

# A MARXIST PRUSSIA OR A SWISS GERMANY

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**M**ORE effective and more decisive than all external paper guarantees of the long delayed peace treaty between Moscow and the Western Allies will be Germany's own internal transformation. Only spiritual disarmament, only reconciliation that springs from a peaceful heart, and a harmonious change of institutions to make this change of heart permanent are real peace guarantees. All technical disarmament will prove ineffective if the will to war survives, because this will to war—whether on the part of the Germans themselves or on the part of the Occupying Powers—is always bound to find the material means, probably infinitely more terrible means than those forbidden by the peace treaty.

The cardinal problems of Germany's transformation—apart from the international tensions—are the old Prussian conceptions of the individual and society. This is in no way connected with any particular trait of character or peculiar method of approach among the Prussian population. This group of people, after all, is composed of a number of different tribes the main section of which was a Slavonic branch residing in Western—and East—Prussia, at a later stage avoiding extermination by timely acceptance of the Christian faith. The Prussian problem was fundamentally the problem of a certain dynasty and a ruling caste with a strongly developed doctrine.

There exist in Europe two examples of this militaristic Junkerdom: Prussia and Hungary. In both cases the state was not formed by the people as a whole, but governing elites built up states and succeeded in pressing into these frames tax-paying and soldiering citizens. Furthermore, there prevailed a Spartan philosophy of the inferior value of the individual in his relation to the semi-deity of the state. Consider the penury of the soil of the Mark Brandenburg; consider the colonial character of the Pomeranian and East-Prussian territories; the lack of a mature middle class caused by the country's unfavourable geographical position off the main trading routes—and you begin to understand Prussian history.

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Similar to Hungary and Poland, the Prussian centre was never part of the Roman Empire; and Prussia's links with Rome were weakened still more by the Hohenzollern adherence to the Lutheran Reformation, an expedient that secured the Eastern regions as land of the German Knights' Order with a Hohenzollern prince in the role of 'grandmaster'. No less important for Prussia's development was the fact that its beginning co-incided with the collapse of the old feudal order embodied by the 'Holy Empire of the German Nation'. Frederick the Great's Silesian conquests were the foreign political magnesium flares of the approaching liberal French Revolution, which eventually caused the break-down of the hollow order in the economic and cultural fields also.

Centralism, military constitutionalism, technical achievements and the secularisation of civilisation ushered in by the French Revolution, all aided the rise of Prussia. Prussia owed her Rhine Province to Napoleon's destruction of the 'Holy Empire'; by the peace of Vienna she gained half of Saxony; parts of Poland and Altmark; in 1864 she won Schleswig-Holstein; she ousted in 1866 Austria and incorporated Frankfort-Main, Hanover and Hessen-Kassel; and by the defeat of France in 1871, finally, she assumed the unrestricted leadership of all Germany. The principles of general military service offered vast opportunities to the Junker caste, which crystallized to perfection the principles of political centralism. Federation and the idea of waging war with 'pressed soldiers' were things of the romantic past, and the waning influence of the Church left a vacancy that was to be filled by the philosophy of power. The prevailing Lutheran Church possessed neither the supra-national qualities of the Roman Pope nor the democratic basis of Calvinism, a factor that fostered the secularisation of spirit. Finally, industrialisation played into the hands of centralism, explaining, by the way, the surprisingly close affinity between Marxism and Prussianism. It is no mere chance that the two apostles of scientific Marxism, Marx and Engels, were pupils of the Prussian power-philosopher Hegel.

Prussia with its 42 million inhabitants thus dominated the remainder of Germany by sheer weight of numbers. Bismarck's Reich-constitution enhanced this monopoly position by providing for the king of Prussia to be the German Emperor, the Prussian premier to be simultaneously German chancellor, and by ensuring that in the 'Reichstag' all German states should only command a fraction of Prussia's votes. Strangely enough, the Weimar

Republic did not change this state of affairs basically, showing up, once again, the spiritual affinity between Prussian state conceptions and Marxism to which the late Thomas Masaryk drew attention.

The mass tendency among 20th Century nations—including the social-democratic-bourgeois Weimar Republic—the surrender of individualism, the soullessness of the bureaucratic plan-state have their causes in modern centralisation, aiming by its very nature, at totalitarianism and, in its wake, the octopus of suffocating desk rule threatening the vital substance of peoples. To do away with centralism, militarism and bureaucracy, then, democracy requires a novel technique since the machinery of periodic elections produces part-time democrats only and does no longer succeed in disguising the permanent anonymous power of almighty bureaucracy.

