

Carlsbad 1819

Like another Chouannerie

Hats off to Marianne

May 23, 2018 by Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur

It is time this tired accusation that “conservatives haven’t conserved anything” be dropped once and for all.

I stumbled upon an article by a certain Frank Moeller on the German revolutions of 1848-9 and I nearly choked when I uncovered [this gem](http://vestnik.spbu.ru/html17/s02/s02v3/11.pdf) (<http://vestnik.spbu.ru/html17/s02/s02v3/11.pdf>):

In May 1848, a so-called “Hat Emancipation Club” was founded in the Bavarian city of Augsburg as well as in other cities at the time. The announced goal of the club was to “eliminate the annoying taking-off of one’s hat in greeting, in favor of the more contemporary, simple military salute”. Each participant could purchase a badge that was attached to their hat or bonnet, signaling that its owner waived the tipping of the hat when being greeted. Within a very short time, the Augsburg club reached the enormous number of 1200 members. Clearly, the expectation was that the abolition of the hat-tip would also lead to a leveling or at least toning down of social hierarchies that stood behind the custom.

A goddamned *Hat Emancipation Club*.

At first I thought this was some academic hoax being slipped through. The citation given for this claim is a book written by the same author, *Bürgerliche Herrschaft in Augsburg 1790–1880* (2014).

Thinking of what phrases I could come up with to get results from Google Books, I settled on “gegen das Hutabnehmen.” (“against hat-tipping” — more or less).

Turns out, the problem was much deeper than I ever could have thought.

Type in “gegen das Hutabnehmen” and you get a load of contemporary German newspapers from the 1830s and 1840s, covering various cities, all documenting the same phenomenon: a mass movement of social clubs founded by liberals getting triggered over people tipping their hats.

This is excellent news for the neoreactionaries, as it turns out that *tipping your fedora is a counterrevolutionary act*.

The conservative movement is owed an apology. They stood athwart history yelling “Stop!” and the march of progress actually did slow. Although the threat of government-subsidized sex changes for 3-year olds is on the horizon, it is nevertheless a fact that today you will not face major repercussions for tipping your hat — a clear and unambiguous victory for the right.

I also stumbled upon the bizarre phrase “Hutnichtabnehmungsfrage” in the Nürnberger Abendblatt of 1844 coined in response to this social movement. It would seem that this would literally mean the “hat-not-tipping-question” or “hat-unacceptance-question.”

The point being there was a time when whether or not liberals could strip you of your right to tip m'lady was raised to the status of a *social question*.

The Hat Tipping Question. The HTQ, we could name it.

“Why do the cuckservatives refuse to address the HTQ?”

“You know, I like Jared Taylor, but he’s too soft on the HTQ.”

“Read Culture of Critique, bro. It’s got everything on the HTQ.”

Add to the causes of World War I and II: being governed by descendants of people triggered by hat-tipping.

Anyway, the only reason I wrote this is so I could make all these jokes about hats. But then I realized I had to pad it with something else.

Now besides this calamity, there were a myriad of lesser crimes and outrages committed by the hat-emancipationists. Flying the Slovene tricolor (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lovro_Toman), because you want to rule the Duchy of Carniola that badly; inciting revolts (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nemzeti_dal), by reading your slam poetry (“On your feet, Magyar, the homeland calls!” — it wants its hat back); the “Romanian people” proclaimed (https://ro.wikisource.org/wiki/Proclama%C8%9Bia_de_la_Islaz), the liberation of Jews and gypsies at Islaz; Hungarians and Romanians butchering each other (http://www.hungarianhistory.com/lib/sekler/A49_Nagyenyed.pdf), in pursuit of the ethnostate (solution: give them what they want, goy) and going mad (<http://mek.oszk.hu/03400/03407/html/368.html>), after serfdom in Transylvania was abolished; and who could forget the Slovaks a demandin’ their rights (https://sk.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%BDiadosti_slovensk%C3%A9ho_n%C3%A1roda), — at that point they weren’t sure if they wanted to be Czechs, Hungarians or something else, but they knew an opportunity when they saw it.

Meanwhile, in the developed world...

