The Growth of Prussia

by Henri Nickel

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The great conqueror had fallen. Napoleon had paid his penalty. The man who for twenty years had filled the world with his glory, who, not satisfied with the illustrious crown of France, had stretched out his hands to govern the whole continent, now was condemned to meditate in the seclusion of a solitary island over the change of fortune and the suddenness of fate. Europe again breathed freely. Oppressed and weak Germany, with many in need of grace, hoped that at least the day of freedom had come and that out of the shattered ruins of their country would spring up a nation as free and great as their ancient ancestors.

Just as desirous for peace and freedom as the people were also the rulers. One might believe, says Müller, that the sovereigns had no less an aim in mind than to give to the world a new Golden Age. For on

Sept. 20th 1815 Alexander Czar of Russia, Francis Emperor of Austria, and Frederick William the King of Prussia issued a proclamation, wherein they announced their firm resolve from that time forth, to adopt the Christian religion alone as their standard, "to rule wholly in accordance with Christian love and peace," as well
within their respective states as in their intercourse with foreign governments, afforded one another assistance in all cases and to regard themselves merely as the plenipotentiaries of their own sovereigns. To rule three branches of one and the same family, how encouraging these charitable words sounded! And enthusiastic they were received by the wearied people, readily they believed them, especially when, in the next few years, all European sovereigns, with the exception of the King of England, the Pope, and the Sultan, entered the excellent holy alliance.

Soon after the war of liberty had been brought to such a happy conclusion all founders of Europe had met at the Congress of Vienna. Where Germany received back all the provinces of which she had been deprived during that and the subsequent time. They were now divided among the members of that newly formed Confederation of Germany, in such a manner that the majority either received the same territories they had possessed previously or such as they had earned at the peace of the Rhinish league. But of several hundred independent states a league of thirty nine sovereigns states had been formed and the great idea of a Germany consisting of a mixture of all the nations speaking the
German language was attached to this transformation. The first thought arose was how to govern the separate states and everywhere came the call for a constitution limiting the powers of the monarch and giving to the people the privileges which naturally belong to them. Members of this body had been able in the articles of the confederation, the 13th article stands as follows: On all censures of the Confederation there will be (originally shall be) a constitution with referendum. Nothing had indeed been said of the manner how shall the body act when these contents of this great article should be fulfilled. But the always truthful Germans had faith in their rulers happy to have been pronounced that much. There was only one leader in the Northern states liberal enough to rise with the people, the rest held themselves aloof.

Charles Augustus Grand Duke of Baden with the consent of the Estates of his country gave in 1816 a constitution allowing the representatives of all citizens, right of voting, tax exemption of the Press. The others seemed more ready to act in accordance with the above mentioned article. King Maximilian of Bavaria granted a constitution in the year 1818. In August of the same year Grand duke Charles of Baden gave a still more liberal one and the potentiates of
Wurtemberg, Hess, Hessen, and Hanover had also to yield to the pressure of other nations.

King Frédéric William III of Prussia had in his decree of May 22, 1815, prepared a constitution and set the limits within which certain delegates should have accomplished the work of drawing it up. But the king dropped and his king having by that time changed his advisers continually just passed and at last gave up what he had promised. Bishop Egbert gives us in a few words the character of this monarch, who although a good father of a family and educated man was hardly fit to govern a rising state. Bishop Egbert says: The king has acted like a wise father, who governed by the devoted love of his children upon his birthday or his recovery from illness is in a kindly manner and extends to their wishes. But afterwards upon consideration, he modifies his consent and asserts his natural authority.

William von Humboldt was busy drawing up a constitution when suddenly the news reached Berlin that King Louis, the author of a despotic history of Germany, had been assassinated by a liberal fanatic. And that the Burschenschaften at a meeting in Geneva had publicly burnt the writings of men who defied royalty as a power without restraint.
This was the death blow to liberty. For now could sweeps away by painting a sober revolution in the darkest colours not only change the King's mood and make him disposed to all liberal movements but also the make Prussia the leader in the persecution of the so-called demagogues. Severe measures were taken at once. All places for gymnastic exercises were closed.波恩 the leader was sent to Spandau, later to Kustrin; the three Bonn professors - Frick and the brother Welker - were imprisoned and their papers seized. Many others, arrest teachers and students took place. But the greatest despoticism was shown in the Kielbald decrees which, among other things, embraced the following points: the freedom of the Press was restricted by censorship; a central commission was established at Magdeburg for the investigation of demagogical writings; the Bundeshäferei together with its democratic constitutions was forbidden. The universities were placed under the inspection of state government, deputies and all German governments must submit to the decisions of the Diet. A number of liberal men still hoped that the King of Prussia would not give this consent to these articles but when he agreed to them. Willkomm von Hambach von Bingen the minister of war and von Bayme Higers
chancellor felt themselves compelled to resign, and even the Prussian government adopted all measures necessary to suppress liberal thought of democracy. De Witt, professor of theology, had only written a consolatory letter to Benda's brother for this. He was about to lose his position and had to leave Berlin. Red-black-gold caps, heads bands, and ribbons were forbidden, the forms of students' caps and cords were examined, and in a cabinet order of the year 1821 the name Protestant was added. Protestantism was forbidden. Instead of a representation of provincial parliaments one was instituted by a royal patent of June 5th, 1823. There had only advisory men and could only advise when the ministers asked their advice.

