



German History in Documents and Images

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Shades of the Future?: Daniel Frymann [Heinrich Claß] (1912)

Heinrich Claß (1868-1953), writing here under the pseudonym Daniel Frymann, was chairman of the ultra-nationalist Pan-German League. A trained lawyer living in Mainz, Claß was an inveterate anti-Semite and wrote polemical texts that espoused the need for German expansion both overseas and within Europe.

All the states surrounding us here in Europe, all those on this globe in which the vital nerve of the state, the will to power, has not yet been killed off, reach out and expand their sphere of influence; it is done even by states that are internally as unhealthy as France and Russia; it is done by states with such immense possessions as England and the North American Union; finally, it is done by a state whose population has begun to decline, France, where there is most certainly no need for additional colonial land. All are reaching out, even weak Spain is fighting back and is seeking to recover Morocco, which it lost to the United States – only the German Reich is “satiated,” and as soon as a conflict breaks out in a country that would be a candidate for the influence of the civilized nations, it hastens to proclaim its “political non-interest,” as they say, and to demand only that its economic interests be safeguarded.

But if any state has cause to look to the expansion of its sphere of power, it is the German Reich, for the size of its population is growing rapidly, its industry needs new markets, its overall economy needs land to produce tropical and semi-tropical products of every kind, the procurement of which has today brought us into intolerable dependence on others; let me mention only cotton. [. . .]

One must bear in mind, though, that the purposes of land acquisition abroad are manifold, depending on the economic and national needs they are meant to serve: we need industrial markets and land for industrial raw materials, and we need them *now and under any circumstances* – but also land for the settlement of Germans, for whom the Fatherland will have no more room *one day* because of overpopulation. But that land must be acquired, developed, and secured *today*, even if it will experience a larger influx only in twenty or thirty years, for it is not possible to set up a colony to absorb larger groups of immigrants from one day to the next, and until such time as it will be needed for this, it can and will already serve the other purposes. [. . .]

One can thus say that since Bismarck’s departure, a complete change has taken place in our public opinion; talk about German “satiety” is no longer valid; *developments and need have shown that we have become hungry again, hungry for land*, and this confronts German statecraft with tasks that go beyond Bismarck. [. . .]

The propertied and educated feel politically disenfranchised, silenced by the decision of the majority. Entrepreneurs, whom the developments of the last decades have in fact made the pillars of our national economy, find themselves exposed to the arbitrariness of the workers stirred up by the Socialists – all protection by the state is refused.

The vicious cycle of wage increases and price hikes carries uneasiness into every house.

For twenty years, the socialist press and party organizers have been granted unlimited opportunity to exercise their subversive, inflammatory activity, and to alienate the masses from their own people and state.

The Liberals of every stripe, with the exception of the right wing of the National Liberals, engage, under the leadership of the Hansa League, in the suicidal tax campaign and the struggle against the phantom of the blue-black bloc; their press, their agitators are working unscrupulously in support of the agenda of Social Democracy. [. . .]

Large capital, large industry, large commerce pose a most serious threat to the middle class, and it is understandable that people who, in spite of all their hard work, all their thrift, do not get ahead in this struggle or even go under, are aggrieved with the state, which has watched as the greater power of capital has smothered them. The “free play of forces,” once revered as the embodiment of economic wisdom, has two sides to it, and the bad side is partly to blame for the fact that the strata of the population that were once the most loyal and reliable are today discontented. [. . .]

Here one must now remember the fateful role that *Jewry* plays in the life of our nation, ever since the gift of emancipation was thrown into its lap, which was not earned by achievements of any kind, but was granted by the sentiment of humanity, lovely in itself, and from the idea of the equality of all people.

Now, Germans and Jews are by their innermost nature like fire and water; as long as the life of our nation was morally sound, there was nothing more different than the German and the Jewish attitude towards life. The German stands above all possessions, remains inwardly free with respect to them, and demonstrates his freedom by wishing to live life fully with no regard for economic success. Honor, independence, and autonomy of mind are the driving forces behind his action, which may often be impractical, but which nonetheless demonstrates an orientation of mind that is not merely “of this world.” The Jew, however, subordinates his life to practicality and utility; acquisition, possessions are everything to him; he is unfree with respect to them; to them he subordinates his entire personality. It is no surprise that people with such qualities, once they have been granted equal rights, are differently equipped for economic life than the Germans, seeing as they knew – even when the laws were unequal – how to exploit the Germans and amass riches. [. . .]

