Constitution has been washed from his brow and in its place the halo of glory rings his laurelled head."

But those were voices of no importance or influence. In general, popular opinion followed success, war-glory and power. When, a year later, in the autumn of 1867, new elections for the Prussian diet took place, the Liberals once more lost half of their already diminished number of seats, and the Catholic party disappeared altogether from the scene. In their place new parties, Free Conservative and National Liberal, won a great number of seats; their programme was one of direct support for Bismarck.

There were many reasons—external reasons of German and Prussian politics, and intimate dynastic and personal reasons as well—why the dictatorship and the absolutism, which Mevissen and Treitschke had expected, were not established. We have quoted what those two prominent Liberals thought and the angry but true words of the Socialist Liebknecht, to show what would have been possible at that time. Parliamentary opposition was broken. Bismarck had taken the national wind out of the sails of the deputies who appeared so irreconcilable and thus he had paralysed their forces. If they themselves had wished to stand firm in defence of their constitutional rights they would no longer have received the support of their electors; so they had to be content with the golden bridge which the powerful and victorious Minister built for their retreat, and had to suffer the harsh words of the king without comment.

In addition to defeating Austria, the Prussian army had also defeated her allies, the smaller German States. After the victory Prussia annexed those of them whose territories lay between the Rhenish and the East Elbian parts of Prussia. Hanover, Hesse, Nassau and Frankfurt became "*Muss-Preussen*" ("compulsory Prussians"), without enthusiasm but without perceptible opposition. Thus Prussia rounded off her territory and, for the first time, became a great Power. And this great Power now formed the "North German Confederation" with the small States of North Germany. In this way a Federal State was formed in which Prussia, in size, population and material power, far exceeded the sum total of its partners. There were about twenty of them and

yet when taken together and with all their potentialities added up they were as a dwarf in comparison with their giant confederate. We must recall that an advocate of the Prussian solution, Pfizer, and after him many Liberals, had wished to see, before Germany was formed, a dismembered Prussia split up into its different provinces, in order that Prussia, at that time far less powerful, should not crush the smaller States with its superior strength. Now things had gone the opposite way: Prussia had gained considerably, not only in prestige, but in size; it was more firmly established and better able to withstand a crisis. It had become more independent, more strategically secure before it united with those others who had been defeated. It could not be otherwise: this new Germany was a Greater Prussia but with its Constitution framed on federal lines. Out of the North German Confederation there arose, a few years later, the German Empire, after the States of the South had joined the Confederation. The Confederation was the dress rehearsal which decided all the important features of what was to come.

Bismarck put his threat into practice: he gave the new Federal State a "*Reichstag*" elected by universal and equal suffrage. This was, in the eyes of many, really revolution, and again, as with the Prussian Reform of 1808, a "revolution from above." If the joke of the comic papers had really become fact, if Bismarck was appealing to a democratically elected Parliament, there were various motives to account for it, in part still those which had caused him to evolve the scheme a year before: considerations of foreign policy; the closer combination of Prussia with the small States of the Confederation; the wish, as before, for moral conquests in the South German States, whose independence had been retained for the present by French influence. There were, in addition, considerations of domestic policy. The Prussian Chamber of Deputies, which had given so much trouble to the Crown, was the Parliament of the wealthier classes of tax-payers, of the middle classes who were striving to gain influence. It was an obvious idea to mobilize the poorer classes against them. And here Bismarck was certainly not thinking of the urban proletariat, but—Germany was still predominantly agricultural—of his Schönhausen peasants whom he had armed in 1848 against the Berlin revolution. Fourteen years before, as a Conservative Deputy, he had answered a liberal opponent: "Indeed I mistrust the population of the large towns . . . but, to my mind, they are not the true Prussian people. On the contrary, should the large towns rise up again, the true Prussians would know how to bring them to their knees, even if it meant wiping them off

the face of the earth." The language used by the Minister was milder, the sense of the words the same. In the dispatch of 1866 to the Prussian Minister in London, from which we have already quoted, it was said that "the artificial system of indirect and class franchise is a dangerous one because it prevents the healthy elements which form the nucleus and the main body from coming into contact with the highest power." That was not only intended for the Envoy himself. Not long before Bismarck had said bluntly to the Liberal deputies in the Chamber: "You are denying the Prussian national spirit. Thank God this spirit is still monarchist through and through, and it will stay that way in spite of your 'enlightenment,' which I call a confusion of ideas." He was undoubtedly thinking of the labourers who worked on the big estates. The East Elbian agricultural workers, who were only legally free, could offer all kinds of possibilities to a bold statesman.

His opponents did not fail to recognize this. Representatives of Liberalism, who regarded the middle class as the "true bearers of liberal ideas and the real mainstay of all European states," voiced the fear that the bold Minister wished "to establish autocracy with the aid of the masses." Napoleon III had, after all, also founded his despotism on the plebiscite, on national vanity and on the army.

But there were also other reasons why Bismarck chose such unconventional paths. King William was old, seventy already at the time of the Prusso-Austrian war, and at this time more frail than he was later. His successor, Crown Prince Frederick William, husband of the English Princess Royal and son-in-law to Prince Albert, was a Liberal. In 1863, during the conflict between the Crown and the Chamber, when Bismarck was governing dictatorially and by arbitrary police methods, the Crown Prince had openly opposed the ministry of his father. Any day he might become king, and Bismarck had no wish to say farewell to power. When a Junker confidant reproached him with the fact that universal suffrage was not in accordance with conservative principles, Bismarck answered him angrily: "Do you want, may I ask, to preserve me at all for the Conservative party? Shall not I and the Conservatives be completely lost when the Crown Prince comes to the throne? As soon as the old gentleman closes his eyes I shall find myself kicked out by the Crown Prince. But he cannot kick me out if I am sure of a parliamentary majority. Such a majority I can now only secure by an electoral system of this kind."

So clear an argument leaves no manner of doubt concerning the purpose for which Bismarck introduced universal suffrage.

Bismarck, moreover, added: "If the electoral system is no longer necessary in a few years' time, or if it no longer pleases me, I shall withdraw it." That was not the expression of an ill-humoured moment, nor a remark made only for the benefit of his Conservative hearer. Thirty years later, when the expectations which Bismarck had placed on universal suffrage had not been permanently fulfilled, he wrote in his memoirs: "I have never doubted that the German people, as soon as they realize that the existing franchise is a pernicious institution, will be strong and intelligent enough to free themselves from it. If they cannot do this, then my phrase, once they are in the saddle they will be able to ride, will have been an error." This famous phrase about "riding" has always been regarded by German Liberals as a hopeful expression of democratic confidence, in keeping with the spirit of Freiherr vom Stein. The limited significance which Bismarck himself gave to his words was a disappointment. But, undoubtedly, Bismarck would have promoted the cause of democracy even more energetically had the struggle for power made it necessary. When war again threatened in 1867 he exclaimed: "I carry the red cap in my pocket and will don it on the day war breaks out."

Bismarck's faith in universal and equal suffrage was not immediately disappointed. The first elections, those for a North German *Reichstag*, brought a safe Conservative majority, while his implacable enemies, the Left Liberals, were reduced to a negligible figure.

As a result of the victory of the Prussian army and the union of the North German States through treaties between the sovereigns, the initiative for the draft of the Constitution was completely in the hands of the leading Minister of the one great Power among the German States, that is, in the hands of Bismarck. A democratic electoral system existed but the functions of the elected were insignificant—they could do little more than agree to the proposals of the Governments; under no circumstances did they wish or were they allowed to question the union; it was inconceivable that they should jeopardize this national achievement.

The result was a further strengthening of the army which now, in an increased sphere, that of the Confederation, was under the king of Prussia as "*Bundesoberfeldherr*" (Supreme Federal Commander). Complete command was in his hands and he exercised it through institutions—the army council and the general staff—which were separate from the Ministry of War and thereby removed from all parliamentary influence. If "public security"

demanded it—a matter which was to be decided by the king himself—he was able to proclaim martial law in any of the different States and, as Supreme Commander, could take over the administration and act as dictator. There was no common internal administration in the territory of the Confederation; that was left to the individual States, and the *Reichstag*, therefore, had nothing to do with it. It had practically no financial powers at all; these did not follow until later in the development of the *Reich*. So Parliament was virtually nothing more than "mask and mummery"; the "strongest of the liberal arts," which Bismarck had used as a threat, had been no more than an illusion. When the *Reichstag* once strayed into the really important military sphere the powerful Minister warned it: "I do not consider it advisable that any one should feel a special need to exercise the parliamentary influence for which you have striven and which we are glad that Parliaments should have, on matters concerning the army whilst many other fields remain open to it." Bismarck then proceeded to enumerate the harmless spheres to which the endeavours of the deputies could be directed without risking the danger of serious disagreements; weights and measures, coinage, post, telegraphs, shipping, railways. The warning was sufficient as far as this Parliament was concerned.

There was no misapprehension about the actual constitution; this charge cannot be made against the people's representatives. A National Liberal, Twesten, stated: "On the one side military force, firmer and more far-reaching than ever, held together in the hand of the supreme commander; and parallel with it universal, equal and direct suffrage—these are the means with which Cæsarian dictatorship is built up in France." Another deputy, the Left Liberal Waldeck, prophesied that the *Reichstag* would soon finish Parliamentarism. Speaking of the king's position, he said: "That Federal Commander who, without any kind of law, without any responsible Minister, is to have exclusive control of legislation, of the entire organization and the administration of military matters, has the power of a Roman Emperor." A compromise was finally arranged which promised the *Reichstag*, at least for the future, rights with regard to the Budget and on this basis the German semi- or sham parliamentarism was later to evolve. The foundations of the Empire were laid.

The Empire itself was an outcome of the war against France in 1870 and 1871, the third campaign which Bismarck caused the Prussian army to fight within seven years. He understood so to arrange facts that everyone in Germany was convinced that

the proud French Empire was about to attack the German people. This time the Prussian army allied itself with the troops of the other German States and completely defeated the French army. In the war against the "hereditary" enemy he found the means to unite the whole of Germany, the North German Confederation and the States of the South, in patriotic enthusiasm. In the South, particularly during the years after Königgrätz, the dislike of Prussian predominance had become especially active; people were afraid of the "Prussianization" which they saw steadily advancing. But battles fought together against a Napoleon awakened sentiments which were strengthened by remembrance, and the common victory created the enthusiasm which was necessary to weld the States into the Empire.

The Empire, which had for so long been the dream and the torment of the German people, was formed by an agreement between the princes who until this time had prevented and hampered its formation with all the forces at their disposal. Its creation was the result of the victory of the Prussian army, which for fifty years had been the strongest force against the desire for national union in Germany. That Bismarck had succeeded in bringing this army into the service of national unity was the historically decisive fact. A Bavarian particularist groaned: "If Prussia conquers us we shall be Prussian instead of German." The king of Würtemberg threatened: "Before I allow myself to be mediatized by Prussia I will enter into an alliance with France." The Government of the Grand Duke of Hesse conspired almost until the last with the French enemy. But no dynastic, particularist or democratic anti-Prussian opposition could have prevailed against the patriotic enthusiasm which ranged the whole of Germany, with the Liberals in the forefront, on the side of Prussia. Bismarck at last induced the insane and extravagant king of Bavaria to take the initiative for the princes by promising him vast sums from his secret funds. King William himself offered the strongest opposition to his elevation to the position of German Emperor. It is true that he had once considered the conquest of Germany, but what he loathed was that Prussia should be included in the Empire. "It would be a great misfortune," he said to the Crown Prince, "if I were forced to exchange the brilliant Prussian crown for this dirty bauble." According to the king's son-in-law, the liberal Grand Duke of Baden, the new Imperial Crown was looked upon as "a degradation" by General Headquarters at Versailles. Referring to the black-white-red colours of the new flag of the Empire he could find nothing more to say than that "at least they had not been picked out of the

mud of the gutter" like the black-red-gold emblem of the liberal patriots.

The Parliaments had little share in setting the coping-stone to the building of German unity. The Liberals found it most difficult to overcome the opposition of the Catholics in the Bavarian *Landtag*. They were prompted by the conviction that they could not afford to miss the favourable moment. A Liberal from Baden told a Bavarian Liberal that he did not so much as read what was written in the treaties and, referring to the mental state of the king, said that never again would they find a king of Bavaria who, because of a toothache, would offer the Imperial Crown. The North German *Reichstag* was permitted—a modest task—to beg the Prussian king not to refuse the honour offered to him by the princes. A delegation sent by the *Reichstag* appeared at General Headquarters; it was led by the same deputy who, in 1849, had been sent from the *Paulskirche* to offer Frederick William IV the Imperial Crown. They were the true representatives of the liberal German bourgeoisie, which for sixty years had struggled for German unity and freedom. "What do those thirty fellows want here?" asked one of Bismarck's councillors. A police official received them, and in the end the king, after some hesitation, decided to grant them an audience.

The proclamation ceremonial on January 18th, 1871, clearly showed the true historical meaning of the act. In the large Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, the residence of King Louis XIV, in the heart of conquered France, whose rôle of leader in European affairs was about to be taken over by victorious Prussia, King William stood upon a dais, surrounded by the colours of his regiments, nearest to him that of the First Regiment of Foot Guards, the old Potsdam Giant Guard. The Hall was filled with all the generals and some half thousand officers and non-commissioned officers: it was the army which founded the Empire. Hindenburg, later Field-Marshal and Reich President, at that time a young lieutenant, attended the ceremony as representative of his regiment. Fifty years later he stated: "It was our South German brothers who expressed the greatest joy over the 'German Empire.' We Prussians were more reticent, for historical reasons, which had enabled us to recognize our own worth at a time when Germany was but a geographical concept."

This, then, was the feeling of the old Prussians and of the Officers' Corps, not very different to Bismarck's dictum of 1849, that the groundwork for a German Fatherland had hardly been completed. The head of the new Empire himself lamented that the day of the coronation would be the unhappiest of his life.

The King of Prussia had repeatedly declared that he was only making war upon the government of the French Empire but not against the French people. When the war was continued, in spite of Napoleon's abdication and in spite of the plea for peace by the new Republican leaders, and when the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine emerged as a war aim, there was opposition from the extreme Left in Germany. The East Prussian democrat, Johann Jacoby, had the courage to say in an assembly: "Only a few days ago it was a defensive war which we were waging, a Holy War for the beloved Fatherland; to-day it is a war of conquest, a struggle for the supremacy of the German race in Europe." He was arrested and taken to the fortress of Lötzen, together with a few protesting socialists. Marx, in his London exile, wrote: "If the German working class allows the present war to change its strictly defensive character and to degenerate into a war against the French people, then defeat or victory will be equally disastrous. All the misery which befell Germany after the so-called Wars of Liberation will return with increased violence."