Centralisation and bureaucracy are thus seen to be the pillars of the modern mass conditioning-for-obedience society, whose symbol—not exception—is the historical conglomeration known as Prussia. But that means that the internal transformation of Germany is not merely outwardly a question of the 1945 Military Government destruction of Prussia, but much more so, at heart, a concession to regionalism, federation and self-government.

The Gestapo state—true to its crazy ideas of total domination—continued the cancer-like tendencies of the Bismarck Empire and the Weimar Republic, abolishing such remnants of independence as had been left. The dictator-somnambulist with the mad gleam in his hypnotic eyes carved up individual assemblies and nominated a set of 'Reichsstatthalter', to officiate as Caesarian governors. Thus the separate entities of Old Germany survived in name only: Bavaria, Wuerttemberg, Mecklenburg, Baden, Saxony, Thuringia, Hesse, Oldenburg, Brunswick, Anhalt, Lippe, Hamburg, Schaumburg, Bremen and Luebeck.

It should be obvious to the German people that a new formation of Germany along federal lines cannot fall back on these unnatural structures of the days gone by: it was the inorganic growth of Prussia and Napoleon's interventions that created these unhappy structures. A natural arrangement of Germany in the second half of this age should be based on the German tribes, with due consideration for the results fashioned by history as well as geographic and economic reasons and relations. Such a harmonious peace-arrangement would result in a dozen or so 'organic cantons,' which together would form a

federation to integrate in turn with the European Federation. Each of these cantons would have a population around five million of the same or kindred ethnological origin, forming automatically a natural political and—up to a point—economic unit. Each of these units would have its own assembly and its own administration, as is the case with the model democracy of Switzerland. This would pave the way for a logical decentralisation to break up the monster of German over-organised bureaucracy, and is the first condition for regionalism, opposing all imperialistic tendencies inside Europe. In fact, only within the framework of such regional self-administration can an effective check be applied by the people on state government, a check which is almost out of the question in centralized mass-democracies. It is, then, a question of secondary importance whether this control by the people is carried out by representatives of parties or vocations, or both. The crux is that these representatives are selected in really free, general, secret and direct elections and that they are vested with the necessary safeguards against bureaucracy and nepotism.

In view of Germany's internal situation since the acceptance of unconditional surrender and its participation in power blocks directed from outside, it has become more evident every year that to foist a semi-cominform regime or an Anglo-American Two-Party system upon the Germans has not provided the correct solution in either case. Political democracy under statutes of occupation and emergency laws of arbitrary character, moreover, is like handfuls of sand thrown into the delicate gears of a machine originally designed for precision work. The reaction has been national resentment or disinterest with democratisation under foreign military rule or foreign civil service pressure (what an incredibly stupid contradiction from a purely historical point of view!), and a rising feeling of cynical opportunism.

It seems clear that such genuine re-assessment and inner-political transformation of Germany is a task for the German people themselves and thus only indirectly connected with the problems of the various Allied Commissions. It must, therefore, be obvious to anyone really desiring a constructive and peaceful re-casting of Germany, a fresh shaping of her political aspirations, her economic minimum necessities for the support of her refugee-swollen rump territory without the bread basket beyond the Oder-Neisse line, her proper cultural claims, that all this can be achieved by a peace ensuring a constellation in which the federation and 'Swissification' of Germany—though within

the framework of natural and historic unity—can be carried through.

The alternative to such an enlightened policy on the part of the peace-makers is simply an alliance between Moscow and the communist German People's Police which will carry the banner of "Prussian Leninism" deep into all parts of the European Continent. Though the international Press has not published a word so far, it is known in diplomatic circles that Russia is prepared to make slight concessions at the expense of Poland in return for a new Ribbentrop policy. In addition, and this is the latest move, Alsace-Lorraine and Benelux are singled out for future Soviet-German incorporation. Such a Marxist Super-Prussia is designed to be Moscow's all-conquering ally in Europe, just as Mao-Tse-Tung has already conquered a large part of Asia.

The spirit of Versailles, Potsdam and unconditional surrender will quickly lose the peace. To draw the conclusions from the lessons of history, to work patiently and sincerely for reconciliation in all Europe, to apply the principles of friendship and federation, to march in step with all the patriotic, idealistic and libertarian forces still left in Western Europe, to work hard and to trust in moral and spiritual values will yet win the peace for us and the future for our generation.

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