

Chapter 16 — The Kaiser's Dream of World Power

from *Long Heads and Round Heads: Or, What's the Matter with Germany* (1918)

by William S. Sadler, M.D.

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Sources for Chapter 16, in the order in which they appear

- (1) Munroe Smith, LL.D., Editor, *Out of Their Own Mouths: Utterances of German Rulers, Statesmen, Savants, Publicists, Journalists, Poets, Business Men, Party Leaders and Soldiers* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1917)
- (2) William Archer, Compiler, *Gems (?) of German Thought* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1917)

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source first appears, or where it reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and Sadler pointedly differ from one another.
- (e) **Pink** indicates passages where Sadler specifically shares his own experiences, opinions, advice, etc.
- (f) **Red** indicates an obvious mistake, in most cases brought about by Sadler's miscopying or misunderstanding his source, or an otherwise questionable statement.

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XVI: PRUSSIAN CONTEMPT FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW

16:0.1 THE world has come to recognize that the Prussian government looks only with contempt upon national treaties and other solemn contracts. The present rulers of Germany look down in disdain upon the sacred obligations of international law. The German military system does not permit itself to be in the least handicapped or fettered by any of the so-called rules of civilized warfare.

16:0.2 Not only do we observe that, by practice and performance, Germany has made herself an international outlaw—an outcast among the civilized countries of the earth, so much so that more than a score of nations have already declared war upon her—I say, not only do the cruel and barbarous acts of the German military machine justify this universal and world-wide contempt, but a perusal of the following quotations from leading German authorities will show that German militarists, philosophers, and educators have been for half a century inculcating this very disrespect for international law into the minds and hearts of each successive generation. Read what Bernhardi, Treitschke, and Hartmann have to say on the subject of international law and the rules of civilized warfare:

“MITTEL EUROPA”¹VIII: UTTERANCES OF MILITARY RULERS (*Out of Their Own Mouths* 150)

Need of strengthening Germany’s European position (*Out of Their Own Mouths* 169)

We can increase our power by **joining to Germany those middle European States which are at present independent,**

forming a Central European Union which . . . should have the purpose of defense and offense for promoting the interests of all its members.

This object can in all probability be realized only after a victorious war.

Bernhardi, “Unsere Zukunft” (1912); translation by J. Ellis Barker, entitled “Britain as Germany’s Vassal” (1914), pp. 207-208 (169).

III: UTTERANCES OF PHILOSOPHERS, HISTORIANS AND MEN OF SCIENCE (*Out of Their Own Mouths* 33)

World power (*Out of Their Own Mouths* 46)

... In the division of the non-European world among the European powers Germany has always hitherto failed to get its share; and the question whether we can become an oversea Power involves our existence as a Power of the first rank.

If we cannot, we face the horrible prospect that England and Russia will divide the world between them. . . .

Treitschke, *ibid.*, vol. i, pp. 42-43 (46-47).

16:1.1 “We can increase our power by joining to Germany those middle European States which are at present independent,

forming a Central European Union which should have the purpose of defense and offense for promoting the interests of all its members.

This object can in all probability be realized only after a victorious war.”—Bernhardi.

16:1.2 “In the division of the non-European world among the European powers Germany has always hitherto failed to get its share; and the question whether we can become an oversea Power involves our existence as a Power of the first rank.

If we cannot, we face the horrible prospect that England and Russia will divide the world between them.”—Treitschke.

SOURCE

VIII: UTTERANCES OF MILITARY RULERS (*Out of Their Own Mouths* 150)

Military necessity versus the laws of war (*Out of Their Own Mouths* 155)

Military action must be determined solely in accordance with those conditions which usually prevail in war; in this sense **its procedure is completely ruthless.**

For the individual soldier murder and ill-treatment, robbery and pillage, are crimes and offenses whether committed in war or in peace.

It goes without saying that, in actual warfare, it is hardly ever possible to draw a sharp line between these two courses of action on the part of the fighting forces (155-56).

Rights which the war power has to respect can exist only in so far as they are expressly conceded, recognized, or maintained by that power. . . .

If the war power admits duties, it imposes them upon itself by virtue of its own supremacy; it does not regard them as imposed upon itself by any external authority (156-57).

Unconditioned freedom of military action in war is an indispensable condition of military success.

This is the principle which must be evoked from a military point of view against every effort to fetter action by an international law of war.

Gen. Julius van Hartmann, "Militärische Notwendigkeit und Humanität," in the "Deutsche Rundschau," vol. xiii (1877), pp. 116-117, 122-124, vol. xiv (1878), p. 89 (157).