This prophecy was to prove exaggerated. But the dream of the German Liberals had been realized through Bismarck and the Prussian army: the paradox which lies in this fact was to become very clear in the succeeding period which only ended in 1933.

Liberal aspirations had always been cosmopolitan, and, in internal affairs, federalist; the actual result was the establishment of a new Great Power, a Greater Prussia created by annexations. The empire of the Liberals was to be created by the democratic consent of the people; the Empire of 1871 was formed by conquest and by an agreement of the princes.

The Liberals had wished to make use of Prussian military power in order to protect their work against external dangers; Bismarck had exploited their longing, had used it to promote his Greater Prussian policy.

The unity which the Liberals had desired was to have been born of freedom and bound up with it; the "red cap" which Bismarck, as he had threatened, was prepared to don could now disappear again into his pocket.

With the ruthless candour which distinguished Bismarck's diplomacy from every other known method he had said, even before he embarked upon his victorious campaigns: "I will buy some of them, frighten others, defeat a few, and in the end win the whole lot over to my side by leading them against France." He carried out his programme with a precision scarcely ever

equalled by any other statesman. But he did much more than "buy, frighten and defeat" the politicians and parties; he gratified, ostensibly, the wish of everyone and gave to each who had something to offer exactly what they most desired: to the Liberals he gave the Empire and Constitution, to the princes the secure tenure of their thrones, and to the various States the maintenance of their individuality, to the workers the vote and to the army an opportunity for the revival of its glory. At the same time the authority of the king and the Prussian *Junkers* had been preserved; the power which they had formerly exercised only in their small and scattered Prussia was now extended over a great Empire.

Bismarck described politics as "the art of the possible" and acted accordingly. He exploited every possibility, accepted conditions as they were and used them for the great national uprising which he brought about by the war. Naturally this was no modern national State that had been created, inspired by common ideals, with its necessary centralization and unification, in which the heterogeneous component parts interact and fuse, finding a *modus vivendi* in debate and in common responsibility. On the contrary, the various elements remained unassimilated, and again and again they could only be brought into a common rhythm when their national feelings were aroused. So long, however, as this ultimate expedient was not used—and this could only be done occasionally—they were held together by the sheer physical power which the Prussian autocracy held firmly in its grip.

Each small and smallest State, down to Lippe-Detmold and Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt, retained its Court, its separate administration and its own diet, and each diet was constituted in accordance with its own local traditional principles. Whereas the diets of the southern States were elected by universal equal suffrage, Mecklenburg, the "super-Prussia," had, up to 1918, a feudal assembly of "estates," composed of Junker land-owners. Bismarck, far from wishing to render the various States more uniform, attached great importance to the preservation of their special peculiarities. Thus had he made the small dynasties the friends of Prussia, for he considered that the more undisturbed they were left at home the less would they be inclined to meddle in real affairs of state in the affairs of the Empire. The one sphere in which such confusing isolation could not be permitted was that of military matters. Only Bavaria was here allowed to enjoy a slightly favoured position: Bismarck was not afraid of a privilege of which the privileged could not avail themselves. Apart from

this the Prussian army, securely in the hands of the king and his generals, safe from any princely or popular intervention, extended over the whole of Germany from Lake Constance to the Baltic.

What distinguished the *Reich* above all from a modern constitutional State was the fact that it had no responsible government, no cabinet. The ruling body was the "*Bundesrat*," the Federal Council, a conference of ministers of the various States. But even this body never attained an independent political existence, any more than had the *Bundestag* of the years between 1815 and 1866. The only legal executive instrument of the Empire was the *Reichskanzler* (Imperial Chancellor), and he was at the same time Prussian Premier—this was the real source of his power. In the Federal Council Prussia had far fewer votes than she could have claimed on account of her size—Bismarck despised formal rights—but she dominated the Council, and the Prussian will was always the deciding factor in the control of the *Reich*. Thus the *Reichstag* was without that essential element upon which the significance of Parliament depends—it did not face a Cabinet responsible to it. The *Reichstag* did not obtain power nor had it responsibility. It is true that it controlled the budget for affairs of the Empire, it could approve or reject the army or navy estimates, those for the diplomatic service or the colonies, but those who ruled the *Reich* were never faced with a majority which could have taken over the power. On the rare occasions when opposing elements united to form a majority which voted against the Imperial Chancellor the *Reichstag* was dissolved, and a "patriotic" slogan adopted which transformed them again into a minority. The *Reichstag* remained, as Bismarck had intended it should, a debating club, an assembly representing various sectional interests. The real governing factor in the *Reich* was the King of Prussia or the Prussian Premier as *Reichs* Chancellor, chosen by the king freely and at his own discretion.

Karl Marx's gloomy prophecy—that the same misery which had existed after the Wars of Liberation would reappear with increased violence—showed true insight, but was mistaken as to time and extent. It is true that the old authoritative State remained with its military framework and the decisive influence of the Prussian Crown. The power of that Crown was strengthened now that the Prussian three-class electoral system appeared as a solid support of the conservative Junker party, which only now really organized its forces: there was never again a liberal *Landtag* in Prussia as there had been at the time of conflict in the 'sixties. But within this framework of autocracy it now became possible

to develop democratic ideas and democratic technique. This was a new experience, at least in North Germany. The Constitution was modelled on Western ideas, as far as the protection of individual rights was concerned. Criticism of the Press and of Parliament were acknowledged as legitimate and were guaranteed by the Constitution. The immunity of the Deputies for their speeches in Parliament was protected by law; Press and teaching, research and Church were only subordinate to the law, and the irremovability of the judges who applied the law was guaranteed by statute a few years after the foundation of the Empire. Furthermore, the first *Reichstag* was so composed that the maintenance and extension of the liberal character of the *Reich* seemed natural. Of three hundred and eighty-two deputies, two hundred and thirty-two were to be regarded as Liberals—in the wider sense —with weak aristocratic and radical-democratic parties on either side and a solid block of one hundred and nineteen National-Liberals, of that party which now claimed to be heir to the old liberal movement for German unity. The fateful question was now, in which direction would Germany move? Would the liberal bourgeoisie, the overwhelmingly liberal *Reichstag*, set the course? Now that patriotic desire had been fulfilled would liberal principles be victorious? But the Empire had not been founded by the Liberals, however indispensable their intellectual and propagandist preliminary work had been. The founder of the Empire was Bismarck whose support had been the army, and he was the champion of Prussian autocracy: he had done everything to keep the power of the Crown untouched since he had saved it in the conflict with the *Landtag*. It was now the turn of the forces which were behind him and not of Liberalism. And they were prepared for the advance.

In considering the events that were to follow now, it should be remembered that the establishment of the *Reich*, the realization of an age-old ambition, the ultimate success of a struggle that had failed twice and often seemed hopeless, was a momentous event in the life of the nation and above all for the educated middle classes. All their thoughts had been centred in this one aim. It is not surprising, therefore, that many of these allowed themselves to become confused, to believe that they had really attained their aim, to accept Greater Prussia as their Germany and to hail Bismarck as their leader. January 18th, 1871, seemed the beginning of a new epoch to historians and philosophers, nay, the culmination of historical development. Nietzsche, the great critic of the time, wrote accusingly: "There is among educated Germans a feeling of gratification which, since the

last war, produces a constant readiness to rejoice and burst into exultation."

It had, after all, long been the desire of the middle-class Germans to have a "political existence." Now that they had obtained it, they naturally valued it highly and even exaggeratedly. Nietzsche, who was prophet as much as critic, wrote, only two years after the *Reich* was established: "Even at this moment there are simple people in odd corners of the world, in Germany, for instance, who maintain quite seriously that the world has now been set right, and that whoever still harbours sombre doubts about this life could be proved wrong by 'the realities.' They say that the establishment of the new German *Reich* is the decisive and crushing blow against all 'pessimistic' philosophizing, and that this argument stands absolutely unrefuted." Nietzsche feared "the extirpation of the German spirit in favour of the German Reich." At the German universities he found "revolting kow-towing to the idols of the moment" and wide-spread insistence on the State as the supreme goal of humanity. Even so early, these phenomena had already begun to be conspicuous. Once the *Reich* was accepted as having inaugurated the millennium, it became presumptuous for anyone to cling to his separate individuality, and national self-praise developed into a tendency to forcible assimilation, to internal annexation now that the external one had been completed.

The Catholic minority of the Empire was the first to be attacked. The events which led up to the so-called *Kulturkampf* are difficult for us to understand to-day, so far is it removed from our own times. The Vatican Council of 1871 had declared the infallibility of the Pope in matters of faith. The German bishops had opposed the new dogma, but when it was adopted, they submitted to it. Not all German Catholics and not all Catholic teachers and professors followed their example. Bismarck took up the cudgels on their behalf against ecclesiastical authority. Although the occasion of the Church conflict was of a delicate religious nature, the political passions which were aroused, with Bismarck's help, were crude and popular. Great hopes were centred in the struggle. "One people, one Church," the slogan which appeared again in Nationalist Socialist Germany became the battle-cry. There should be a single German Church, or at least a German Catholic Church, apart from Rome and without connections with the Catholics in other countries.

When the Episcopate proceeded, as it had to proceed, to fulfil its duties towards the Church as a whole, and demanded that religious instruction should be given only by obedient sons of

the Church and not by teachers who had severed their connections with it, the State soon took the initiative. Catholic Orders were dissolved, those of their members who were not German subjects were expelled; others, who were, were not allowed to reside in certain places and were sent to others. The State interfered in Church administration, took control of the appointment of the priests, removed them from ecclesiastical jurisdiction and placed a lay court over the bishops. And when the bishops offered passive resistance to regulations which were incompatible with their conscience, fines were imposed which soon reached sums far above their means; several of them went to prison; hundreds of parishes had no incumbents; baptisms, marriages, funerals could not take place and religious instruction was partially suspended; it was as if the land were under an interdict. The anti-clerical legislation was accompanied and supported by a malicious literary and Press campaign, in the use of which the Chancellor once more showed himself a master. For years Germany was divided into two hostile camps, poisoned by hatred. The attempt to establish unity by force had led to the gravest discord.

All this happened almost directly after the first jubilation over the foundation of the Empire had died down. The problem of papal infallibility was a spiritual question, of no immediate political importance, and could scarcely have any interest for non-Catholics. But Bismarck had hoped to be able to strike a blow at the Catholic party and at the leaders of the Catholic Poles in the Eastern provinces by publicly defaming them and by undermining at the same time their resistance with administrative chicaneries. These had been the principles of the old Prussian absolutism, improved upon by demagogic tricks, the same tactics which had been applied so successfully against the Liberals before 1866. He endeavoured to show that the interests of the army, too, were concerned: "If things go on in this way," he said, "particularly in the schools in Posen, the recruits will soon pay more attention to the Pope than to the King." After a number of years he abandoned the struggle. The result was an enormous strengthening, not only of the Church, but also of political Catholicism which, in its defence against autocracy, became strongly united, founded organizations of electors as well as of students and artisans and a great number of newspapers.

One of the most significant features of the *Kulturkampf* was that the majority of the Liberals took the side of Bismarck. In the quarrel concerning the Archbishop of Cologne in 1837, when Prussian absolutism also wished to coerce the Catholic Church

by police measures and bishops went to prison for their faith, Liberal public opinion had been firmly on the side of the persecuted Church. Had the Church since that time become a danger to freedom of thought? On the contrary: owing to the exclusion of Austria from Germany it was now a minority in a Protestant State, incapable of awakening in anyone memories of the time of the counter-reformation. It may be possible to regard the struggle against the Church as a patriotic one, in so far as its object was internal unity, or rather uniformity; but it cannot be defended on the basis of Liberal principles. The Liberals, however, permitted themselves to be dazzled by Bismarck's fame, for it seemed that everything he touched must succeed. They accepted the myth that the Jesuits—the order which suffered the greatest persecution—directed in secret everything that happened in the world to Germany's disadvantage. The Jesuits were the object of superstitious fear and bitter hatred, as was later the case with the Jews. Everywhere their hand and their supernatural cleverness were seen. By making political use of this ignorant credulity, instead of resisting it, the Liberals sinned against one of the basic principles of their own existence. In their proclamations for the first elections in the new Empire they had promised "the continuous development of freedom." Now, in order to promote unity within the *Reich*—by compulsion —they had allowed themselves to become tools of the Prussian autocratic police system.

In 1874, when elections took place for the second time in the new *Reich* Liberal votes showed a great increase. The National Liberals, who now had one hundred and fifty-two deputies, could form a safe majority with the Progressives, the radical-liberal party. The years from the foundation of the Empire till 1878 are regarded as a liberal epoch; Bismarck governed in conformity with the wishes of the Liberals; they voted for his bills, and together they achieved much for the development of the Empire. After their successes at the polls, they believed that their time had come—the time which was to bring them participation in the government after the national goal had been reached. In 1877 the Chancellor offered their leader, Bennigsen, the Prussian Ministry of the Interior. Although the existing Constitution really precluded a parliamentary régime—there was no responsible *Reich* Ministry—the Liberals thought nevertheless that they would thus penetrate into the administration of the *Reich* and of Prussia, that their party would at least participate in the government. Bennigsen therefore requested that two of his political friends, two from the left wing, should also become ministers. But

Bismarck had other plans, and as always several ones at the same time. The Emperor was now eighty years old—the Liberal leader in the government would be a safeguard against his dismissal when the Crown Prince came to the throne. Bismarck had no wish to give any party, and certainly not the Liberals, a share in the power. What he wanted was to have a right wing in the *Reichstag*, which was numerically strong and which would render him implicit obedience. He therefore wanted to split the large National Liberal party, to draw their right wing to himself and to force the left into opposition. As Bennigsen remained firm Bismarck relinquished his intention of reaching his objective by this means; he allowed negotiations to become protracted, and then turned openly against Liberalism, against the party and against the liberal course altogether. During the crises and wars of the period of great changes, from 1862 to 1871, the Prussian conservative forces, the army and the Junkers, had proved the stronger power. They were the pillars of the *Reich*. The plan of German Liberalism had been founded on election results and not on factors of power. The mighty Chancellor was easily able to crush this plan.

Several important events played into Bismarck's hand during his sudden change of front.

The first one was in the sphere of foreign politics. The Berlin Congress held in 1878, at which England and Russia stood opposed to each other, allotted to him a sort of umpire's rôle in Europe. His international prestige was at its zenith; peace seemed to be assured for some time to come. The Chancellor felt free in his relations abroad and had no need to fear conflicts at home.

