THE GROWTH OF GERMAN MILITARISM

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THE GROWTH OF GERMAN MILITARISM

THESIS

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PREFACE

Militarism is not a matter of the number of soldiers maintained by any country, nor even of the frequency and ruthlessness of its wars. It is a word which is used to describe efforts on the part of the professional soldier to control the functions of the civil administration and to curtail the rights of the citizen. When the armed forces are allowed to be the ruling factor in a state, independent of the civil government, with political aims and ideals of their own, that state may be said to be under the domination of militarism. An army so built that it serves military men, not war, is militaristic; so is everything in an army which is not preparation for fighting, but merely exists for diversion or to satisfy peacetime whims. Militarism is thus not the opposite of pacifism; its true counterpart is civilianism.

I have attempted to tell the story, not of the growth of the German army, but rather of those outstanding periods in the history of Germany which have tended to make it the militaristic country it is today. I have tried neither to approve nor condemn.

I have, at the request of my major professor, footnoted only direct quotations and contradictions of authorities.

P. B. W.
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CHAPTER I

THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF
A PROFESSIONAL ARMY

Under the feudal system, armies were based on the military service of vassals to their overlords. The decay of feudalism and the diversion of the soldier-vassals into peaceful occupations introduced the mercenary system, under which soldiers banded together, with their own laws and leaders, and hired out to anybody who was willing to pay them. In times of peace, the mercenaries were a constant element of disturbance, for they often waged their own private wars or became highwaymen. Later the forming of regiments and armies became, so to speak, a financial enterprise. A colonel received a certain amount, for which he furnished a regiment, and all the money for its maintenance and equipment went through his hands. Mercenaries were unpopular both with the princes who hired them and with the common people; the princes, since they so seldom got their money's worth and the hired soldiers were untrustworthy; and the people, because they were robbed and terrorized.

The solution to these problems was found in the professional army. The essential difference between the mercenary army and the professional rested on the fact that the professional army was permanently attached to one nation, one people,
and one ruler. The soldiers were recruited by officers of the monarch in his name. They owed allegiance to the ruler, and the officers had authority over their soldiers only because the ruler gave them the right to command in his name. It was a slight but momentous step from the professional army recruited only in time of war to the permanent standing army.

The Electors of Brandenburg had never possessed enough revenue to maintain an army in peace time, so when war came they depended, as did the great majority of European princes, upon the old regimental mercenary system. In Brandenburg-Prussia the system was permeated with fraud, bribery, and general corruption. The contractors made no attempt to maintain their regiments at even a small percentage of the agreed strength, and when the ruler came to review his troops, these officers would, by various frauds, make it appear that they were maintaining full regiments. These colonels were absolute masters of their troops and would torture or kill the enlisted men at the slightest provocation. They also were the terror of the civilians, for the majority of them spent more time plundering and brow-beating the people they had sworn to protect than they did fighting the enemy. The average colonel had no scruples whatsoever against betraying or defying the prince he had sworn to serve.

George William, Tenth Elector of Brandenburg, weak, vacillating, and easily influenced, was born to play a role for
which he was in no way fitted. He became Elector of Brandenburg and Duke of East Prussia in 1619, just one year after the opening of the Thirty Years' War, and for twenty-one years he and his small state did nothing but suffer. As he was bound by kinship to one faction, and by imperial allegiance to the other, he was never able to cast his lot definitely with either side, but rather attempted to maintain a helpless sort of neutrality, helpless because he did not have the troops to maintain it. In each of his territories the all-powerful Estates controlled most of the revenues, yet would raise no troops, except occasionally a few for local use, and these were under the command of their own officers. As he did not have the money to hire mercenaries, the Elector's lands were left defenseless before the mighty armies of the warring factions. The inevitable result was that neither side respected his neutrality, and both used his lands as a plundering ground for their mercenaries. The entire reign of George William might perhaps be epitomized with his statement made when the invading Swedish troops demanded that he turn over certain forts to them, "What can one do? They have got cannon."¹ George William did but one thing for which he could be commended; he left a son, Frederick William, capable of repairing the devastating results of his reign.

Frederick William, who became Elector in 1640, was made of different stuff. He determined to build agriculture and trade, and to protect them with a strong army. It was a tremendous task which faced him, for the agriculture and trade of his state had been almost completely destroyed by twenty years of looting, burning, and killing. The "army" left him by his father was small, demoralized, and mutinous.

Frederick William grew up on a continent at war and came to the throne eight years before the Peace of Westphalia. He soon perceived that, in view of the deplorable condition of his territories and their constant danger from invading mercenaries, his first task was to make his state strong through an army able to command respect from the warring princes. To do this he had to raise the revenues and curb the unruly element in his army. By bringing pressure to bear on the Estates and by changing the old direct taxes on houses and land to an excise on articles of consumption, he was able to raise enough money to proceed with his plans for reorganizing and building the army.

Frederick William's first step was to move against the unruly colonels. Some were arrested; others fled; a few loyal ones were retained and took a new oath to the Elector. A thorough purge was made of the men in the ranks. From one regiment, for instance, "thirty-three native-born Swedes, thirty-two Scotch, Irish, and Polish adventurers, and thirty
men 'crooked, lame, and useless'\textsuperscript{2} were eliminated. Only 2,500 soldiers, hardly enough to garrison the fortresses, remained in the entire army, but they formed a basis upon which to build a well-disciplined, dependable force. The Elector continued to build his new army until in 1648, the year of Westphalia, it numbered around eight thousand superb fighting men.

The Elector placed his reorganized corps on an almost completely new basis; new, that is, to Brandenburg-Prussia. Sweden and France had employed the system for some time. It was to be a professional army. Some of the recruiting for the new force was done beyond the borders of Prussia, but the native element predominated from necessity, as the exhaustion of neighboring lands made them poor recruiting grounds. The Elector appointed and assigned the colonels to their regiments, and although the recruiting was done by each individual commander for his own regiment, he did it in his sovereign's name. Under the new system, the ruler alone, and not cities and estates, as formerly, was to enlist and pay troops. The advantages of this innovation soon made themselves apparent both to Frederick William and to the people. With it, the Elector had an army upon which he could depend and upon which he could base a stronger diplomatic policy. The populace no longer was subject to plundering soldiery, because

\textsuperscript{2}Sidney B. Fay, \textit{The Rise of Brandenburg-Prussia to 1786}, p. 52.
the soldiers of the new army were paid well enough that they did not have to resort to the robbery and oppression of those they were supposed to protect.

Although Frederick William now had a professional force, he had not yet created a standing army. The Estates were grateful to him for ridding the country of mercenaries, and had accordingly helped him support his new army by special grants, but it must be remembered that this was still war time. After the Peace of Westphalia, the Estates demanded that he dismiss his army and refused to grant any more funds for its maintenance. As the Elector had yet no private or special revenue sufficient to support any considerable body of troops, he could do nothing but dismiss over half of the eight thousand men that comprised his fighting force at the end of the war. All he could afford to retain were the 3,907 men who were absolutely essential to garrison the fortresses. This could in no way be called a standing army, because the troops in case of war could do nothing but wait in the forts for the enemy to attack, and a standing army is a "permanent active field army, with an assured means of support, kept on foot in time of peace as well as of war." 3

About six years later the Great Elector became convinced that two of his neighbors, Sweden and Poland, were going to war. Both were making veiled appeals for his help.

He knew that if he joined either side the other would attempt to strip him of much of his territory, and he might join the losing side and therefore be stripped. He also knew that if he remained neutral and refused aid to either side the victor might next turn on him. His final decision was to remain neutral and to arm himself to such an extent that he would have nothing to fear from his warring neighbors. All that he had for the defense of his lands was the handful of garrison troops, scattered among his isolated fortresses. The creation of a field army was therefore a necessity for the safety of his eastern province, East Prussia, and perhaps for the safety of his entire domain.

Frederick William, therefore, ordered his officers to start recruiting a regular army. This force was built on the same professional basis which he had put into effect during the last years of the Thirty Years' War. They were not to be mercenaries recruited by an independent colonel, who would then contract his own private regiment to the Elector; rather, they were to be recruited by the monarch's own officers and would owe allegiance only to their sovereign. They were also to be to a great extent men from the Elector's own lands and would therefore feel that they were protecting their own state and homes.

The Elector's domain consisted of three separate territories which had been acquired by his family at different times and which felt no common bond. The only relationship
between the three was that the Elector of Brandenburg, the Duke of East Prussia, and the Duke of Cleves were the same man. As the Estates of Brandenburg felt that Brandenburg was in no danger from either Poland or Sweden, it could not see why it should give money and men to protect another of Elector's territories, East Prussia; accordingly it refused to grant any money for the support of these new troops. The Estates took the view that if East Prussia were in danger it ought to protect itself and that the Elector should not expect Brandenburg to sacrifice her money and men. Frederick William refused to accept this interpretation of the obligations of each of his territories, and, upon the Estates continued refusal to grant funds, he levied without the sanction of that body and collected by military means a land tax of 180,000 thalers. The Estates finally submitted and granted a large amount of money for the maintenance of the army during the coming war.

The Elector, after a period of neutrality, entered the war. With the Peace of Oliva, at its close, came the next important step. The army had grown from the 3,907 garrison troops to a well-equipped, well-trained force of twenty-seven thousand, and the Estates expected him, now that peace had come, to follow the practice of his predecessors and disband it, leaving only the minimum necessary for garrison troops. The Elector, however, had other ideas. He wrote, "I have become convinced that I owe the preservation
of my position and my territory to God, and next to God, to my standing army."4 He had seen the dangers of being unprepared when surrounded by aggressive neighbors and determined to have a permanent standing army. He felt that his subjects had become enough accustomed to paying military taxes that they would not protest. Therefore, at the end of the war, instead of disbanding all of his troops except those required for garrison duty, he dismissed only a little over half, keeping about twelve thousand. Garrison duty required 5,200 of them, but the rest were distinctly retained as a permanent field force. Brandenburg-Prussia had acquired a standing army—a standing army to which Frederick William constantly kept adding until, by the time of his death, it contained about twenty-seven thousand.

Before taking leave of the Great Elector, we might do well to look into two rather important topics: the position of the nobles and the effect of the standing army upon the provincialism of his various territories. Under Frederick William, the nobles of Brandenburg-Prussia did not have that exclusive right to high military positions which they later gained. They had to share jobs with such foreign nobles and non-nobles, even peasants' sons, as had had military experience in the Thirty Years' War. The young noblemen who wished to become officers had to begin as private soldiers and work their way up. Concerning the effect of the standing army on

4 Ibid.
the provincialism of the different territories, it might be said that, more than any one thing, the army brought about the unification of the different provinces. Although the people objected to it at first, they were proud of the renown which the Elector's victories brought them, and this "tended to cement his territories into an united whole, and to inspire them with the feeling that they were all parts of one nation."5 As the military taxes were collected by the Elector's government, a centralized and efficient civil service was soon spread over the entire state. As more and more of the old powers and duties of the Estates were handed over to the agencies of this centralized civil service, the territories came closer and closer to complete union. The army had an even more direct hand in the unifying process. When a recruit left his home, he left it as a citizen of Brandenburg, of East Prussia, or of Cleves. He returned home, after service in the army, as a soldier of the Elector.

Undoubtedly Frederick William's greatest legacy to the military system of modern Germany was the standing army, but he left another which was to find an important place in that system— the permanent General Staff. Until the Northern War, the troops of the various lands belonging to the Elector had been under separate commands and had never been united in a

5Frederick Longman, Frederick the Great and the Seven Years War, p. 12.
single army. In 1651, as a first step towards centralization, Freiherr von Sparr was given supreme command over all of the troops except those in Brandenburg and East Prussia; then, four years later, he was made commander-in-chief. If Frederick William was with his army in the field, then Sparr acted as his Chief of Staff. Sparr gathered around him a number of the outstanding officers and from these developed a permanent General Staff.

At the death of the Great Elector in 1688, the throne of Brandenburg-Prussia went to his son, Frederick. Frederick was vain, frivolous, sickly, deformed, and loved to surround himself with pomp and ceremony. So great was his vanity and love of pomp that he spent the first twelve years of his reign trying to secure the permission of the Emperor to proclaim himself a king. The Emperor, influenced probably much more by the advantages of securing as a friend the master of twenty-seven thousand of the best troops in Germany than by the pleading of the Elector, finally in 1701 gave his consent. The Emperor, however, did not want another king within the boundaries of his empire. Frederick, therefore, took the title of Frederick I, King in Prussia, Prussia being outside of the empire. It is strange that weakness and vanity can sometimes play an important role in the advancement of a nation. The vanity of Frederick made Prussia a kingdom, and, since a large army is the most splendid trapping of monarchy, Frederick constantly increased his
army. The "Royal Prussian Army," and the "Royal Prussian Crown" became the symbols of unity. The importance in Prussian history of the gaining of the royal crown is perhaps best shown by the belief of Frederick the Great, who held that his grandfather had said to his successors by that act, "I have attained a title for you; show yourselves worthy of it. I have laid the foundation of your greatness; you must finish the work."

Frederick I had inherited an army of twenty-seven thousand men; he bequeathed an army of nearly forty thousand to his son, Frederick William I. Frederick also left his son a soldier for whom history can find few equals—Leopold of Dessau, the "Old Desauer." Dessau was no great strategist, but as an instructor in tactics and discipline he was without equal. He was brutal, kicking and beating his men into the art of war; but he left his mark on the military tactics of the entire world. As Carlyle says:

He invented the iron ramrod; he invented the equal step; in fact, he is the inventor of modern military tactics. Even so, if we knew it, the soldier of every civilized country still receives from this man, on parade grounds and battlefields, its words of command; out of his rough head proceeded the essential of all that the innumerable drill-sergeants, in various languages, daily repeat and enforce. He was one of Frederick the Great's instructors when the king was a child."

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6 Augusta Gifford, Germany: Her People and Their Story, p. 330.