The bearers and teachers of the materialism that predominates today are the Jews; its German supporters are people led astray and alienated from their innate instincts. [. . .]

Truly, is there anything more tragic than the role of those who govern today? Between them and the people stands a mediator – the Jew – and he lets through only what he likes. [. . .]

The alpha and omega of the measures against the Jewish subversion is, however: *That race is the source of the dangers.* – Religion plays no other role than that of being an emanation of the race.

The court, the government that looks to it, the governmental elements of the Conservatives are one heart and one soul with Jewry – struck by the blindness that does not recognize the mortal enemy. [. . .]

If one gets to the bottom of things, one will be compelled to say that at the moment *when the Anti-Socialist laws were not renewed, the axe was put to the roots of universal, equal suffrage*. For this democratic suffrage is politically only possible *if the totality of the voters is filled with the same national and political sentiment, when all are in agreement on the foundations of the life of the state*, such as national character [Volkstum], monarchy, and property, and when attitudes diverge only on questions concerning the degree of the distribution of rights between the totality (the state) and the individual, as well as on questions of the expedencies of state. *As soon as a group of voters of some strength rejects the foundations of political and national life, universal suffrage is cast into question, and it becomes impossible when masses of voters do the same.* [. . .]

Whoever wants to gain the proper position on the Socialist danger to the Reich must be very clear that the mass poisoning of German voters would not have been possible at all without the participation of the Jews, that the true leaders are Jews, and that those with whom the hopes of improvement rest also belong to this people; under Jewish leadership, the “German” Social Democrats, like the Austrian ones, are serious about their internationalism, whereas the French, Italian, and Czech Socialists, for example, have no such thoughts. [. . .]

Universal, equal suffrage has always been a lie, because it presupposes an equality of people that can never be realized. It is immoral in that it treats the worthy, capable, and mature person the same way as the unworthy, incompetent, and immature person. Finally, it is unjust because it in fact strips the educated and the propertied of their rights through the violence of the masses, the mass votes. It was tolerable only as long as the national and political sentiment of the have-nots and the uneducated also balanced out its inherent contradictions; until then, one could say that the love of the Fatherland was keeping the dangers in check; with the mass defection from the Fatherland, the balancing element has been eliminated, and *universal, equal suffrage works, without disguise, destructively against the state, and strips the rights from those who wish to defend it.* [. . .]

However great, then, are the concerns in this direction regarding gigantic enterprises, we are actually dealing with truly organic creations, which one cannot split up, cannot undo. Let us take enterprises like Krupp, the great shipyards of Blohm & Voß, Schichau, and others – how could one contemplate dismemberment? Such living organisms with their own, magnificent life are something different from latifundia, which, if need be, can be divided up into smaller agricultural enterprises. They serve the totality of the people; they are, once they were able to arise, indispensable. Organic creations of this kind carry within themselves their own justification for existing; for that reason one ought not to touch them. [. . .]

It is an urgent need of our public life to win over the captains of industry, with their experiences, for participation; it is possible that the reform of suffrage and the elevation of the level of parliament it has brought about will make participation seem once again desirable to these leaders of our economic life. [. . .]

How very different from these large enterprises, which create value themselves, is the situation of the *large banks*; here, there is no public interest in letting these enormous masses of capital remain in a single hand, not even that of procuring money in case of war. *It strikes me as right*

to introduce limits on the capital of the large banks and to enact a prohibition against increasing the size of capital. [. . .] I regard the complete suppression of department stores as necessary and believe that it is feasible. [. . .]

The way in which Social Democracy has been allowed hitherto to do what it wants cannot continue – on this all serious patriots agree. [. . .]

But what is to be done?

One should fall back on the draft of the Anti-Socialist Law that Bismarck presented to the Reichstag in 1878, and let it become law without the watering down that was so popular in parliament at the time. [. . .]