A second factor which came to his assistance was of an economic character. A majority was formed in the *Reichstag* with the specific object of changing from free trade to protective tariffs. To this majority belonged the Conservatives and the Catholic Centre party, and, in addition, Liberals of the Right wing—those interested in heavy industry.

The occasion to act was provided by unforeseeable events. Two attempts were made on the life of the venerable Emperor, in May and June; he was badly wounded in the second attempt. It was easy to connect these attempts with the growing number of Social Democratic votes, which in 1877 had already numbered half a million. In the few years following the foundation of the Empire the Social Democrats had grown from nothing to be the fourth strongest party in Germany.

The new course of the founder and Chancellor of the *Reich* did not meet with any determined opposition. A new Constitu-

tional conflict like that at the beginning of the 'sixties, a struggle of the Parliament for power, was unthinkable in 1878: too much had changed.

The Liberals themselves, since the unity of the *Reich* had been successfully achieved, underwent a far-reaching process of transformation. They were no longer the party of idealistic professors as they had been during the first part of the century. Even the professors themselves were no longer what they had been. Did not Bismarck in 1848, not without scorn, remark that in his circles, "amongst those who in the event of conflict would have to issue orders and control armed force," the great parliamentarians and scholars of the *Paulskirche* were not taken seriously? What happened now was the very reverse: after Bismarck had founded the Empire the scholars began to honour, nay, to adore, only those "elements in whose hands the real power lay." We have heard how severely two serious historians, Treitschke and Sybel, judged the Bismarck of the time of the conflict, that one of them spoke of the boast of the "*shallow Junker*" who wished "with blood and iron to subdue Germany" and whose "infamy was only surpassed by his absurdity"; and that the other shouted at him angrily: "You hate the democratic idea of the *Landwehr* . . . the spirit of the Wars of Liberation has departed from you." It was just these two historians who became Bismarck's most fervent admirers after he had finally done away with the *Landwehr* and had solved the German problem with blood and iron. The philosophy of the two, and not theirs alone, had completely veered round and turned into its own opposite now that Bismarck had legitimized himself and his political system by his success. What Bismarck had said of the whole nation was also true of these highly intellectual men, famous for their accomplishments—that if one gave them something to brag about abroad one could do what one liked with them at home.

The character of the Liberal Party also changed in another respect. The bourgeoisie, the rapidly increasing class of industrialists, prosperous or growing in prosperity, veered to the Right and adapted itself to the government upon which so many of their interests depended, and grew satisfied with the influence they had achieved. They were contented because the internal customs barriers within Germany had been removed and a large market created, that weights and measures, currency and coinage had been unified, that the banking system had been placed upon a proper footing and that business flourished.

The estrangement of the new bourgeoisie from the old liberal ideas received its most powerful impetus when, in 1878, Germany

relinquished free trade and adopted a system of protective tariffs. The iron industry had, for some time past, demanded such tariffs; this industry was considerably over developed and if a terrible slump was to be avoided, cartels had to be formed. Therefore, the home market was to be closed against foreign competition and goods were to be sold at a high price at home so that export prices could be kept down. But the plans of the industrialists had been frustrated by the big land-owners, who exported corn and were, therefore, free traders. Bismarck, too, was a big land-owner. In former days, he had mocked at the demands of industry: "Protective tariffs are a protection against the freedom of the inhabitants to buy where it is cheapest and most convenient, a protection of the home country against the home country." During the 'seventies agrarian Conservatives had said that with the help of tariffs the industrialists "like leeches, sucked themselves full with the blood of the nation" . . . through the detestable principle of State assistance "certain classes were privileged, the workers penalized and revolutionary Social Democracy promoted."

But in 1875, owing to the development of maritime traffic, foreign corn flooded the European market; the Prussian agrarians were no longer able to compete. Bismarck and his caste suddenly turned from free trade to protection.

Corn-producing land-owners and iron-producing industrialists formed an alliance which from that time onwards withstood all storms and has played an important rôle in each German political decision. The prices of raw materials, both home produced and imported, were considerably increased and thus the interests of the manufacturing branches of industry and of the secondary forms of agriculture, which, in the main, was carried on by the middle peasantry, were neglected. The bread of the workers was subjected to an ever-increasing burden for the benefit of the Junkers. The "alliance between the blast furnace and the manorial estate" was in conformity with the general consolidation of an upper class of large property owners. The Junker squirearchy, the ruling class of the ruling State, received, half reluctantly, half willingly, the "chimney lords," the industrial magnates from the Rhine and from Central Germany, admitted them to their clubs and into their crack regiments and students' corps, intermarried with them in order to gild anew their old armorial bearings. The *parvenus* became assimilated. The mode of living and the way of thinking were set by the older partner; both were absolutist and authoritative, anti-intellectual, and narrow-minded. If any newcomer still retained some vestige of

his liberal past, he had hastily to rid himself of it if he wished to pass muster.

The struggle against Social Democracy, which Bismarck proclaimed in the year 1878, was no less instrumental in ridding the State of liberal principles. The rapid march of industrialization drew masses of workers into the big towns, and the dreadful conditions under which the agricultural labourers lived on the large estates in the East provided an inexhaustible supply of these workers. None of the old parties understood how to gain the sympathies of these new urban masses except the Centre party which held together the Catholics of this class too. The Liberals had nothing to offer to industrial workers; the big industrialists, enemies of trade unions, brusque exponents of the "master in one's own house" standpoint, dominated the liberal Right wing; the Left wing had faith in the Manchester doctrine —that complete economic freedom would, given time, smooth out all hardships. Thus it was that the proletarian voters swelled the rapidly growing ranks of the Social Democratic Party, which no longer represented the ideas of Lassalle, but preached the Marxist message. The number of their votes rose from one hundred thousand just after the founding of the Empire to half a million seven years later. The attempts made on the life of the Emperor William in the spring of 1878 afforded Bismarck an opportunity for action. News of the first attempt reached him when he was at dinner. He banged on the table and shouted: "Now we have got them!" One of the company asked: "The Social Democrats, Your Highness?" Bismarck answered: "No, the Liberals."

His line of thought was cunning and bold, quite worthy of Bismarck. The Social Democrats, though revolutionaries in their theory of political economy, had always refused to associate themselves with any acts of individual terror; they had nothing whatever to do with an attempt to murder the monarch. But Bismarck—to use his own expression—fastened the would-be assassins upon the "coat-tails" of the Social Democrats. He extended his accusations to the Progressives, from the Progressives to the National Liberals. What Bismarck intended was to deal a blow at Liberalism. The "madnesses"—as he once expressed himself—of the Social Democrats were, in his view, not really dangerous, but his old enemies the Liberals were dangerous: "their poison is more powerful than that of the Socialists!" He had a law passed, the so-called "Anti-Socialist Law," which persecuted all those who held Socialist views, imposed penalties upon them and threatened with punishment well-nigh opinion

itself. The autocratic sector of State power was greatly extended. Whole districts of the Empire could be put under martial law, citizens could be banished from the country, suspects were forbidden to carry on their professions, public meetings were made dependent on police permission, Social Democratic associations and newspapers were suppressed. Police control, vexatious and arbitrary, took the place of law and freedom of thought.

Bismarck did not damage Social Democracy. The law stopped short of the franchise: Germany had not yet gone back so far from the liberal ideals, out of which German unity had been born, that the franchise could be cleared away. So the Social Democrats were declared public enemies, were sent to prison if they agitated, but they were allowed to vote and to be elected —a highly inconsistent position which continued for twelve years. At the elections it was soon seen that coercion and persecution did not damage the party but rather advanced its interests. It is true they lost votes at the general election immediately following the attempted assassination, in consequence of the hatred stimulated by the Government. But afterwards their numbers continued to grow and after they had been outlawed for twelve years, they became in 1890 the strongest party in the Empire not in seats but in votes, because the redistribution of seats did not keep pace with the rapid growth of the big towns.

The methods of chicanery employed by the police and the courts provided Social Democracy with martyrs, with a "heroic age," as they called it, and increased their faith in victory. The anti-Socialist Law was, as one of their leaders said, "the iron band which held the Social Democratic party together." Persecution and injustice made them tough and enduring in the political struggle and increased their confidence which was of an almost religious character. At the party conference in 1890, their leader, August Bebel proclaimed: "Bourgeois society works so powerfully for its own downfall that we only need to wait for the moment when we shall take up the power as it falls from their hands." At a meeting at which more men of a ripe age than youths were present, he prophesied: "The attainment of our goal is so near that there are few in this hall who will not live to see it." It is now nearly fifty years since these words were spoken and the Socialists have not reached their goal. But at that time their faith made them inwardly strong.

Bismarck's bureaucratic persecution helped the growth of the Social Democratic party as it had previously assisted that of the Catholic party. But he dealt a blow at the heart of Liberalism.

To insist on freedom of battle for the opponent, provided he employs intellectual weapons, is an unalterable principle of Liberalism, but the majority of the Liberals themselves now offended against this principle. Bismarck himself, a few years before, had advised the spreading of Social Democratic theories: "When they come sufficiently into the air and sunshine, their criminal folly and the impossibility of their realization will be recognized." It was in vain that the Chancellor was reminded of this when he determined to track down theories with the police. Rudolf von Bennigsen, the liberal leader, warned him: "What you cannot do is to prevent the dissemination of Social Democratic ideas. What cannot be propagated openly becomes more effective in secrecy. . . . The exasperation of those classes who are affected by this bill will be provoked in an exceptional manner." This Liberal did not lack vision, yet in spite of this the party he led, the National Liberals, closely allied with the ruling powers and forced into compliance by Bismarck's skilful diplomacy, voted for the anti-Socialist Law. The National Liberal organ resigned itself to the position, and wrote: "As long as we are in battle against the Socialist enemy we cannot expect any further development of individual liberty." The upper bourgeois section of the Liberals had abandoned the liberal ideals, they continued to exist in the programme as a negligible show-piece. It was not until the time of the Republic that a National Liberal, Stresemann, recalled their existence. Two years later Bismarck faced Bennigsen with the choice of agreeing with the Conservatives or "we shall head straight for absolutism." The National Liberals became obedient supporters of the government and whoever did that could no longer remain a Liberal in autocratically governed Prussian-Germany.

The party groups at their Left—there were always several—which remained faithful to the liberal programme could not be compared in social significance with the old Liberals of the days before the Empire. The industrialists whose prosperity and influence had steadily increased with the economic development of Germany, remained National Liberals or moved further to the Right for reasons already mentioned; they needed and enjoyed the favour of the ruling caste. Those who remained on the Left belonged to the lower middle class: artisans, small tradespeople, lesser officials, elementary school teachers and, in some parts of western Germany, also peasant farmers; on the whole these were the less important sections and they had as their leaders "educated proletarians," as Bismarck sarcastically called them, "learned and highly educated gentlemen, without

property, without substance and without income." Soon after the split in the party, these petty-bourgeois Liberals had to stand up to a dangerous opponent competing with them in the same small section of the electorate: the anti-Semites who represented the interests of the small tradesmen and who fought against Jewry as the incarnation of high finance as well as of social revolution. Sometimes they were tinged with Protestantism, sometimes they were Social-Conservative, sometimes agrarian, sometimes urban, and they enjoyed support of various kinds in high places. Bismarck favoured them for a time because they were damaging the Progressive Liberals; they were favoured by the aristocracy and military, and occasionally also by William II as Crown Prince, because they advertised themselves as opponents of Social Democracy which, however, they never seriously harmed. Of all the parties they were obviously the greatest enemies of freedom, the most narrow-minded and the most reactionary, and they played upon the anxieties and hatreds of the half-educated and economically oppressed small bourgeoisie with the most ruthless demagogy. In spite of this they had no particular success; the intellectual atmosphere was still too clear in the Empire, the light of knowledge was still too strong and deterred those in power from making use of such dubious tools.

The parliamentary situation which Bismarck had brought about by the frustration and division of the Liberals was later fittingly characterized by Bismarck himself. It lies with the leading statesman, he said, "to select from the political groups and sects those whose convictions and votes can be had in return for certain advantages offered to them." He spoke scornfully of "inter-party haggling," or of "competitive crawling." But only after he had been dismissed from office did he condemn this procedure as not being in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution. As long as he was in power he did all he could to prevent this spirit from becoming effective.

When through his break with the Liberals, through the great change of 1878, an end had been put to the aspirations for giving parliament a share in the government, he renewed his attempt to rally the masses to the monarchy. Universal suffrage had disappointed his hopes. He now made a fresh departure: that of social legislation. In the year 1881 he started a long series of social laws, designed to protect the workers against the worst consequences of illness, accident, old age, and infirmity. He attempted to win the support of the workers for his autocratic régime by a kind of paternal State socialism, while continuing to suppress the Social Democratic Party. The attempt failed;

Social Democratic votes increased like a flood rising steadily and relentlessly.

Since the changes of 1878, since the break with the Liberals, Bismarck worked resolutely for a solution which would again make the Prussian autocracy the decisive factor in the State without regard to the constitutional part of the political system. The manner in which the Government was conducted militated more strongly against freedom than laws and decisions in Parliament.

Prussia occupied two-thirds of the territory of the *Reich*. It was, moreover, a united and compact territory, whereas the remaining third was divided into more than twenty scattered federal States. Consequently Prussian things mattered most, and here autocracy was hardly hampered by parliamentary influences because the Diet was in the hands of the Conservative party. The Prussian gentry and agrarians had only paid serious attention to party organization since the constitutional conflict of the sixties, but since then they had employed the whole force of their social position. Their success was all the greater particularly in the country, as elections in Prussia were not secret and therefore those who were economically dependent were forced to vote "straight." But the Conservatives did not become a parliamentary party in a democratic sense just because they sent a crowd of deputies to the Diet. They used the parliaments to their own advantage whenever possible, but remained true to the principle which Stahl, their first parliamentary leader had enunciated: "Authority, not Majority." They sat in Parliament as enemies of Parliament. Anyone who was conservative in Prussia, was a follower of autocracy, of absolutism, of dictatorship.