7 Carlyle, op. cit., I, 321.
Frederick William I brought to completion the secularization of the Prussian army which his grandfather, the Great Elector, had begun. He swept away the last remnants of feudal obligations and stamped out ruthlessly the slight beginnings of a militia system. Nothing but the professional soldier wearing the King's uniform and drilled even under his own command satisfied him. At the King's accession there was no conscription in Prussia. The army was recruited by voluntary enlistment, partly from within Prussia, partly from the rest of Germany, and to a considerable extent also from nations speaking other languages. As in other countries, too, when voluntary enlistment yielded insufficient numbers, it gave place to impressment. Recruiting was in the hands of captains, who received a lump sum for enrolling and maintaining their companies. The recruiting officers "often came into conflict with one another for men, and often used deceit or compulsion which led to protests, opposition, and violence, especially when they attempted to get recruits from the lands of Prussia's neighbors." In 1733, to remedy these abuses, a rigorous system of cantonal conscription was set up by which the military districts were required to furnish quotas according to population, although almost the entire middle class was exempted. The conscripts served for a long period of years, and throughout the eighteenth century large numbers continued to be recruited by voluntary

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8Fay, The Rise of Brandenburg-Prussia to 1786, p. 110.
enlistment, both from Prussia and from foreign countries. Each regiment had its own canton from which to draw recruits (a canton contained about five thousand families), and a roll was kept of the young men from whom it was to choose. As each eligible boy reached his tenth year, his name was placed on the roll, and he was given a bunch of red feathers to wear in his hat, a pass which certified leave of absence, and took the military oath. Thus peasant boys were familiarized from childhood with the thought of having some day to become soldiers in the army of their king, while the land owners and parents had time to prepare for their enforced absence.

This canton system played an important role as a leveler. Most of the nobles bitterly opposed it, for their peasants, instead of remaining blindly obedient to them, now had other interests and other ideals. The men who came back from the army after completing their service or during one of the long furloughs which were regularly granted, "were a different class of beings from the sons of the soil who had marched out."\(^9\) It was Frederick William's outspoken aim to make things more comfortable for them in their regimental quarters than they were at home; they were taught to read and write and were well fed, clothed, and lodged.

The entire life of Frederick William was devoted to two things: perfecting and enlarging his army, and saving

money. He had grown to manhood through years of almost continuous warfaro for Prussia, and it was with the greatest chagrin that he recognized the fact that the Prussian military machine, and consequently her whole foreign policy, was dependent upon foreign subsidies. Prussia did not have the money to keep her army in the field for even a short period. He therefore resolved to build the Prussian treasury reserve up to a point where he would be entirely independent of subsidies and thus make possible a foreign policy in accordance with Prussia's own interests. So wholeheartedly did he put this resolution into effect that his entire reign took on an atmosphere of miserliness. Every cent of revenue which did not absolutely have to be spent was saved or spent on the army. Year after year he kept increasing his revenue and diminishing his expenditures. Accordingly, each year he saved great amounts of coin and "reposited them in barrels in the cellars of his Schloss."\(^{10}\) At his accession in 1713 he had inherited a bankrupt administration; at his death in 1740 he left his son a model administration in which the annual domain revenue had risen from 1,300,000 to 3,300,000 thalers, and a war treasury of 8,000,000.

Frederick William I had only one extravagance—his army. Nothing was too good for his "dear blue children." His efforts to make his army mechanically perfect on the parade-ground were so successful "that Macaulay could say that,

\(^{10}\) Carlyle, op. cit., I, 332.
placed beside them, the household regiments of Versailles and St. James's would have appeared an awkward squad."

This perfection afforded him his greatest pleasure, and his favorite pastime was personally putting his troops through their parade-ground maneuvers. At every opportunity, he would add a new regiment to his rapidly growing army, and the army of forty thousand which he had inherited from his father grew into a gigantic machine, according to the standards of that day, of eighty-three thousand of the most efficient and best disciplined troops in Europe. Their efficiency received no real test, however, during his reign, for he was so proud and fond of them that he did not want to expose them to the dangers of war. With the exception of two minor engagements, Frederick William's beloved battalions remained on the parade-grounds during his entire reign. The King devoted his life to the Prussian Army and left a mark on it which the years did not fade. As Richard says in his History of German Civilization:

> It was Frederick William I who established that military character which distinguishes the Prussian army and has made the German army what it is today; he taught the Prussian soldier that it is a distinction to wear the uniform of the King, that it is his duty to give his life for his country. He implanted in the army and corps of officers that idea of honor which is founded on self-respect and devotion to duty. In the year 1722 the King donned the uniform of his army and wore no other apparel thereafter—a thing no monarch had ever done before him. Thus he

\[11\] William Reddaway, Frederick the Great and the Rise of Prussia, p. 22.
set an example for his subjects of respect for the army and its members, and so strengthened their self-respect—a master stroke of psychological common sense. 12

It has been stated previously that in the army of the Great Elector the native Prussian nobility received no preference. Frederick William went to the other extreme in that he would allow no one but a Prussian noble to become an officer in his army and went so far as to force all young Prussian nobles to accept commissions. One of the first acts of the King's reign was the purging of his officer corps of men of low birth or foreign citizenship and the filling of their places with the native nobility or 'Junkers.' He had plenty of noble material with which to fill these vacancies and those created by the addition of new regiments, for he strictly required the services of all able-bodied nobles from the day of their graduation from his Cadettenhaus (military school) until they reached old age. Attendance at the Cadettenhaus in Berlin was compulsory. The King would demand from each province a list of the young noblemen between twelve and eighteen, whereupon royal orders were issued as to which youths from each district were to enter that year. Hitherto the young nobles of the various territories which happened to be subject to the House of Brandenburg had been quite as ready to take military service under another government as their own, but now that was strictly forbidden.

12Ernst Richard, History of German Civilization, p. 337.
by law. The reward which the Junkers received for their compulsory service was, besides the monopoly of high army and government offices, a great number of social, economic, and political privileges. Their preservation as a class was guaranteed them by the King. As stated in Cambridge:

In Prussia the officers of the army were the ruling caste, like the priests in other countries. The king insisted on the fact that he stood on a far more intimate personal footing with the officers than with the rest of his subjects. Following his example, the officers treated the official class, the learned profession, and the upper middle class generally, with a contempt and at times a brutality which rendered the position of these classes uncomfortable and insecure. Prussia was a polity of officers. Their numbers were enormous, their service monotonous and very rarely interrupted by periods of leave. The nobility might console themselves for the loss of their freedom by the fact that, in the main, they made up the whole of this officers' polity.13

The Junkers, used to commanding, quickly took to the new system. Their interests became as one with the army and the King, and they became one of the main pillars of the Prussian throne. These nobles brought with them to their new roles their pride, sense of honor, sense of social superiority, and an ability to command, and they soon formed a body of men unequalled in their devotion to their military superiors, in ability, training, and capacity for sacrifices.

Frederick William was not satisfied with forcing his ideas of duty, combined with strict military discipline, on

merely his army and his nobles. He carried his drill-sergeant ideas into Prussian business and as far as possible into Prussian life. Every soul in his kingdom was expected to act at all times as a well-trained soldier would act.

Frederick William I died in 1740, leaving his son, Frederick the Great, a full treasury, a prosperous country, and a magnificent army—an army which was recruited partially from native and foreign volunteers and partially from native Prussians through the canton system; an army in which the native nobility expected and received all preferences; an army which was solely the instrument of the monarch—paid, fed, clothed, drilled, and commanded by that monarch; an army in which the middle or mercantile class had no part; an army which was disciplined with the greatest severity and cruelty; an army drilled to perfection.

Frederick early gave indications that his reign would be no less tyrannical and militaristic than his father's. One of his first acts was to increase the army by sixteen thousand men. He retained the canton recruiting system of his father, but corrected some of the evils which had grown out of it. He had little time, however, to make changes, for he had been King only seven months when he entered Silesia at the head of twenty-eight thousand men. This invasion sounded the opening gun of twenty-three years of almost continuous warfare. The First Silesian War closed a year and a half later with the Peace of Breslau. Frederick
was victorious in two major battles, Mollwitz and Chotusitz. The battle of Mollwitz, the opening engagement of the war, caused a great sensation in Europe, for no one had believed that the Prussian troops, accustomed in Frederick William's life only to drill exercise, would be able to resist the veterans of Austria in actual warfare.

The Second Silesian War began in 1744. Frederick was again victorious, winning four great battles: Hohenfriedberg, Sohr, Hennersdorf, and Kesselsdorf. The war was terminated in 1745 with the Peace of Dresden.

Frederick came out of the Silesian Wars with the idea that, in the whole world, he had no sure friend but his army. He felt that he could not be too vigilant of it. The Frenchman Valori says of Frederick after the First Silesian War: "He got into details which were beneath, not only a Prince who has great views, but even a simple Captain of Infantry--according to my military notions and experiences."\(^{14}\) For over twenty-three years Frederick spent around five-sixths of his entire revenue on his army. The Silesian campaigns had revealed many defects in officers, men, equipment, numbers, and in the Commander-in-Chief himself (Frederick). For eleven years (1745 to 1756, the years between the Peace of Dresden and the opening of the Seven Years' War) the King toiled to remove these defects. The number of the peace force was raised to 135,000 with an expansion capacity up to 200,000. Training continued

\(^{14}\) Carlyle, *op. cit.*, III, 373.
with increased rigour; reforms were made in the Cadettenhaus, in the military education of the officer corps, in technical equipment, in the cavalry and artillery, and in tactics. Also, Frederick worked hard to improve his own military knowledge and ability. Like his father, he managed everything about the army in person, himself training and drilling the troops that he led to battle. He caused minute reports to be drawn up, from which he learned the capacity and the special good and bad qualities of every regiment. Officers and soldiers alike were subjected to hard, serious work and were given but small pay. The common soldier was disciplined severely and cruelly. It was during this period that Frederick introduced the "Autumn Maneuvers." In 1753, for example, thirty-six thousand troops were collected at Spandau for this purpose, and the maneuvers lasted twelve days. The King devoted himself with great assiduity to the study of tactical problems and then caused them to be worked out in practice by his troops. These maneuvers benefitted him in many ways. He was able to check the ability of the officers and the mobility of his regiments. As he held his maneuvers on territory where he was later to fight battles, he was familiarizing himself with details of terrain, his knowledge of which was in time to prove a big advantage. An amusing story is told of how Daun, the Austrian commander at the battle of Leuthen, when out reconnoitering the morning before the battle, asked a peasant the name of some distant object, and how the peasant
replied, "That is the hill our King chases the Austrians over when he is reviewing here." 15

Frederick's work was interrupted by the opening of the Seven Years' War in 1756. The King found himself facing the wrath of the three greatest powers of Continental Europe: Austria, Russia, and France. Combined they had a population nineteen times that of Prussia. In 1757 the Allies put more than 430,000 men into the field against Prussia, while the most Frederick could raise to oppose them, after deducting forces necessary for garrisoning the fortresses, was a little over 150,000 men. Against these odds Frederick struggled valiantly. He won many great victories and was badly defeated a number of times. After four years of this life-and-death struggle for Prussia, the army was but a shadow of the magnificent force that had marched to war in 1756. Nine pitched battles, endless skirmishes, severe marches, and constant desertion had opened great gaps in the Prussian lines. The levies from the Prussian dominions were inadequate to fill the gaps, and Austria and Russia, because of larger populations, refused to trade prisoners. The new levies consisted largely of "deserters, prisoners of war pressed into the service, and foreigners enticed or kidnapped into it by outrageous devices. Such men could not be trusted as Frederick trusted his followers at Leuthen." 16 As the war went on,

15 Longman, op. cit., p. 137.
16 Ibid., p. 156.
the Prussian army degenerated more and more. By the end of
1761 it had sunk to sixty thousand men. Its quality had gone
down even more. As Longman in his Frederick the Great and
the Seven Years' War says:

The splendid well-disciplined troops which had
commenced the war existed no longer, and deserters
and vagabonds of all kinds were swept into the ranks
to fill their places. The utmost severity failed to
preserve discipline, and the low moral tone prevail-
ing in the inferior ranks infected even the officers.
Peculation was rife, mutiny and desertion constant. 17

The war finally ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1763.
Russia and France had withdrawn from the fight, and Austria
was unable to carry on by itself. Frederick, although badly
beaten in many battles and at the end of his resources, was
acknowledged the victor.

The results were many and varied. The little kingdom
of Prussia now took its place as one of the Great Powers.
The disunited people of Germany had found a champion of whom
they could be proud. In the battle of Rossbach, for the
first time in history, a French army had been defeated in a
great battle by a purely German army commanded by a leader
of German blood. Prussia had gained tremendously in size
and population by the acquisition of Silesia. The people
of Prussia itself had gained a military history and a leg-
end of which they could always boast—a legend which was of-
ten to be used by military leaders as an excuse for increased
arsenal. The immediate effects upon Prussia were, however,

17Ibid., p. 228.
not so pleasant. A large percentage of her manhood had been killed, and her fields were ravished. Many years were to pass before the nation could regain its feet.

It was the beautifully-trained, well-disciplined, faithful army, so loved by Frederick William I, that reaped the most bitter blow of all. The flower of the old officer corps lay on the battlefield. The great generals and the high officers, with few exceptions, were dead or disabled. Their successors had known war "only in subalterns' positions, and looked for the secret of the Frederician conquests only in the mechanical exercises of the parade-ground."\(^{18}\) Frederick had followed the custom of exempting the middle, commercial class from service in the army. It was their duty to build the commerce and industry of the state so that the monarch might have revenues large enough to support his army. When great numbers of the peasant-soldiers were killed during the war, the King did not dare replace them with the middle class because of the threatening economic situation. So completely did Frederick separate his army of noble-officers and peasant-soldiers from the average middle-class business man of Prussia, he could boast that with it he could carry on a war while Prussian merchants and manufacturers went unknowing and undisturbed about their business. The result was that Frederick had to recruit his armies from the scum of Prussia and Europe.

\(^{18}\)Confessions of Frederick the Great and Treitschke, The Life of Frederick the Great, edited by Douglas Sladen, p. 182.
He impressed entire regiments of Austrian and Saxon prisoners of war. Only the most harsh and cruel forms of discipline could keep these soldiers in line. Long after the end of the war and after Prussia began to rebuild, Frederick's army remained full of dry-rot, even though it soon regained an outward appearance of strength and efficiency. The Prussian prison fortresses had never been so crowded as they were at the close of his reign. For slight breaches of military discipline, men were imprisoned. One officer got twenty years for failure to report a tired sentry who had fallen asleep at his post. Flogging was as common as ever. For minor offenses soldiers had to run the gauntlet a hundred times.

