

joined the alliance with an army of seven hundred thousand men—the greatest yet put in the field.

I think, too, that this powerful reinforcement of the army will have a quieting effect on our own people, and will in some measure relieve the nervousness of our exchanges, of our press, and of our public opinion. I hope they all will be comforted if they make it clear to themselves that after this reinforcement and from the moment of the signature and publication of the bill the soldiers are there! But arms are necessary, and we must provide better ones if we wish to have an army of triarians—of the best manhood that we have among our people; of fathers of family over thirty years old! And we must give them the best arms that can be had! We must not send them into battle with what we have not thought good enough for our young troops of the line. But our steadfast men, our fathers of family, our Samsons, such as we remember seeing hold the bridge at Versailles, must have the best arms on their shoulders, and the best clothing to protect them against the weather which can be had from anywhere. We must not be niggardly in this. And I hope it will reassure our countrymen if they think now it will be the case—as I do not believe—that we are likely to be attacked on both sides at once. There is a possibility of it, for, as I have explained to you in the history of the Forty Years' War, all manner of coalitions may occur. But if it should occur we could hold the defensive on our borders with a million good soldiers. At the same time, we could hold in reserve a half million or more, almost a million, indeed; and send them forward as they were needed. Some one has said to me: "The only result of that will be that the others will increase their forces also." But they cannot.

They have long ago reached the maximum. We lowered it in 1867 because we thought that, having the North-German confederation, we could make ourselves easier and exempt men over thirty-two. In consequence our neighbors have adopted a longer term of service—many of them a twenty year term. They have a maximum as high as ours, but they cannot touch us in quality. Courage is equal in all civilized nations. The Russians or the French acquit themselves as bravely as the Germans. But our people, our seven hundred thousand men, are veterans trained in service, tried soldiers who have not yet forgotten their training. And no people in the world can touch us in this, that we have the material for officers and under-officers to command this army. That is what they cannot imitate. The whole tendency of popular education leads to that in Germany as it does in no other country. The measure of education necessary to fit an officer or under-officer to meet the demands which the soldier makes on him, exists with us to a much greater extent than with any other people. We have more material for officers and under-officers than any other country, and we have a corps of officers that no other country can approach. In this and in the excellence of our corps of under-officers, who are really the pupils of our officers' corps, lies our superiority. The course of education which fits an officer to meet the strong demands made on his position for self-denial, for the duty of comradeship, and for fulfilling the extraordinarily difficult social duties whose fulfilment is made necessary among us by the comradeship which, thank God! exists in the highest degree among officers and men without the least detriment to discipline—they cannot imitate us in that—that relationship between officers and men which, with a few unfortunate

exceptions, exists in the German army. But the exceptions confirm the rule, and so we can say that no German officer leaves his soldiers under fire, but brings them out even at the risk of his own life; while, on the other hand, no German soldier, as we know by experience, forsakes his officer.

If other armies intend to supply with officers and sub-officers as many troops as we intend to have at once, then they must educate the officers, for no untaught fool is fit to command a company, and much less is he fit to fulfil the difficult duties which an officer owes to his men, if he is to keep their love and respect. The measure of education which is demanded for that, and the qualities which, among us especially, are expressed in comradeship and sympathy by the officer—that no rule and no regulation in the world can impress on the officers of other countries. In *that* we are superior to all, and in that they cannot imitate us! On that point I have no fear.

But there is still another advantage to be derived from the adoption of this bill: The very strength for which we strive shows our peaceful disposition. That sounds paradoxical, but still it is true.

No man would attack us when we have such a powerful war-machine as we wish to make the German army. If I were to come before you to-day and say to you—supposing me to be convinced that the conditions are different from what they are—if I were to say to you: “We are strongly threatened by France and Russia; it is evident that we will be attacked; my conviction as a diplomat, considering the military necessities of the case, is that it is expedient for us to take the defensive by striking the first blow, as we are now in a position to do; an aggres-

sive war is to our advantage, and I beg the Reichstag for a milliard or half a milliard to begin it at once against both our neighbors”—indeed, gentlemen, I do not know that you would have sufficient confidence in me to consent! I hope you would not.