At the close of the seventies Prussia, in spite of liberal institutions and in spite of forming part of the Empire, was once again on its way to becoming a Junker paradise. Just as, after the army reorganization under William I, the last non-"homogeneous" officers—relics from the time of the Wars of Liberation—had been removed so now the Civil Service was effectively purged of liberal elements that had intruded during the more "careless" period. At the time of conflict there had been islands of Liberalism even in remote country districts of old Prussia. That was over now. The Junkers had already been dominating the administrative machine, but now it passed entirely into their hands. Anyone of a different origin who was admitted had to make up what he lacked in birth by emphasizing his Conservative political opinions. In the country districts this meant a great deal, because no strongly developed self-government existed there. Smaller

land-owners and peasants depended both socially and economically upon the Government and the Government upon the Junkers: if anyone insisted upon showing liberal tendencies, he had to be prepared for a bitter petty warfare, perhaps even for a boycott, and very few dared face this. The *Landrat*, head of the lower administrative unit, has often been described as the real King of Prussia; it was an established rule that only a Conservative could become *Landrat*. Immediately subordinate to him, with direct rule over the village, was the big estate owner, the *Rittergutsbesitzer* as *Amtsvorsteher* (local superintendent), the embodiment of the identity of political power with land ownership as represented by Junkerdom.

In a similar manner but not on the same scale, this practice was extended to the Law Courts; here too the Government, by its choice of personnel, continually strengthened Conservative influence. It was of little import that here and there a Liberal or Catholic judge remained—the majority of those holding conservative opinions was predominant. It is not surprising therefore that complaints about class justice never died down.

To secure an adequate supply of officials for the future, all teachers in secondary schools and universities were chosen and promoted rather for their political opinions than for their capabilities. This did not mean that there were no exceptions: outstanding qualifications were recognized, but it was not advisable to swim against the tide which flowed steadily towards the Right. It was only a sign of the times, significant and characteristic, but not more momentous than the practice of appointments, that in the year 1898 the Prussian Government passed a bill by which Socialists were excluded from teaching at the Prussian universities; so that even the liberal doctrine of freedom of teaching was sacrificed.

The army reorganization of William I influenced the civil life of the country in the same direction. The officers on the reserved list were attached to regiments and put under the control of the so-called District Commands. Thus the citizen officers, at one time intended by the reformers to have a moderating influence on the active army, had their opinions doubly tested by the active officers. Only those whose loyalty to the Conservative political course of the Crown was unassailable could maintain their positions here. Accordingly, the educated were picked out during their military service and, if commissioned, were kept under observation. If anyone hoped to make his way in the new Germany, it was of importance to him to become an officer on the reserved list; in the Civil Service this was a decisive factor, and

it was no less important from a social and business point of view. The body of officers on the reserved list was, moreover, of special significance because it carried the influence of the Conservative régime into circles which would not otherwise easily be reached by the Government, into the middle class of the towns (also in western Germany), who, by reason of their possessions and position, might have remained independent. All healthy young men did their period of military service; anyone who failed to get a commission must have some flaw—that was the general view, and the person concerned would be made to feel it at every turn. Perhaps it was only a political flaw, but soon a political flaw amounted to the same thing as a social blemish. The sons of liberal fathers no longer followed the tradition of the family but that of the State, even in those provinces where this State had been the conquering interloper. Merchants, solicitors, doctors, men of all sorts of professions, were brought by their military career into close touch with the king who was now their "War Lord," their Commander-in-Chief, and not merely their sovereign. Even deputies were often influenced in their political activities by being officers in the reserve. The middle classes developed a rigidity and a uniformity—a sort of pseudo-Junkerdom—as if they had all been cast in the same mould. This was the perfect antithesis of that free development of the individual which was the aim of idealistic liberals.

About 1878 there began a period in which the idealistic exuberance of the first half of the century not only vanished but actually became suspect. Bismarck was the model which prevailed long after his dismissal and death—and he had never believed in anything but power and authority. He had effectively destroyed Legitimism, which before his time, had formed a kind of religious basis of the monarchy when, in 1866, he dispossessed three monarchs in spite of the troubled conscience of his king. In his political struggle he pursued with personal animosity those whose convictions were founded upon religion or ethics: Catholics, Socialists and Liberals. He always urged people to base their politics on their practical interests. He had as much contempt for spiritual values as he had for his fellow men. He spoke with the most cutting contempt of William I whose humane qualities were generally recognized: "even an ox understands 'whoa' and 'gee up' but that's more than he does" or "it would be more useful if he spent his time playing *Patience*." Bismarck showed consideration only to those who had completely subordinated themselves to his rule. He treated with brutality and humiliating contempt the Ministers who were formally his equals. "Before I can drink

a spoonful of soup," he said, "I have to ask eight asses for their permission." He once asked an acquaintance: "Do you feel a need to respect your colleagues? I don't." Of his parliamentary opponents he only honoured one, Windthorst, the leader of the Catholics, and him he honoured by his hatred. Otherwise when he was annoyed he preferred to assume a contemptuous and overbearing tone in the *Reichstag* and the Prussian Diet, such as an angry schoolmaster might use towards indolent pupils. Even in his memoirs he hurled at the parliamentary parties the mocking words of Coriolanus: "Get you home, you fragments."

The impressive example of the great man had a devastating and sterilizing influence on the minds of those who admired him. He poured contempt upon every impulse suspected of non-rational origin, and founded the school of "*Realpolitik*" whose adherents were out for success, the accumulation of strength, the extension of power, and who had no understanding for anything else; who judged all spiritual values on the basis of practical utility. He himself, Bismarck, the creator of German greatness, was the object of their adoration, but scarcely longer than he was in office. It was the result of the principles which he had inculcated, that there was not the slightest public opposition to his brusque dismissal. Had the Germans not learned from him that only power is worthy of respect? They therefore turned without hesitation to the man who succeeded him in power, William II.

The brilliant development of the *Reich* created a new and dangerous enemy to freedom in the ultra nationalists who were descendants of the Liberals themselves. The philosophy of enlightenment had loosened the religious bond of subordination and wakened the urge towards freedom of the individual. From this had sprung the longing for the liberation of the Fatherland from external and internal oppression, from the tyranny of foreign conquerors as well as from the despotism of the petty monarchies. Liberalism had produced German patriotism and, when Germany was unified in the Empire, patriotism gave birth to nationalism. After the founding of the Empire Bismarck considered Germany had reached the saturation point externally, and the Liberals were of the same opinion. Internally he wished, and here the Conservatives were with him, for the restoration of autocracy, while the Liberals desired progressive development of freedom and self-government. But in the age of imperialism, sections of the Liberal and Conservative parties united, Junker and bourgeois, officers and intellectuals—those who were not content with what had been accomplished, who did not want

to hear of national saturation, who in addition to the homeland wanted colonies, in addition to a large army a large fleet, who were out for world power and conquest. They distorted the patriotism of the Liberals and combined it with the Prussian army's rigid belief in authority and looked at the army as the instrument with which national ambitions were to be achieved. And thus it came about that nationalism—a changeling born of the patriotic urge for freedom and the old Prussian lust for power—became the most dangerous enemy of liberty.

In 1875 the English diplomat, Sir Robert Morier, a keen observer, wrote of German chauvinism that it was "a new and far more formidable type of the disease than the French: because, instead of being spasmodical and undisciplined, it is methodical, calculating, cold-blooded and self-contained."

The same phenomenon astonished the young Austen Chamberlain a dozen years later, who attended as a student the lectures of the old but still powerful and greatly revered historian Heinrich von Treitschke. He wrote to his father thoughtfully: "Treitschke has opened to me a new side of the German character—a narrow-minded, proud, intolerant Prussian chauvinism. And the worst of it is that he is forming a school. If you continuously preach to the youth of a country that they stand on a higher step of the creation than all other nations, they are only too ready to believe it, and the lecturer who descends to this will be popular and draw big audiences. . . ."

Treitschke was really forming a school. Men who, as students, had sat at his feet, breathlessly listening to the passionate tirades of the former Liberal on the splendour and strength of Prussian Germany and on the weakness and thoughtlessness of Liberalism, and who had formed their ideas accordingly, became the founders and leaders of the Pan-German League which was the very embodiment of German chauvinism during the next decades. Here a group of deputies, journalists, professors, generals, big industrialists and big land-owners had come together and formed a circle which, through its energy and industry, exercised an influence throughout the middle classes. Here was practised that cold-blooded and methodical system against which Sir Robert Morier had warned. Every possibility of extending the German frontiers, and the German spheres of influence abroad, of increasing material power was here carefully weighed up and scientifically systematized, the whole material collected and forwarded to the Press, to associations and to official quarters. And because impetus and desire exceeded the possibilities of the moment—the *Realpolitik* here first acquired its non-rational characteristics

—war became the central theme of all discussions and wishes. As a necessary complement they demanded the crushing of Social Democracy and the establishment of a dictatorship—even if, at first, this was only urged by the extremists of the movement. Among the extremists of the Pan-German League the race theory also took solid root: the ruthless exclusion of Jews was demanded.

Millions of Germans were supporters of imperialism. They represented and reflected the intellectual and political structure of the German people in all its details. Among them were men with far-reaching ideas of social reform who dreamed of a popular and imperialist monarchy. Also sincere Liberals. Supporters of the Prussian administrative autocracy. Finally there was amongst them the advance-guard of those who later on were to be called National Socialists, aiming at the destruction of the working class organizations, the abolition of the freedom of the Press and of all other freedoms. They stood for a dictatorial system, the subversion of Christianity, the deification of race, the expulsion of the Jews, war, conquest, the colonization of Eastern Europe, the subjugation of the whole Continent, the establishment of a world-wide empire. Here, in a nutshell, was compressed the whole German development of a hundred and fifty years, a development which Grillparzer has prophetically sketched: "From humanity to nationality, from nationality to bestiality." At the same time, it is also the history of a rationalism that destroys the older non-rational values—only to bring forth in turn a new irrationality. At first the group of extremists among the imperialists was only small. But gradually it gained in weight and influence.

Around the Pan-German League were grouped the large organizations whose propagandist activities were carried on in public: the Colonial League and the Navy League and, as a means of influencing the lower classes, the League of Ex-Service Men's Associations which organized those men who, after their period of service, continued to render allegiance to the political opinions of the army. Yet their following was much too small effectively to counter Social Democracy. Organized chauvinism was the speciality of the heavy industry, which profited by the development of the navy, and by the building of railways and harbours in distant parts of the globe—and it hoped to profit still more—and also of the rapidly increasing educated and commercial middle classes, whose prospects at home were too limited and who sought new and lucrative tasks in the opening up and administration of distant countries.

But however numerous the ambitious, covetous and mentally standardized middle classes were it was mistaken, although this was often done, to identify this class with Germany. The rich diversity of the German character found its expression in the innumerable different groups, which stood aloof from the dominant political course.

To describe these countless circles and individualities would naturally be a far more difficult task. May it suffice to indicate that literature, art, the theatre, and a considerable section of science and learning continued to lead their own separate existence, removed from the Government and the ruling caste, nay, separate from the State. During these years Gerhart Hauptmann wrote his great dramatic plays imbued with the spirit of social protest and deadly satire against the ruling Prussianism. Thomas Mann created the figure of the decadent Hanseatic patrician; Heinrich Mann in his novel, *The Subject*, castigated the Philistine striving towards world domination; Stefan George wrote odes to the imaginary aristocratic being of the future; the German Impressionists, at their head the Jew, Max Liebermann, who had been educated under French influence, painted quiet landscapes and small incidents from the life of the lower classes; the producers Otto Brahm and Max Reinhart, both Jews, gave intense life and vigour to the theatre; the historian, Theodor Mommsen, the economist, Lujo Brentano, and the sociologist Max Weber, taught in conformity with liberal ideas. Of the prominent men of the period there was only one, Richard Wagner, who promoted the ideas that were to be victorious later on. His musical dramas extolled the lawlessness of old Teutonic barbarism, the adoration of pomp and power.

The dissociation of the majority of the German people from the leadership of the Empire was expressed politically in clear figures. After the manner of all clever propagandists, Bismarck grouped all the opponents of his Government together: he called them "*Reichsfeinde*"—enemies of the Empire. Foremost among these he reckoned the French of Alsace Lorraine (whose preference for French culture did not diminish during the forty-seven years during which they belonged to the Empire), the Hanoverians who remained true to the Guelphs, the Poles of the East Prussian provinces and the Danes at the northern frontier of Schleswig; in addition there was the Centre party uniting the Roman Catholics, there were the Progressive Liberals, the South German particularists and the Social Democrats. These parties together had often a majority in the *Reichstag*, and during the last two decades of the Empire their electors had a clear and

ever-increasing majority. Amongst them it was the Social Democratic party which grew steadily. The *Reichsverdrossenheit*—the spirit of discontent with the Empire—about which Bismarck used to complain, was all to their advantage, perhaps even more than the growth of the industrial proletariat. All those who were dissatisfied, not with the *Reich*, but with the Hohenzollerns, with the Conservative bureaucracy, with imperialism and with the army, expressed their ill-feeling by giving their vote in the secret ballot to the party of absolute negation, which would grant to this régime "not a man and not a penny."

The founder of the Empire was not the man to give up his work or to abdicate from power because the majority of the people did not follow him. He was prepared to retrace his steps along the road he had taken. The Germans did not know what to do with the Nuremberg toy which he had given them; they were spoiling it—thus he growled, speaking confidentially to a friend. Every time there was an unsatisfactory division in the *Reichstag*, or after bad election results, he threatened a *coup d'état*, spoke of "rule by the sword," "absolutism," a new period of "blood and iron." Such plans would not have been easy to carry through with the old Emperor and still less with his son and heir who, like his wife, the Princess Royal, was entirely parliamentary and liberal in sentiment. But Emperor William died at last in 1888, ninety-one years of age, and his son Emperor Frederick was fatally ill when he ascended the throne. He wore the crown for only a hundred days—it seemed as though destiny denied a Liberal Sovereign to the German people. In William II, the son of Frederick, Bismarck hoped to find understanding for his plans. "In the end one will have to smash the pots," he said towards the end of 1889: "Questions like that of Social Democracy . . . will not be solved without bloodshed, just as the question of German unity was not solved without it. And since violent measures sit lightly on the neck of the young lord. . . ."

Bismarck's plan was ready. The German princes were to repeal the agreement upon which the Empire had been founded. A customs union and military alliance between the various States was to take its place. The struggle against Social Democracy was to provide the occasion. The anti-Socialist Law expired in 1890 and Bismarck demanded a more drastic one to replace it, whereas the National Liberals were in favour of relaxation. Thereupon Bismarck advised the Conservatives to reject the modified bill. Had the *Reichstag* then thrown out a new and more drastic bill, Bismarck would have dissolved Parliament, and would have repeated this procedure with any newly elected

Reichstag if it remained persistent. Dissolution was to follow dissolution until it was proved that the *Reichstag* shirked its duty, that it was useless, that both duty and the safety of the State required that it should be cleared away. The Prussian conflict of the sixties was a suitable model for the opening phase. The end had been differently conceived. This time it was not to end in war but in the bloody suppression of a workers' revolt followed by the repeal of the covenant upon which the Empire was founded. The princes had made this covenant: they could also revoke it. Since the military alliance of the German federal States was to remain, the material power of Prussia and the Prussian king would not have been affected; as a unit of power Germany would have remained. What Bismarck wished to destroy was the Constitution of the *Reich*, the *Reichstag*, and with it the suffrage for the *Reichstag*, in order, as he said, to "make good the most serious mistake of which I have ever been guilty." The basis of the liberal institutions was to be destroyed and with it Social Democracy, whose legal existence depended upon those institutions.

