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# THE FOUNDATIONS OF GERMANY

A DOCUMENTARY ACCOUNT  
REVEALING THE CAUSES OF HER  
STRENGTH, WEALTH, AND EFFICIENCY

By J. ELLIS BARKER

AUTHOR OF "MODERN GERMANY" ETC.

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# PREFACE

TO

## THE SECOND EDITION

THE second edition of 'The Foundations of Germany' is, as the title-page states, a very greatly enlarged one. The present volume would perhaps be described more correctly as a new book. Three chapters contained in the first edition which dealt with the causes of the World War, with the relations between Germany and Turkey, and with the German Colonial Empire, matters which have been treated by many writers, have been omitted. On the other hand nine new chapters, numbered VI to XIII and XIX, have been added. There are more than two hundred pages of new matter in the present edition.

Machiavelli, who at the same time was an eminent writer and an eminent statesman, pointed out in 'The Prince' that, according to historical experience, two able rulers succeeding one another may create a new State and firmly establish it. Modern Germany, which, after all, is merely an enlarged Prussia, has been created by four men possessed of rare statesmanlike genius, boundless ambition, singular strength of will, and unlimited daring. It has been created by Frederick William, the Great Elector, King Frederick William I, King Frederick the Great, and Prince Bismarck. Each of these four men directed the State during an unusually long number of years. The Great

Electors governed Brandenburg-Prussia during forty-eight years, from 1640 to 1688. King Frederick William I and King Frederick the Great ruled Prussia during seventy-three consecutive years, from 1713 to 1786. Prince Bismarck conducted Prusso-Germany's foreign and domestic policy with almost regal authority from 1862 to 1890. During no less than one hundred and forty-nine years the State of the Hohenzollerns has been directed by men of the greatest administrative and executive capacity, whose brilliant successes have astonished the world, by men who autocratically wielded the entire power of the State, whose word was law, whose only aim was success, greatness, and glory. These four men have not only fashioned a new State, but have at the same time firmly impressed their extraordinary character upon the subjects. They have thus created both a new State and a new nation, and they have supplied State and nation, rulers and ruled, army and people with great traditions, with great precedents to follow, with a new rule of life.

The most eminent and the most influential among the four makers of Prusso-Germany was not Prince Bismarck, as is widely believed, but Frederick the Great. That singularly successful monarch was in truth the creator of modern Germany. His multitudinous activities inspired the generations which succeeded him. Both Bismarck and William II were his pupils. Determined upon increasing the power of the State at any cost, he introduced that non-moral policy which Prusso-Germany has followed ever since. Germany's political and military philosophers, from Von Bielfeld to Treitschke, and from Clausewitz to Bernhardt, were not originators. The advocates of 'Machtpolitik' merely built up a theoretical system upon Frederick's practice, and furnished Prussia's traditional policy with a pseudo-scientific cloak and justification.

Frederick was equally great as a general and as a diplomat, as an organiser and as a law-giver. Germany's

administrative, educational, financial, industrial, agricultural, and juridical policy is based upon Frederick's practice. A very full account of Frederick's policy and that of his great predecessors will be found in the first two chapters of this book. The fact that it is given as far as possible in the words of Prussia's rulers, and especially in those of Frederick the Great, should increase its value.

Incidentally this book reveals the failings of democracy; the defects of democratic organisation and administration. It is no doubt possible to combine the advantages of democratic with those of autocratic government, liberty with efficiency, order, and economy. Democracy need not, and should not, be synonymous with disorganisation, instability, amateurishness, drift, muddle, waste, improvidence, and unpreparedness for war. The present war has revealed the weakness of democracy. The views of the greatest German rulers and statesmen collected in this volume may indicate the cure. The experience of the present war may cause Germany to become more democratic and may cause the Anglo-Saxon democracies to become better prepared and better organised. The views of Frederick the Great on the defects of democracy and of cabinet government, which are given at length on pages 28 to 34 and 38 to 42, should be particularly interesting at the present moment.

The present volume on Germany bears the sub-title 'A Documentary Account revealing the Causes of her Strength, Wealth, and Efficiency.' Frederick the Great is one of the few statesmen who laid down his guiding principles and views in a number of secret State papers, political testaments, &c., for the use of his successors. Owing to the indiscretion of his worthless nephew, King Frederick William II, these were published shortly after his death. They are practically unknown to the general public. The most important of these invaluable documents will be found in the original French in Chapters XIV to XVIII. I would draw particular attention to them.