But if you were to do it, it would not satisfy me. If we, in Germany, should wish to wage war with the full exertion of our national strength, it must be a war with which all who engage in it, all who offer themselves as sacrifices in it—in short, the whole nation takes part as one man; it must be a people's war; it must be a war carried on with the enthusiasm of 1870, when we were ruthlessly attacked. I well remember the ear-splitting, joyful shouts at the Cologne railway station; it was the same from Berlin to Cologne; and it was the same here in Berlin. The waves of public feeling in favor of war swept us into it whether we wished or not. It must always be so if the power of a people such as ours is to be exerted to the full. It will be very difficult, however, to make it clear to the provinces and states of the confederation and to their peoples that war is now unavoidably necessary. They would ask: “Are you sure of that? Who knows?” In short, when we came to actual hostilities, the weight of such imponderable considerations would be much heavier against us than the material opposition we would meet from our enemies. “Holy Russia” would be irritated; France would bristle with bayonets as far as the Pyrenees. It would be the same everywhere. A war which was not decreed by the popular will could be carried on if once the constituted authorities had finally decided on it as a necessity; it would be carried on vigorously, and perhaps successfully, after the first fire and the sight of blood. But it would not be a finish fight in

its spirit with such fire and *élan* behind it as we would have in a war in which we were attacked. Then all Germany from Memel to Lake Constance would flame out like a powder mine; the country would bristle with arms, and no enemy would be rash enough to join issues with the *furor Teutonicus* (Berserker madness) thus roused by attack.

We must not lose sight of such considerations, even if we are now superior to our future opponents, as many military critics besides our own consider us to be. All our own critics are convinced of our superiority. Naturally every soldier believes it. He would come very near to being a failure as a soldier if he did not wish for war and feel full assurance of victory. If our rivals sometimes suspect that it is fear of the result which makes us peaceful, they are grievously in error. We believe as thoroughly in the certainty of our victory in a righteous cause as any lieutenant in a foreign garrison can believe in his third glass of champagne—and perhaps we have more ground for our assurance! It is not fear which makes us peaceable, but the consciousness of our strength—the consciousness that if we were attacked at the most unfavorable time, we are strong enough for defence and for keeping in view the possibility of leaving it to the providence of God to remove in the meantime the necessity for war.

I am never for an offensive war, and if war can come only through our initiative, it will not begin. Fire must be kindled by some one before it can burn, and we will not kindle it. Neither the consciousness of our strength, as I have just represented it, nor the trust in our alliances will prevent us from continuing with our accustomed zeal our accustomed efforts to keep the peace. We will not allow ourselves to be led by bad temper; we will not yield

to prejudice. It is undoubtedly true that the threats, the insults, the provocations which have been directed against us, have aroused great and natural animosities on our side. And it is hard to rouse such feelings in the Germans, for they are less sensitive to the dislike of others toward them than any other nation. We are taking pains, however, to soften these animosities, and in the future as in the past we will strive to keep the peace with our neighbors—especially with Russia. When I say “especially with Russia,” I mean that France offers us no security for the success of our efforts, though I will not say that it does not help. We will never seek occasion to quarrel. We will never attack France. In the many small occasions for trouble which the disposition of our neighbors to spy and to bribe has given us, we have made pleasant and amicable settlements. I would hold it grossly criminal to allow such trifles either to occasion a great national war or to make it probable. There are occasions when it is true that the “more reasonable gives way.” I name Russia especially, and I have the same confidence in the result I had a year ago when my expression gave this “Liberal” paper here occasion for black type. But I have it without running after—or, as a German paper expressed it, “grovelling before Russia.” That time has gone by. We no longer sue for favor, either in France or in Russia. The Russian press and Russian public opinion have shown the door to an old, powerful, and attached friend as we were. We will not force ourselves upon them. We have sought to regain the old confidential relationship, but we will run after no one. But that does not prevent us from observing—it rather spurs us on to observe with redoubled care—the treaty rights of Russia. Among these treaty rights are some which are not con-

ceded by all our friends: I mean the rights which at the Berlin Congress Russia won in the matter of Bulgaria. . . .

In consequence of the resolution of the Congress, Russia, up to 1885, chose as prince a near relative of the Czar, concerning whom no one asserted or could assert that he was anything else than a Russian dependant. It appointed the minister of war and a greater part of the officials. In short, it governed Bulgaria. There is no possible doubt of it. The Bulgarians, or a part of them, or their prince—I do not know which—were not satisfied. There was a *coup d'état*, and there has been a defection from Russia. This has created a situation which we have no call to change by force of arms—though its existence does not change theoretically the rights which Russia gained from the conference. But if Russia should seek to establish its rights forcibly I do not know what difficulties might arise, and it does not concern us to know. We will not support forcible measures and will not advise them. I do not believe there is any disposition toward them. I am sure no such inclination exists. But if through diplomatic means, through the intervention of the Sultan as the suzerain of Bulgaria, Russia seeks its rights, then I assume that it is the province of loyal German statesmanship to give an unmistakable support to the provisions of the Berlin Treaty, and to stand by the interpretation which without exception we gave it—an interpretation on which the voice of the Bulgarians cannot make me err. Bulgaria, the Statelet between the Danube and the Balkans, is certainly not of sufficient importance to justify plunging Europe into war from Moscow to the Pyrenees, from the North Sea to Palermo—a war the issue of which no one could foresee, at the end of which no one could tell what the fighting had been about.