Through his entire reign, Frederick clung to the same theory concerning nobles as his father had held before him, firmly believing that only a noble could have a well-developed sense of honor. He was suspicious of non-nobles, feeling that they entered the army only for profit. Although he gave commissions to numerous bourgeois when he could find no others, he ignored their good services and coldly dismissed them at the end of campaigning. Toward the end of his reign, at a time when, due to the great losses among noble officers during the Seven Years' War, a small number of middle class officers were allowed to remain in service, Frederick, at an inspection, would sometimes call out an officer to inquire if he were of noble birth. If he were not, the King would

tap him on the shoulder with his little stick and dismiss him in disgrace. The result of this attitude on the part of the
monarch was that there arose in the noble officer corps an
aristocratic arrogance which soon became more intolerable to
the people than the coarse roughness of earlier times. The
people had no redress against even the worst excesses commit-
ted by the members of this corps, for the King supported them
in everything. This attitude is perhaps best expressed by two
statements that the King himself made. In an ordinance, he
wrote that the officers of the army were "the foremost class
in the State." In his Confessions, he says, "Always con-
fer an air of superiority on the profession of arms." The
effect of this philosophy upon the militarism of the future
Germany is perhaps best expressed in Douglas Sladen's intro-
duction to the Confessions of Frederick the Great:

A century and a half later Nietzsche writes:
'The future of German civilization rests on the
sons of the Prussian officers.' It is because
this principle was accepted by Frederick and has
been developed by Frederick's successors, that the
word has gone forth to Germany and the world that
the German officer was something sacrosanct, and
that for the safety and development of the state
he must be permitted to dominate the civilian. He
was to be accepted as an awe-inspiring representa-
tive of the Kaiser. Any temporary annoyance to
the civilian population was to be fully atoned for
later by the glorious success of 'the Day'.

20 Cambridge Modern History, edited by A. W. Ward, G. W.
Prothero, and Stanley Leathes, VI, 714.

21 Confessions of Frederick the Great and Treitschke, The
Life of Frederick the Great, edited by Douglas Sladen, p. 82.

22 Ibid., p. xiv.
The reigns of the last Elector of Brandenburg and the first three kings of Prussia left a mark upon their nation which the passage of several centuries has not obliterated. The professional army created by the Great Elector and developed by his successors was to give way to a national army, but the system of military domination which it produced was to remain. The passing centuries were unable to break down the strict caste system which resulted both from the exclusion of all except the nobles from the commissioned ranks of the army and from the acceptance by King, officers, and civilians of the officer class's right to dominate.
CHAPTER II

THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL ARMY

Frederick the Great died in 1786, leaving a country with a population of six million and a standing army of 200,000 men. His successor, Frederick William II, although weak, ignorant, and lazy, increased his territories, his population to nine million, and his standing army to a quarter of a million. When, therefore, Frederick William III ascended the throne in 1797, he had abundant means for solving the serious political problems which arose from the French Revolution.

On the surface, Prussia in 1806 was still the powerful little country which, under Frederick the Great, had held at bay the combined might of Continental Europe—but only on the surface. She was not a naturally great nation. She did not have any well-defined, or easily defensible frontiers, rich agricultural lands, or fine harbours. The greatness of Prussia was man-made. She owed her pride of place to a remarkable succession of great rulers, "a line of kings who had pursued undeviatingly and with single-minded devotion a carefully thought-out policy, designed to build up, out of the most unpromising materials, a great political edifice in Central Europe."1 To that end they maintained an army out

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1 John Marriott and C. Grant Robertson, The Evolution of Prussia, p. 222.
of all proportion to the population or to the economic resources of the state. The whole administrative system was devised with a view to the maintenance of military efficiency. Finance and commerce were promoted with the same object. To Prussia's continued greatness, then, two things were essential: a succession of capable rulers and a military machine in a perpetual state of efficiency. Both were lacking in 1806.

Neither Frederick William II nor Frederick William III was capable of successfully leading their country through a period of great danger. The former was lucky in that he had no grave international problem to face, but the latter had to face Napoleon.

Apart from the weak character of Frederick William III, there were inherent defects in the army itself. It was just twenty years since Frederick the Great had died. During these years nothing had been done to bring the Prussian army up to the new standard required by the rapid development of the art of war. Organization, drill, and tactics were what Frederick had left them. The officers were the same, twenty years older and debilitated by inaction. The Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of Brunswick, was too old to ride horseback. His second in command, Mollendorf, was eighty-one years of age. Of 142 generals, four were over eighty and thirteen had passed their seventieth year. In the infantry there were 540 higher officers, and of these over a quarter were more than sixty years old, while the cavalry had twenty-five senior
officers, so senior that they were well on to seventy. In the lower grades the situation was equally remarkable. Of 945 infantry captains, 119 were over fifty, and eighteen had passed sixty.

Mere age, however, was not the only fault of the Prussian officer corps. Old or young, they were lacking in military qualities. The young officers were radically bad, owing to their airs of nobility and licentious garrison life. As Menzel says:

Their manners and principles were equally vulgar. Women, horses, dogs, and gambling formed the staple of their conversation; they despised all solid learning, and, when decorated on parade, in their enormous cocked hats and plumes, powdered wigs and queues, tight leather breeches and great boots, they swore at and cudgelled the men, and strutted about with conscious heroism.2

The average citizen of Prussia was not conscripted, and the peasantry was too small to fill the demand. This resulted in the impressment of large numbers of foreigners, usually of the lowest quality. In 1806 the term 'soldier' might mean thief, drunkard, bankrupt, tramp—anything except a respectable citizen; and the laws that governed him were laid down accordingly. Any peasant or laborer, no matter how low, was entitled to stop any soldier, ask for his pass, and, if it was not forthcoming, take him to the nearest village and hand the case over for investigation. Being without a pass or refusing to follow was considered tantamount

2Wolfgang Menzel, Germany from the Earliest Period, IV, 1484.
to desertion. When a large part of the army was living mainly in the hope of running away, where a reward for the capture of a deserter was paid, and where no love was lost between the soldiers and the people of the country, this rule was not allowed to become a dead letter. When a soldier actually did desert, the whole country was roused as though an invasion was imminent. Alarm bells were rung, all roads and passes were blocked, and every boat had to be made fast so that the fugitive could not use it in escaping. Whoever harbored a deserter was hanged, and whoever captured one was rewarded. The preceding refers only to peace time; in war time desertion became a serious thing, and vigorous watch had to be kept to prevent entire companies from deserting at a time.

The common soldiers were subjected to the most brutal forms of discipline—"any sixteen year old ensign might flog an old soldier half to death for carelessness in drill."3 For more serious offenses, there was the running of the gauntlet of two hundred men armed with salted whips. The offender's hands were bound, his feet fettered, and a ball of lead was placed in his mouth lest he should bite his tongue off in his agony. For such terrible offenses as insolence to an officer, death was the penalty.

Far from being expected to have any patriotism and genuine desire to serve his country, the common soldier was not

even allowed to keep his self-respect. The fighting man was universally despised. If a trooper asked for refreshment at an inn, he was served on the doorstep lest he might offend the bourgeois within by his presence. The terrible injustice of it all is perhaps best expressed in Seeley's question: "What could be worse tyranny than to seize upon the peasant and subject him for twenty years to a brutal discipline and to the risks of war in order that he might defend a country to which he owed scarcely anything, while those who owed comfort and happiness to the State were not called upon to risk anything for it?"4

In spite of the moral decay which had eaten into it, the Prussian army still gave the outward appearance of efficiency, but even this was a mirage. The guns used by the soldiers were heavy and apt to hang fire. As Clausewitz, the great military writer, says: "Their muskets were highly polished but they were the worst in Europe."5 As a result of the avarice and incompetency of the officers, the troops received the worst of equipment. One of the causes of the degeneration of the Prussian army was the military successes of Frederick the Great. The army considered itself invincible, without the need of improvement. The traditions of the Frederician era had become petrified, and strategy sank into a rigid

4 Frederick Whitton, Moltke, p. 13.
formalism and blind adherence to arbitrary forms and rules. There arose a fatal notion which "confused the means with the end, and conceived the essentials of war to lie in the execution of cleverly devised maneuvers, rather than in the annihilation of the enemy forces." 6 This theory was carried to absurdity. Massenbach, on his retreat from Jena and Auerstadt, ordered Prince Hohenlohe to make a detour in order to place a brook between him and the enemy, and this though the enemy was not there and the brook was dry. The defeat of the army at Prenzlau was the result, but Massenbach was quite content to disregard all means of safety rather than be guilty of an offense against the accepted rules of military science. In a word, by 1806 the whole aim of war had been lost sight of in Prussia—"War was no longer an effort to annihilate the main forces of the enemy. It was merely an old-fashioned game, played very slowly and very badly by very old men." 7 The unreality of the war system of Prussia extended to the supply service. There were times when troops camped in cornfields yet starved, when they camped near piles of firewood and perished with cold.

This was the army with which Frederick William III dared to challenge the great Napoleon. To make matters worse, he declared war at a time when Prussia was at a great disadvantage. Instead of throwing his lot with Austria, he waited

7 Ibid.
until that country was crushed and unable to offer assistance before deciding upon war. On the day that hostilities commenced, thousands of Prussian soldiers were away from their companies on leaves of absence, and a fair percentage of the army was in distant garrisons; while on the other hand large French forces were stationed in South Germany.

In the fall of 1806, the Prussian army marched away to war, but it is a fair assumption that the great majority of average Prussian citizens neither knew nor cared. It was the King's army, not theirs; they took no part in it and felt no kinship with it. As Bigelow says:

German men of letters, Germans who pretended to elegance in social matters, had been brought up to regard patriotism as savoring of bad taste, if not positive vulgarity. The plain people preserved their national feelings, but in 1806 the plain people were not asked their opinion on current events. Germany had been trained to docility for generations past, and this docility had turned into political imbecility. The country was full of Hegels who never bothered their heads about whether they were governed by Turk or Tycoon. Whatever came from above they accepted with meekness; if the taxes were heavy they paid them with a groan, if they were light they paid them with a smile; but in any case they paid them, and never asked themselves who received the money or what it was spent for. Napoleon won the battle because Prussia was full of men like Hegel—Hegels in the universities, Hegels in the government offices, Hegels even at the head of the army.8

The force which marched westward for the purpose of humbling Napoleon looked more like a picnic caravan than an army going to fight for the very existence of its country. It was

hampered by thirty-two hundred extra horses that had no duty except to carry the personal belongings of the officers. Each officer had in the baggage a tent, a bed, a chair, and a table. The roads were cluttered with thousands of wagons containing such things as mistresses, pianos, living chickens, toilet articles, wine, and complete kitchens. The march was further hindered by the most ridiculous observance of minor details. For example, Frederick William met Captain Boyen, who all the morning had been engaged in desperate efforts to clear an obstructed road for the troops, and sent word to him—that his hair was out of order.

The Prussian army was divided into two parts; one was placed at Jena and the other twelve miles away at Auerstadt. The King and the Duke of Brunswick commanded the force at Auerstadt, while Prince Hohenlohe commanded the advance army at Jena. The Prussians had no idea where the French were, for Frederick William's sense of honor would not permit him to sanction the use of spies. On the thirteenth of October, the French marched into position and the next morning opened fire. One unit under Napoleon attacked Hohenlohe at Jena, and another under Marshall Devoust engaged the King at Auerstadt. The Prussians were routed on both fields. In both battles the same mistakes were made: the site was badly chosen, the reserves were held back too long, and both commanders were sound asleep when the French attack was launched. Auerstadt was the more galling of the two defeats, because
there the Prussians actually outnumbered the French. "It was a regular achievement to lose the battle," writes Boyen; "everything there was in our favour."9 By four o'clock that afternoon, the "Royal Prussian Army" was in full flight. All order was lost as the officers deserted their commands and scurried to safety. By midnight Prussia had no army.

The lesson taught by the battles of Jena and Auerstadt is well stated by Bigelow:

The lesson of this day ought to be treasured by us who believe in personal liberty and self-government. Here was an army of over 100,000 men, all professional soldiers; led by a king whose education was purely military; commanded by officers who knew nothing outside of the profession of arms. They fought on their own ground, in defense of their country; they were superior in cavalry, artillery, and infantry to the French. This army was completely defeated by an enemy which employed no novel method of warfare, which commanded no source of knowledge inaccessible to the Prussians...But the Prussian Army was full of old men whose self-conceit made them blind. The American War (1776-1783) had demonstrated that citizen soldiers, led by enterprising men of practical sense, were more than a match for the regulars of the English King. Thirty thousand Germans had been sold into the service of the English in those seven years, of whom only about one-third returned from America. But these few were enough to warn their fellow country-men against the folly of marching in solid battalions against an enemy that scattered in skirmishing line. The Prussian generals were, however, too much puffed up with professional prejudices to learn the lesson taught by the farmers of America; it took a Jena to bring that lesson home.

...On the evening of October 14, 1806, the Prussian army, commanded by all that Prussia classes as aristocratic, had been converted into a mad mob. The most military state of Europe suddenly discovered that in the day of trial, soldiers alone, even when led by officers of "noble blood," are a poor substitute for

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9Henderson, Blucher and the Uprising of Prussia Against Napoleon, p. 12.
liberty-loving citizens capable of rapid organization.\textsuperscript{10}

As the victorious French army marched into Prussia, fortress after fortress surrendered. Five major fortresses capitulated within two weeks of Jena. The great stronghold of Erfurt surrendered without a shot to a small detachment of French cavalry. The commander of Spandau, the central depository for military funds and material, surrendered, also without a shot, and with but one stipulation—that his chicken coops should be respected.

Napoleon was now master of Prussia. The King fled into hiding, and the important cities, including Berlin, were occupied by the French. The Emperor allowed Prussia to keep her independence but laid down certain conditions: the army was to be limited to forty-two thousand, and no anti-French actions were to be taken.

Frederick William was not capable of lifting his trampled nation from beneath the boots of its conquerors alone, but he found two great ministers in Stein and Scharnhorst. Both believed that Prussia's only hope lay in her common people. Stein, as Minister of the Interior, issued ordinances which went a long way to break down the feudal caste system. Citizens were given a form of local self-government. Everything possible was done to make the peasants and bourgeoisie feel that it was their country and was worth fighting

\textsuperscript{10} Bigelow, \textit{History of the German Struggle for Liberty}, I, 51-52.
or dying for. To Scharnhorst, as Minister of War, fell the duty of molding the aroused populace into a fighting machine capable of withstanding the Napoleonic juggernaut.

Scharnhorst opened his program with the purging of what remained of the army after Jena and Auerstadt. A commission, with him at its head, began its work on July 17, 1807. During the next year it tried all officers who had fought at Jena or Auerstadt or had been in a surrendered fortress. If they could not prove that they had not acted cowardly or traitorously, they were dismissed from the service in disgrace. A large proportion of the lower officers cleared themselves entirely and lived to cover themselves with glory in the War of Liberation, but of 143 generals in the army in 1806, only two, Blucher and Taurentzien, commanded in 1813. Scharnhorst's house-cleaning was made easier by Napoleon's limitation of the army to forty-two thousand. He could hand-pick his officer corps.

Jena and Auerstadt had shown that reforms were definitely in order, and radical changes were made. Under the new regime, the whole conception of the officer's duty changed. He was appointed because of merit and not because of high birth. The higher offices of the army were thrown open to the common soldiers, and the compulsory service of the aristocratic classes was abolished. The officer was to be "an example to the soldiers in the matter of patiently bearing the fatigues of the march; he was to go on foot and carry his knapsack on his back;
he was always to remember his honorable calling, that of leader and educator of an estimable part of the nation."11 The commanders were to see that their subordinates "neither treat their soldiers roughly nor permit the insults that are still occasionally the custom."12 Promotion was to be based to a large extent on merit and not on length of service alone. In 1809 war schools, and in 1810 a war academy for ensigns and lieutenants, were founded.