The plan was bold and violent. It failed because Bismarck had misjudged the young Emperor. He believed he could lead him, but William wished to govern himself and to free himself from the tutelage of the powerful Chancellor. Nor was he disposed to take part in carrying out such far-reaching and dangerous plans. Just at this time he was under the influence of "Tory Socialists" who counselled him to continue Bismarck's former policy; to win the workers for the crown by granting them new concessions, and by presenting new gifts of social welfare. His uncle, the Grand Duke of Baden, warned him not to let matters develop into an insurrection: "Then you, like your grandfather, will be called the 'Grape-Shot Prince.' You will have to wade up to your ankles through the blood of your subjects." The young Emperor used a minor difference of opinion to rid himself, with a light heart, of the first German Imperial Chancellor. Bismarck's Government came to an end before he could carry out his *coup d'état* and turn, openly and decisively, back to Prussian autocracy.

Germany was spared a *coup d'état*, Parliament and suffrage were preserved, the laws concerning civil liberties remained intact. But neither was there any change in the distribution of power. Autocracy and democracy both continued to have their share in the affairs of the State. At the beginning of this century, Theodor Mommsen, in a letter to Lujo Brentano, described with masterly skill the condition of the State as a "pseudo-constitutional absolutism under which we live and to which our powerless people seem to have inwardly resigned themselves."

The deputy, von Oldenburg-Januschau, a Junker notorious for his frankness, arguing from the opposite side, said exactly the same: "The structure of the Bismarckian *Reich* has two completely separate parts: the one civilian and democratic; the other military and autocratic." Which side he thought the stronger he expressed without ambiguity when, during a plenary meeting of Parliament, he shouted provokingly at the assembled representatives of the people: By order of the King of Prussia one lieutenant and ten men could at any time shut up the *Reichstag*. No other word has so strikingly revealed the real character of the Constitution.

The measure of liberty which existed under the monarchy before the war and which was also enjoyed by the Opposition, must not be underestimated: it was not negligible. Everyone enjoyed civil liberties without, on the whole, being obliged to hide his political opinions. It is true, an obedient judiciary often instituted proceedings for *lèse majesté* resulting in severe punishment, and bureaucracy and police continually harassed the undesirable political parties. But the *Reichstag* was never prepared to carry bills directed against free expression itself. Members of the oppositional parties, however, were not admitted into the Civil Service. This remained the prerogative of the Conservatives alone. Catholics and Progressives found a sphere of activity in municipalities where they had the majority although the controlling bureaucracy would sometimes harass disobedient municipalities with surcharges, the State railway might build the new line at a distance, or the Army might take away the garrison.

The Social Democrats, however, remained completely excluded from any share in public administration. The local authorities could elect their officers but the appointments were subject to the approval of the Government. Whenever the candidate was a Social Democrat this approval was refused. The régime itself prevented them from gaining understanding and appreciation of the political reality by refusing them a share in the political responsibility. In the army they were forced to deny their political convictions. The recruit who answered "Yes" when asked by his superior whether he was a Social Democrat, was confined to barracks. Occasionally the army encroached on other spheres and showed its power by ignoring even the limits of the law; for example in 1912, in the Alsatian town of Zabern, where the regimental commander, after gathering crowds had annoyed him and incurred his displeasure, on his own initiative, usurped police powers and had demonstrators and passers-by arrested by his soldiers and had them thrown into the cellars of the

barracks. It accurately reflected the views of the ruling class that, when he was tried, the court-martial acquitted him and his career was not prejudiced by the incident. That was the usual state of affairs in Prussia and the smaller German States which followed Prussia's example. The development in the South, however, was very different. Much to the disgust of all North German supporters of the Government the Grand Duchy of Baden had, during the last years before the war, an administration which was supported by a majority of National Liberals, Progressives and Social Democrats, while the Catholic Centre party maintained an attitude of benevolent opposition. The sharp contrasts of the North found no place in the small country which could look back on a long tradition of liberty and freedom.

The Emperor had got rid of Bismarck because he had no wish to start his reign with a *coup d'état* and with bloodshed. His endeavours to conciliate the workers did not last long—patience was not one of his characteristics. After a very short time he too was playing with the idea of a *coup d'état* but, timorous and irresolute by nature, he could not seize the initiative for which Bismarck would not have lacked the courage. William expressed his opinion only in words. Although at times, when the Pan-Germans threateningly demanded action by the government, he accused them of being "criminals who would ruin the Empire," he used in his numerous speeches exactly the language which was in accordance with their convictions. Thus, speaking of foreign politics he exclaimed: "Give me the trident"; again, he called himself "the Admiral of the Atlantic"; and he used the words "*Civis Germanus sum*," in imitation of the custom of the old Roman Empire. It was the same when he turned to internal matters; he raged against the Social Democrats, calling them "a brood of men not worthy of the name of Germans."

To an ambitious general he said threateningly: "If this goes too far it will be your turn. I know that if it comes to shooting you will do it thoroughly." The discontent of so great a part of the German people irritated him continuously. He challenged the discontented to emigrate: "I will not tolerate pessimists," he once shouted. "Let them shake the dust from their feet." He wrote to Chancellor von Bülow: "First shoot down the Socialists, cut off their heads and make them innocuous—if necessary by massacre—and then an external war." He talked of the Deputies in the *Reichstag* as "a bunch of fools," or "blockheads." After reigning for twenty years he boasted: "I have never read the Constitution and know nothing about it." Of the Socialists and members of the Catholic party he wrote in a letter to the Czar

that they were "ripe for the hangman, the whole lot of them." In the golden book of the town of Munich he wrote "*suprema lex regis voluntas*," and in a public speech he boasted: "There is only one master in the land and that is I!" And, on another occasion: "Those who resist me I shall crush!"

But William exhausted himself in words only, in reality he was a timorous man. No deeds followed his words and so they did not alarm his opponents against whom they were directed and they left dissatisfied the authoritarians whom they were meant to impress. The internal situation remained characterized by the steadily increasing numbers of Social Democratic enemies of the State. At the general election of 1912 they numbered four and one-third million votes and one hundred and ten seats. Together with the Liberals they had twice as many votes as all the other parties.

The conflict with Social Democracy had become the great problem of Liberalism: would the Empire, autocratically governed as it was but with a democratic suffrage and with liberal institutions, be in a position to cope with the danger threatening from an oppositional majority of its inhabitants and the steadily increasing growth of a party with a revolutionary programme? Or was the *coup d'état* inevitable?

In 1849 the young Bismarck had referred in the Prussian Diet to the way in which Frederick the Great would have settled the German revolutionary troubles of that time. "I believe," he said, "that he would have resorted, and not without success, to that outstanding characteristic of Prussian nationality—to the war-like element. He would have known that to-day, just as in the time of our forefathers, the sound of the clarion which calls to the colours of the king has not lost its magic for a Prussian ear, be it for the defence of our frontiers, be it for Prussia's glory and greatness."

In Bismarck's memoirs nearly half a century later the same thesis, which had been drawn up for the past, was also proclaimed for the future. The dismissed founder of the *Reich* again enumerated all the Empire's internal enemies and, forming his words with the masterly demagogic poignancy which had not left him, even in his advanced years, he prophesied: "Nevertheless I hope that in times of war, patriotism will always rise high enough to clear away the web of lies with which party leaders, ambitious orators and the party Press endeavour to ensnare the masses in times of peace." In other words, Bismarck was convinced that, even after decades of parliamentary practice, the urge for liberty and the revolutionary longing would evaporate

before the "clarion call" of the king. Nevertheless, he recommended a dictatorship in the event of war which would give the Government the same "independence with which the Bohemian War (1866) was undertaken, without agreement, even in opposition to political feeling."

Bismarck was right in thinking that the question of Social Democracy would be solved with "blood and iron": the war solved, or at least postponed it. On August 1st, 1914, it was proved that it is not "the noise of the larger and smaller parliaments" which is important; what matters is "the bearing of the rank and file or their attitude towards mobilization." The clarion call came and, as Bismarck had expected, the bearing of the conscripted Social Democratic workers was excellent. They, like the Liberals and Catholics—even the members of the national minorities on the Eastern and Western frontiers—all of them "internal enemies of the Empire"—marched and fought like the most obedient loyalists. Bismarck's confidence in the soaring patriotism proved true beyond all expectations. Parliament too was seized by it. All parties, including the Social Democrats, unanimously granted the war credits. It was due to the Socialist trade unions that the Socialist workers performed their military duty in such a perfect manner. More, for the duration of the war, the Social Democratic party, together with all other parties, abandoned even the political struggle, A domestic truce, the so-called "Burgfriede,"[1] was concluded.

The war did not bring the dictatorship for which the adherents of absolute authority had hoped. As long as it seemed Germany would be victorious every strengthening of the autocratic part of the Constitution would have been accepted. But the Kaiser was timorous, as was his nature, and the generals too, however much they loathed civil liberties, found it impossible to come to any decision. In theory everything remained unchanged. It was different, however, in political practice: by the voluntary submission of the Kaiser and of the parties of the Right, the generals became the determining factor. Supreme in command was Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, but the "strong man" was his assistant, General Ludendorff, who, in fact, governed Germany from 1915 till the end of the war—not as a dictator but by pressure which he exercised by threatening to resign. The various Chancellors who followed each other vacillated between General Headquarters and the *Reichstag*. The Pan-Germans formed themselves into a party, the so-called "Fatherland party." Their propaganda

[1] *Burgfriede:* the literal meaning is: Peace within the beleaguered Castle. The expression is generally used to indicate a truce between political parties.

was conducted on a grand scale. Their main endeavours were directed to persuading the Kaiser and the army leaders to bring about far-reaching changes in the Constitution. They found little sympathy for their demands. The parties of the Left, on the other hand, demanded extension of parliamentary rights. Their wishes centred in two amendments to the Constitution: the Prussian electoral system—still the old three-class property graded plutocratic system where voting was public—was to be replaced by equal and secret suffrage. This would have meant the fall of the Prussian stronghold of Conservatism. And secondly, deputies were to be introduced gradually into the ministerial positions in Prussia and in the Empire. Thus, it was hoped to adapt the Constitution to western models and to remove the autocratic part of the government.

Political feelings ran higher, antagonism grew more irreconcilable. Privation, and with it unrest increased. Yet for four years nothing was done. But when the Supreme Command saw that the war was lost—in September 1918—they ordered that concessions be made to the Left. Acting on instructions from the generals the Prussian Diet carried in October the introduction of a democratic suffrage. Under the impact of Wilson's notes, General Ludendorff gave orders for the formation of a parliamentary government. In doing so he hoped both for a favourable armistice, and the shifting of responsibility to the "politicians."

The democratic revolution brought about by order of the army—again a "revolution from above"—was completed even before firing had ceased on the fronts and without any kind of revolutionary act taking place "from below."

CHAPTER IV

THE GERMAN REPUBLIC

BISMARCK, BY THAT TIME AN old man, had warned the young Emperor with gloom and sorrow: "Your Majesty, as long as you have this body of army officers (*Officierkorps*) you can of course do what you like. If you should once be without it, everything will be quite different."

Thus the founder of the Empire revealed once again—for the last time—the inmost nature of his work. The army was the steel frame around which the whole edifice of the Empire had been built and which supported it, whatever happened. Already, under Bismarck and still more so after him, the methods of the autocratic régime in that pseudo-constitutional Empire produced confusion and growing conflict. Nevertheless, the monarch had nothing to fear. As long as the army was firmly under the control of its officers he could brave any storms. Should discontent and opposition ever become really dangerous there was always the *coup d'état*, a means which the first Chancellor was about to use fearlessly when he was dismissed by William II.

The moment which Bismarck had prophesied with gloomy foreboding came in the autumn of 1918. The army was defeated. True, in spite of dreadful losses, the loyal Officers' Corps still existed; but it was scattered throughout those millions which formed the enormously inflated army, and after four years of struggle and privation, the spell of its tradition broken by defeats, this army no longer rendered implicit obedience to its officers. When disturbances broke out in various parts of Germany a number of commanding officers from the front line were hurriedly summoned to a conference at General Headquarters. They were asked whether the troops would march against the insurgents. The answer was: No. The Kaiser could have followed the advice which Bismarck had given him before he ascended the throne, "rather to fall, sword in hand, fighting for his rights, on the steps of the throne, than to yield an inch." But William was not robust enough for personal heroism. "No German soldier would leave such a ruler in the lurch," the first Chancellor had prophesied. Wilhelm preferred not to put matters to the test, and he went abroad.

Thus the monarchy came to an end in Germany and in the federal States. Detachments of troops which were to be used against striking and demonstrating workers refused to obey orders. The power of the State was broken. The formation of a government was left to that political party which could be trusted to do two things: to control the excited masses and to abstain from any revolutionary changes. The last Imperial Chancellor, Prince Max von Baden, handed the reins of government to the Chairman of the Social Democratic party, Friedrich Ebert.

The great majority of the German people expected from the new régime not only food for the hungry, but above all liberation from the coercion which, during the years of war, had weighed ever more heavily on public and on private life. The workers, the petty bourgeoisie and the intellectuals wanted "Socialism," too, but neither the masses nor the political leaders had any clear conception of what Socialism was. Socialist literature of the pre-war period had been copious enough, but it had not produced any practical plan of what should actually be done if the establishment of Socialism—so ardently desired and so much discussed—suddenly became a political possibility.

The Social Democratic programmes had always consisted of two parts: a liberal and democratic part, concerned with the present and meant to facilitate the struggle of the Labour Opposition against Imperial autocracy, and another one which vaguely referred to a distant and blissful future. It was hoped and promised that then, "through the abolition of class rule and of class itself," the "ever increasing productivity of social labour, which is now a source of poverty and oppression for the exploited classes, will be transformed into a source of the greatest welfare and of universal and harmonious perfection." This was the optimistic prophecy of the "Erfurter Programme," which had been drawn up in 1891 and had remained unchanged.