In his memoirs (<https://archive.org/details/memoirsofmistral00mistuoft>), Frédéric Mistral, the Occitan revivalist, recalled his youthly 48'er exuberance in Provencal — bar fights, knife-thrusting and drunken singing in the name of liberty and fatherland:

A mad enthusiasm seized me for all humanitarian and liberal ideas ; and my Republicanism, while it scandalised the Royalists of Maillane, who regarded me as a turncoat, delighted the Republicans, who, being in the minority, were enchanted at getting me to join them in shouting the "Marseillaise."

And here, in Provence, as elsewhere, all this brought in its train broils and internal divisions. The Reds proclaimed their sentiments by wearing a belt and scarf of scarlet, while the Whites wore green. The former carried a buttonhole of thyme, emblem of the mountain, and the latter a sprig of the royal lily. The Republicans planted the "trees of liberty" at every corner, and by night the Royalists kicked them down. Thereupon followed riots and knife-thrusts; till before long this good people, these Provenceaux of the same race, who a month before had been living in brotherly love and good fellowship, were all ready to make mince-meat of one another for a party wrangle that led to nothing.

All students of the same year took sides and split into rival parties, neither of which ever lost an opportunity of a skirmish. Every evening we Reds, after washing down our omelettes with plenty of good wine, issued from the inn according to the correct village fashion, in shirt sleeves, with a napkin round our necks. Down the street we went to the sound of the tambour, dancing the "La Carmagnole" and singing at the pitch of our voices the latest song in vogue. We finished the evening usually by keeping high carnival, and yelling "Long live Marianne!" as we waved high our red belts.

The citizen-king Louis-Philippe who was overthrown in this event was known (<https://archive.org/stream/frenchassemblyof00curt#page/34/mode/2up>) to be quite the admirer of American ideas. "No one could have been two years in America and not share that view [that the American constitution is the most perfect]," he confided to Lafayette. Nevertheless, Lafayette told him that France could not be a republic yet, merely a "popular monarchy surrounded by republican — thoroughly republican — institutions." Louis-Philippe agreed.

Following the overthrow of the July Monarchy, the radical faction of the Provisional Assembly was debating the proclamation of a republic. One side argued that the proclamation should not be made until a referendum by universal suffrage, because "Paris is not France."

Alexandre Ledru-Rollin and Louis Blanc begged to differ, however, and the latter proceeded to explain (<https://books.google.com/books?id=qIgo4y5lPUQC&pg=PA27>), how national representation means that, in fact, Paris is France:

It is not absolutely true that Paris is not France. Whether the irresistible preponderance imparted to Paris by the present system of centralisation be an evil or not, is not the question we have here to examine. The fact is, that as all enlightened and influential men flock incessantly to Paris from every part of France, Paris, in reality, is the point of confluence at which the various streams of provincial interest or intelligence meet, there to combine, as it were, into a mighty basin. France speaks through Paris, if by France we are to understand that which expresses her true instincts, and constitutes her genius. A Republic being that form of government which depends upon the national will, and derives from the national will alone, regularly and unmistakeably expressed, its legitimacy as well as its existence, — contrary to a monarchy, which rests upon the hereditary principle, and avails itself of the tacit, that is, the supposed, consent of the people, — it is evident that Sovereignty of the People and Republicanism are convertible terms. **The whole nation assembled could not possibly reject the Republican form of government without forfeiting its own sovereignty — without committing suicide — nay, without encroaching in the most iniquitous manner upon the rights of the generations to come...**

Count Albrecht von Bernstorff (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albrecht_von_Bernstorff) (1809-1873) was a Prussian diplomat, who, among other things served as an envoy to Vienna in 1848. His papers (<https://archive.org/stream/bernstorffpapers01ring>) feature valuable recollections about the state of the city at the time — taken over by the Academic Legion, consisting of students, “shady literary characters,” doctors, artisans, etc. The Emperor had taken flight.

Bernstorff, his wife and his 4-year old child were having breakfast at a hotel, just as regiments of Austrian troops were trying to disburse the Legion’s stronghold, with barricades erected all over the place and blocking normal traversal of the streets. Later at midnight they were woken to the sounds of mutinous citizens throwing boiling oil, water and rocks at Windischgraetz’s troops trying to recapture the city and restore normalcy. Except that Windischgraetz was in Prague and all of this was a false alarm caused by revolutionary hysteria.