The degrading corporal punishments under which the self-respect of the soldier had wilted were abolished, for now the best men in the nation would find themselves in the ranks. The reformers, Scharnhorst, Boyen, Gneisenau, Grolman, and others, also felt that the best disciplined army would be the one that had the most humane rules and regulations. Common troopers were to be treated as self-respecting men, and minor breaches of discipline were to be punished with detention in barracks under word of honor. This new army was to be essentially for use and not for display. The tricks of the parade-ground were now abandoned, and serious work and target shooting took their place. Wigs and pigtails were discarded, the uniforms made more comfortable, and the amount of baggage decreased. Every regiment that had been concerned in a surrender was permanently disbanded so that no old prejudices or

11Henderson, Blucher and the Uprising of Prussia Against Napoleon, p. 35.
12Ibid., p. 36.
traditions stood in the way. Foreigners were no longer to be taken into either the ranks or the commissioned corps. The canton system of recruiting was abolished. The new army was to be a patriotic fighting force made up of all classes.

Scharnhorst's ideal was a citizen's standing army. He did not believe that a militia, called for training a few weeks out of each year, would be any more successful against Napoleon than were the professional soldiers. He wanted every man in the nation to be called upon for one comparatively long and continuous period of service. Napoleon's limitation of the army and the lack of money, however, made this impossible at that time. As a compromise, the standing army was to be kept at a certain minimum, but was to be provided with the machinery for rapid expansion. In the forty-two thousand men allowed Prussia by the Emperor, the Minister of War had a nucleus or skeleton, but what could this handful do against the 800,000 trained, experienced soldiers of the French? If Prussia was ever to be free, she must have at least several hundred thousand trained troops, not to mention great amounts of war materials. Scharnhorst was determined that his country should have these troops, but how could he do it when any attempt to lift the army above forty-two thousand would immediately bring the wrath of Napoleon down upon him and probably result in the loss of Prussia's independence? The reformers finally hit upon a plan which would outwardly appear to conform to the limitation but would actually provide
the nation with thousands of trained troops above the prescribed number. Each month every company in the army would enroll five new men and release five who had had several months training. The men sent back into civilian life were not lost sight of, however. They were secretly looked after in their homes by officers who had been nominally retired but actually drew small salaries, on the understanding that they should reside near the places where they were needed and should drill these reserve soldiers from time to time. The officer corps was kept to sufficient strength by adding an extra officer to each company. By 1813 Prussia had 150,000 trained soldiers: forty-two thousand in her standing army and over a hundred thousand reserves (Landwehr). She had also the Landsturm, or general arming of the people for guerilla warfare.

The soldiers for Prussia's new army were not conscripts; they were volunteers. The reforms of Stein and the French occupation had awakened the stagnant patriotism of the common people. Young men begged to be taken into the army, and many organized their own free companies. The exploits of one of these groups of fire-eating young patriots made history. Ferdinand von Schill, a young lieutenant who had been wounded at Jena, formed a guerilla troop of disbanded soldiers and young men who, although indifferently provided with arms, stopped the French convoys and courtiers. His success was so extraordinary that he was sometimes enabled to send sums
of money, taken from the enemy, to the King. Among other exploits, he took prisoner Marshal Victor, who was exchanged for Blucher.

While he was building up the man-power of the army, Scharnhorst was also collecting great stores of war materials. The more modern types of garrison cannon were secretly converted into field-pieces and were replaced with ancient guns; and where muskets could not be found for the soldiers, pikes were used. By 1813, enough equipment had been collected that, in case of necessity, a considerable force could be speedily assembled and armed.

In all of his reforms, Scharnhorst could count on the support of the progressive men of the nation and upon the great majority of the general public, but fighting him every step of the way were the King, the aristocracy, and Napoleon. Frederick William was afraid that the forming of a popular army would be but a prelude to revolution, and the nobility did not want to lose its exclusive privileges. When the Emperor received proof of the War Minister's secret system, he forced the King to remove him from office. Although from that time Scharnhorst had to move even more secretly and often had to use disguises, he did not allow his dismissal to slow down his program.

From 1806 to 1812, reform went steadily on, but even after six years, Prussia, with an army of 150,000, was in no position to challenge Napoleon, who had around 300,000
men under arms. In the late summer of 1812, Napoleon marched into Russia at the head of about 600,000 of the best troops in Europe, including twenty-thousand which Prussia had been forced to provide. The Prussian corps, however, did not go into Russia but remained on the border as an auxiliary force. A few months later Napoleon and thirty-thousand men—all that remained of the magnificent invading army—recrossed the boundary. Pouring after the remnants came the victorious Muscovites. Yorck, the commander of the Prussian contingent, found himself in a precarious situation. His troops were surrounded by Russians, who demanded that he join them in the fight against Napoleon. Yorck's personal preference lay with the Russians, but his King was firm in his alliance with the French Emperor. Frederick William believed that the Corsican was invincible and could see nothing but certain destruction for himself and his kingdom if he joined the Czar; accordingly, when his general asked for orders, he forbade the union. This order, however, never reached Yorck. He had waited as long as he could and had then placed his command under the Russian banner. The Russians, out of courtesy to their new ally, stopped all messengers from the Prussian King so that the General might not become a traitor technically as well as factually. Thus, while one portion of the Prussian army was arming to fight for Napoleon, the other portion was arming to fight against him.

The King stood firm in his alliance with the Emperor,
because he did not trust his people. To him, Prussia was still the Prussia of Jena and Auerstadt. What could he expect of a partially-trained army of 150,000 when his magnificent force of 200,000 had been routed in a single day? As for issuing a general call to arms to the people—"Call out volunteers? A very good idea; but none will come." Stein, Scharnhorst (both technically in banishment), and the other liberal ministers persisted, however, and at last, grudgingly and unwillingly, on February 3, 1813, Frederick William called to his aid the whole body of his people.

For each volunteer that the King had expected, a thousand enthusiastic patriots swamped the recruiting stations. One day Scharnhorst drew the King to the window of the palace at Breslau (the French occupied Berlin) to show him how badly he had misjudged his people, for below him in the street there clattered by a long procession of country carts loaded with cheering volunteers who had arrived from Berlin entirely at their own expense and were eager to be led to battle for their country's cause. The great Minister, who had suffered and labored much for this hour, turned to the Monarch and said, "Does your Majesty now believe?"

For the King had been terribly wrong—the Prussia of 1813 was not the Prussia of 1806. "Queen Luise had lived

13Ibid., p. 88.

14Bigelow, History of the German Struggle for Liberty, II, 66.
and died; the spirit of Pestalozzi had worked in the common school; the serf had become a citizen; the hireling soldier was now a volunteer; Stein and Scharnhorst had awakened public confidence in the government; Scharnhorst had breathed the new spirit into the army; Jahn had taught his athletic clubs that patriotism was not a thing to be ashamed of; the boys of Prussia sang songs of German unity; the poets and preachers of Germany talked of liberty; and the boys who were twelve years old at Jena could shoulder a musket in the year of Grace 1813."\(^{15}\) It was a new army that was preparing for war that eventful spring—a new army, backed by a new nation. The very word 'soldier' now ceased to be used, for it meant a mercenary, a hireling. The young men who answered the call of their country preferred to call themselves warriors. Out of a population of five million, there came forth an army of 271,000,\(^{16}\) or one out of eighteen. In Berlin the response was overwhelming. Nine thousand volunteers were enrolled in three days; the university enlisted 258 of its students; one grammar school sent 113 boys, another 134. Nine boys from the famous Gray Cloister School were to find death on the field of battle. The French government sought to arrest those who tried to make their way to Breslau, but with no effect, for the youngsters started in different

\(^{15}\)Ibid., I, 229.

\(^{16}\)George Priest, Germany Since 1740, p. 64. The figure is placed at almost 300,000 by Whitton, op. cit., p. 19.
directions and united well beyond the city walls. They travelled at their own expense and cheerfully risked their lives for a King whom they imagined a hero in temporary distress. The professors followed the students; one of them, by the name of Steffen, turned his lecture to the students on philosophy into a call to arms; Jahn by his influence also handed over his whole class of gymnasts as soldiers for the ranks. Offices and shops were closed when the workers thronged to the barracks. Even poets joined the army, while the whole country sang the patriotic songs they wrote. From the rich and poor there poured forth a flood of contributions to the funds of war. Precious heirlooms were sold to raise money; women sold their jewels, their hair, and even their wedding rings. In return for them, they were given an iron ring engraved with the words, "I gave gold for iron, 1813." ¹⁷ For a man to remain at home, for a woman to have given nothing, became a disgrace.

The response of his people so surprised and encouraged the King that, on February 9th, he issued an edict that gave notice that every able-bodied Prussian between seventeen and twenty-four years of age was expected to step into the ranks and fight. Eighteen days later, a defensive and offensive alliance was signed with Russia. On March 27th, war was formally declared in Paris by the Prussian minister demanding his passports, and on April 15th Napoleon left Paris to join

his army. The Prussian army had already assumed a popular character altogether undreamed of in the year of Jena, but the most democratic of all the King's proclamations was yet to appear. On May 8th an edict was published which completed the scheme for a whole people in arms. Every male Prussian between the ages of fifteen and sixty, who had been exempted from the active army, was to enroll himself in the Landsturm. The Landsturm was to rise wherever and whenever the enemy invaded the country. Important excerpts from the law are:

When an alarm is sounded, then it means that the war has become one of extremes which hallows every means. The most desperate are the best in the long run, for they bring the great cause to conclusion most quickly and successfully.

The Landsturm must not merely prevent the enemy from invading the country, but must prevent it from retreating; keep it on the jump and out of breath; cut off its ammunition, food, messengers and its reinforcements; capture its hospitals; carry out night surprises; in short, worry it, rob it of sleep, destroy it piecemeal wherever there is a chance.

Whoever refuses to obey the call to arms, or deserts, shall earn a degrading punishment, as, for instance, he shall be made to occupy a particular place in church. Cowards shall be punished by having to give up their arms... Their usual taxes shall be doubled. They shall receive corporal punishment. He who shows the feelings of a slave shall be treated as a slave.

The Landsturm shall wear no distinctive uniform, because that would expose them to pursuit and capture by the enemy.

It shall be the duty of every inhabitant at once to give notice in case a member of the Landsturm has been badly treated by members of the French army. In that case, and within twenty-four hours, revenge shall be taken to the same extent upon any French prisoner happening to be in Prussian hands.18

18 Bigelow, History of the German Struggle for Liberty, II, 126.
Prussia had her army; now it must have a leader. Scharnhorst had the right man picked out and persuaded the King. To the conservatives in the army, the last blow was the intrusting of the Prussian high command to Blücher, "almost seventy years old, a reckless talker, a wild gambler, and a psychopath, visited by severe fits of senile melancholy and fancies."19 The reformers realized that Prussia, in her present mood, needed at its head such a figure as Blücher, "who was and looked the ancient hero, venerable and dashing at the same time."20

The Allied army, to which Prussian furnished the strongest contingent, finally emerged victorious and forced Napoleon to give up his throne. The citizen soldiers had proved themselves to be brave, hard fighters. They had good discipline; Blücher himself commented on it. As Henderson says:

These were no longer the criminals, the drunken victims of the press-gangs, the cowed peasants who had fought and run in 1806. They were all free men imbued with a sense of honour and of their own importance and aflame with the desire to wipe out the shame that had been inflicted on their country.21

The military triumphs of this new Prussian army made the year 1814 exceptionally favorable for making permanent the work of the reformers. On September 3rd of that year, a law, designed by Boyen, was put into effect which drew every

19Vagts, op. cit., p. 150.
20Ibid.
21Henderson, Blücher and the Uprising of Prussia Against Napoleon, p. 98.
able-bodied male to the army. The recruit was to report for service during his twentieth year. Five years were to be passed in the standing army—three of them in active service, two as a reservist on leave. Then came seven years in the first class of the Landwehr, with the obligation to serve abroad as well as at home, to participate in occasional drills and reviews on set days, and once annually to join the regular army in large maneuvers. The second summons of the Landwehr filled out seven more years with occasional drills, the obligation to do garrison duty in war, and the possibility of service abroad in need. After these nineteen years, he was to hold himself ready for service in the Landsturm, which included all between the ages of seventeen and fifty who were in any way able to bear arms. Its uses were purely defensive. The citizen who could show a certain degree of education and could furnish his own arms and uniforms served only one year in the army and then generally in special troops, followed by two years as a reservist with a prior right to a commission in the Landwehr.

Thus Prussia had retained her standing army, but now it was placed on a national basis. Every able-bodied man in the nation was to be a soldier.
CHAPTER III

MILITARISM VERSUS DEMOCRACY

The Revolution of 1848 forced the Prussian monarchy to accept a constitution which gave the Landtag a certain amount of control over army affairs—through the annual budget and ministerial responsibility. Other features of parliamentary control, such as having the army swear to support the Constitution, were, however, carefully removed from the document by military men near the King. Although at first this group behaved itself and submitted fairly moderate financial demands to the Lower House, it soon began to find ways of getting around ministerial responsibility. Most of the power and functions of the War Ministry were taken away and placed in the hands of the King and a special military cabinet, neither of whom was responsible to the Parliament. For its control of the army, the Landtag had to depend upon its budgetary power.

In 1857, William, Prince of Prussia, became Regent, due to the mental illness of his brother, Frederick William IV. Long before he became Regent, William, a soldier by instinct and training, had been impressed by the need of a stronger and more efficient army and for a reform of the existing military organization. With true insight, he had recognized that, in the altered conditions of military science and
technique, the day of the old militia was over and that Prus-
sia's position would be strengthened and her capacity to meet
future tasks would be assured only to the extent that she had
at command a sufficient force of highly trained and highly dis-
ciplined men. He had seen with increasing anxiety the growing
military strength of France, Russia, and Austria, and he feared
that in event of a clash with either of these powers, before
Prussia had time to adjust her military system to the altered
situation, the result might be disastrous. Defects in the
army which had come to his knowledge when engaged, as Prince
of Prussia, in quelling the Baden insurrection of 1849, and
the slowness of the mobilization in 1859 when Austria had
eagerly waiting for Prussian help, had also convinced him
that radical reforms in organization were necessary if the
army was to become an absolutely reliable weapon in serious
warfare.