The Socialist section of the party programme was considered utopian even by the leaders and members of the party. Only a small group, which had split off during the war, which was called "Spartacus" and from which the Communist party later developed, demanded an immediate realization of these plans. The majority of the party had long ceased to be revolutionary either in method or in spirit. It is true, after political power had dropped into their laps, there was a great deal of talk about the Socialist transformation of the economic system, but no practical step was taken in that direction. The other part of their programme, however, the practical, democratic part, had now become topical through the collapse of the old order. That, how-

ever, was the programme of an opposition which presupposed the existence of a strong monarchist State supported by the army from which it hoped to wrest the maximum of democratic and civil liberties; it was not the programme of a party which itself wished to rule the State. They had never thought that monarchy, militarism and autocracy could all simply disappear from one day to the other.

Ebert, the most strong-minded and most influential of the Social Democratic leaders, did not want to go further than was warranted by the circumstances. To the last Imperial Chancellor, Prince Max von Baden, he said with complete frankness: "I do not desire a Social Revolution. Indeed I hate it like sin." He did all he could to save the monarchy. He might have been successful had the Kaiser consented to abdicate without delay. But William could no more be persuaded to renounce his crown than to fight for it. Ebert therefore had to abandon the monarchy in order to retain his hold over the masses during those troubled days of defeat. As Prince Max said, "he resorted to a revolutionary gesture in order to prevent the revolution."

Even after another Social Democrat leader, Scheidemann, carried away by events, had proclaimed the Republic, Ebert still attempted to save the monarchist constitution. He implored Prince Max to remain as Regent. Thus the crown was to be preserved for the grandson of the Kaiser, who was a minor and not compromised. This plan might have succeeded, but Prince Max declined. He was a weary, aristocratic gentleman, with no aspirations for an important political rôle. He preferred to retire from the political arena and to leave the cares of state entirely in Social Democratic hands.

On November 9th the Emperor left the country and on the same day the Republic was proclaimed. Already on the following day Ebert announced to the world: "Germany has completed her revolution." He thus made it clear that there were to be no further changes in the structure of the State now that, against Ebert's wish, the head of the State had been changed.

The first Republican Government, following the Russian example, had styled itself "*Rat der Volksbeauftragten*" (Council of People's Commissars). But only the label was borrowed from Russia. The Council consisted of six Socialists, three from the Right and three from the Left wing—three from the "Majority Socialists" and three from the Independent Social Democratic party, which had split off during the war because they wished to end the war and to grant no more credits. These six men, who had professed Socialism for many years, now occupied the highest

positions in the *Reich*. It may be understandable that they did not attempt to establish a Socialist commonwealth. But neither did they make any attempt to safeguard the democratic Republic against counter-revolutionary attacks.

If one reviews their acts and omissions one is reminded of the earliest days of German Liberalism and of those political day-dreams which Wilhelm von Humboldt evolved at the time of the deepest autocracy. We referred to them in our first chapter. In the system which Humboldt had planned practically everything which played a part in the life of the nation—religion, family, morality, art, education, economics, poor relief, etc.—was to be left to private initiative, to "voluntary associations," and only one burden was to devolve upon the State—the responsibility for the public safety: the army, police and the law courts. The ideas of the young philosopher were brilliant, revolutionary, ahead of his time, but they revealed only a very limited insight into the nature of the State. Humboldt divided the functions of society into two separate parts. The one, which was cultural in the widest sense, he assigned to the self-government of the citizens; the other, that of the Executive, the indispensible coercive functions he left to the State, the existence of which he assumed without actually describing its nature. This hidden source of compulsion, about which Humboldt has given us no more definite information, can be none other than—autocracy. Such dualism cannot endure. As long as the executive organs of the State are not subordinated to and co-ordinated with the liberal principle, liberal institutions will never be able to develop freely and in safety. Again and again the instruments of coercion, tending to be a law unto themselves, will endeavour to invade all other spheres of the communal life to gain the ascendancy over the "voluntary associations" either to destroy or to subjugate them. The history of Liberty in Germany offers an ever repeated confirmation of this fact.

We witnessed the vain attempt of the people in 1848 to establish liberal institutions—in the National Assembly at the Frankfurt Paulskirche and in the Prussian Assembly—parallel to and independent of the armed Executive, the ultimate power in the State. Both Parliaments were shattered by the Prussian army which had remained intact.

We saw at the beginning of the sixties the attack made by the liberal Chamber on the absolute monarchy—an attack easily repulsed by Bismarck because the army had remained loyal to the king.

We saw the "Liberal Era" after 1871; it did not last long. The

conservative forces, supported by the army, gradually and increasingly gained the upper hand.

It was only during the Prussian reform—a result of the defeat of the army in 1806—that a serious attempt was made by liberal officers to unite freedom and power and to make the army the bulwark of liberty by broadening its social basis and establishing the *Landwehr*. At that time the nation was not sufficiently developed to make use of the great opportunity which was then offered to it.

In 1848 Karl Marx had pleaded in vain for the establishment of a Parliamentary army.

In 1862 Lassalle had preached to the Opposition that it must "intervene and so transform the armed Executive that it will never again be able to oppose the will of the nation."

In both instances the advice given by the Socialists was utopian; an attempt to carry it out would only have enhanced the victory of the reactionaries, just because the army had remained unaffected and a willing instrument in the hand of royalist autocracy. But Marx and Lassalle had both known well what was the real point, and had taught that freedom could only be assured if the old army were conquered and destroyed and a new one set up in its place, imbued with the new spirit.

In 1918 the road was at last open. The foreign enemy had performed the task which the German people themselves could obviously never accomplish. The army, conquered in the field, disintegrated by reason of its enormously inflated size and the depression of defeat, robbed of its former spirit, was practically broken up. It had been reduced to a widely scattered collection of bands which required provisioning but no longer possessed any fighting value. The man who could collect from the ruins of this army an efficient fighting force, however small, could command Germany.

To do this was the paramount and inescapable duty of the People's Commissars. No government can rule even for a day with any freedom and assurance if it cannot command a handful of armed men who can defend it, at least against madmen and criminals. Even if it enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of the nation it is not relieved of this necessity. If this is true in times of peace how much more is it essential at a time of extreme general unrest!

It might therefore have been expected that the People's Commissars, who were at the same time both Ministers and sovereign, would at once have taken measures to form an armed force—a bodyguard in fact—and that they would have used their

indisputably great authority to create a new army for the new State. There can be no doubt that they would have succeeded. They had the great Social Democratic party behind them—one million organized and registered members. Within that million were hundreds of thousands of comrades whose loyalty had been tested, and amongst these again tens of thousands who had served in the army in peace and war and thoroughly understood military matters.

But instead the People's Commissars acted quite differently. Less than forty-eight hours after they took over the government they issued a proclamation which decreed a large number of rights and liberties and removed all special restrictions imposed during the war as well as some older restrictions to which people were accustomed. They promised, in addition, an eight-hour day, unemployment assistance, a well-regulated system of production, measures to relieve the shortage of housing and the shortage of food; finally proportional representation was introduced; everyone over the age of twenty received the vote for all democratic institutions, and elections for a Constituent Assembly were announced. The decree itself was already a kind of constitution, a far-reaching, fundamental law, which lavished liberties and benefits on the population.

For decades Social Democracy had accused the capitalists of exploiting the people, the Junkers of profiteering with bread, the officers of ill-treating the men, the Imperialists of war-mongering. If there was some truth in all this, it would have seemed that the present state of the nation was the consequence of these former misdeeds. And what was the present state? Two million Germans lay buried on the battlefield, thousands who were crippled and maimed were begging in the streets, the people were starving, proletariat and middle classes were impoverished, and a small section of industrialists and business men had made enormous fortunes. All this had come about whilst the generals exercised almost unlimited power over Germany. But the Council of the Socialist People's Commissars made no accusations, it announced no retribution; it scattered a fairy fortune over everyone as if merely the fact that it was in power would suffice to guarantee food and justice in unlimited quantities, and as if its government stood firm and unchallenged.

The Council of People's Commissars left undisturbed in their positions of power those men whom they, the Socialists, were accustomed to denounce as enemies of the people. The aggressive heavy industrialists remained owners of their coal mines, the despotic Junkers continued to rule on their large estates, the

reactionary judges continued to pronounce judgement, the monarchist bureaucracy remained in office and the Kaiser's generals at the head of the army. Prussia was not divided up, and the smaller and smallest Federal States continued to exist. The Socialistic People's Commissars left the entire Imperial *Reich* untouched, they behaved as if it were enough that they sat in the seats of the Ministers, and that the way to the formal democracy of majority rule seemed to be open.

One of the Commissars, Wilhelm Dittmann, who belonged to the Left group, to the Independent Social Democrats, has attempted to explain the almost incomprehensible inactivity of the ruling Council: "The easy victory of the revolution, effected as a matter of course, proved its own undoing. The resentment of the time of the anti-Socialist Law had died down. No bloody struggle preceded the victory. No passions were aroused. Even the reactionaries had acknowledged "the facts of the situation." Nowhere was there any serious resistance. Thus the illusion was created that the old forces had been overcome for good and all."

This false optimism may have existed in the minds of the Socialist leaders, but how did it ever arise? Even to-day this seems still a mystery. Up to the war the Socialists had owed their enormous electoral successes in no small degree to the harsh, accusing language with which they incessantly attacked the ruling and the propertied classes. The last proclamation, addressed by the Party Committee to the workers only a few days before the outbreak of war, included the following sentence: "The ruling classes, who gag, despise and exploit you in peace time, want to misuse you as cannon fodder." These words, full of indignation, hatred and wrath, were printed exactly ten days before the Party, accustomed to express itself in such terms, not only voted unanimously for the credits which these same "ruling classes" and their monarchy required to carry on the war but also concluded a political truce with the Government and the parties opposite and undertook to abstain from all forms of criticism. That was on August 4th, 1918. What happened in November, 1918, was the continuation of such an inconsistent, contradictory and suicidal policy.

The Social Democratic party had become ossified in the routine of small day to day struggles and of extremist phraseology. It had long since ceased to be really revolutionary. This applied certainly to the Right wing section, the so-called Majority Socialists, but it was also—with certain exceptions—true of the Independent Social Democrats, who had come into conflict with the party majority on the question of war aims and war credits.

The *Spartakusbund* alone was revolutionary, and from this group later arose the Communist Party. In 1918 the Spartacists were only a small group, numerically weak, and the great noise connected with it was less the noise it made itself than the noise made about it. The extremist attitude of the *Spartakusbund* offered reactionaries of every colour the desired opportunity to inveigh, not only against revolutionary Socialism but against the Socialists in any guise, against the democratic Republic and against civil liberties. Not even all the Spartacists demanded a revolutionary dictatorship. Their two most prominent leaders, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, voted in favour of parliamentary methods and for participation in the National Assembly. That was in December 1918, just before they were murdered as "Bolsheviks." They wanted their Party to be the advance guard in the workers' struggle for Socialism, and not an instrument for an enforced millennium.

The Social Democrats had not become revolutionary democrats just because they had ceased to be revolutionary Socialists. The belief that the social revolution was both necessary and possible had been lost while the movement grew into a rigidly organized mass party. But this did not mean, of course, that they had any clear notion of what was essential for the achievement of civil liberty, of democracy. On the contrary, an over-simplified Marxist terminology had blunted their minds to the demands of the struggle for power, had led them to become accustomed to the simple notion of the two classes—on the one side the workers and on the other the "reactionary bloc"—however much Marx himself had rejected this conception. They had either forgotten or had never learned to differentiate between the groups which made up "bourgeois" society. That detailed knowledge of the specific political qualities of the various groups in the German body politic, which the Opposition Liberals of the last century had possessed, had not been transferred to the Social Democratic Opposition. As Social Democracy now, in political practice, gave up the class struggle and the idea of destroying "the bourgeoisie" it became reconciled to their existence as a whole and abandoned even the idea of reforming the whole by depriving certain sections of their power. The result was that the Social Democrats acted in a most contradictory manner. The party endeavoured to bring about two things which everyone acquainted with Prusso-German history, and with the forces that had shaped it, was bound to regard as irreconcilable from the start: to make liberal Democracy victorious, and to base it upon the Officers' Corps.

We have already heard that the Council of People's Com-

missars failed to take the obviously most urgent step of forming a body of reliable troops. There were special reasons for this striking omission. Military affairs in the Council had been taken over by Friedrich Ebert. Of all the Social Democratic leaders Ebert had been the most zealous supporter of the Supreme Command during the war. More than any other he had enjoyed the confidence of the generals. Now, on the evening of November 9th, when he was faced with the difficult task of giving the new Government its necessary basis of material power, he turned to those men of whom he had reason to suppose that they had the greatest experience and expert knowledge in military matters —to the Supreme Army Command.

The Commander-in-Chief was still, just as during the war, Field Marshal von Hindenburg. General Groener had now replaced Ludendorff. Groener was well acquainted with the Social Democrats and with the Trades Union leaders because he had been in charge of the armament industry during part of the war. There was a direct telephone line from the Chancellor's office to the General Headquarters of the army. As soon as the Council of the People's Commissars had taken over the reins of government, Ebert and Groener came to an understanding with each other over this telephone line. Groener later referred to this understanding as an "alliance," and the word fits the case.

In 1925 the General, called as witness, said of this historical conversation: "We formed an alliance for the fight against Bolshevism. There was no possibility of a restoration of the Monarchy. . . . Our aim on November 10th was the establishment of a proper Government, the support of its rule by troops and by the National Assembly as soon as possible. I advised the Field Marshal at the outset not to fight against the revolution with arms, as it was to be feared that, with the temper of the troops as it was, such resistance would break down. I proposed to him that the Supreme Army Command should ally itself with the Majority Socialists. . . ."

"Proposing" or "advising" was here merely the expression of formal military subordination. The man who acted was Groener himself and the memorable conversation between him and the Social Democrat, Ebert, formed the real basis of the German Republic. Many observers have been amazed at the inner contradictions of this political creation as they revealed themselves during the course of the following fourteen years on countless occasions, during every crisis. The dualism of German policy during the republican era, often almost incomprehensible, can be traced back to that nightly telephone conversation which was

a historical fact of great consequence. It was the origin of the distribution of power which determined the course of coming events.

The strongest historical force of the Prusso-German State was the Prussian Officers' Corps; it was the mainstay of the autocracy which had ruled till 1918. Everything which had stood out against autocracy during the past hundred and fifty years, from the philosophy of enlightenment to the revolution of 1848 and the Liberal opposition of the sixties had at last found expression in the gigantic mass party of the workers. Now, at the very moment when the army was lying prostrate, when the Officers' Corps had ceased to exist as an element of power, when Social Democracy could triumph and initiate a new epoch in German history —at that moment the Social Democrats entered into an alliance with the beaten foe and helped him to recover. The alliance bore the specific features of the philosophical conceptions of the young Humboldt. The Social Democrats undertook to develop the institutions of the civic life while they left the Officers' Corps in charge of public safety and external security. To express it in Humboldt's own words: the Social Democrats were left with the "voluntary associations," the Generals with "the State."

