

TRANSLATION

I have reconstructed and subdivided the convoluted German sentences as best I could. Some words are undecipherable; I extrapolated, guessed, or omitted. Questionable words are italicized.

Dear Friend:

You surmised correctly that your first letter had not arrived. I had no news from you until 18. March of this year, for Steger has not told me anything either. However, I had neither forgotten you myself, nor had it in the least occurred to me to accuse you of forgetting us people in Wolfenbüttel. I would have proven that to you by letter a long time ago, had I not, as I must admit to my embarrassment, mislaid the paper on which you had written your address. Of course, I had remembered your name, and the "Saager Circle" survived in my memory; but, no matter how hard they tried, no one in our group could recall the "Kaadan."

Your letter reassures me not only about that, but above all, that you had not, as we had feared, come to grief in connection with the interior struggles in Austria, especially on the occasion of the October Revolution. Of course, fortune and freedom are relative terms for a patriot who feels so deeply for the fatherland's unhappiness and oppression.¹ But on behalf of the fatherland, they remain, after all, lofty and magnificent goals, so long as there remains a shadow of hope. And that there is no lack of it, that it is not yet time to despair, - that, dear friend, I would like to see more clearly affirmed by you.

Of course, the entire State of Austria is creaking in every joint, but why? Is it because an enormously strong despotism has triumphed over an impotent freedom? Is it perhaps just the opposite, that this artificial empire, grown to its present magnitude, or rather cobbled together, by dynastic marriage schemes, can no longer hold out against the nationalistic, liberty-seeking movements which are storming from all sides against the iron shackles of despotism, but is yet powerful enough to assure its survival at all costs? Strong enough not through its own vigor, but through the inertia which has accumulated through long years of tyranny, through the durability of an established system, and through the jealousies among *manipulated* (?) and irrational ethnic boundaries. If the Slavs, the Germans, Hungarians, Rumanians, could unite around a firm common goal, somewhat like the Italians, and were they not split up such as especially the Slavs, into multiple ethnic minorities, the dissolution under the principle of self-determination would proceed easily and peacefully. This would happen in parallel with an alliance under international law, necessitated by mutual interest and based, I am sure, in part on traditional mutual affinities. The Slavs would not have supported the government against the Hungarians, nor the Germans against the Italians. The premise did not

¹Text reads *Freiht* which I interpret as a contraction of *Freiheit* (freedom). It is paralleled later on the same page in the word "Zten", where I conclude that the *ei* vowel is similarly implied to read *Zeiten* (times).

exist and as the result of inevitable fighting among divided and rively-torn nations, it was despotism which, at least in the short term, won out in its battle against freedom. The people have realized that now; the mutual goal of freedom will, hopefully, carry more weight than mutual jealousy, and the government, hated by all, will fall despite the victory at Navarra.

That is how it appears to me. And you have this *consolation*: Austria will dissolve into its constituent parts, the Italian possessions will go to the Italians, the Germans to the Germans; the Slav minorities will federate with one another and with the Hungarians, backed by a strong, free Germany. This may be small consolation for the present struggle and misery, small consolation for you as Austrian, but I should think it must be good for you as German. Thus, go ahead and be in despair for your artificial, unrealistic fatherland Austria; but you must not despair for your true, natural fatherland Germany. That is the substance of my comforting thoughts. Of course, the more you view the current conditions with the eyes of an Austrian, the more you will wonder how I can believe in a strong, free Germany at a moment when the Prussian hereditary kingdom has been rebuffed by the majority of the Frankfurt assembly; wonder that I can believe in it even as they have made their decision. However I will try to justify this my opinion, at the risk that you think me in the same ranks with the *cold, querulous* youth which in fact I deplore along with you.

I don't have to tell you that I consider Republicanism as the best and most perfect way for a people to govern itself, which is my main concern. But despite my personal preference for this type of government, I consider it impossible to be achieved for Germany at the present time, since I am fully convinced that the majority of the German people opposes a Republic. I came to this conclusion because the popular revolt stopped at the Thrones, and because the majority of the Preliminary Parliament, German as well as Prussian and the recent Austrian National Assembly, was monarchistic. I conclude it also from the negligible successes of republican revolts, and from the unconcern of the Prussians when they dissolved the National Assembly, as well as that of the Austrians in the provinces at the time of the October Revolution in Vienna. This seems to me a natural outcome in view of the long-standing practice of deliberately dulling and dumbing the populace which could not be undone all of a sudden even by the freshest winds of a most justifiable and most energetic revolution. But that a minority should impose a republic on the majority by force, seems to me wrong. Arguments against such terrorism are (1) the experience with the French Revolution; (2) the *theoretically* reasonable view which cannot conceive that one would validate and establish the principle of popular rule by a process which violates that very principle; and finally, (3) considering current realities, a rational estimate of probable success.

