

Carlsbad 1819

Like another Chouannerie

Schmalz and loyalist particularism

May 15, 2018 by Nulle Terre Sans Seigneur

Theodor Schmalz (https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodor_Schmalz) (1760-1831) was one of the last representatives of an 18th-century cameralistic enlightened absolutism, which already by the 19th had become deprecated as the fault lines radicalized into full-on liberalism versus full-on restorationism, with most of the compromise positions in between generally carrying a liberal bias (sign of the linearly progressing times, after all). This meant that he was stuck in an awkward center, loyal to the princely states he served and not to a then-hypothetical national state — raising the ire of liberals, with Heinrich von Treitschke memorably quipping that “the modern state and its legal unit, he regarded as an empty abstraction.” At the same time, he was very much a reformist within these small states, in favor of abolition of serfdom and patrimonial courts, of liberalizing trade, of permitting bourgeois army officers, etc. which naturally opposed him to purer conservatives.

The aftermath of the German Campaign of 1813, or the Befreiungskriege (war of liberation) against the Confederation of the Rhine was a temporary renaissance for pan-German nationalism of the Burschenschaft and romantic variety. Ernst Moritz Arndt singing (http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=237) that the “His fatherland [is] not bounded so” and that the fatherland is “as far’s the Germans’ accent rings”; the philosophizing of a Jakob Friedrich Fries; and later on reignited by the shockwaves of the July Revolution, the simultaneously comical and terrifying April 1833 siege attempt of Frankfurt (Frankfurter Wachensturm) led by the Burschenschafter Gustav Koerner (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustav_Koerner) who proceeded to emigrate and become an American citizen, raising a volunteer Union regiment in Illinois during the Civil War and becoming a close associate of Lincoln. Even some of the more reform-minded sections of the nobility got into the action, with Franz Bernhard von Bucholtz (https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_Bernhard_von_Bucholtz) coming to mind.

It is these exuberant pan-Germanist elements, besides his more conservative foes, that Schmalz was sniping against c.1816 on basis of his traditional corporate patriotism:

...Other connections soon formed in silence, perhaps from the rubble of those and the others mentioned above; praiseworthy, if for the liberation of the fatherland from foreign oppressors; worthy of a vengeance, if by this means various purposes are to be enforced in the interior without the king's will.

But the existence of such connections spreads fear amongst the citizens of all German lands and fills the legal citizen of the Prussian states with indignation. From such fraternities go forth with those rabid insults against other governments, and those great declamations about uniting the whole of Germany under a government (in a representative system, as they call it); an association which from ancient times was opposed to the spirit of all German peoples, for whom, however, adherence to the particular dynasties is now to be depressed by scorn and sedition in every German breast. It characterizes her the passionate preaching of an absolute death-hating against France, but connected with the most shameful accusations of all German governments (also the Prussian is not spared, although, as they say, they require their uniform [army]) thereby in bourgeois life a firm expression of the most heartfelt contempt of all, even the distinguished statesmen or scholars, who disagree. To them all insight, all scholarship is denied, both are vilified as moronic, or as villainous; but not with the declaiming vehemence with which they write against governments (chiefly when the person is in the country), but with a dumb shrug, with a distinguished smile, with single half-insinuations, which afford the twofold advantage that they are all the more wounded deeper, and at the same time bring the slanderer to safety.

With the poisoning of the most sacred morality they teach nefariously, setting aside real, particular duties for those which are dreamt up and general, and therefore transgressive. **Like the Jacobins of mankind, they reflect the German, in order to make us forget the oaths, whereby we are each related to our prince. If millennia could not make a nation out of the Germans, if from Saxony and the Reich, Welfen and Waiblingen, Germany had always been torn apart, so often such a kind of unity was attempted between Germans: then their history and duty are the same little respected: — if perhaps they too would like to be governed by a provincial government, or by some other authority, and above all a rich income.**

Germany will flourish great and glorious when the princes mean it truly with the German Confederation, as with a holy Confederation, to which common interest really unites them, and what oldest and recent experience so plainly teaches them. But these people want to bring about a German war against the unity and concord of Germans in Germany; establish a unity of government through bitter mutual hatred... Harmony in unity and duration in the founding of their constitutions, they do not think of that. They want the new upheaval, do not want a permanent state, actually want nothing but themselves everywhere. Mouths without hands (often without a head) have always embarrassed because they had no orders to utter.