Metternich had reached his aims, and Prussia was more entirely in his hands. The feeling of the people at that period were manifested in literature and a whole school among authors were the most illustrious Gertel and Fledermaus defended aristocracy and the theory of monarchy by the grace of God to their hearts delight.

How loyal and true some to change the German nation is can not better be proved than by their long endurance. Yet the states had taken part and this would not be smothered but would take fire at its head.

June 7th, 1848 Frederick Williams 11th added
Frederick William II ascended the throne of Prussia. He was a man of learning and great hopes were connected with his government. His first acts showed indeed the intention to better and heal. Amnesty was declared for all political offences. Both was recalled from his confinement. The professors who had been driven from Berlin were recalled and everything seemed to look favourable. The goodwill of the Emperor between people and King was this constitution. Yet when a petition was sent by the Landtag of Prussia asking the King for representative government the King answered that the provincial parliaments would be retained, and a parliament of the whole Kingdom would still be introduced. In spite of this, a petition was caused by two pamphlets who had been issued during the revolution of Prussia and by publicly a physician in Königsberg, the first representative of the granting of a constitution as a political necessity, its second calling it simply a right of the people. Provincial committees were reconstituted at Berlin in order to supplement the provincial institutions by an element of unity and to work regarding its common interest of the state. Very soon a second step toward a parliament was taken. February 30, 1847 appeared a royal patent by which the United Landtag was created on the basis of provincial parliament.
Although this had not very greatly forever died its present was reproduced to the king and prime ministers of the new order. The new constitution was composed of the powers of the crown, foreign powers, holding up to the crown, standards, and the representatives of certain corporations, and corporations, the second. The new constitution consisted of the collection of the letters, who paid and the country parishes. But the good feeling which these measures had been greeted by the people were destroyed by the speech with which the king on April 11th 1847 addressed the current landings and in which he seemed to have put his whole creed. "The power on earth," he said, "shall never succeed in persuading me to exchange the natural relations between king and people for a conventioned constitutional one, and another man nor ever will a written sheet be a second providence to thrust itself in between our God in Heaven and this land to displace the old sacred faculty. The crown can and must rule only according to the laws of God and the country and according to its own free decisions and last according to the will of majorities. Russia cannot endure such a condition. Thrown a glance upon the map of Europe, on the situation of our land, above all cast a melancholy glance over our..."
history." The landtag was closed on June 26th without any other result than the landshut was to gain more.

Thus was heaped up more and more dislike and disaffection, and the first breach secretly was nearly ready to break out. The only need was a cause to aid it. The King of Prussia considered the landtag an obstacle which could be made in the way of popular government, an obstacle which the people were unwilling to accept.

Gatherings of the people were commenced on the 6th of March 1849 and petitions and deputations were sent to the King. Collisions with the troops took place and the soldiers began to rise arms. Almost this same news spread to the capital of the proceedings in other states. The Vienna revolution on March 13th was made known. Deputations of the Rhenoish provinces announced a threatening attitude there. The news of these different things inspired the people to send a deputation to the King on March 18th demanding among other things, the adoption of a liberal constitution. The deputation was well received and at two o'clock that afternoon it was announced that investigated petitions were in preparation granting to the wishes of the people and abolishing conscription, improving the Prussoish constitution and
proposing changes in the German confederation to be carried out in harmony with the other German governments. The people were scattered and surrounding the palace around the king with loud applause. Yet the entrance of the palace was held by soldiers and the people noticing this became at once suspicious and theirullnachweis was aroused. Down the long "Kaiser mit der truppe" went heard. The infantry advanced to scatter the crowd and not by accident or intentionally two shots were fired and the people thinking that they had been deceived and had been quieted by false promises in order to be slaughtered broke out in the universal cry, "We are betrayed! Murder!" Odebrecht they scatter in great excitement in a few hours barricades were erected and black and red flags banners floated in the air. The troops began their attack at 3 o clock and by seven they had closed the greater part of the Königsstrasse by the use of grapeshot. The fighting was continued during the whole night and the next morning the soldiers were so exhausted that it seemed doubtful whether they would be able to sustain the populace. The king had to yield and he commanded the troops to leave Berlin, distributed to the formation of a citizen guard for the protection of the city and
palace and summoned a new ministry with Count Chriams of Bokenburg at its head. The king and queen stood on the balcony of the palace, and were compelled to view the corpses of 216 men, who fell before the barricades and were brought on bears and open coffins in the court yard. Their heads covered with flowers and green leaves. An amnesty was declared for all political offenders. The Poles, who were imprisoned in Berlin in consequence of this over-