Prince Bismarck was Frederick's pupil. He endeavoured to carry out the idea of the Fürstenbund, Frederick's plan of unifying Germany under Prussia's leadership. The great characteristic of his foreign policy was that in it daring was blended with wise caution. In Chapter VII the secret story of the Ems telegram is fully told, and in Chapter VIII it is shown by means of little-known documents how he tricked Napoleon III in 1866, and how in that year he doubled the number of the subjects of the Hohenzollerns by concluding the most audacious, and the most profitable, peace of all time. I have endeavoured to show that Germany followed Bismarck's precedent of 1870 in going to war in 1914, and that she is endeavouring now to conclude a peace doubling her territory by following Bismarck's action in 1866.

Germany's war aims have been put forth in a petition which was drawn up by the six greatest business associations of the country. It was signed by the League of Agriculturists, the German Peasants League, the Westphalian Peasants Society, the Central Association of German Industrialists, the League of Industrialists, and the German Middle-class Association. These powerful societies represent the bulk of the German business-men in town and country. That most remarkable and important document, which frankly advocates the confiscation of private property in the conquered districts, the expulsion of the property-owners, and the enslaving of the resident working population, is given in full in Chapter XIX.

Bismarck desired that the new Germany should follow a cautious and conservative policy. He attached the greatest value to maintaining Germany's friendship with Russia and England. He foresaw and foretold that the rash and provocative policy of William II might bring about a world coalition against Germany and the downfall of the Empire. He tried in vain to oppose the Emperor's 'new course.' The contrast between his policy and that of William II, rendered chiefly in Bismarck's own words,



will be found in the lengthy Chapter III—'The Policy of Bismarck and of William II.'

The efficiency of the German people is due to their education, while that of the German army is due to the activity and excellence of the General Staff, which was reorganised by Von Moltke. Germany's educational policy is based upon that of Frederick the Great. It is described, largely in Frederick's own words, in Chapter IV, while the organisation of the General Staff and the cause of its efficiency are explained in Chapter V.

Education in Germany, from the elementary schools to the universities, is nominally free. In reality it is directed by the Government, by the military machine. The teachers at the schools and the universities, and the Protestant and Roman Catholic clergy as well, are well-drilled, State-appointed, and State-paid State officials, whose true character is disguised by their not being clothed in State uniforms. Secular education and spiritual education have been made subservient to the State, to militarism. How the German educational system has warped and distorted the national mind is shown at length in Chapter VI—'How Education has Degraded the German People.'

Germany's political propaganda in foreign countries is described in Chapter IX in the words of one of her agents at Washington. His revelations throw a good deal of light upon Germany's subterranean activities in the United States previous to the Great War.

In his book 'Politics,' Treitschke significantly placed Machiavelli, Luther, Frederick the Great, and Bismarck side by side as the creators of the modern State, of modern Germany. While Machiavelli was undoubtedly the father of German statecraft, Luther had a far-reaching influence in shaping the character of the German rulers and of their subjects. Owing to his action, the German Reformation, which was originally a democratic movement, became an instrument for increasing the absolute power of the German

princes and for enslaving the people. Besides, Luther's coarseness and brutality affected German manners unfavourably. The influence of Machiavelli on German statecraft and of Luther on the German national character has been documentarily depicted in Chapters X and XI.

Whether one-man government is a blessing or a curse depends entirely upon the personal character of the monarch. Hohenzollern absolutism, which created Prusso-Germany's greatness and prosperity, caused the downfall of the country in 1806. At that time the Prussian people did not hold responsible the weak and incapable King Frederick William III. He was considered an innocent victim of Napoleon I. But will the German people remain similarly silent if the present war, which was caused by the recklessness and ambition of William II, should end in defeat and general ruin? Chapter XII describes Prussia's downfall in 1806, its causes and its lessons, and Chapter XIII deals with the consequences which Germany's defeat may have upon the German monarchy and people. In the latter chapter it is shown that the Germans were a democratic nation in the past, that their democratic spirit is not dead, that their democratic character has been suppressed, but not entirely been destroyed, by the Hohenzollerns, that the Germans possess considerable aptitude for self-government. A German defeat may discredit the Hohenzollern autocracy and may make Germany once more a democracy, and possibly a republic.

The bulk of this volume has appeared in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, *The Fortnightly Review*, and *The Contemporary Review*. The original articles have been considerably expanded and have been interconnected. I would cordially thank the editors of these three monthlies for permitting me to reprint them.

J. ELLIS BARKER.

LONDON, March 1918.

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