The Prussian military organization was based at that
time upon the law of 1814 which, on the basis of a universal
obligation to serve, assigned all the male population for
three years to the regiments of the line, and for two years
more to the war-reserve of these regiments, and then for
seven years to the first, and for seven years more to the
second, levy of the militia (Landwehr). In time of war, the
regiments of the line and the first levy of the militia
would constitute the active army in the field, while the
second levy would garrison the fortresses. In 1815 the
population was something over ten million and the number of those yearly drafted, forty thousand; the number and the strength of the regiments of the line were therefore established upon the basis of three such yearly drafts. In forty-five years, however, the population had increased to nearly eighteen million, and thus the number of those under obligation to serve had increased to sixty-five thousand, while the regiments could still, as before, only receive, train, and pass over to the militia the original forty thousand, in consequence of which twenty-five thousand young men every year escaped service entirely. Such conditions merely made mock of Prussia's allegation of universal obligation to serve. On the contrary, injustice and unfairness abounded in every quarter. As has been mentioned before, the first levy of the militia, consisting of men from twenty-five to thirty-two years of age who had already served, belonged to the active army destined for the field. In the mobilizations of 1849, 1850, and 1859, it was shown that half of these men were married and fathers of families, so that their death would ruin whole households, and yet they were exposed to the fire of the enemy while many thousands of unmarried youths were sitting quietly by their own hearths.

William decided upon a plan which would eliminate the injustices of the old system and at the same time add to the strength of the army. The yearly draft was to be increased from forty thousand to sixty-three thousand men. In order
that it might absorb these extra recruits, the standing army
was to be increased by thirty-nine infantry and ten cavalry
regiments. On the other hand, the first levy of the militia
was to be divided; the men of from twenty-five to twenty-
seven years, the majority of whom were still unmarried, were
to be added to the war-reserve of the line-regiments, while
the remaining were removed from the active forces and as-
signed with the second levy to the garrisoning of the for-
tresses. Thus the Landwehr was to be eliminated altogether
from the field army. The future field force was to consist
exclusively of regiments of the line which were filled up by
the Reserve. By eliminating the Landwehr regiments, the war
machine was to become quite homogeneous. The maximum age of
the field soldier was to be reduced from thirty-three to
twenty-eight. It was thought a younger army would not be
inclined to think politically for itself, as might the Land-
wehr, whose independence could hamper the actions of the army
in case of revolutionary trouble, as well as in an unpopular
foreign war. One part of the military reform concerned it-
self with the Landwehr officer who was far too often liberal
and in opposition to the policies of the crown and the mili-
tary bureaucracy. Under the old system, he was elected by
his fellow district officers; now he was to be elected by the
officer body of an active regiment. The officers of the Re-
serve were to be elected in the same way. Thus all officers--
professional, Reserve, and Landwehr--were to take their
model from the Junker.
William chose the occasion of the mobilization of 1859 to put the new system into effect. When the demobilization came, he kept all the divisions of the militia under arms, each being represented only by a part of its men; from these the new regiments were to be formed. All that remained to complete the innovation was the approval of the Parliament of the increase in the budget.

On the surface the army improvements were very commendatory. They placed the burden of war upon the young men, and spared men of middle age and over for the conduct of business and the care of the families of the land. The country was prosperous, and the added expense of about nine million thalers would work no hardship, and, in view of the troubled foreign situation, the added regiments would do much to help Prussia's position. In spite of all these apparent benefits, the changes evoked stubborn and unrelenting opposition in the Landtag. There was some opposition to the increased taxation, but this had the appearance of merely hiding stronger and deeper currents of contention. The liberals in the Parliament felt that there was more behind it all than mere army improvement. If Prussia was to continue her weak foreign policy, what need did she have for an increased army? If she was to take a firmer stand, what was that stand going to be? How would it affect the democratic gains in Prussia herself? Surely there was enough of the military in Prussia as it was without hastily allowing it to be increased. Would bowing to
the wish of the Regent in this instance mean that a precedent would be set that would make the Parliament a mere debating society on army matters? These were the questions that came to the minds of all lovers of democracy in the Prussian House of that day. In an attempt to block the apparently growing power of the military faction, the liberals demanded that the term of actual service in the line-regiments be reduced from three years to two. This did not mean that the Landtag wanted to undermine the spirit of the army, but rather that it wanted to make it "a Parliamentary, not a Royal Army." ¹ As Ludwig says:

The liberals rightly looked upon the Landwehr as the last stronghold of the people, the one which they had continued to occupy since the War of 1813. It was their fathers, the "people" in the literal sense of the word, who had won the War of Liberation—not the nobles, whose attitude had been undecided, and not the King, who was hostile to the people. Now it seemed that the people's army, which Scharnhorst had created in those days, was to degenerate into a King's army. Moreover, like William, the liberals wanted to strengthen the army; they wanted a united Germany, and that was why they were in favour of a two years' term of service. What they were averse to was that the influence of the nobles over the army should be increased. They objected to the proposed enlargement of the officers' corps and of the military colleges; and they did not wish to see the officers of middle-class origin transferred to the Landwehr. Everything else had slipped back into the power of the nobility, for the diplomats, the lord lieutenants, and the Landrats were all nobles. But if the army could be kept as a people's army, something would still be left of the spirit of 1848.²

¹Paul Wiegler, William the First, His Life and Times, translated and edited by Constance Vesey, p. 208.
This was definitely a challenge to the Regent and to all the professional militarists. The gauntlet had been thrown, and, when the smoke of battle lifted, there could be but one of two outcomes possible. Democracy and militarism could not both rule in the same house. One had to bow to the other.

The Regent and the military clique were not slow to accept the challenge. William absolutely refused to even consider a reduction of the period of initial service, because "it would weaken the fighting strength."\(^3\) The new regiments were formally presented with their colors, and the necessary new officers were given their commands without regard to the Parliamentary struggle. Not feeling its strength and points of opposition sufficient at that time to enter into a death struggle with the aroused and powerful military faction, the Chamber of 1860 granted the nine million thalers on a temporary basis. It was not to become permanent until the demands of the liberals were granted.

William became King in 1861. At this time both sides were mustering their forces for the coming battle. Backing the Monarch were the military clique, the nobility, and the conservatives in the Lower House who were chiefly members of the lesser nobility. Against them were the progressive members of Parliament, representatives of the middle and lower classes. As the progressives outnumbered the conservatives

\(^3\)Heinrich Friedjung, The Struggle for Supremacy in Germany, 1859-1866, p. 26.
about four to one, there was never any doubt about the position which the House would take on any phase of the conflict. The military-nobility group had, however, complete control of the executive branch of the government, for William and his Cabinet were confirmed militarists. The liberal members of the Government had all resigned when the fight was seen to be inevitable. Outstanding in the Ministry was Roon as head of the Department of War. He was a general of great ability and firm monarchial leadings. It is said of him that he was far more of a royalist than the King himself. It was Roon who said that "the crown must not be dependent upon changing majorities and partisan speeches."  

The elections of December, 1861, proved a turning point. The conservatives were reduced to an impotent body of twenty-four, and the great majority of moderate liberals were replaced by irreconcilable democrats who preferred offensive to defensive tactics. The people had plainly shown that they were behind the opposition to the military reform, and the new members of the House were not slow to overrule the compromise made by the preceding Chamber. When the Government offered its army estimates, the Lower House refused to accept them, on the ground that the classification of expenditure was too summary. It passed a resolution calling upon the Government to give full details, instead of asking the House

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4Ludwig, op. cit., p. 194.
to vote money in the dark, and also, as before, demanding the reduction of the period of service to two years. This challenge the Government interpreted as an attempt to invade one of the most important of the crown's prerogatives—its sole right to determine army administration and to direct the executive—and answered it by dissolving the Parliament. The May elections resulted in the return of a Lower House more hostile to the Government than before—a House in which, out of 352 members, there were now only twelve conservatives. The result was an immediate demand that the Government concede all points of dispute. The King and his ministers refused to surrender, and the House declared the organization proposals to be unconstitutional, and, by a vote of 273 to 62, struck out of the budget all of the funds required for the maintenance of the new regiments. An internal war had been declared—a war to the death. What had been merely a dispute was now a grave crisis. If either side yielded, it meant recognition of the permanent superiority of the other.

A great blow had been struck at the prestige of the Prussian King. In the most abrupt and insulting manner, every penny had been refused for the support of the new regiments, notwithstanding the fact that money was due for the payment of officers' salaries. The Monarch must dismiss men—men whom he himself had appointed, who wore his uniform and carried his ensigns—against his will and without pay, because of the opposition of the representatives of the people. He
had three choices: submit to the dictates of the House; abdicate; or disregard the Constitution, the Parliament, and the people, and proceed with his program without sanction. At sixty-five the King felt too old to fight his nation, so he decided to resign in favor of his son, Frederick William. At this time, however, Roon saw fit to send the following telegram to the Prussian Ambassador at Paris: "The pear is ripe." It seems that for some time Roon had been advising the King to appoint a certain Herr von Bismarck as his Chief Minister. The Minister of War was wholeheartedly opposed to giving in to the liberals and felt that Bismarck was the man to conduct the fight. Otto von Bismarck was an old-fashioned Junker, scornful of democracy and a devoted monarchist. He had represented Prussia at the Diet of the German Confederation and at St. Petersburg, and at this time was Prussian Ambassador to France. On the day that the telegram was sent, Roon had repeated his often-made recommendation to the King and had received the reply, "He will not do it; besides, he's not here—we cannot talk it over with him." The dispatch to Bismarck was the result. The Ambassador immediately rushed to Berlin and from there was summoned by the King at Babelsburg. It was a completely disheartened monarch whom Bismarck went to see, for the Queen and the Crown Prince were with the


opposition and gave William no rest. He could see no way out, and he greeted Bismarck by handing him an abdication message already drawn up and signed. "To that let it never come," urged Bismarck, and then and there he undertook the task of governing without the House, without a budget, and without the approval of the nation—promising that he would carry the army reform through to a successful conclusion. William found a strong shoulder to lean upon and a new hope. As Bismarck said, "The King's attitude before the interview was that of a beaten man; he left it with a firmer step, resolved and hopeful." 

The new Prime Minister proceeded to carry out the provisions of the army reform bill as if there were no opposition. The regiments were paid and the alterations made without any account of expenditures being given to the House. Bismarck had never been liked by the public because of his feudalistic theories, and now he was thoroughly hated. The liberals regarded the Minister's actions as tyranny in its worst form and saw in them a permanent loss of all that had been gained in 1850. This impression was heightened by a speech in which Bismarck said:

Germany has its eyes, not on Prussia's liberalism, but on her power. Bavaria, Wurttemberg, Baden, may indulge in liberalism, but no one is going to assign Prussia's role to them for that reason. Prussia

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7 Henderson, A Short History of Germany, II, 381.
8 Friedjung, op. cit., p. 27.
may mobilize and conserve her strength for the favorable moment, which more than once has passed unused. Prussia's frontiers as fixed by the Treaties of Vienna are not favorable to a healthy state life. The great questions of the day will not be decided by speeches and majority votes—-that was the great mistake of 1848 and 1849—-but through blood and iron. 9

Bismarck found himself in a very precarious position; he favored the reforms, because he saw the coming conflict with Austria for supremacy in Germany, but he could not reveal his reasons to the people of Prussia; if he did, Austria would have all the rest of Europe on her side, and the idealists in the Prussian Parliament, who foresaw a unification of Germany through reason and persuasion, would oppose the army policy all the more bitterly. The struggle finally reached the point where Bismarck went so far as to suspend the freedom of the press and to limit the right of assembly and of free speech.

At the end of March, 1863, Frederick VII of Denmark issued a patent formally annexing the province of Schleswig, while leaving to Holstein, its sister province, its old autonomy. The Prussian Government promptly invited Austria to join in a formal protest, to be followed, in the event of its failure, by armed intervention. Austria immediately accepted, not wishing to allow Prussia to in any way take the leadership of the German states. The Prussian Lower House, which had now become merely a protesting society and was not

9Raymond Sontag, Germany and England, Background of Conflict, 1848-1894, p. 76.
allowed to take action on any of the major problems of state, did not let Bismarck's proposal of intervention go unopposed. On April 17th, it declared by resolution that "the Prussian Government, owing to its isolation, was not in a position to wage war against Denmark, and were it proposed, the House would resist any such measure, since it was bound to fail." Bismarck's reply was one of defiance. "I can assure you and foreign countries," he said, "that if we (the Government) think it necessary to wage war, we shall do so with or without your consent." Here was the House attempting to spike the first move in Bismarck's carefully laid plans. The opposition of the liberals at this time was to be a black mark against them with the people when the great days of glory came. Yet the House's protest was but an expression of current public opinion. The man who could see ahead was to triumph over those who could see only the present.

Bismarck and the Prussian-Austrian armies were completely victorious, but the internal conflict was not solved; rather, it was intensified. The Government could point to the successes of the army reform to which the deputies had refused their assent; but the liberals had no difficulty in proving that the reform had scarcely begun. The fundamental problem was still who should rule—the legislature or the executive. This remained just as uncertain after the war as before.

10 Dawson, op. cit., I, 179.
11 Ibid.
The Danish War did not settle the Constitutional conflict, but it offered Bismarck his opportunity to settle with Austria the question of German supremacy. Both Prussia and Austria began to arm—Austria with a great flourish, and Prussia quietly but efficiently. The Prussian army of 1865 was not what the reforms of 1806-14 would tend to make one think it would be. The following description of the officer corps of the 1830's by Whitton in his life of Moltke might well describe that of the '60's:

Scharnhorst's reform, which had opened a military career to officers of middle class origin, had no appreciable effect. The limitation fixed on the Prussian army by Napoleon from 1808 to 1812 left practically no opening for this new blood, although the triumph of the Allies and the increase in Prussian territory did for a time completely alter this state of affairs. The old army officers were then completely snowed under by the influx of a new class, and between the two no real fusion was possible. The Junkers, haughty, and often of small means, kept themselves aloof from their bourgeois comrades, and this impoverished exclusiveness developed a type of young officer of a reserved, and indeed sometimes even of boorish manners. The school was an austere one, but it brought forth a Moltke and a Roon.\(^\text{12}\)

In the years between Waterloo and the accession of William I, the officers were selected more and more from the aristocracy. The liberal-minded soldiers of the days of Liberation little by little withdrew from posts of influence, and the army passed almost completely into the hands of men who felt that it was an instrument of the monarch and not of the nation. When Bismarck became Prime Minister and

\(^{12}\)Whitton, op. cit., p. 47.
proceeded to put into effect the reforms proposed by the King, the few commissioned bourgeois left in the service were either dismissed or relegated to the Landwehr (the new inactive Landwehr). By 1865 the Prussian officer corps was as aristocratic as that which fought at Jena.