From the Austrian perspective, Count Franz von Hartig, a reform-minded admirer of constitutional doctrines, believed that Vienna had been too confident in popular support of the Emperor, as they had ostensibly regarded (<https://archive.org/stream/historyofhouseof00kell#page/60/mode/2up>) that the Galician slaughter of 1846 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galician_slaughter), a peasant revolt against a szlachta-led revolution (and thus a de facto peasant-led counterrevolution) was evidence of pro-imperial rather than specifically anti-seigneurial tendencies: “[The disturbances] sprang from recollections of the ancient kingdom of Poland, and they contemplated its restoration ; the spirit which actuated them was not democratic, since their object was not to elevate the people to a participation in the government, but to establish a Polish dominion in place of the Austrian, which latter was to be suppressed. For this reason, its authors did not succeed in seducing the people ; but the latter crashed the revolution in its birth. It is very remarkable that the government was taken by surprise and unprepared, although the civil and military chief of the province had held the reins of government in his hands for fourteen years, and was an archduke of the house of Este, a family of whom it cannot be said that it is not quick in spying out revolutionary tendencies. The key to this difficulty may be found in the fact, that the archduke directed his attention more to the movements of the poor and inconsiderable democrats, and was not a match for the hypocrisy of the deceitful and treacherous Polish aristocracy, by whom he was ensnared.”

The closest to a definitive Austrian viewpoint, however, has to be that of Count Karl Ludwig von Ficquelmont (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Count_Karl_Ludwig_von_Ficquelmont) (1777-1857), born of a lineage in Lorraine, and serving in a variety of Austrian civil and military posts, rising up to Minister-President and Generalfeldmarschall respectively. He left numerous invaluable writings on then-current affairs as an Austrian conservative.

In his 1850 pamphlet *Aufklärungen über die Zeit vom 20. März bis zum 4. Mai 1848*, Ficquelmont makes several astute observations. First that the German revolutions and the Frankfurt Parliament were inimical to the particular character of the Austrian state, and that a grossdeutsch unification was baseless: “The Government of Austria has always been German; History, language, education, politics have made them; she is allowed to be, she should not abandon this character; we can not separate from Germany. However, since the Austrian body of state is of a peculiar nature, the Government must guard against the changes that are now taking place in Germany, that the political agreement with Germany would not jeopardize the position of the emperor in his own empire. We should stay Germans yet also not stop being Austrians.” (p.50)

One of the chief ideological questions of the day was how to justify the traditional dynastic empire under attack by national-majoritarian doctrines. This is how Ficquelmont approached the issue (p.61-63):

Under the principle that no German prince could rule over another people or over other peoples at the same time and in unison with Germans, Germany has the germ of a great weakness, and with time a complete destruction, in so far as at the same time there reigns the substitute principle that no foreign prince or foreign government could ever rule over divisions of the German people. It also seems that this principle, as a completion of the first, though it could not be pronounced for obvious reasons, was to be brought into living application by the precursors of the latter. At least the first attempt was made in the matter of Schleswig, where it was possible to appeal to the wishes of the people.

What should be done, however, where the separate tribesmen do not demand reincorporation, or where there are some obstacles to the fulfillment of their wish? That the German governments should therefore be compelled to give up all foreign ownership, while the foreigners should remain free to rule German populations?

What, among other things, was to happen to the Germans in the Baltic provinces, who settled there as conquerors? Who would want to set certain limits to the essence of nationality? Who belongs to the Germanic tribe or not? The Dutch, the Flamlanders, are they not Low German, or very close to them? The Danes themselves, the Swedes, the Anglo-Saxons, are they not further away from Germanic origin? **Who would be presumptuous enough to want to banish the fertile expansionary power that lies within the human race, and which is revealed in the spread of nationalities, in the narrower limits of state formation? Or vice versa, who will want to form a state based on a nationality that does not contain any expansionary power?**

The idea of the state is limited by the various mutable conditions of its formation; the state is the most complicated concept that the mind has to grasp, and the afflicted history of humanity proves how difficult that conception is. **The idea of nationality, on the other hand, is a simple one; it has no other limitation than that of other nationalities. That is why the struggle is its essence, and this struggle will break out wherever the concept of the state does not act as mediator. This is how it has happened in Austria for a long time. The state with the law of equal rights [Gleichberechtigung], albeit not yet proclaimed, has intervened as peacemaker, and under the protection of this law, as far as it has been validated, the struggle of the political forces had ceased.**

The state idea as higher than the national idea. It may seem outwardly Hegelian at first glance, except that Ficquelmont does not conceive of a civil society by any means. Further he attacks head-on the insinuation that any drive toward colonization or conquest is somehow aprioristically bad by virtue of violating "rights" of national groups. The limiting case "where the separate tribesmen do not demand reincorporation, or where there are some obstacles to the fulfillment of their wish," as he puts it, was also right on the money, being the source of a great many future "wars of liberation" that would have been handled by some settlement of princely inheritance or a limited cabinet war in earlier times.