16: LONG HEADS AND ROUND HEADS

16:1.3 "Military action must be determined solely in accordance with those conditions which usually prevail in war; in this sense its procedure is completely ruthless.

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GERMANIC DECEIT AND DISHONOR

16:2.1 That solemn treaties with the nations are mere “scraps of paper” is not a new doctrine in Prussia. That deception and faithlessness are not incompatible with national self-respect and honor has long been taught the German people by their Prussian overlords and military masters.

16:2.2 That “necessity knows no law,” and that German might in itself constitutes the height of moral mandate, is the very quintessence of modern German philosophy. Read these confessions of deceit and dishonor and then see how small a thing it was for Germany to violate Belgium's neutrality:

I: UTTERANCES OF RULERS (*Out of Their Own Mouths* 1)

“Scraps of paper” (*Out of Their Own Mouths* 2)

All written constitutions are only scraps of paper.

Frederic William IV, Speech from the Throne, April 11, 1847 (2).

Political philosophy of Frederic II (*Out of Their Own Mouths* 1)

If there is anything to be gained by it, we will be honest; if deception is necessary, let us be cheats.

Frederic II, Letter to Minister Radziwill (1).

16:2.3 “All written constitutions are only scraps of paper.”—Frederick William IV.

16:2.4 “If there is anything to be gained by it, we will be honest; if deception is necessary, let us be cheats.”—Frederick II.

SOURCE

V: MACHIAVELISM (*Gems (?) of German Thought* 185)

Mendacity and Faithlessness. (*Gems (?) of German Thought* 185)

373. It is natural, and within certain limits, politically a matter of course, that the German Emperor should have thought that, until Germany had a strong fleet, we must try to keep on good terms with England, and even, on occasion, to make concessions.—GRAF E. v. REVENTLOW, D.A.P., p. 60 (188-89).

II: UTTERANCES OF GERMAN MINISTERS AND CHANCELLORS (*Out of Their Own Mouths* 8)

The invasion of Belgium a “wrong” (*Out of Their Own Mouths* 18)

Gentlemen, we are now in a state of necessity of self-preservation (*Notwehr*) and **necessity knows no law.**

Our troops have occupied Luxemburg and perhaps have already entered Belgian territory (18).

[contd] Gentlemen, that is a **breach of international law** (18).

The wrong—I speak openly—**the wrong we thereby commit** we will try to make good **as soon as our military aims have been attained.** ...

Speech of Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg in the Reichstag, August 4, 1914 (18).

16: LONG HEADS AND ROUND HEADS

16:2.5 “It is natural, and within certain limits, politically a matter of course, that the German Emperor should have thought that, until Germany had a strong fleet, we must try to keep on good terms with England, and even, on occasion, to make concessions.”—Reventlow.

16:2.6 “Gentlemen, we are now in a state of necessity of self-preservation, and necessity knows no law.”

Our troops have occupied Luxemburg and perhaps have already entered Belgian territory.

Gentlemen, that is a breach of international law. . . .

The wrong—I speak openly—the wrong we thereby commit we will try to make good as soon as our military aims have been attained.”—Bethmann-Hollweg, August 4, 1914.

SOURCE

16: LONG HEADS AND ROUND HEADS

III: UTTERANCES OF PHILOSOPHERS, HISTORIANS AND MEN OF SCIENCE (*Out of Their Own Mouths* 33)

Political morality (*Out of Their Own Mouths* 43)

It is necessary to distinguish between public and private morality.

Since the State is power, the relative importance of duties must be quite different for it and for the individual...

For the State, self-assertion is the greatest of the commandments; for it, this is absolutely moral.

And for this reason it must be declared that of all political sins the most abominable and the most contemptible is weakness; this is, in politics, the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Treitschke, *ibid.*, vol. i, pp. 100-101 (43-44).

V: MACHIAVELISM (*Gems (?) of German Thought* 185)

Mendacity and Faithlessness. (*Gems (?) of German Thought* 185)

374. ... Moreover, every sovereign State has the undoubted right to declare war at its pleasure, and is consequently entitled to repudiate its treaties.—H. v. TREITSCHKE, p. i. 28 (189).

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Moreover, every sovereign State has the undoubted right to declare war at its pleasure, and is consequently entitled to repudiate its treaties.”—Treitschke.

1. A misspelling of ‘Mitteleuropa’, the German word meaning Central Europe.