However, Germany does not have cause to tremble before them. Such passionate or passionate-looking people can not deceive and the truth is not on their side. Never have the German minds of our people been moved by declamations; Bitterness and rudeness, however, repel each reader from their pamphlets, which does not belong to them.

To be sure, they proudly boast of what they, the allies, would have done in 1813 in order to inspire the Prussian nation – whence the fear would arise that they too could inspire both Prussia and other Germans for their purposes.

But they only boldly say the untruth, if they boast that they had inspired the Prussian nation. There was no trace of such enthusiasm or enthusiasm from them in 1813. It was like this:

The people felt a deep oppression of the fatherland. But in quiet strength they waited for the king's signal. When in 1812 the union with France was concluded, which saved us, and through us the whole of Europe, these people screamed and proclaimed, threatened and tried all sorts of things. But the people obeyed against their affection the commands which the king gave against their own. **In February and March, 1813, there had not been a declamated paper, not a word spoken of when the King issued the call, and upon this call suddenly the whole nation stood up, like a man. No enthusiasm, everywhere quiet and the stronger feeling of duty prevailing. Everyone rushed to arms, and to every activity, as one hurries out of quite ordinary civic duty to extinguish a fire.** That was just the beautiful, noble, great, so genuine German sense, that no one acted as if he did something special, if he made the biggest sacrifices. Everybody was as if it had to be that way.

And now they want to admit the glory of the people. But they did nothing, their yelling did not affect the people. On the contrary, many who count the rumor among them behaved so clumsily that it was not up to them when the zeal of the people was not stifled by their awkwardness. They spoke of freedom, and even drove the poor mean man despotic, where they had something to command; they spoke of great interest, and yet played with the poorest pedantry in their orders; they spoke of sacrifices on the altar of the Fatherland, and yet kept their own offering to themselves. Wherever they appeared with stern earnestness, the people saw well that they did not feel the distress of the fatherland, but their own dignity.

But the purposes of such leagues may not be so bad; Nor is it important to distrust the German governments of one another, or to enforce general or special constitutions against the will of the princes; For example, it would be only a matter of uniting the better minds (and giving yourself the honor of counting oneself) in order to bring oneself and theirs into administrative offices: it remains incomprehensible how intelligent men cannot draw such conclusions!...

[source (http://www.gleichsatz.de/b-u-t/spdk/19jhd/schmalz_vereine.html)]

First, it's clear this was written by a civil servant ("just bring yourself into administrative office, fam" — exactly what you don't want). On the other hand, his picture of patriotism and devotion to the fatherland as being essentially bound to an ethos of soldierly loyalty to a commanding superior and to a paternal submission, is quite interesting and in contradistinction to the spirit of the self-appointed popular guerrilla that characterizes the emotional content of patriotic expressions today. The problem is, of course, that this portrait of the "genuine German sense" proved quite wrong and where the *patria* has been deprived of paternal figures after the representative system and unitary statehood took hold, how can nationally minded activism manifest itself as anything other than the rabid shock troopers of a bureaucratic apparatus? Fatherlands without fathers, be they fathers on the throne or fathers of households — what a problem to behold.

Of course, the fact is that we are stuck with the descendants of the blabbering buffoonery of Burschenschaft romantics as the representatives of modern rightism, and from a practical standpoint it can definitely drive back some of the more egregious dimensions of left-wing emancipationist extremism. But it can only do so in a cyclical fashion of internationalist action followed by nationalist reaction ad infinitum, never as a permanent fortress, unless the governmental and media institutions of nation-building are somehow permanently barred from infiltration — which is really the core and seemingly unsolvable problem to begin with. But, when the peasant of Oldenburg was convinced by the Bildungsbürgertum that he is as entitled to a stake in Tyrol as much as anyone actually living there, he lost a good deal of rootedness and groundedness that had to be replenished by state-institutional programmings of mechanical-rationalistic solidarity.

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