The party of determined reactionaries (absolutists, aristocrats, bureaucrats) is reinforced by the capitalists with their constant fear of a red republic, and a fairly

substantial indolent mass of peasants and tradesmen who are significant by virtue of money, votes, and as a pool of manpower for the military. That party is about matched in strength by the party of acknowledged and committed republicans, backed by the audacious and courageous corps of proletarians, workers, shop assistants, domestic servants. They may be poor and not totally reliable, but are bonded to the Left by their self-interest. The scales in the struggle between right and left are therefore tipped by the Center². That is the party of moderates from constitutionalists of the old school to avowed democrats who acknowledge the suzerainty of the people and perhaps also see the Republic as an attainable ideal, but do not want to pursue it at this time because of a lack of republican youth. It is quite apparent that this party of orderly freedom cannot be won over to the left by republican riots but is instead propelled towards the right. This is further demonstrated by recent events.

If it should become necessary to abandon, for the time being, the idea of a republican form of government, one might choose between a Directorate, a provisional empire, or the Prussian hereditary monarchy. The latter, if nothing else, would establish a united and strong Germany in international affairs. It will not only be a way to merge Prussia into the rest of Germany, but a basic prerequisite. The consensus here in Northern Germany is that any concern about Prussianism is unfounded. The artificial state is bound to be gradually melded into the natural state. At any rate, freedom would be in no greater jeopardy than under the other two forms of government. I have no illusions that attempts will be made to suppress it, but I do not believe that they will be successful. As the center party will be driven to the right by offenses against law and order, so will assaults on freedom cause it to veer towards the left. The earlier Prussian National Assembly has proven that; the current one is beginning to do the same. The thread will break and the Albas will have to take flight if they were to dare to murder our Egmonts and Counts Horn before our eyes.

The proposed German Constitution embodies *material freedoms, voting rights, veto*, as basic entitlements. If this constitution can be preserved, then the nation as a whole will be turned with certainty towards morality, culture and learning. That blessed light (*loving sun*) by which an oldster sees, a young heart matures, weakens the forces of the Right, strengthens the masses on the Left; that new morning will reinforce three-double times the freedom fighters in their struggle against the *Dunkelmänner*.^{3, 4}

Once the Kaiser's task of unifying Germany has been accomplished, a freedom-ready people will transform him into a responsible President. The South

² traditionally representing Catholic interests

³ There are 3 lines I can't make sense out of, except for the words "superstitious, unthinking creatures of habit"

⁴ *Dunkelmänner* - a secret society assuming to itself an extralegal mission of enforcing the law as they see it, something like the Posse Comitatus, or the KuKluxKlan.

German states will acquiesce out of patriotism, and in the realization that participation in the German totality are their best assurance of honor and might. *I cannot accept the likelihood that German Austria would be excluded because of its own hereditary monarchy; but should the occasion arise for it to join, the obstructing veto would be set aside legally, or illegally by revolution.*⁶ As far as the probably justified reservations regarding the Prussian king's personality are concerned, that would not matter under the provisions of the constitutional system. The only difficult question is this: What happens if he does not accept? I am not clear about that, but it seems to me that declining the people's proffer of the Emperor's Crown would increase the possibility of a Republic to a greater degree than would be likely to be the case otherwise.

The fragment ends here at the end of 4 pages (5 1/2 x 8"). I was unable on cursory search to find the exact continuation. However, there is another sheet which is the end of another letter in the same handwriting, dealing with the same issues. The first letter is undated; this second fragment is dated 3. April 1849; I do not know in what sequence they were written. The signature is C. Leiste, cand. jur., which stands for candidatus juris, indicating that he is a young man who completed his law studies and is preparing for the bar exam.

Whether you share my political opinions or not, I trust that you will not doubt the sincerity of my convictions and my populist goals, and that, if there is a difference of opinion, you will not deprive me of your regard and your friendship. About the *Wartburg celebration* I had already heard from different sources, all in agreement with your observations, all very unsatisfactory. Hopefully, the youth of the future will be an improvement over that of the past. At least I console myself with my experience that as far as I can look over my immediate surroundings, the sons are generally more liberal than their fathers. I hope that their immediate fatherland, in one way or another, will soon be relieved of its enormous suffering, or that the rest of Germany will reach a decision quickly and wonderfully. Therefore, do not give up your courage, wait out the crisis, and dismiss your thoughts of emigration. Surely you can be most useful German soil to . . . ? and to your fatherland. Anyway, I hope for continuation of our correspondence in German land.

I plan to travel this summer after I finish my exams mid-July/End-of-August, which are getting close and cause me much grief and stress; I hope to have an opportunity to meet you in your home territory.

The deputation which was dispatched from Frankfurt to the king in Berlin, came through in Hannover and Braunschweig. They were enthusiastically received with enthusiasm, only in Cologne with jeers⁶ by the far Left and the Ultramontanes⁷.

⁵ I am uncertain about the gist of this sentence because I cannot decipher some crucial words and had to guess at others.

⁶ Katzenmusik literally: cat music

⁷ Ultramontanen literally: beyond the mountains (Alps) and referring to Catholic interests