and on the 26th March, microbiologists and his fellow sufferers held a kind of triumphal procession through Berlin. This had its proud attendance, changed and had at last recognized that the people, who had long played with, might at last show their force and demand their natural rights. Frederick William issued a proclamation on the 25th of March, to the German nation, in which he declared that he set himself, at the head of the collective fatherland, and in the afternoon he rode accompanied with the services, ministers and generals through the streets of Berlin, wearing black, red and gold furs. Halting in front of the university he addressed the people in many words, spoke of German freedom and unity and of his intentions to do all he
could for the record of the German monarchy. The burial of the fallen, when the King again arrived with bare head over the date of revolutionary days. Prince William who was accused of having given the troops order to charge went to England by express command of the King in order that his presence might not be an obstacle to a reconciliation. The monarch landed again once more on the 2nd of April and was in six days to examine and accept the law for a constitutional conven- tion's draft before it by the Enghausen Ministry which had succeeded that of Drum on the 22nd of March.

But the most credit gained by Prussia with the German people by this fact that in the Landtag which had assembled at Berlin in accordance with the electoral law published by the King of a constitution had been adopted to which the King had sworn on the 6th of February 1850.

The war still in the meantime had commenced about Schleswig-Holstein, the struggles between Prussia and Austria for its supremacy, full power of the most interesting phases of German-Danish history. The King however had not yet ceased for Prussia. It was not ordained
by fate to Frederick William IV to give greatness to Prussia a greater man than he was ever ready to ascend the throne and advised his great and glorious men to cause this solemn desired event.

William II ascended the throne of Prussia in 1860 and at once directed his chief attention to a military administration. Of was his intention to submit weakly to foreign dictation, but on the contrary as a soldier through his love well that honor and glory of Russia lay in a well-disciplined and well-equipped army. Of course such aims could not be accomplished without great expenses and the house of representatives not seeing the indirect value of once refund its appropriations. For this reason William dominated on the 18th of March 1862 the liberal ministry on the 23rd of September the conservative schleinsfeld ministry resigned and on the same day von Bethmann这件事情 assumed the presidency of the cabinet. On the 8th of October he became minister president with the special department of foreign affairs. Could Prussia ever forget this man's name could she ever forget gratitude and obligation to him? To give her greatness and unity Germany men his aims and more perhaps under such difficulties with as much
opposition could have of fearlessly carried
out

Three great and bloody wars were yet

The war of 1866 decided the question of

The war of 1867 decided against the

Prussia, an increase of 28,034 square

Prussia, and by a patent of January

875,700 inhabitants. This total area is

23,590,000 souls. But in addition to this ac-

acquisitions of territory which was purely

organised the further great advantage that
her possessing no longer divided into two parts, forming now but united well rounded whole. The Prussian Landtag approved of the annexation and also all the motives of the government voted ordinances to Count Bismarck and Generals Roon Wolter Bickenfeld Kleimich & Vogel von Falkenau. Shortly after the North German Confederation was founded and the proposed constitution was adopted in the new Reichstag, with only a few changes. Universal suffrage and secret ballot were adopted and some of the most important measures as control of finances and framing of the legislation were conferred upon the people. What Frederick the Great tried to accomplish by his own federation of princes in 1755, the union of Germany, had now largely at least been achieved by William III and his great advantage.

The once weak and despised Prussia had now become one of the great powers of Europe, but the great successes could not fail to arouse the envy of her haughty neighbours. Not satisfied with contemptuous and jibing words with Napoleon, she had played on the former waves and crowning by the fate of his great uncle of the nearest trainer of fortune. Ordered to mould the mind of the Russian tsar in, in order to arouse...
war, and he too the insolent upstart of
his great uncle gave the penalties, a penalty
at least shameful and disgraceful, as that of
the great Napoleon. Defeated by
his own nation, he had to submit himself
to Prussian great King and in the great
palace of Versailles, the palace of all the
Illustrous French monarchs, accepted the
King of Prussia, the insecure imperial crown of
United Germany.

And if one ever meditates over the 18
years which have passed since that memorable
year, years full of internal excitement and
struggles and thinks over the future of
this mighty state, whose great King has
dropped the imperial crown, and whose mighty
people also seems destined to leave her without
assistance we might well fear that hard
hunts are threatening Prussia, dark and
with full our hearts (and that is, might
Prussia never forget that we remain alone
there is strength and might she never
by internal struggles lay herself open
to the violence of her mighty neighbours. 