

This letter was exceptionally hard to translate because of the number of non-decipherable words, abbreviations, and idiomatic expressions. Rather than to present a chopped-up product with ellipses and parenthetical clauses, I omitted some text in its entirety because I could not make sense out of it, and freely emended other parts. A few explanatory notes were unavoidable. The result still shows some contradictory passages which may be due to misinterpretation by the translator, or to illogic in the original composition.

The maneuverings between the varying power structures described in the following narrative led to armed conflicts between Prussia and Denmark in 1864, and between Prussia and Austria in 1866. Unification of the numerous major and minor German principalities was orchestrated, under Prussian hegemony, by Bismarck in 1871, at the conclusion of the Franco-Prussian War.

Linz, 5. February 1851

Dear Friend!

On the assumption that you would like to learn some details about public and private affairs in the old, or aging, world, I am going to give you some condensed news. I will begin with the time of your departure from Europe.

The Reaction has won a complete victory and is currently celebrating its Hallelujah in Dresden with a convention of delegates from all German governments for the purpose of renewing the old alliance.

Certain events that took place, may serve as an introduction. Abandoned by all powers, the Schleswig-Holsteiner under General Willisen lost the battle of D. Two unsuccessful attacks on the bridgehead and Friedrichstadt by the same General led to his resignation. He was replaced with General von Hocht, and since then it has been a war of diplomatic intrigues rather than with the sword. On 2. January 1850 the Council of the Fürsten-Union (Fürst = monarchic head of a state or principality, a prince) had completed its work; on the 26th Austria called for an extraordinary plenary session in Frankfurt. Prussia declined and issued its own call for the Fürsten-Union to convene a congress in Berlin. There was much eating and drinking, but no decisions were reached other than an agreement to participate in the Frankfurt conferences insofar as there would be free discussion. Austria was not interested and Prussia withdrew from participation. Nevertheless Austria issued a circular letter calling for a meeting of the Alliance in Frankfurt. Prussia countered with a note rejecting any return to the previous status. Saxonia, Hanover, and several lesser sovereigns resigned from the Union and allied themselves with Austria. The monarchs of Austria, Bavaria, and Würtemberg met in Bregenz, and demanded the evacuation of Hamburg and Baden, non-interference with Alliance troops supporting the Danes, implementation of Allied decisions for Hesse, under threat of armed intervention against Prussia if it did not cooperate. Both sides

mobilized and it looked as if Hesse would become a battleground. Blood has already flown on German soil. In Hesse itself there was a collision between legislative and executive power, in that the Elector had, without justification, dissolved the popular government; he had appointed a certain Hassenpflug as prime minister, a man who had been dismissed in the thirties because of attempted constitutional violations, and had been sentenced for falsification in a civil court. Nonetheless the Ruler by the Grace of God associated himself with a common criminal and broke his oath to appoint only the kind of men who merited the trust of the people. The Chamber issued a Vote of No Confidence. Hassenpflug dissolved it, then called it back into session, and his unsubstantiated request for a grant of 76,000 Thaler was denied. Again he dissolved it and, without submitting a budget, called on the new Chamber for the same amount to be raised by direct taxation. Once more he met with refusal, and the outcome was the same. An edict commanded that the taxes be collected and imposed a state of siege although the land was perfectly at peace.

The official agencies refused to obey the decisions and the people joined them in peaceful resistance, so that coercive measures were not appropriate, and 241 officers turned in their resignations. Now Hesse turned to federal help and Austria marched in with army units to protect the authority of the Elector. Prussia occupied the roads in the rear, and war seemed unavoidable. But the Angel of Peace intervened, and the vassals (pawns) were obligated to attend a meeting at Warsaw. Only two points remained undecided; they were settled amicably in Olmütz between Schwarzenberg and Manteuffel (*Austrian and Prussian generals*) in the presence of the Russian ambassador Mergendorff, and it was agreed to continue stewing the witches brew at already planned further conferences in Dresden. At the meeting in Olmütz Prussia sacrificed the last vestige of German honor when it not only consented to the expedition in Holstein but promised its collaboration, and gave Austria a free hand in the Hessian affair. In spite of Prussia's humiliation, she (*presumably Hesse*) did not gain anything other than the hope to regain full sovereignty within her borders. The Austrian influence on Germany will be the more decisive, as she enters the Federation with its whole complex of states. Prussia is crabbing backward. Her recent proclamation is the harbinger of the destruction of the Constitution which they are determined to accomplish by subterfuge with or without the Constitution; they try to avoid an open break with an oath of allegiance to the Constitution as was done in Saxony, Würtemberg and Mecklenburg, where there were instances of tax refusal. The tendency is in all States to revert to a pseudo-constitutionalism. The year of reference is not 1815 (*re-birth of Europe after Napoleon*); on the contrary, it is the time of the barricades, the French Revolution that they are concerned about. There is no prospect of popular representation. In order to counter any such movement at the outset, a force of 135,000 men is being mustered, a new way to put out a fire with powder and lead. A Prussian army corps is standing by at the Rhine border and is being reinforced daily, in order to be prepared for any eventualities. The Holstein army has been reduced by 1/3, the