Autocracy and democracy continued to exist side by side as they had done before, and as before the conflict had to be resolved.

Of the two confederates Ebert was the first to do his part. The Supreme Command was confirmed in its powers, the legend of Hindenburg's war fame was fostered and consolidated and the officers' privileges were defended to the utmost.

Resolutions were drawn up by the various revolutionary bodies, including the Council of the People's Commissars, to set up a people's army, and many attempts were made to this end. In their anxiety to safeguard the newly-won democratic liberty soldiers had formed themselves into many more or less disciplined corps of soldiers whose object it was to protect the Republic. But Ebert, whose task it should have been, as Defence Minister of the Republic, to see that the resolutions were carried out, to support the initiative of the various leaders of soldiers throughout the country and to co-ordinate all these forces, did nothing to provide the Republic with an armed force loyal to the democratic principles. He vacillated, finessed, promised and then had scruples, so that everything remained patchwork. The People's Commissar, Dittmann, as a witness, said of Ebert's tactics, "that General Groener's influence on Ebert was especially marked every morning; at night, at 11 o'clock, he used to telephone

to General Headquarters . . . and on the following morning Groener's influence could be clearly traced. We Independent Commissars had then continually to struggle against the re-assertion of the old military point of view in Government measures."

The Independents repeatedly demanded the establishment of a people's army (*Volkswehr*). They were not alone in this military question; the bulk of the Majority Socialists were in agreement with them; they, too, insisted that the power of the old officers' caste should not be restored. But in vain: Ebert was holding the reins and he was the more experienced tactician. The result was that in the military question—the most vital problem—nothing was done by the Council of the People's Commissars to secure a reliable defence force for the Republic.

General Groener, too, had no efficient forces at his disposal for the moment. The old army, that army of millions, obeyed no longer. It was dispersing. Groener attempted to use sections which he trusted against a Socialist volunteer corps, the "*Volksmarine-Division*," which had come into conflict with the Government, but the attempt failed. The Government experienced unpleasant situations and was exposed to the exacting demands of excited groups of armed men. More than once Ebert wished to leave the capital and his colleagues prevented his flight only with difficulties.

This state of insecurity lasted for nearly three months but Ebert was confident that it would very soon be at an end. Groener and his officers knew what was required. Whilst demobilization was still in full swing they undertook to form new detachments. A few daring officers collected a number of eager subalterns and soldiers who had not been touched by the disintegrating effect of defeat—young men, cadets, grammar-school boys, sons of farmers—some of them counter-revolutionary in feeling, others quite ready, for high pay and from love of adventure, to make up by a civil war for the war they had missed abroad. By ceaseless drill, in training-camps far removed from the big towns, new battalions were forged. In January 1919 they were already able to occupy Berlin in goose-step.

The Communist leaders, Liebknecht and Luxemburg, were shortly afterwards murdered by officers of these new divisions. The Socialist Government did not have the energy to carry through effective legal proceedings against the murderers. The consequence of such an unusual degree of weakness was a long series of murders of socialists, pacifists and democrats. Rathenau and Erzberger were among the most notable victims. The

murderers always belonged to the same officer circles and they practically always managed to evade justice.

The Free Corps, as the newly-formed detachments were called, were, by their very nature, not only ready to fight against any attempts by Left-wing Socialists to continue the revolution, but they were definitely counter-revolutionary, that is to say they were filled with the desire to restore by force either the monarchy or some other form of autocracy. They proclaimed "*Ruhe und Ordnung*" (Law and Order) as their aim, but in the opinion of their leaders law and order could only be preserved under the dictatorial rule of an individual who acted according to their ideas. Their whole outlook was dominated by military notions and, as was only natural, they thought and felt in terms of the Prussian absolutist army of Junkers. To reach decisions by means of a dialectic process, as demanded by liberal democracy, seemed altogether alien and even sinister to them, and they considered it pernicious for the nation. They believed in compulsion, not in liberty. They kept strict discipline within their ranks and only tolerated subordinates who were either politically of the same mind or else non-political, simple mercenaries.

It has often been maintained by Social Democrats, in defence against criticism from the Left, that the Socialist government had no alternative but to have recourse to the counter-revolutionary Free Corps because the Social Democrat workers, after four years of war, had no wish to serve again in the army. That is scarcely correct. The truth was that the workers had no wish to serve under such leaders, under Imperial officers of the old school, because they distrusted them. Nevertheless, in the early stages, before the political situation had become clarified, the number of Socialists or Republicans in the Free Corps was by no means negligible. They were systematically removed by the officers. Nothing was to interfere with the uniformity of the troops.

Secondly, it has been asserted by Social Democrats that the Government had to seek the support of the Free Corps because the continued unrest amongst sections of the working class, the activities of the Left-wing Socialists or Communists, forced them to do so. The argument will not bear examination. In the first place, it is not correct chronologically. First came the Ebert–Groener alliance; the formation of the Free Corps, a result of this alliance, began already quite early in December 1918; large-scale demonstrations against the Government did not take place until the turning of the year. Cause and effect have been confused here. One important reason why sections of the working class could not settle down for such a long time to come was that

they were incensed by the appearance of the re-established Prussian army. Had not the army been the most conspicuous and notorious and also the most hateful element of the old autocratic régime? And had it not been resurrected, was it not marching again through the streets as in days gone by? It was just the politically conscious workers who felt they could not trust a government which based its power upon the officers of the Kaiser.

Under the protection of the Free Corps the National Assembly, which was to work out the Constitution, met in Weimar on February 6th, 1919 .The situation of the second German National Assembly was similar to that of the first which had held its sessions in the Paulskirche in Frankfurt in 1848. It is true that in 1919 there was no longer a Prussian king with unrestricted authority over the instruments of power. But even without a king the army consciously remained a law unto itself, giving only conditional support to the institution of the seemingly triumphant democracy. In 1848 the National Assembly had had to turn to the king for protection against the rebels. The same thing happened in 1919. The new army, which was none other than the old Prussian army, bloodily repressed every revolutionary attempt made by Socialist workers. Apart from the occasional use of flattery, the army scarcely concealed the contempt in which it held the Government, the Parliament and also the President of the *Reich*—on February 11th, 1919, the Social Democrat, Ebert, had assumed this office—to whom it owed its new existence. "An ice-cold marriage of convenience," one of their generals had called the relationship between the Officers' Corps and the Republic. Whoever looked closely into the army —which the democratic politicians were hardly able to—knew that the officers would use the first opportunity to overthrow the despised Republic. In 1919, the situation was less clear, more disguised and concealed, and it was some time before it revealed itself plainly. At bottom it was the same situation as in 1848: the Democracy could rely on being protected against the Left; it was defenceless against an attack from the Right.

The German National Assembly worked out and agreed upon a Constitution which guaranteed all civil liberties and created social liberties of a new kind which were by no means insignificant. Social Democrats, the Catholic Centre party, and the Liberals, the so-called "coalition of Weimar," together had a large majority. The parties to the left and right of this coalition had together obtained only about one-fifth of the seats. It was a matter of course that Germany was to be based on the parliamentary form of government. "The most liberal of all Constitutions," thus

Social Democratic politicians proudly called the fundamental law of the Republic. The Weimar Constitution has often been adversely criticized by radical Liberals, but they were mistaken. If Germany had been governed in conformity with the letter and spirit of this Constitution no sincere Liberal or Democrat would have had reason to be disturbed. From the liberal point of view, the Constitution was almost perfect. But it existed only on paper. It was not taken from real life, as a Constitutional Charter ought to be, but instead it laid down rules for life. For this reason it never had any real existence.

The written Constitution was in sharp contrast to the actual constitution, the relationship and the distribution of power. It was only natural that there was an Opposition which desired autocracy instead of liberal democracy. How could the old tradition be dead? The special danger of the situation was that the material basis of autocracy continued to exist.

The revolution had left intact the large estates in East Prussia and the heavy industry of the West. Prior to 1918 the Junkers and "chimney lords" had been determined opponents of democracy. They had been forced to yield after the army was broken, but there was no reason to assume that they had changed their opinions. Their abundant financial resources were always at the disposal of the counter-revolution.

The Republic, moreover, left vital parts of the machinery of the State in the hands of its enemies. It neither reformed the bureaucratic system nor did it change its personnel. On the contrary, one of the clauses of the new Constitution even stated that "the duly acquired rights" of the Civil Servants were to be scrupulously preserved. It is true, gradually some changes were made in administrative posts, but these were not at all sufficient to produce any change in the character of the bureaucracy.

The judiciary remained completely unaffected and—monarchistic and anti-democratic as they were—they were confirmed in their high offices.

Finally, and this was the most important factor, the armed forces remained in the hands of the old officers.

In these circumstances it was natural that the parliamentary Opposition grew up again. That in itself would have meant little to the Republic, but this Opposition had nearly all the positions of power outside Parliament at its disposal. Like the Conservatives of the Imperial days, oppositional deputies sat as enemies of Parliament within Parliament. Conscious of their material power they despised the parliamentary majority and grew furious at government which appeared to them based upon

mere presumption. The Republic was no "State" as far as they were concerned.

Gustav Noske, People's Commissar and afterwards Minister of National Defence, an intimate friend of Ebert's, who took over control of military affairs in the Government in December 1918, proclaimed on the occasion of the entry of the Free Corps into Berlin: "With the young Republican army I will bring you freedom and peace."

Probably this statement was made quite sincerely; Noske had the reputation of being an honest and unaffected man. But his proclamation must have sounded the bitterest mockery to all Republicans who saw more clearly. The "young Republican army," which so excellently understood the use of terror and bloodshed against socialist dreamers and turbulent workers, soon showed clearly what their republican sympathies were worth. Again and again the generals of this army, now called *Reichswehr*, threatened rebellion in order to force their will upon the Government. Their chiefs, President Ebert and Noske, the Minister of National Defence, always believed that they would be able to tame them by gentle persuasion. They could never make up their minds to root them out.

Eventually, in March 1920, the Government was obliged to flee from Berlin because a mutinous Free Corps marched into the capital and the Government could find no troops to defend the city. Noske appealed to his generals. In vain! "*Reichswehr* shoot at *Reichswehr*?" said one of them, von Seeckt, jamming the monocle into his eye: "Impossible!" Some of the other generals were in league with the mutineers. This was the so-called "*Kapp Putsch.*" The counter-Government set up by the mutineers was unable to assert itself. The working classes at once called a general strike which spread to almost all parts of Germany. That by itself might not have proved sufficient to frustrate the attempt upon the Republic. But the *putsch* was too amateurish, too much of a hare-brained adventure—it was insufficiently prepared and the net of conspiracy had not been spread far enough. Even those Civil Servants whose sympathies were undoubtedly with the reactionaries were unable to place any confidence in the precipitate enterprise. The higher officials refused to co-operate with "Reich Chancellor" Kapp. The military commandants in the provinces, who had not been initiated early enough into the plans, played for time and adopted a waiting attitude. Before they had decided upon their action the leaders of the rebellion had lost their game.

The split in the Republican régime was now only too evident.

The workers had called a strike to protect the Republic. In various parts of Germany they had done more—they had set up bodies of armed men to maintain order (*Sicherheitswehren*) and had seized the local administration. All this was done with the immediate object of warding off the attack on the Republic, and it was naturally bound up with the determination that the Republic should be better protected against future attacks. The hope of continuing the revolution also played its part, but the number of Communists was still very small. The objectives of the workers were in the first place: self-defence against the *Reichswehr* whose attitude—not without reason—they considered treacherous, and secondly: to detach the leaders of the Social Democrats from the dangerous coalition with the reactionary Civil Servants and army officers.

When the Republican Ministers were once more back in their Ministries in Berlin they wished to end the strikes and independent actions of the workers. After the *putsch*, as before it, the working classes found themselves opposed by the very Social Democratic members of the government whom they had risen to protect and who were now in league with the generals against whom they had protected them. In the minds of the workers the faces of Noske, the Social Democrat Minister of Defence, and of Kapp, the counter-revolutionary "Reich Chancellor," merged into one; they called the soldiers who opposed them "*Noskiden*" or "*Kappisten*," with the same tone of voice. The generals, however, now that they could turn against the Left, became once again servants of the Republican Government—though by no means loyal ones—and, by order of the Government, they were now able to take a bloody revenge on their Socialist enemies. It was characteristic that the Free Corps and *Reichswehr* battalions refused to carry the black, red and golden colours of the Republic for which they were fighting.

The failure of the "*Kapp Putsch*" eased the Government's position for the moment, but fundamentally nothing was done to give permanent strength to the position of the Republic. The adherents of autocracy had received a warning by the failure of the frivolous adventure; they had learned that the counter-revolution must be better and more thoroughly prepared. But as it was they who had defeated "the Reds" they regarded themselves as indispensable. In no sense had they become friends of the Republic or uncertain in their objectives. On the contrary; when, on the morrow, the Social Democratic and the liberal Press again criticized the *Reichswehr* they concluded with bitterness that they were being rewarded with ingratitude. That their

own disloyalty had provoked the workers' rising they preferred not to admit, or to forget. Had they not rescued the Social Democratic Ministers from the insurgents? And now Social Democrat journalists and deputies were demanding that those troops which had fought and bled for the Social Democratic Government should be either disbanded or reorganized. The basic falseness of the Ebert–Groener alliance stood once again clearly revealed.

Among the Republicans there was a demand for a militia, more or less on the Swiss model, in place of the standing army. Apart from everything else, this was impossible because it was prohibited by the Treaty of Versailles. The victors in the World War had rendered an extremely effective service to the autocratic principle by forcing upon the defeated country a professional army of a hundred thousand long service soldiers. Only a professional army of so small a size could be so homogeneous and so uniform as was the *Reichswehr*. The Republican politicians missed the great opportunity offered by the failure of the "*Kapp Putsch*." At that time the officers were in great confusion. It might have been possible perhaps, although at great risk, to disperse them and to establish a Republican army. This was, indeed, decided upon but it was never attempted. The Ebert–Groener alliance of November, 1918, remained in force. Once again an Imperial officer, General von Seeckt, was entrusted with the leadership of the army. He was shrewder than his predecessors, no hot-head, capable of long-term policy. The task which now fell to him of reducing the army to 100,000 was utilized to comb out the adventurers and the undisciplined elements. They swelled the ranks of the irregular White bands. Many went to Munich where a reactionary Bavarian government gave support to enemies of the Republic of every shade. But Seeckt excluded, above all, anyone suspected of entertaining socialist, democratic or liberal opinions. The *Reichswehr* became disciplined and silent, a mute organism, charged with energy, resolved to wait until its hour had come. The Republican politicians could not but suspect what was happening in the army, but they were modest enough to be satisfied with the respite. Those guilty of bringing about the reactionary rebellion went unpunished because their political allies sat in the Law Courts.