The common soldiers of 1865 were not, however, the vagabonds, drunkards, and thieves who fought in 1806. They were young men of all classes and they served as a patriotic duty. That these were to prove themselves the most efficient troops in Europe can be attributed to two men—Roon and Moltke. From the day that Bismarck's flaunting of the House gave the go-ahead signal, Roon had been investigating and providing for every possible situation. Moltke, as Prussian Chief of Staff, had the war with Austria planned down to the smallest movements months before it was declared. The troops were provided with the latest equipment and were trained for actual warfare, instead of for the parade-ground. The army was ready for anything that Bismarck or the King might ask of it.

The situation had become critical before the year 1866 had grown very old. The House viewed the war preparations with alarm and increased their demands that the Minister give a complete accounting of his actions. The idealists who were in control feared that Prussia was becoming so militaristic that the other German states would never consent to join with her in a united Germany. They felt that only by Prussia presenting herself as the democratic antithesis of autocratic
Austria could the union be possible. Feeling, therefore, that all their dreams were being shattered by Bismarck's policies, they pressed the Constitutional conflict with renewed vigor. Of his replies to these demands for a democratic Prussia, Bismarck says: "Thereupon I strove to convince the Opposition and its speakers that they would do well for the present to allow all domestic Constitutional questions to remain in the background; that the German nation, when once united, would be in a position to settle her internal affairs as she thought best; that it was our present task to place the nation in this position." 13

In June a homogeneous field force of nine army corps, totalling 321,000 men, stood ready to fight for Prussia. Back of them were 239,000 Landwehr troops who could garrison all fortresses and if necessary provide reserves for the fighting forces. Bismarck's skillful diplomatic policy had left Austria with no foreign allies, but he was unable to prevent all of the German states from rallying to her support. Prussia, however, had an ally in Italy. Without a formal declaration of war, the Prussian troops marched into and forced the surrender of all the northern German states, then turned south into Bohemia. There, in a few short weeks, the Austrian defenses crumpled, and she and her German allies were forced to sue for peace. The reforms of William had proved themselves on the battlefield.

Democracy had lost. At that time it would not have been apparent, but the fatal blow had been struck. The Prussian people, always appreciative of military glory, now swung from intense disapproval of Bismarck, the King, and the military faction, to extravagant approval. Backed by an adoring public, Bismarck could have taken vengeance on the House which had refused to grant him any of the things which had brought about the great victory, but he was so bent upon conciliation that he took the first step in bringing it about. He had the King demand a complete indemnification from the House for all the unconstitutional acts of the late conflict. William admitted that the Government had been carrying on without a proper basis, but when the House so mistook the tone of the request as to outspokenly censor the King and demand that he promise that it should never happen again, Bismarck warned against "demanding a too specific acknowledgement of wrongdoing, and declared that his party required peace, not because it had been rendered unfit for combat, but because the great task was not yet finished, and the fatherland needed unity in word and deed."\(^{14}\) The act of indemnity was passed by 230 out of 305, and a special grant of a million and a half thalers was set aside as a donation for those who had most distinguished themselves in bringing about the great military victory. The extent of Bismarck's victory over the House began to show itself in the next election; almost all

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of his rabid opponents were replaced by moderate liberals and conservatives who were pledged to support the Government. The new Parliament became a puppet in the hands of Bismarck, and democracy had lost. Militarism had triumphed.

Democracy had lost in Prussia, but there was the rest of Germany to be considered if a German union was to be an actuality. If the other states remained true to the parliamentary system, could it continue permanently to be dead in Prussia? The answer rested with the question: who was to unite Germany? If Prussia was to be the basis of union, then the other states must conform to her autocratic system. Could Prussia unite Germany? There were the southern states and France to consider. The northern states had joined Prussia in the North German Confederation, but the southern remained hostilely outside. Only by providing a great national cause to which all would adhere could Prussia hope to bring them into a union under Prussian leadership. A "holy" war against France was the obvious answer.

For four years the Prussian government devoted itself to preparing for a conflict with France. To Bismarck fell the duty of setting the diplomatic stage. It was his duty to see that France had no allies and that all the German states joined with Prussia. Russia had been made a firm friend by timely help given in the Polish revolt of 1863; Italy was an ally of the Austrian War and remained grateful; Austria had been given easy peace terms and was in no condition and had
no inclination to join France in a war against a united Germany. Bismarck's real problem then was the southern states, Bavaria, Hanover, Hesse, Saxony, and Westphalia. Their support could be gained only if France seemed to be an imperialistic aggressor. The fact that a Napoleon ruled the French would tend to make this all the more plausible. Bismarck must, therefore, provoke the Emperor into a war in such a way that it would appear that the third Napoleon was going to follow in the footsteps of his great uncle and attempt to subjugate the Fatherland.

To Roon and Moltke fell the duty of preparing the Prussian army and the armies of its allies for the war. The members of the Northern German Confederation furnished four and a half army corps which were united with those of Prussia. In 1870 when, by treaty, the forces of southwestern Germany were placed at Prussia's disposal, she had sixteen and a half army corps in place of the nine she had in 1866. Mobilization and railway transportation was so accelerated during this period that an army corps would be ready for movement on the tenth day and could be conveyed to the frontier on a single-track line in five, and on a double-track line in three and a half, days. In 1866, it had been a great achievement to place a quarter of a million men on the Austrian frontier in five weeks. In 1870, Roon's plans called for the assembling of half a million men on the French frontier in three weeks. Moltke, as far back as 1868, had made
all his arrangements for the formation of the armies to be employed, the points to be occupied, and the routes to be taken. These instructions had been carefully studied by the several corps commanders and their staffs. Not one matter, however apparently trivial, had been neglected. So, when, on the 16th day of July, the King of Prussia gave the order for mobilization, it required only to insert the day and the hour on which each body of troops should march.

Bismarck found his *casus belli* in the question of the accession to the Spanish throne, and Napoleon was made to appear the aggressor. When the people of the small German states heard of the French boast that the Imperial troops would celebrate August 15, the birthday of Napoleon I, in Berlin, they rose as one man. For the first time in history, Bavarian, Hanoverian, Prussian, Hessian, Saxon, and Westphalian fought side by side against a common enemy. The spirit of the people of all Germany was aroused to a white heat, and every one was resolved to die rather than see the Fatherland again under the iron heel of France. A united Germany marched westward toward the Rhine.

France was crushed beneath the might of a large, efficient, thoroughly-prepared, well-officered, and patriotic army. In a few short months, William was proclaimed German Emperor at Versailles. The policy of the King, Bismarck, Roon, Moltke, and the other militarists who had defied the House had reached a triumphal conclusion. The government and
the Constitution of the new German Empire would be made by these men and not by the liberals. The superiority of military interests was to be recognized by law as well as by fact, and that superiority was now to affect all Germany and not merely Prussia. The victory of militarism was complete.
CHAPTER IV

THE PERIOD OF CONFUSION

Under the Empire, the German officer corps was all-powerful. It was independent of the civil government and responsible only to the Kaiser, whom it dominated. Only those ministries which had the approval of the military leaders had a chance of survival. In 1914 the Junker generals marched to war with the army and the nation firmly in their control; four years later that power had slipped from their nerveless hands. Their magnificent war machine was crushed and their hold over the people broken. The power which had been theirs was taken over by a saddler, a tailor, and a carpenter—Ebert, Scheidemann, and Noske. An Empire saturated with militarism became a Republic dominated by civilianism. After such a defeat and such a loss of prestige, how could the generals ever hope to regain their position and reintroduce militarism? Yet the Germany of 1932 was as militaristic as the one of 1914.

The power which had slipped from the hands of the generals was handed back to them by the bourgeois government of the Republic and by the Treaty of Versailles. The treaty placed a limit of 100,000 on the size of the army and provided for long term enlistments. This made universal conscription impossible and made a small professional army compulsory. The officers, practically all of whom had served
under the Kaiser, were thus able to cut the new Reichswehr off from the mass of more or less socialistic and democratic people in those early revolutionary days and gradually make of it an instrument independent of everything but its commanders. The Reichswehr was placed above mere political parties—the Republic being considered as simply one of the parties. The years 1918 to 1932 were a time of wholesale unemployment, and the officers had the great majority of the young men of the nation from whom to choose. As in all professional armies commanded by the feudal landed aristocracy, most of the recruits were chosen from young peasants. Social-Democrats and boys with social-democratic fathers were excluded lest they infect their comrades with socialist or pacifist or international ideas. And this at a time when the German Chancellor and many of the ministers, as well as the President of the Republic, were Socialists.

The Treaty of Versailles gave the army back to the militarists, but it remained for the Republic itself to hand back to the generals the control of the nation. Ebert, the first German President, began the shift of power when, in the early revolutionary days, he allowed himself to be persuaded to use volunteers to put down the rampant Communists.¹ If he had enrolled a purely republican guard, officered by men of democratic convictions, the Republic might have survived and history been changed; but even a revolution could not erase the

¹Edgar Mowrer, Germany Puts the Clock Back, p. 71.
saddler's conviction that military matters should be left in the hands of military men. Therefore he placed the volunteers in the hands of the most reactionary elements of the old officer corps, and the Republic had lost its chance. Hoover, in his book, *Germany Enters the Third Reich*, lays the blame on Noske and says:

Perhaps Noske, the Social Democratic Minister of Defense, followed the only possible course when he offered to be the bloodhound and with a few bursts of machine gun fire put down the Spartacist rebellion. He had, however, established a momentous precedent. He had called in the old officers to lead the troops which defended the government against the Spartacists. Noske afterwards claimed in his own defense that the soldiers had asked to be led by professional officers. In any event, the success of this method of suppressing Communist risings served quickly to reestablish the self-esteem of the old officers' corps, and to confirm the officer caste in its contempt of a party which did not trust its own ability to maintain peace and order but had to turn with pitiful wistfulness to its old masters, and to beseech them, at a price, to wield the actual instruments of state power.2

It was this same arrogant class that was allowed to organize and completely control the Reichswehr.

As if it were not enough that the Treaty of Versailles and the Republican leaders should seem to conspire to place the militarists back in the saddle, the Constitution of the new Republic did its share. This Weimar Constitution, which the generals so intensely disliked, stated that the commander-in-chief of the army was the President of the Republic. In times of crisis, the President might, subject to certain

2Calvin Hoover, *Germany Enters the Third Reich*, p. 35.
restrictions, at the request of the Chancellor set aside the Parliament and the Constitution and govern according to military law. The officers of the Reichswehr, hunting for a basis for their claimed independence of Parliament, announced that the army was responsible only to the President. The Reichswehr obeyed the President, not the Chancellor or the Parliament. It served, not the Republic, but the State, symbolized by the President.

It seems strange that the Parliament would allow the army to flaunt its claims of independence, when all that was needed to humble it was the cutting off of its funds. Perhaps the custom of bowing to the demands of the Junkers was so strongly ingrained that even a revolution could not erase it. Hoover offers the following reasons:

There is little doubt that the Social Democrats were greatly affected in their attitude toward the Reichswehr by their national patriotism. They could not bring themselves to vote against appropriations for the Reichswehr, not only because it was their weapon against Communism, but because they looked upon it as the only armed defense of Germany against the forces of hostile countries which surrounded the defeated and humbled nation. This feeling was, of course, completely illogical, for the Reichswehr was too small to be of any use for such a purpose. Nevertheless, the Social Democrats at least found an excuse for themselves in this circumstance.3

But whatever the cause, the control of the Reichstag over the Reichswehr vanished until it became a principle of government that the army and navy need not account to the Parliament for anything, not even for the way they spent their appropriations.

3Ibid., p. 37.
It became an accepted fact that a general could not be called to account by the Reichstag, and that the Reichswehr Minister must be a general and not a politician. It must not be supposed that the military men gained any of this power by force of arms; it was given to them by the Republican authorities. The Republican leaders sought to buy a loyalty they should have commanded. The officers were paid salaries out of all proportion, the living conditions of the soldiers were almost luxurious, and the military budgets, although usually extremely high for a bankrupt country, passed through the Parliament with practically none but Communist opposition.

How did the Reichswehr respond to this policy of buying their loyalty? The officers accepted the money as their rightful due and would have looked upon any attempt to curtail the appropriations as treason. Any criticism of their actions was silenced with the answer that what they might be doing, though too deep for civilian understanding, was in reality necessary to the national defense. Perhaps the outstanding result of their granted independence was the fact that they reserved the right to decide for themselves when to intervene in defense of the state. When the Communists revolted or even seemed about to revolt, the Reichswehr would immediately declare martial law in the threatened district and put down the uprising with widespread bloodshed, but when a revolution was begun or joined by any portion of the army, commanded by its Junker officers, the Reichswehr would not move. Let the
Republican "party" get out of it the best way it could. When the Kapp revolt of 1920 was joined by mutineering soldiers of General von Luettwitz, and again when a portion of the army took over Bavaria, the Commander-in-Chief of the Reichswehr said to Noske, the War Minister:

There can be no thought of setting Reichswehr to fight Reichswehr. Is it your intention, Herr Minister, to force a battle at the Brandenburg Gate between troops who a year and a half ago were fighting shoulder to shoulder against the enemy?

You see, Herr Reichspräsident, the chief aim of an army is to secure and defend our bleeding frontiers. To do this, the Reichswehr, small as it is, must be reliable and above parties. Therefore it may be used against Communists and even democratic Republicans, because none of the soldiers are democratic Republicans. But it must not be used against reactionaries, because some of the soldiers and most of the officers are reactionaries.  

What a strange speech for the commanding officer of the army of a democratic Republic to make to his President. The President, who was a democratic Republican, was told that the army might be used against his party but not against another party. That such a situation was allowed to exist makes one wonder how the Republic lived as long as it did, instead of wondering how it came to fall.

It must not be supposed that the officers of the Reichswehr were power-mad despots who would ruin the State in order to gain power. The troops and officer corps contained the most patriotic citizens of Germany. It was simply that they

4Mowrer, op. cit., p. 73.
viewed the interests of the Fatherland differently than did the leaders of the Republic. The Junkers had as an ideal a rearmed and again-powerful Reich, and everything that promoted that interest was all right, and everything that tended the other way was treason. To them, the real internal enemy was not the monarchist, the reactionary, nor the counter-revolutionist; but was rather the pacifist, the internationalist, and the nationally indifferent. Therefore it was all right for any portion of the army or any reactionaries to revolt against the Republic, for mere "party" quarrels did not interest the Reichswehr commanders. As long as the powers-that-be were nationally minded and had due regard to the position of the army, what difference did it make which party was in control? The Communists were, however, something entirely different. A successful Communist revolt would have meant the loss of the generals' newly regained position and a permanent policy of pacifism and internationalism.