official Assembly has adjourned. The Austrians are marching on Flensburg because Denmark is unwilling to concede.

Things in Austria are the same as in Germany. Constitutions have been written, but there is no sign of Representative Assemblies. Taxes and assessments are imposed, sentences and arrests are commonplace, the state of siege continues without end. The police force has been increased to 1600 men, restrictions on the clergy are suspended which opens the door wide to religious scandals. The state debt is mounting day by day and will soon reach the level of 2000 million florins. Credit has dropped markedly. Silver is at 31 percent; a new law is censorship in more stringent form, book sellers are subject to new orders. On December 31, 1850, 23 fraternity students were sentenced who had been arrested in May 1849. In Bosnia, the rebellion to introduce reforms, continues; but the end of that is foreseeable. General Bern died in Aleppo of the fever. Peace to his ashes!

France is suffering from birthing pains. The clown Louis is asking for extension of his presidency. The Duke of Bordeaux is gravely ill and likely to leave us soon. With him the legitimate people will have lost their last hope.

This is the political situation in Europe. We are 20 years away from the fulfillment of Napoleon's famous words in St. Helena "in 50 years Europe will be either under the Cossacks (*questionable*), or Republican.

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I read the account of your trip as far as New York when I visited Chmig in Joachimsthal. I was glad to know you were out of danger and was anxious to learn more of your efforts to establish a new home. That news took longer. It was only on February 2, 1851, that Mr. Prinzl was kind enough to share with me an excerpt of that report which had arrived shortly before. I have asked him for the original and am looking forward to reading it - not only because I am curious, but also because under certain circumstances I might take it into my head to follow you. You will understand why I am not doing now, when I tell you my reasons. Above all I cannot accept the idea the search for freedom in Europe is a dead issue. On the contrary, I see the storm winds blowing which will sweep away thrones and princes; even though in such stormy times the individual is powerless, it gains strength through the partnership of many. I cannot get used to the idea of applying my resources, small though they be, to myself alone. I consider it a desertion, to abandon the battlefield so long as courageous fighters rally around the flag. I would consider my life a lost cause if the storm were to pass me by unheeded. I have only one wish on this earth, to fight and to die in the struggle for Justice and Truth. It is a wild passion which burns in my bosom, the hatred of tyrants.

An 8-line poem follows which is too much to tackle. The last two lines read something like this:

We have a debt to settle for our dead;
That's why we stay - we are not leaving yet.

Even if all hope is lost, It would be difficult for me to come to America. As you know, I have no money, and have never acquired any skills which would support my existence there. If I were a simple man of the land and had some financial backing, I would still see the Ocean between myself and seeking my fortune in another world. As it is, I am indentured to fate and tied to the soil. I cannot expect help from anyone else; everyone looks out just for himself and his family. Even if I were offered such help, I could hardly bring myself to emigrate. But our decisions are subject to change, and perhaps the time will come for me when I, too, look with yearning for the distant shore. Then allow me a piece of earth where I can die.

I am still a professor at the University in Unterlustenau. I feel well, physically at least. I am anxious to enter into a different setting, but that, of course, is liable to remain wishful thinking for a long time. My major field is History, which is replete with poison.

Fare well, my good friend, and remember me. Many regards to you and Paul. My only wish is that you are happy.

Your friend

Karl