For a further three years Germany remained torn by internal strife. With isolated Communist risings the police were able to deal effectively enough. Greater, however, was the danger threatening from the Right. This danger came to a head in

1923. It was a year of hunger and disintegration. French and Belgian troops had marched into the Ruhr to enforce the reparation deliveries which were in arrears. The Government stopped work in the districts thus occupied and printed money to compensate for the loss of earnings. The big land-owners and the big industrialists enriched themselves by the inflation which had already been going on for a long time and was now reaching its climax. Famine raged among the masses. The middle classes were stripped of their possessions—the misery was worse than during the war. Here and there nationalist bands began to make their appearance. They were controlled to a certain extent by the *Reichswehr*; they had partly been founded and were maintained by *Reichswehr* authorities, and the *Reichswehr* was prudent enough to inform the Social Democratic Ministers of these secret preparations. The illegal or "Black" *Reichswehr* was represented to them as being a protection against a Polish attack and Bolshevik risings; it was, however, so composed that it could always be employed as a counter-revolutionary force against the Republic. There was, nevertheless, method in the procedure. No sporadic action was permitted. When a section of the Black *Reichswehr* made an attack upon the Republic, the so-called "*Kustriner Putsch*," Seeckt disowned them and had the rebels arrested.

In Bavaria a conspiracy directed against the Republic went a stage further. Nearly all the Right-wing elements of Bavaria were implicated—Society, Government and *Reichswehr*. Irregular troops had assembled at the northern frontier of Bavaria in readiness for the march on Berlin where they intended to join up with the North German bands. Between Bavaria and Prussia, however, lay Saxony and Thuringia with their large industrial populations. The Bavarian plans were known here and the people armed to repulse the attack. "Red" troops prepared to defend the Republic. Once again the same forces faced each other as at the time of the "*Kapp Putsch*," and as the Government again had only the same armed force at its disposal as before—the *Reichswehr* of which excellent use could be made against the Left but scarcely any against the Right—the decision was the same as in 1920. Open civil war was averted this time. The Government moved troops to Saxony and the workers, who had risen in defence of the Republic, were disarmed. Regiments were stationed along the Bavarian frontier and prevented the advance of the rebel troops from the South even before it had started. Nevertheless, two rebel leaders at Munich considered the moment favourable. These leaders were the defeated Commander-in-

Chief of the Great War, General Ludendorff, and Adolf Hitler, an agitator of obscure origin. On November 9th they attempted to induce reactionary Bavaria to strike, "to help her to jump," as Hitler said. Their pronunciamento, the so-called "*Bürgerbräu-Putsch*," came too late and failed. These were not the leaders under whom the Bavarian politicians and officers wanted to act. Moreover, the real danger had already been forestalled by the blocking of the road to the North.

The skilful hand of a new Minister, Gustav Stresemann, was at the helm. He prevented civil war and at the same time introduced a policy of reconciliation towards the enemies of the Great War. He established a new currency and attracted American credits into the country. Germany entered upon a period of recovery, of economic prosperity and of social progress. For six years—until March, 1930—Germany presented to the world a picture of stability, of advancement, and, in some spheres, even of splendour. That was the façade. Behind the façade was the dangerously faulty structure of the State.

The period of German history which is called after Stresemann could have been regarded as the consummation of Liberalism in Germany had the picture which appeared on the surface of public life been in conformity with the actual character of the State. The emblem of autocracy, the monarchy, had ceased to exist. The head of the State was elected and the nature of the Government determined by voting in accordance with the dialectical procedure of democracy. Press, research, learning and religion were free, restricted only by the penal code. Outbreaks of civil war had ceased and with them the dictatorial intervention of the President which was permitted by the Constitution at times of extreme emergency.

But beneath and behind the political superstructure of the *Reich* the apparatus of autocracy had remained almost intact. The one effective reform which had been carried through was the reorganization of the police force, which had been built up anew and was considered reliable from the Republican point of view. In the internal administration only a small number of the higher and central posts had been occupied by new men devoted to the Republic. The judiciary were scarcely affected by the change in the form of government and even new appointments were made, for the greater part, in conformity with the old traditions and not in accordance with the new state of affairs. The *Reichswehr* developed strictly along the lines laid down by General von Seeckt; it was, and continued to be, an organization composed of enemies of the new order.

Stresemann was fully aware of the incompatibility of these elements in the State. In July, 1923, a short time before he became *Reichskanzler*, he wrote in a confidential letter: "Gessler's (the *Reichswehrminister*) conception of the unquestionable reliability of the *Reichswehr* as regards the present State appears to me unduly optimistic in view of the feeling among *Reichswehr* officers and soldiers. Presumably only those Socialist centuries (*Hundertschaften*) which may happen to be organized and the Sipo (Security Police) in Prussia could be relied upon to intervene in favour of the Government and the Constitution." The actual balance of power within the *Reich* could hardly have been described more clearly.

Stresemann used his clear vision and the strength of his patriotic imagination for the consolidation of the Republic. He took over the reins of government at a time when despair prevailed in Germany, and it was not one of the least important causes of this despair that the *Reich* was powerless. The lesson which the Germans had learned from the Bismarckian foundation of the *Reich* was that, in politics, only material power had any significance. Since the unity of Germany—of which liberal idealists had dreamed, written and spoken in vain for more than half a century—had been accomplished by "blood and iron," the boasting of power, the pride of power, and vaunting of power had become the main concern of German political life. When in 1918 defeat left them powerless against the world they endeavoured at least to show themselves powerful at home, and to do so by subjugating each other. This clinging to material power had also been the deepest reason why Ebert concluded his alliance with the Officers' Corps. From the very outset of his government Stresemann set his face against this attitude. "Recovery must come from the spiritual, not from the material."

Stresemann's faith that the world could be moved by the spiritual enabled him to maintain at home a democracy which was merely an illusion, and to achieve abroad for a powerless Germany the position of a Great Power. Without a navy, without an air force, and with the smallest possible army, the *Reich* did not even possess the military power of a small State. Stresemann used the League of Nations as the instrument by which he regained weight and influence for Germany, and thereby contributed to the ascendancy of the League. Germany's renaissance was the unmistakable sign that in the life of nations liberty under the rule of law had taken the place of force.

It was a great moment when unarmed Germany took its place

as one of the Great Powers in the Council of the League of Nations. The vision of the dying Faust:

> "*To many millions let me furnish soil,*
> *Though not secure, yet free to active toil,*"

appeared to be realized. The realization endured, as measured by history, only for a moment. The illusion of unprotected liberty had no permanence. However much Stresemann's policy appeared to lie in the interests of the peaceful liberal Western Powers he was, nevertheless, insufficiently supported by them. Five years after they had, in 1924 at Locarno, concluded with Germany a pact of friendship they still left their troops in the Rhineland. In the spring of 1929, then a very sick man, he complained bitterly to an English visitor: "If you had given me only one concession I could have carried my people. I could still do it to-day. But you have given nothing. . . . Well, nothing remains now except brutal force. . . . And the youth of Germany which we might have won for peace and for the new Europe, we both have lost. That is my tragedy and your crime."

The year 1929 was the turning point. Many things happened to bring about a change in Germany. After the failure of the optimistic foreign policy came the world economic crisis; the soothing stream of American credits dried up, unemployment figures mounted, and the extremist parties on both sides of the political front grew rapidly. Stresemann saw, with pain and sorrow, the triumphal progress of nationalist phrases and of the big capitalist interests, even in his own party. He prophesied that they would "bring about the subjugation of Germany to plutocracy . . . or the rule of the braggarts." In October of the ill-fated year 1929 he died.

Crises are always calculated to destroy the more or less illusionary super-structure of State organization and to bring into prominence in all its nakedness the balance of material power. The six years of Stresemann's rule had not been sufficient to impress the notions of liberal parliamentary democracy firmly upon the mind of the nation. The liberal statesman himself had been almost the only one in the upper middle class to uphold the ideals of liberty and peace, and he had become more and more isolated. "Nothing remains now except brutal force," had still been his own clear-sighted analysis of the situation. The factors of material power—army, heavy industry, landed property—were united in their determination to put an end to the

policy of illusions, at home and abroad. Their programme was rearmament and restoration of autocracy in the leadership of the State. The destruction of liberty they considered indispensable, above all, because the rearmament had to be carried out in secret. Only three years were necessary to make the country ripe for the execution of this programme.

The events of these last three years of the struggle for liberty in Germany are more complicated and confused than interesting. The most important point was, as we have already said: that the means were available for suppressing liberal institutions in Germany once intention had reached the point of resolution with the adherents of autocracy. After the death of Stresemann, the man from whom alone an energetic defence of democracy could have been expected, the decision was taken.

Immediately after Stresemann's death the *Reichswehr* took over the leadership. General Field Marshal von Hindenburg was now, as President of the *Reich*, their supreme commander. General Groener, who had made his alliance with Ebert in November, 1918, was Minister of National Defence. But the political head of the army was a younger assistant of both, General von Schleicher. This unprincipled schemer, more back-stage politician than soldier, had assured himself of an important position—his influence governed Hindenburg's *entourage* and the *entourage* governed the eighty-years-old Field Marshal. Open civil war was as little desired by Schleicher as by anyone else in the army. He had chosen, however, as his means for overthrowing democracy, that dictatorship paragraph of the Constitution to which reference has previously been made. Article 48—the paragraph in question —was, if honestly interpreted, by no means suitable for the purpose, as it only permitted the head of the State to take emergency measures which the Reichstag could immediately repeal. But in spite of this, Article 48 had long figured in all dictatorship plans as the means by which all the other clauses of the Constitution could be rendered null and void. And, once the necessary power was available for such a plan, this article could well be utilized for the purpose. Schleicher therefore, at the end of 1929, looked for a parliamentarian who would take on the task of governing on the lines of Article 48 of the Constitution—which meant governing against the Constitution. He chose for the purpose the leader of the Catholic party in Parliament, Heinrich Brüning, who, after some resistance, agreed to Schleicher's propositions.

The partisans of autocracy were greatly assisted by the deepening economic crisis which drove the masses to the extremist parties. The conspirators helped to hasten the development.

Hitler, the unsuccessful *putschist* of 1923, had merely been tolerated up to now on account of his "national" sentiments; at the same time he had, however, been despised because of his coarseness and lack of restraint and because he kept very bad company. But now that all forces had to be concentrated on the great objective, he was accepted into their circle. They hoped to get rid of him in due time—after he had served their purpose. He received generous subsidies from big business so that he should fully develop his gifts as an agitator. With this assistance he quickly developed his faction into a mass party and equipped a private army. The fact that the State looked on passively drove his opponents to the Left, to the Communists. Many supporters of democracy grew confused. They left its ranks because democracy seemed powerless. Thus the counter-forces were gradually weakened. The Social Democrats, faced with the question whether they should hazard a civil war against the *Reichswehr*, could not make up their mind to take a risk which promised little hope of success.

Those who controlled the powers of wealth and military strength were resolved that autocracy was to be restored. Opinions were divided as to the form it should take. Brüning wished to put a Hohenzollern on the throne again and hoped to be able to reconcile parliamentary institutions with the restored monarchy. The more extreme Right demanded the naked absolutism of the army, bureaucracy and police. While the other instigators of reaction were still wrangling over the spoils, the National Socialist party had grown so strong that it was impossible to exclude Hitler from any scheme for the resurrection of autocracy. The intention presumably was to let him have the leadership merely in appearance. But once Hitler was in the Government, *Reich* Chancellor, appointed by Hindenburg, his armed bands were able, by a bold stroke, to seize control of the public administration. The army made no effort to prevent it, and the army was the decisive factor.

Of the principles which helped the tyrant to gain possession of Germany not a single one is new—neither monarchy, nor nationalism, nor the drive for world domination, nor enmity against the Jews, nor the command to complete submission, nor even the phrase about "the nation as a community" (*Volksgemeinschaft*). All of these are old doctrines taken from the Pan-German vocabulary and the intellectual stock-in-trade of the old ruling caste; the socialist ingredients alone were stolen from the enemy. The new characteristic was that this mixture was advertised as a sensational discovery, preached with fanaticism

and proclaimed as a dogma. National Socialism did not conquer the majority of the German people as long as there were free elections; moreover, the party was already crumbling when the clique of conspirators against liberty, disunited and extremely disconcerted, entrusted the government to its leader. But because that raw creed now ranks as a dogma, and has to rank as such in order to provide a sort of intellectual basis for the despotic rule of a minority, its proclaimers must persecute and destroy all other creeds. For whereas a dogma which is a thousand years old can be applied leniently and allow of deviations, at least in practice, a dogma which has been newly originated must adopt a virulent intolerance. It is for this reason that liberty in Germany has been exterminated so ruthlessly and so completely.

If it be asked why the Germans have not defended their liberty better the answer is simple—because they never obtained their freedom by fighting for it. That Prussian autocracy, out of which the German *Reich* was newly formed, after the Holy Roman Empire had fallen into decay, has never been conquered nor destroyed. It allied itself in turn with every new force—with liberal philosophy, with the national urge towards unity, with the impulse for independence of the rising class of merchants and industrialists, finally with the Social Democrats, and last of all with Hitler and his party tyranny. And perhaps it will outlive even Hitler.

When the history of Liberalism began in Germany the ideas of liberty and national unity were inseparably linked. Autocratic Prussianism, because it protected that unity, has again and again been preserved, even admired and loved. When, however, the Germans once more have breathing space and the opportunity to reflect and to remember that they love liberty too, then they will do well to remove from their national life even the last traces of that old and tenacious force. However friendly and accommodating the old Prussian Junker military autocracy may pretend to be it will always remain equally dangerous. If the nation offers it a little finger it will always seize the whole hand and the rest of the body. A country is only free when the whole of the coercive forces of the State, everyone bearing arms, is completely subordinated to the wishes of the people. It is not enough, as we have seen, to cut off the head, because it grows again. The forces which make for tyranny must be disintegrated and utterly destroyed so that they can never again form into a whole. That will be the hardest struggle which the German people have ever been called upon to perform within their own borders. But when

that struggle is over and Liberty is won, then they will love that Liberty, hold fast to it and defend it. For man only holds dear that for which he has fought and suffered, and has made his own by right of conquest.

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