The Republic was not very old before it became apparent that the man who controlled the Reichswehr ruled the nation. The early Social-Democratic Presidents did not dare oppose the Reichswehr, and when Paul von Hindenburg became President, the power of the officer corps became absolute. Hindenburg was all army; the army was his ideal, and he was its idol. When the Reichswehr and the Presidency saw eye-to-eye, they were all-powerful because of the "emergency" article in the Constitution. Under this provision the President
could declare a state of emergency and rule by decree. Against
the two, backed by the Constitution, the Reichstag was helpless.

That the Reichswehr was the perfectly-trained, obedient
machine that it was can be credited to General Hans von Seeckt.
The gaining of power by the generals would have been impossi-
ble if the Reichswehr had not been completely under their dom-
ination and so highly trained and so well equipped that its
superiority was unquestioned. In the last days of the Repub-
lic, several of the parties had almost a million men uniformed
and under arms, yet none of them dared in any way to challenge
the 100,000 men of the Reichswehr. Mowrer gives an interest-
ing account of the work of Seeckt:

Toward the end of the World War, it was becoming
increasingly apparent that for the offensive a few
highly trained men and much material did the work.
Seeckt managed to create an army which for its size,
its training, its aggressive spirit and probable ef-
ficiency was superior to any in the post-war world.
At the end of a few years he was able to point to
his hundred thousand professionals with immense pride,
for both their permanent officers and their long-time
enlisted men had been welded to a model of Prussian
precision. Ideally, they were trained to consider
themselves a prolongation of the "old victorious army"--
anything but a Republican militia. On parade their
gait remained the goose step. Their discipline was
terrific, but intelligent. As in the old Army all re-
cruits were, for instance, given an almost Jesuitical
training in self-control. To a group of them, care-
less laughing lads of eighteen, a non-commissioned in-
structor would relate a funny story or an enormity.
They must listen with immobile faces. If one laughed
he was ordered to climb upon his wardrobe and, from
this perch, without a smile, to bawl out an old hymn
"From the high Heaven descending." Another who smiled
was sent under his bed, whence he must chant another
religious ditty: "From the depth of my need I cry to
Thee." In other words, these prospective officers
were trained to carry out the (apparently) most
ridiculous, incongruous, or terrifying orders, face
the most ludicrous, provoking, or alarming situa-
tions without a trace of visible emotion. The theo-
ry was that he who controls his laughter can con-
trol his fear. But the result of such training was
to widen the gulf between the stony-faced soldier
and the world of free, human spontaneity around him.
This was what General von Seeckt wanted. A conscripted
army drawn from the whole people reflects not only
the popular qualities but the popular defects. There-
fore, especially, it will be lacking in "martial
spirit" and esprit de corps. It will not be so "re-
liable" in the hands of its leaders.\(^5\)

It was, however, under General Kurt von Schleicher that
the power of the Reichswehr reached its zenith. Schleicher
had ousted Seeckt and was exercising a veto power over the
government some time before Hindenburg became President, but
afterwards the exercise of this power was done openly. Hin-
denburg was too old to grasp firmly the reins of government,
and he was too feudal-minded to allow the Social Democratic
Reichstag to exercise the power that rightfully belonged to
it. Schleicher was a man of the same stamp as Hindenburg and
received his full confidence. Thus one man controlled the
President and the most powerful force in Germany, the Reichs-
wehr. For several years he ruled through Chancellors who
knew that his displeasure meant their fall—Bruning and Von
Papen. The Reichstag was called very rarely and then usu-
ally immediately dissolved. The Chancellors ruled with the
decree power of the President, and Schleicher ruled through
the President. Finally, in the last days of the Republic,

\(^5\)Ibid., pp. 30-82.
Schleicher, after causing the dismissal of both Bruning and Von Papen, formed a cabinet and made himself Chancellor.

The Republic of 1918 was hampered from the beginning by having to shoulder the blame of Versailles, but if its leaders had shown the firmness and strength of a Clemenceau or a Lloyd George, it would have had a chance to survive. It had a perfect chance to root out the last dregs of the militarism which had ruled Germany since 1870, but it chose to place it back in power. In allowing the Reichswehr to refuse successfully to submit to the civil authorities, the Social Democrats killed the Republic which had offered democracy—if nothing else. The rule of the militarists might have lasted until the present day if two factors had not interfered—the terrible economic conditions and the rising power of Nazism. Something had to be done, and the generals turned to the leader of the Nazis. They bargained with him for three reasons: (1) he was a man of the people and could sway the masses; (2) he was a confirmed militarist who promised to rearm Germany; (3) they thought they could control him. That Hitler surprised the generals and took the reins in his own hands did not in any way lessen the fact that Germany was now definitely in the hands of militarism.

The story of the rise of the Nazi and the other militant parties throws an interesting side light upon the conditions under the Republic. There are many enticing questions which one might ask: Why did the Reichswehr allow hundreds
of thousands of men to organize and arm themselves under party banners? Why did not these thousands take over the government by force? Who paid for these troops? Why did German young men join them? Why were they organized? The story perhaps begins back in the early days of the revolution, when the anti-revolutionary Volunteer Corps was formed. These troops, armed and led by former officers, were permitted by the Reichswehr because they did a job which the Reichswehr wanted to do but because of its official position was unable to do—suppress the Communists and fight the Poles. Since these organizations were illegal, their existence had to be kept secret, and the army could not exercise official control over them. Other independent corps, like the Ehrbard Brigade, the Rossbach Organization, the Consul Organization, and the Black Reichswehr were to spring up later. Some of the groups attempted revolutions, but none were successful. The action taken by the Reichswehr in each instance depended upon the relationship of the rebels to its own officer corps. Sometimes the army refused to move to protect the Republic, but more often the rebels were disarmed and arrested. In 1923, in army-controlled Bavaria (a branch of the Reichswehr had marched in to put down a Red revolt and had taken the government into its own hands), General Erick Ludendoroff, the second soldier of the Fatherland, led a determined uprising. It was the General’s intention to take over Bavaria and then the rest of Germany and completely overthrow the Republic. He was backed by the party of an
obscure agitator named Adolf Hitler. The rebels were confident of success, for the officers of the Bavarian Reichswehr had agreed to leave them alone. At the last moment, however, the army changed its mind and turned its machine guns on the General and his friend Hitler. The revolution was over before it was really begun. Ludendorff was acquitted (a general was not placed in prison in Reichswehr-controlled Germany), but Hitler was condemned to a few years' imprisonment. The militarists must have decided, however, that the Nazi chieftain was too valuable an anti-revolutionary rabble-rouser to remain long in prison, for he was released after a few months.

The failure of the Ludendorff-Hitler uprising seems to have convinced the armed "patriotic societies" that open rebellion against the Republic was useless. From 1923 on these private armies confined their efforts to building up their financial, popular, and political strength. The most respectable and most powerful of these independent armies was the Steel Helmet, or Confederation of Frontline Soldiers. By the year 1931 the Steel Helmet claimed half a million armed men who had sworn to "end the swinishness of the revolution," and to rearm Germany. It was made up of former officers and prosperous business men, all of whom were supposed to have served in the frontlines during the World War. They had no demagogues to appeal to the average disappointed hungry German, but rather pinned their faith for a free Germany on the

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6Ibid., p. 94.
"spirit of the old Army," which was the deity they worshipped. President Hindenburg was for years their Honorary President, and two Reichswehr chiefs, Generals von Seeckt and Heye, entered the organization as soon as they retired from active service.

Next in numbers came the National Socialist organizations, the S. A. and the S. S. These had enrolled over 400,000 young fanatics. They hated or were taught to hate the Republic, foreigners, Jews, and everything that went to make up the "system" which was oppressing Germany. They were organized, uniformed, and armed by Hitler to gain control of the streets. Since the failure of his revolt in Bavaria, Hitler had given up the idea of overthrowing the Republic by force, and concentrated upon increasing the political power of his party. His Storm Troopers and the Communists battled with sticks, stones, and pistols in almost every street in Germany, for he intended to rise to power by offering himself to the people as their protector from Communism and as their hope for a new, stronger Germany.

It is easily understandable why the Reichswehr would allow a peaceful, conservative organization like the Steel Helmet to arm itself, but why did they allow the starved, bitter hordes of Hitler to carry on miniature warfare throughout the Fatherland? Mowrer gives the following explanation:

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7Ibid., p. 95.
Yet critical as the regular army leaders have been of an organization like Hitler's, primarily organized for second-degree civil war, their soldiers' hearts could but thrill with pride at the sight of so much aggressive patriotism, so much "joy in militarism," and therefore extended to them that benevolent protection without which the private armies would never have been permitted to exist. The outspoken Republican organizations did not enjoy this protection, to say nothing of the Communists!—they were not popular with the Army. For what could officers do with recruits who had come under the influence of that demoralizing phrase, heard so frequently among German Democrats: "No more war!"

Not only as a source of trained reserves were the patriotic societies the natural allies of the Reichswehr. They were even more important as an "educational influence," since, without them, the German people would not so quickly have recovered that sense for its intolerable position, and that interest in soldiering which all generals consider the highest conceivable qualities. For the patriotic societies did more than anything else in bringing the masses to realize the nation's "shame" and to understand that the way to erase it was to show willingness to fight somebody, if necessary.8

As internal economic and political conditions grew worse and worse, the extremist parties began to grow by leaps and bounds. The middle parties and the peaceful conservative parties began to drop behind, while the Communists, on the extreme left, and the Nazis, on the extreme right, added millions to their party rolls. As the result of the growing power of these two groups, a strange situation arose in the Reichstag. Together they formed over a majority of the members of that body, and both had the policy of voting "no" on every question before the House. Thus every bill that went before the Reichstag was assured of defeat. The government

8Ibid., p. 96.
was at this time being run completely by the Schleicher clique through the decree power of President von Hindenburg, and the Reichstag was not allowed to stay in session long enough to affect the conduct of government, so its deadlocked condition did nothing but give the militarists an excuse to dissolve it.

Schleicher had not been Chancellor very long before the internal situation became so critical that extreme steps had to be taken. The unrest of the people and the increasing growth of Communists and Nazis had reached the danger point, and, worst of all, the militarists were fighting among themselves. There was no question of a successful revolt against the Reichswehr, but there was the danger of internal collapse. "Big Business" was on the war-path because of the Government's increasing inability to stop internal disorder. Then the final blow fell upon Schleicher—he lost the confidence of President Hindenburg. There seems to be no doubt that, backed by Hindenburg and the Reichswehr, Schleicher could have maintained a successful military dictatorship indefinitely, but when he lost the President, he lost the Reichswehr, for the army belonged to Hindenburg body and soul.

Hindenburg then called upon Hitler to form a cabinet. Why was the Nazi leader made Chancellor? The answer too often given is that he had become so powerful that the militarists had to submit. This is not entirely true. So long as the Reichswehr existed, there was no power in Germany strong enough to force the President to do anything. The
reason, as previously stated, was that the "Old Man" was too senile to take strong action himself, and he was convinced by Von Papen that he (Von Papen), as Vice-Chancellor, could control Hitler. After all, Hitler was as strong a militarist as any of the generals. The future "Fuehrer" was given the Chancellorship—he did not force the President to do anything.

Hitler fooled Von Papen and took dictatorial powers, but what did he do with the generals? He gave them a mighty army to train and command. He created a state in which militarism played as great, or even greater, part than it did under the Empire. He broke his Brown Shirts and killed its leader, Roehm, on June 30, 1934, in favor of the Reichswehr. The Brown Shirt legions had dared to rouse the anger of the generals by demanding that they (the Brown Shirts) be made the nucleus of the new German army. The generals wanted the 100,000 men of the Reichswehr, with its Junker officers, to be that nucleus. Hitler backed the regular army and settled the dispute with the blood of the Brown Shirt leaders.

The rearming of Germany began in 1918. War materials of all kinds were secretly bought and stored for the future. The Reichswehr was trained along lines calculated to furnish 100,000 experts who would be the officers and non-commissioned officers of the future army. Rearmament was hampered by the necessity for camouflage until 1932, but when the Geneva disarmament conference, in that year, acknowledged Germany's right to armament equality, the camouflage could be dropped.
When Hitler came into power the next year, the entire resources of the nation were directed toward rearmament. As Tolischus in his book, They Wanted War tells the story:

On the very day of his appointment rearmament began on a vast scale under conditions assuming more and more the form of martial law. Hermann Goering was appointed Air Commissar and Lufthansa planes grew in number by leaps and bounds, although the expanding corps of pilots continued to train in mufti. By April, 1933, the army also was ready for expansion; its ranks were being filled up with volunteers and battalions grew to regimental size. Compulsory labor service was introduced, and numerous special "police units" were formed which later were incorporated into the army. When the alarmed Marshal Pilsudski of Poland tried to intervene as early as March, 1933, he was frowned down by France and Britain.

By 1934 Germany was feverish with rearmament activity. New barracks, new flying fields, new fortifications, new war schools, new military roads began to take shape. German industry, working on the principle of standardization and mass production even at the expense of quality, boomed with the manufacture of war materials—and unemployment began to disappear.

The final step came on March 16, 1935. After seventeen years, Germany went back to national conscription. Once more every German youth could expect to spend a good part of his lifetime in the uniform of the Fatherland. Germany was once again to be a nation in arms.

For a present-day student to say just to what extent Hitler is controlled or influenced in his army affairs by the Junker officers would be merely guesswork. It is known that for some time after the Nazi leader's coming to power he dared not interfere with the Reichswehr, but since that

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9 Otto Tolischus, They Wanted War, p. 72.
time universal conscription has poured new blood into the ranks—Nazi blood. Hitler is the God of the new army, and many of the officers are Nazis. On February 4, 1938, Hitler ousted the most formidable opponents of the Nazification of the army and assumed personal command of all of the armed forces of the Third Reich. To what extent this meant the loss of control by the Junkers can only be guessed at by the student.

Regardless, however, of who controls the military policy of the Third Reich, the fact that Germany has returned to militarism is indisputable. Military interests come first today as they did under the Kaiser.
CHAPTER V

THE EFFECT OF PERMANENT UNIVERSAL CONSCRIPTION ON THE GERMAN PEOPLE

That a country has permanent universal conscription does not necessarily mean that it has militarism, but when a nation trains its entire youth to be soldiers, there is the tendency to carry military rankings into civil life. Some of the outstanding examples of pure militarism have been found in states employing small professional forces, but the conscript army tends to invade the social, economic, and political life of a nation to a much greater extent.

Germany has lived under a system of universal conscription for many years—Prussia for over a century and the rest of Germany for over fifty years. In the last two decades, so many things have happened to the Reich that an analysis of their effect upon the people must wait for a later time, but even the loss of the World War, the terrible times of the Republic, and Nazism can not have completely erased from the German character those outstanding features of the First Reich which were so clearly the results of universal conscription.