Ficquelmont proceeds to recall having to explain to some deputies of the Frankfurt Assembly why they can't simply take down imperial and royal insignia and replace it with popular flags like the schwarz-rot-gold as if it means nothing. In addition the deputies appear to have voted to transport various jewels of the Reich from Vienna to Frankfurt. "They do not belong to the house of Austria, they belong to the German people; our desire is to bring them back to the people they belong to," was the justification of one of their spokesmen.

Ficquelmont had to explain to them that “as long as Germany, torn in its interior, remains the battleground for all political theories of the state, such venerable relics should not be given up to controversies, nor should they be given to serve ambitious intentions” — as if this needed stating.

Returning to Prussia, the conservative camp was split into several degrees depending on how zealous they were for counterrevolution versus reform and bourgeois integration.

Since the Prussian reforms in the early 19th century, the state had been making inroads toward civic equality, with a reform edict of 1807 abolishing serfdom stating that the categories for legal status from now on would be reduced to “free persons, however, still subject, as a matter of course, to all obligations which bind them as free persons by reason of the possession of an estate or by virtue of a special contract” — an attempt to balance enlightened doctrine with practical hierarchical relations.

Despite Prussia’s posthumous reputation as a den of reactionary militarism, an image of WWI and WWII propaganda made orthodox history, Prussia actually enacted a permanent constitution in 1850, itself not that major a revision from the one proposed by the Prussian National Assembly in 1848. Austria didn’t receive a modern liberal constitution until after the dissolution of the Empire, though it had various letters patent in between.

The most prominent of the liberal-conservatives was probably Moritz August von Bethmann-Hollweg (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/August_von_Bethmann-Hollweg) (1795-1877), grandfather of the infamous German chancellor Theodor von Bethmann-Hollweg. They favored Prussian-led unification over maintaining existing German dualism, the promulgation of a constitution, and the suppression of provincial diets.

In an 1848 sermon, Bethmann-Hollweg believed that a constitutional monarchy with national representation was necessary “for the suppression of the revolutionary principle, the strengthening of Prussia’s inner strength, and the fulfillment of its due hegemony over Germany” — especially the latter.

He saw reaction proper as dedicated to the “preservation of the pre-revolutionary state lifeform,” a task he viewed as insufficient. Drawing a distinction between the Patrimonialstaat of old and the newer Polizeistaat, he viewed the latter as inevitable in a system of modern state finances when kings could no longer rely on their crown domains as their primary source of income. The constitutional monarchy he had in mind would be based on neither universal suffrage nor proportional representation, but on some form of class and occupational representation. The Prussian Landtag would eventually adopt the three-class franchise system based on dividing voters into different brackets depending on amount of taxes paid, and differentially multiplying voting power on that basis. Other than that, there would be a greater focus on formal restructuring of government into a ministerial cabinet system, and a “crown-people alliance” of some sort — but the details left fuzzy.

The problem at hand was how to get people who freaked out over seeing others tip their hats, on board with a hereditary non-meritocratic source of power. National sentiment would not prove enough, on the contrary it made the hat-emancipationists more sure that *theirs* was the birthright to govern, not the crown’s. This problem was never resolved, and most such “reform” efforts proved self-defeating in the end, with the exception of foreign policy goals like national unification, which it seems was the primary purpose.

Either way, I’m off to buy a trilby.

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2 thoughts on “Hats off to Marianne”

1. Pingback: [Hats off to Marianne | Reaction Times](#)

2. marcusmontisursinensis says:

May 28, 2018 at 6:54 pm

This thing with hats is even worse than Casino movement. But, Wilhelm Tell playing cards endure. It seems that I will have to go to Bavaria or Czechia to buy some less revolutionary playing cards.

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