An amelioration of Social Democracy under Jewish leadership is impossible, as is a gradual turning away from internationalism. What is called for, therefore, is the preparation of the opportunity for the masses to turn around or stop by liberating them from the current leadership, *by expelling from the German Reich* all Reichstag and Landtag representatives, all party officials, all publishers and editors of socialist newspapers and magazines, all socialist union leaders – *in short, all those in service to socialist propaganda*; needless to say, the same applies also to all anarchists.

One must not be sentimental where the liberation of the people from those who drive it into corruption is called for. [. . .]

But if one wishes to take up the struggle, one must be clear about one thing: *no half-measures, no weakness, no sentimentality* – a complete job with a firm, hard will. [. . .]

No matter how hard it will be to German justice: *we must generally restrict the rights of the resident Jewry*, no matter how regretful it will be to each of us individually when the good person is affected along with the bad; in cases like these, one must look only at necessity and one must close one's heart to compassion; every concession to those suffering undeservedly would loosen the rings of the armor that we must create for ourselves. [. . .]

The motto is: *a resolute policy of struggle against the Poles through the application of expropriation and the introduction of the prohibition against division into small plots*, whereby the influence exercised by the Foreign Ministry must be eliminated out of consideration for the position of power that the Poles of Galicia hold in Austria. [. . .] One thing, however, should become the common possession of the public opinion of our Fatherland – namely, the despicableness of the attitude that sees our army on land and at sea merely as a means of defense against foreign attacks. That would mean depriving it of the best parts of its worth, degrading it into a tool of Philistine politics. Earlier I have argued against the notion that we are “satiated” – if public opinion takes the same position, it will also state unambiguously: *The Army and the Navy are also weapons of attack when the safeguarding of our existence demands it.* [. . .]

After what was said earlier about the falseness of the slogan about the “satiated state” of the German Reich, it will come as no surprise if it is stated here unambiguously that the portion of the surface of the world that is today under German dominion is not adequate for the needs of the German people. Whether the other states approve or disapprove of this must leave us cold; let them know it and make their decision in good time whether they prefer to provide us in good or ill with what we need: *land.* [. . .]

As the educated among our people, the people with a somewhat political eye, have slowly come to recognize that the policy of “satiety” no longer corresponds to our true situation, it is imperative that all those interested in public life learn to change their thinking and demand *that we engage in active foreign politics; let us go ahead and say aggressive politics.* [. . .]

Any expansion in Europe can be achieved, from the very outset, only by victorious war, since neither France nor Russia will be so charitable as to cede part of their territory to us; once we have won and force the cession of land, we will receive regions inhabited by people, Frenchmen or Russians, that is, people who are hostile towards us, and one has to ask whether such an increase in land improves our situation. [. . .]

But if one gets to the bottom of the special situation of the German people, which is tightly bound within Europe and which, with continued strong growth, could possibly suffocate if it doesn’t gain some breathing room, one will have to recognize that there may be a time when it will have to demand from the defeated enemy in the West or East land empty of humans – unless we had colonies capable of being settled overseas, or we were determined to allow once again the emigration of Germans to foreign states. [. . .]

Thus the fact remains that an expansion in Europe to the East and West is not to be considered except in an utmost emergency; but it remains to be pondered whether the Southeast might offer space for us, the parts of Austria-Hungary and the Balkans inhabited by the so-called “sub-Germanic” Slavic tribes of every kind. Our relationship to this land will be discussed later on, but let me say here *that a magnificent settlement of the Southeast will represent an entirely sound solution – under two conditions*, that a relationship is found between the German Reich and Austria-Hungary, which, in the form of an eternal alliance, creates a complete and lasting solidarity between the interests of both states, and, in addition, that the Habsburg Empire gives itself an internal state form that guarantees for all times the cultural and political leadership of the German element in it, namely on both sides of the Leitha river.

Source: Daniel Frymann [Heinrich Claß], *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär: Politische Wahrheiten und Notwendigkeiten* [*If I were Kaiser: Political Truths and Necessities*]. Leipzig, 1912, p. 5ff.

Original German text reprinted in Willibald Gutsche, *Herrschaftsmethoden des deutschen Imperialismus 1897/8 bis 1917* [*The Ruling Methods of German Imperialism, 1897/8 to 1917*]. East Berlin, 1977, pp. 154-59.

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