The effects of universal conscription upon Germany can be divided into three major divisions: social, economic, and political. It is on the social side of life that the outstanding results can be seen. Germany is a nation of castes.
At the very top, under the Empire second only to the Royal Family, and now second only to the Nazi hierarchy, is the officer corps. Poulteny Bigelow gives an interesting account of the social position of the German officers under the Kaiser:

The social position of the German officers is the most coveted in Germany. This is not merely because as a rule German officers spring from ancient or noble families, or that their regimental messes are very paternally managed, so as to exclude undesirable elements. He is recognized, over and above that, as of a superior training intellectually, as a hard worker, and one to whom the nation looks for defence in case of war. A foreign invasion is at all times so present to the mind of the German that the army never for a moment loses its great significance to the people. With us, our soldiers are so far away on the outskirts of civilization that we scarcely hear of them, and many an American has grown to manhood without being able to describe the uniform of the American army. The German officer always wears his uniform, and wherever he moves represents the majesty of the law as well as the national power. If a landlord wishes to recommend his beer-room to you, he can say nothing higher than that it is frequented by officers. A theatre in which officers do not appear is considered to have sunk below the level of good society. Officers at German dinners and balls are much coveted, for the officer is assumed to have good breeding, and to be in all respects a cultivated man. During the great military operations in the autumn, officers are quartered upon the proprietors of the neighborhood, and far from this being regarded as a nuisance, those who have officers billeted upon them consider the circumstances rather agreeable than otherwise. When parades and reviews are the order of the day, when traffic is blocked upon the streets, the friendship of an officer is more than a sentimental pleasure, for he can take you through all the lines which the police hold against the great army of citizens. An officer can go anywhere in uniform and enjoys social advantages from the very moment of putting on his shoulder straps which men in other walks of life do not attain until they have distinguished themselves very much indeed. It is in Germany a great thing to go to court, and very few ever succeed in entering that charmed circle excepting the army. An
officer goes to court as a matter of course, although if his wife is not of a certain rank, she may be excluded.\textsuperscript{1}

An interesting example of the respect and reverence that is accorded German officers is found in the statement which William I made to Bismarck. The Chancellor had received the highest earthly honors as the creator of the Empire, and yet the Emperor said to him, "You have yet to be adequately rewarded for the great things you have done; you are about to receive the crown to your honors--you shall become a Prussian general."\textsuperscript{2} It was not an empty honor which the Emperor gave Bismarck, for without it the Chancellor would have had to appear on formal occasions in the diplomatic uniform and consequently accept a secondary ranking. So important was the precedence given to the military uniform, when any of Bismarck's successors in the Chancellorship happened to be chosen from among the civilians, he was at once given a rank in the army. This was done in the case of Caprivi, Bulow, and Bethmann-Hollweg. All of these when they performed their military service did so as one-year volunteers. It must give foreign visitors to Germany a shock to see a young lieutenant, with more pretensions than education and brains, take precedence in almost all things over a famous professor who has performed everlasting services to mankind.

\textsuperscript{1} Poultney Bigelow, \textit{The Borderland of Czar and Kaiser}, p. 155.

\textsuperscript{2} Bigelow, \textit{The History of the German Struggle for Liberty}, III, 141.
This social superiority of the officers probably results from the fact that the great majority of them are of noble blood. From the days of the first Prussian King, the nobility has regarded the higher positions in the army as its own prerogative, and the government and the people have accepted that view. The chances of an officer, not of noble blood, ever gaining higher rank are very slight. With the aristocracy carrying its social superiority into the officer corps and with the open preference which this corps has received from the rulers (Hohenzollern or Nazi), it is not surprising that the officers make up the highest caste.

The social distinctions produced by universal conscription do not stop with the officer corps. The man who, having sufficient wealth, enrolls as a one-year volunteer is socially superior to an ordinary conscript. These volunteers have to pay for their equipment, food, and lodging, but in return are placed in special regiments where they will not have to mingle with ordinary soldiers. They have the chance to become reserve officers if they wish. Sons of successful business men, professional men, and members of the lower nobility make up the great majority of these privileged soldiers. Thus a second caste is formed.

The third caste produced by universal conscription is the non-commissioned group. In order to become a non-commissioned officer a man must enlist for twelve years (under the Third Reich this rule has been loosened and an ordinary
draftee may aspire to a corporalcy or even the position of sergeant), but when he has served his term, he has a prior right to such civil service jobs as postman, policeman, fireman, and town clerk.

The economic effects of the system result mainly, of course, from the fact that every German youth must spend two or three years of his life away from all productive occupations. This tends to make more jobs for the older men and results in the young men getting a late start in the business or professional world. Thus very few German men are married before they are twenty-four or twenty-five. As a most accurate record is kept of every individual, the value and importance of having been a good, obedient, faithful soldier is experienced a few years later, when the young man may perhaps desire to receive an appointment under the government. Then the authorities declare that if a man is not faithful in preparing to become a national defender, the Fatherland has no use for him in any civil appointment. This applies to all positions, and is under certain circumstances taken into account when filling even the position of janitor or street cleaner. No man with a poor military record can ever expect to get a situation in any capacity whatsoever on the state railroads or in the post office or as a policeman or in any of the professions. As long as he lives that bad military record will be an ever-present, haunting ghost, or sword of Damocles, hanging over him. When a nation must
provide arms and equipment for millions of soldiers, it nat-
urally affects the production schedule of its manufacturing
establishments. The taxes necessary to provide for an en-
tire nation in arms are high, and they mean that many Germans
must do without many of the luxuries of life. Under the
Third Reich, these sacrifices for national defense have
reached such an extent that they involve necessities of life,
as well as luxuries. In order that the government may im-
port sufficient materials for its war machine, the people
must accept substitutes for cloth, certain foods, and gaso-
line. In order that the army may ride, the people must walk.

On the German political front, the army has held a pe-
culiar position during the three Reichs. Under the Empire
it was supposed to be entirely free from politics, and its
advice on all things pertaining in any way to national de-
fense was accepted as gospel. The only trouble was that for-
eign affairs, finances (both taxes and expenditures), polit-
ical representation, and social welfare were considered as
related to national defense. As Ransom says:

In a country like Germany, where the advice of
the expert is valued highly in all departments, the
advice of the military expert is of great weight,
not only on technical questions, but on political
questions too. No sane foreign policy is possible
without due regard to the military means available
for its enforcement.

And no policy of preparedness can be conceived
which is not affected by possible and probable po-
litical contingencies. The advice of experts on
such questions must be listened to respectfully in
a country like Germany, whose historical position
and whose geographical conditions force her to
provide for certain issues. The influence of the military expert in Germany in that respect has been about as great as the influence of the admiralty expert in England. Both groups were entrusted with technical provision for the nation's safety.3

The army could meddle with legislation, but the Reichstag was not allowed to concern itself with military affairs. The parliamentarians of the First Reich accepted this view, and Von Bulow was able to say, "As far as man can tell, every necessary and justifiable Army and Navy bill will always be able to count on a safe parliamentary majority."4 The catch was, of course, that the Reichstag always accepted the military leaders' views of what was necessary and justifiable.

It is not only in national politics that the power of the military is felt. It receives awe, respect, and fear from all classes. For instance, in the last years of the nineteenth century, a false captain succeeded in a great bluff game of imposing on soldiers, on policemen and on the civil authorities of the small town of Copennick, all of whom respected his every order. He was thus enabled to seize certain funds, and the whole world laughed at the "simple-mindedness" of the mayor. And yet the poor mayor could not have done differently; he would not have dared to disobey the orders of an officer.


4Bernhard von Bulow, Imperial Germany, translated by Marie A. Lewenz, p. 201.
The position of the Reichswehr under the Second Reich has been outlined in a preceding chapter and was shown to be very much the same as under the Empire. The officer corps had its finger in everything and answered all criticisms by saying that what it did was necessary for national defense. The political power which this corps exercises under the Third Reich has not been clearly enough defined by history as yet to reach any definite conclusions. Hitler has created a state in which his word is law, and the only power that anyone can have is through their influence over the Fuehrer—possibly by showing him that they are so much more informed in a certain field than he that to disregard their advice might bring disaster. If the old officer corps has retained any power, it is undoubtedly due to Hitler's lack of military knowledge.

Social, economic, and political effects of universal conscription are rather concrete and can be pointed out, but even more important are certain general effects. The fact that every German has been a soldier and tends to bring much of his military training back with him to civilian life makes Germany take on the appearance and atmosphere of an army camp. The exactness and order, the minuteness of regulation, and the infinite detail of military life pervade the entire social fabric of the Fatherland. Everything, "from beer-drinking up, goes by rule, and most of these rules have been set forth in books or pamphlets with the characteristic
thoroughness of the Teuton."\(^5\) This army camp atmosphere is enhanced by the fact that most German officials, especially those of the lower grades--such as firemen, policemen, and so on--are old soldiers who have won their places in civil life by years of faithful service as non-commissioned officers in the army. They have all the methodical habits of the barracks, and very naturally "they look upon the public as a great awkward squad to be cajoled into subjection and proper discipline."\(^6\) The "awkward squad" submits the more easily because every man in Germany has served his time in the army and knows how to put up with the exactions of non-commissioned martinets. The military atmosphere of Germany is very well expressed by Baker:

Three words, the facets of the same idea, will express the national atmosphere of Germany: order, system, discipline. From the moment one sets foot on the soil of the Fatherland, particularly if he enters by the way of the French border, he feels this atmosphere. It radiates from the soldierly railroad guard who stands sharply at "attention" at the crossing as the train rushes by; he feels it in the forests all planted properly in rows, and in the neatly kept railroad grounds and right of way; he feels it in the policeman who demands his address, his nationality, his business, and how long he is going to stay so that he may be properly tagged and pigeon-holed; and, above all, he feels it in the endless system--and it is nothing short of a system--of military and civil uniforms, which help to relieve him of the responsibility of being a judge of character, for almost every other German wears his character on his back.\(^7\)

\(^5\) Ray S. Baker, _Seen in Germany_, p. 15.

\(^6\) Ibid.

\(^7\) Ibid., p. 61.
Americans have always regarded the German military system as the millstone about the neck of the initiative, self-reliance, and intellectual freedom of the German people. The Americans ask how can blind obedience to orders and unnecessarily strict discipline which tends to carry itself over into civilian life be anything but harmful. The following quotation gives the German refutation to this assertion:

Americans are very fond of praising German efficiency. In doing so they compare it to the clockwork of some dead piece of machinery. They loudly proclaim that the spirit of the pioneer which made America cannot exist side by side with it. They are quite right in pointing out that the spirit of the western pioneer does not flourish in Germany; it did flourish in the olden days when German colonists settled in the Slavic East under circumstances not unlike those which accomplished the opening of the West. There is no room today for the pioneer spirit in the crowded lands of Central Europe. To breed it would be to breed people fit for emigration only. But the spirit of the West is not the only form of resourcefulness and initiative. To build up big modern industries in a crowded land, to push commerce into foreign countries ruled by foreign governments, are tasks which demand a large share of initiative, when it has to be done against the competition of old established rivals. It is not denied that the Germans have done this. It is openly acknowledged that German push and German adaptability are responsible for it. Where did they come from if military discipline deprived the Germans of the capacity for individual action? Where does that intellectual acerbity "come from which no doubt makes German life much" less pleasant than the life of competing nations? And how can it be accounted for that the German socialistic party, many members of which have been in the army, has been the pioneer all over the work, in radically constructive socialism? It has truly been said that it owes part of its discipline to the military training of its members. That training did not stifle their intellectual activity. It did not prevent them from reasoning and acting in a very individualistic way.

Discipline does teach people the capacity for co-ordination; it does not deprive them of the gift
for individual action provided they ever possessed it. And modern military training no longer tries to stifle individual effort for the sake of standardized action. Modern warfare depends on the combined action of masses composed of highly trained individuals, many of whom must be capable of individual initiative whenever there is an opportunity for such. If discipline alone was decisive, an uneducated mob of men would have the greatest chance of victory. For they can be most easily organized in a machine-like way. The armies employing the greatest percentage of African savages would be the best fitted for victory. Such assumptions are purely fanciful. The objects of modern organization must be achieved by the combination of standardization and individualization. The nation which produces the greatest number of individuals and can teach them the element of well-thought-out co-ordinations will be victorious on the battlefield as well as in the markets of the world. The present war has shown that the German people possess this gift to a considerable degree. It is not the outcome of their military system only; it is the result of their national genius, of their history, of their civil and military training. Their system is adapted to their qualities and to their wants. It is good for them and for them only; if it were blindly imitated by other nations, it might produce very different results.  

It must not be thought that this system of strict discipline in civil as well as military life is distasteful to the German youth. The German loves hard discipline and precise commands; he always works best when he is treated in military fashion. He likes the system in which blind duty has acquired so much prestige that it supplies him with a definite moral code. He looks to the army to provide him with mental poise and community spirit. He is only too willing to bow down before the principle of unity and order, because he

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associates it with his duty to the Fatherland. He feels that he is doing his patriotic duty only if he obeys without question his superiors. Von Bulow says, "The German, of whatever stock he be, has always accomplished his greatest works under strong, steady, and firm guidance, and has seldom done well without such guidance, or in opposition to the Government and rulers." He is not only willing to obey—he is proud to do it.

As for the period of actual service in the army, the German youth considers it a natural duty and as necessary and proper as taxes. He thinks it unworthy of any nation that its men should need to have attractions offered them in order to induce them to take their proper share in the defense of their country. Indeed, the average German youth looks upon his period of service not only as a duty, but as a pleasant duty. If, for some physical reason, he should be rejected, he feels that it is his loss and that he has not quite proved his manliness.

An interesting direct effect of universal conscription is found in the upright figures and the firm gait of men of all grades of German society. One would have to look for a long time to see a sloucher on a German street. For three years of his life, every youth is given every possible attention, exercise, and advice that will build his physique. The result is a healthful citizenry. It is said by a German

9Von Bulow, op. cit., p. 201.
doctor that in this way more men have been added to the German nation than have been killed in battle since the army existed, because, if they had not come under the influence of this body-building training, they would have died sooner than they now do. A notable consequence of the general liability for service is that even the men who have not been called on to join the ranks, owing to weakness of physique or some slight deformity, bear themselves upright, trying to emulate their brothers who have been trained. Cleanliness and tidiness of dress are almost universal in Germany because of habits formed while in service.

To summarize the effects of universal training on Germany: it has carried army class distinctions into civil life; it has meant the loss of many of the small luxuries of life due to high taxes and loss of time to young men getting started in business; it has meant an increase in the power of the military leaders until their political superiority is unquestioned; and it has given Germany the atmosphere of a great army camp.
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