



Volume 2. From Absolutism to Napoleon, 1648-1815

King Frederick William I's Handwritten Instructions to the East Prussian Land-Tax Commission [*Generalhufenschoß-Kommission*] (April 23, 1716)

In this famous statement, the Prussian “soldier king” (r. 1713-40) bluntly expresses his determination to break aristocratic opposition in East Prussia to his fiscal and other administrative innovations (though he consents to the convocation of the noble-dominated provincial estates, where the airing of discontent could be expected).

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You should read this to the lords and the notes I have made. You should write me with your opinion, whether it is not solely to my disadvantage that I have the estates [*Landtdahge*] called and also give 4,000 [taler] fees. However, the land commission [*hubencomis*, i.e., *Generalhufenschoß-Kommission*] should continue. I come to my purpose and stabilize the sovereignty and establish the crown firmly like a rock of bronze [*Rocher von Bronze*] and allow the lord Junkers the hot air [*windt*] of the estates. One allows the people [to blow] hot air when one comes to the purpose. I await your thoughts.

*F William*

Source: *Die Behördenorganisation und die allgemeine Staatsverwaltung Preußens im 18. Jahrhundert* [*The Organization of the Authorities and the General State Administration of Prussia in the 18th Century*]. Volume 2: *Akten vom Juli 1714 bis Ende 1717* [*Documents from July 1774 to the End of 1717*], edited by G. Schmoller, D. Krauske and V. Loewe. Berlin: Parey, 1898. (*Acta Borussica*) p. 352 (no. 175).

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