So I can say openly that the position of the Russian press, the unfriendliness we have experienced from Russian public opinion, will not prevent us from supporting Russia in a diplomatic attempt to establish its rights as soon as it makes up its mind to assert them in Bulgaria. I say deliberately—"As soon as Russia expresses the wish." We have put ourselves to some trouble heretofore to meet the views of Russia on the strength of reliable hints, but we have lived to see the Russian press attacking, as hostile to Russia, the very things in German politics which were prompted by a desire to anticipate Russia's wishes. We did that at the Congress, but it will not happen again. If Russia officially asks us to support measures for the restoration in Bulgaria of the situation approved by the Congress with the Sultan as suzerain, I would not hesitate to advise his Majesty, the Emperor, that it should be done. This is the demand which the treaties make on our loyalty to a neighbor, with whom, be the mood what it will, we have to maintain neighborly relations and defend great common interests of monarchy, such as the interests of order against its antagonists in all Europe, with a neighbor, I say, whose sovereign has a perfect understanding in this regard with the allied sovereigns. I do not doubt that when the Czar of Russia finds that the interests of his great empire of a hundred million people require war, he will make war. But his interests cannot possibly prompt him to make war against us. I do not think it at all probable that such a question of interest is likely to present itself. I do not believe that a disturbance of the peace is imminent—if I may recapitulate—and I beg that you will consider the pending measure without regard to that thought or that apprehension, looking on it rather

as a full restoration of the mighty power which God has created in the German people—a power to be used if we need it! If we do not need it, we will not use it and we will seek to avoid the necessity for its use. This attempt is made somewhat more difficult by threatening articles in foreign newspapers, and I may give special admonition to the outside world against the continuance of such articles. They lead to nothing. The threats made against us, not by the government but in the newspapers, are incredibly stupid, when it is remembered that they assume that a great and proud power such as the German Empire is capable of being intimidated by an array of black spots made by a printer on paper, a mere marshalling of words. If they would give up that idea, we could reach a better understanding with both our neighbors. Every country is finally answerable for the wanton mischief done by its newspapers, and the reckoning is liable to be presented some day in the shape of a final decision from some other country. We can be bribed very easily—perhaps too easily—with love and goodwill. But with threats, never!

We Germans fear God, and nothing else in the world!

It is the fear of God which makes us love peace and keep it. He who breaks it against us ruthlessly will learn the meaning of the warlike love of the Fatherland which in 1813 rallied to the standard the entire population of the then small and weak kingdom of Prussia; he will learn, too, that this patriotism is now the common property of the entire German nation, so that whoever attacks Germany will find it unified in arms, every warrior having in his heart the steadfast faith that God will be with us.

AGAINST LIBERALISM: A PRUSSIAN ROYALIST
CONFESSION OF FAITH

DELIVERED JUNE 1, 1847

I WILL not take the trouble to examine the solidity of the various grounds of right, on which each of us presumes himself to stand; but, I believe, it has become certain, from the debate and from everything which I have gathered from the discussion of the question, that a different construction and interpretation of the older estates legislation was possible and practically existent—not among laymen only, but also among weighty jurists—and that it would be very doubtful what a court of justice, if such a question were before it, would decree concerning it. Under such circumstances, the declaration would, according to general principles of law, afford a solution.

This declaration has become implicit upon us, implicit by the patent of the third of February of this year; by this the King has declared that the general promises of former laws have been no other than those fulfilled by the present law. It appears that this declaration has been regarded by a portion of this assembly as inaccurate, but such is a fate to which every declaration is equally subject. Every declaration is considered by those whose opinions it does not confirm, to be wrong, or the previous conviction could not have been sincere. The question really is, in whom the right resides to issue an authentic and legally binding declaration. In my opinion, the King alone; and this conviction, I believe, lies in the conscience of the people. For when yesterday an honorable deputy from Königsberg asserted that

there was a dull dissatisfaction among the people on the proclamation of the patent of the third of February, I must reply, on the contrary, that I do not find the majority of the Prussian nation represented in the meetings which take place in the Böttchershöfchen. (Murmurs.)

In inarticulate sounds I really cannot discover any refutation of what I have said, nor do I find it in the goose-quills of the newspaper correspondents; no! not even in a fraction of the population of some of the large provincial towns. It is difficult to ascertain public opinion; I think I find it in some of the middle provinces, and it is the old Prussian conviction that a royal word is worth more than all the constructions and quirks applied to the letter of the law.

Yesterday a parallel was drawn between the method employed by the English people in 1688, after the abdication of James II, for the preservation of its rights, and that by which the Prussian nation should now attain a similar end. There is always something suspicious in parallels with foreign countries. Russia had been held up to us as a model of religious toleration; the French and Danish exchequers have been recommended as examples of proper finances.

To return to the year 1688 in England, I must really beg this august assembly, and especially an honorable deputy from Silesia, to pardon me if I again speak of a circumstance which I did not personally perceive. The English people was then in a different position to that of the Prussian people now; a century of revolution and civil war had invested it with the right to dispose of a crown, and bind up with it conditions accepted by William of Orange.

On the other hand, the Prussian sovereigns were in possession of a crown, not by grace of the people, but by God's

grace; an actually unconditional crown, some of the rights of which they voluntarily conceded to the people — an example rare in history. I will leave the question of right, and proceed to that concerning the utility and desirability of asking or suggesting any change in the legislation as it actually now exists. I adhere to the conviction, which I assume to be that of the majority of the assembly, that periodicity is necessary to a real vitality of this assembly; but it is another matter whether we should seek this by way of petition. Since the emanation of the patent of the third of February, I do not believe that it would be consonant with the royal pleasure, or that it is inherent with the position of ourselves as estates, to approach his Majesty already with a petition for an amendment of it.

At any rate let us allow the grass of this summer to grow over it. The King has repeatedly said, that he did not wish to be coerced and driven; but I ask the assembly what should we be doing otherwise than coercing and driving him, if we already approached the throne with requests for changes in the legislation?

To the gravity of this view I ask permission of the assembly to add another reason. It is certainly well known how many sad predictions have been made by the opponents of our polity connected with the fact that the government would find itself forced by the estates into a position which it would not have willingly taken up. But although I do not assume the government would allow itself to be coerced, I still think that it is in the interests of the government to avoid the slightest trace of unwillingness as to concessions, and that it is in all our interests not to concede to the enemies of Prussia the delight of witnessing the fact that, by a petition — a vote — presented by us as the representatives

of sixteen millions of subjects, we should throw a shade of unwillingness upon such a concession.

It has been said that his Majesty, the King, and the commissioner of the diet have themselves pointed out this path. For myself, I could not otherwise understand this than that, as the King has done, so also the commissioner of the diet indicated this as the legal way we should pursue in case we found ourselves aggrieved; but that it would be acceptable to his Majesty, the King, and the government that we should make use of this right, I have not been able to perceive. If, however, we did so, it would be believed that urgent grounds existed for it — that there was immediate danger in the future; but of this I cannot convince myself. The next session of the assembly is assured; the Crown, also, is thereby in the advantageous position, that within four years, or even a shorter period, it can with perfect voluntariness, and without asking, take the initiative as to that which is now desired.

Now, I ask, is not the edifice of our State firmer toward foreign countries? — will not the feeling of satisfaction be greater at home, if the continuation of our national polity be inaugurated by the initiative of the Crown, than by petition from ourselves? Should the Crown not find it good to take the initiative, no time is lost. The third diet will not follow so rapidly upon the second, that the King would have no time to reply to a petition presented under such circumstances by the second. Yesterday a deputy from Prussia — I think from the circle of Neustadt — uttered a speech which I could only comprehend as meaning that it was our interest to pull up the flower of confidence as a weed preventing us from seeing the bare ground, and cast it out.

I say with pride that I cannot agree with such an opinion.

If I look back for ten years, and compare that which was written and said in the year 1837 with that which is proclaimed from the steps of the throne to the whole nation, I believe we have great reason to have confidence in the intentions of his Majesty. In this confidence I beg to recommend this august assembly to adopt the amendment of the honorable deputy from Westphalia — not that of the honorable deputy from the county of Mark — but that of Herr von Lilien.