

a few Slavonians, acting the part of spies for their friends at Olmütz, besides a few of the more revolutionary Polish deputies, sat in permanency; but instead of taking part resolutely, they lost all their time in idle debates upon the possibility of resisting the imperial army without overstepping the bounds of constitutional conventionalities. The committee of safety, composed of deputies from almost all the popular bodies of Vienna, although resolved to resist, was yet dominated by a majority of burghers and petty tradesmen, who never allowed it to follow up any determined, energetic line of action. The council of the Academic Legion passed heroic resolutions, but was in no way able to take the lead. The working classes, distrusted, disarmed, disorganized, hardly emerging from the intellectual bondage of the old *régime*, hardly awaking, not to a knowledge, but to a mere instinct of their social position and proper political line of action, could only make themselves heard by loud demonstrations, and could not be expected to be up to the difficulties of the moment. But they were ready--as they ever were in Germany during the revolution--to fight to the last, as soon as they obtained arms.

That was the state of things in Vienna. Outside, the reorganized Austrian army flushed with the victories of Radetzky in Italy; sixty or seventy thousand men well armed, well organized, and if not well commanded at least possessing commanders. Inside, confusion, class division, disorganization; a national guard part of which was resolved not to fight at all, part irresolute, and only the smallest part ready to act; a proletarian mass, powerful by numbers but without leaders, without any political education, subject to panic as well as to fits of fury almost without cause, a prey to every false rumor spread about, quite ready to fight, but unarmed, at least in the beginning, and incompletely armed, and barely organized when at last they were led to battle; a helpless Diet, discussing theoretical quibbles while the roof over their heads was almost burning; a leading committee without impulse or energy. Everything was changed from the days of March and May, when, in the counter-revolutionary camp, all was confusion, and when the only organized force was that created by the revolution. There could hardly be a doubt about the issue of such a struggle, and whatever doubt there might be, was settled by the events of the 30th and 31st of October, and 1st November.

LONDON, March, 1852.

XII.

THE STORMING OF VIENNA--THE BETRAYAL OF VIENNA.

APRIL 9th, 1852.

When at last the concentrated army of Windischgrätz commenced the attack upon Vienna, the forces that could be brought forward in defence were exceedingly insufficient for the purpose. Of the National Guard only a portion was to be brought to the entrenchments. A Proletarian Guard, it is true, had at last been hastily formed, but owing to the lateness of the attempt to thus make available the most numerous, most daring, and most energetic part of the population, it was too little inured to the use of arms and to the very first rudiments of discipline to offer a successful resistance. Thus the Academic Legion, three to four thousand strong, well exercised and disciplined to a certain degree, brave and enthusiastic, was, militarily speaking, the only force which was in a state to do its work successfully. But what were they, together with the few reliable National Guards, and with the confused mass of the armed proletarians, in opposition to the far more numerous regulars of Windischgrätz, not counting even the brigand hordes of Jellachich, hordes that were, by the very nature of their habits, very useful in a war from house to house, from lane to lane? And what but a few old, outworn, ill-mounted, and ill-served pieces of ordnance had the insurgents to oppose to that numerous and well-appointed artillery, of which Windischgrätz made such an unscrupulous use?

The nearer the danger drew, the more grew the confusion in Vienna. The Diet, up to the last moment, could not collect sufficient energy to call in for aid the Hungarian army of Perczel, encamped a few leagues below the capital. The committee passed contradictory resolutions, they themselves being, like the popular armed masses, floated up and down with the alternately rising and receding tide of rumors and counter-rumors. There

was only one thing upon which all agreed--to respect property; and this was done in a degree almost ludicrous for such times. As to the final arrangement of a plan of defence, very little was done. Bem, the only man present who could have saved Vienna, if any could then in Vienna, an almost unknown foreigner, a Slavonian by birth, gave up the task, overwhelmed as he was by universal distrust. Had he persevered, he might have been lynched as a traitor. Messenhauser, the commander of the insurgent forces, more of a novel-writer than even of a subaltern officer, was totally inadequate to the task; and yet, after eight months of revolutionary struggles, the popular party had not produced or acquired a military man of more ability than he. Thus the contest began. The Viennese considering their utterly inadequate means of defence, considering their utter absence of military skill and organization in the ranks, offered a most heroic resistance. In many places the order given by Bem, when he was in command, "to defend that post to the last man," was carried out to the letter. But force prevailed. Barricade after barricade was swept away by the imperial artillery in the long and wide avenues which form the main streets of the suburbs; and on the evening of the second day's fighting the Croats occupied the range of houses facing the glacis of the Old Town. A feeble and disorderly attack of the Hungarian army had been utterly defeated; and during an armistice, while some parties in the Old Town capitulated, while others hesitated and spread confusion, while the remnants of the Academic Legion prepared fresh intrenchments, an entrance was made by the imperialists, and in the midst of the general disorder the Old Town was carried.

The immediate consequences of this victory, the brutalities and executions by martial law, the unheard-of cruelties and infamies committed by the Slavonian hordes let loose upon Vienna, are too well known to be detailed here. The ulterior consequences, the entirely new turn given to German affairs by the defeat of the revolution in Vienna, we shall have reason to notice hereafter. There remain two points to be considered in connection with the storming of Vienna. The people of that capital had two allies--the Hungarians and the German people. Where were they in the hour of trial?

We have seen that the Viennese, with all the generosity of a newly freed people, had risen for a cause which, though ultimately their own, was in the first instance, and above all, that of the Hungarians. Rather than suffer the Austrian troops to march upon Hungary, they would draw their first and most terrific onslaught upon themselves. And while they thus nobly came forward for the support of their allies, the Hungarians, successful against Jellachich, drove him upon Vienna, and by their victory strengthened the force that was to attack that town. Under these circumstances it was the clear duty of Hungary to support, without delay, and with all disposable forces, not the Diet of Vienna, not the Committee of Safety or any other official body at Vienna, but the *Viennese* revolution. And if Hungary should even have forgotten that Vienna had fought the first battle of Hungary, she owed it to her own safety not to forget that Vienna was the only outpost of Hungarian independence, and that after the fall of Vienna nothing could meet the advance of the imperial troops against herself. Now, we know very well all the Hungarians can say and have said in defence of their inactivity during the blockade and storming of Vienna: the insufficient state of their own force, the refusal of the Diet or any other official body in Vienna to call them in, the necessity to keep on constitutional ground, and to avoid complications with the German central power. But the fact is, as to the insufficient state of the Hungarian army, that in the first days after the Viennese revolution and the arrival of Jellachich, nothing was wanted in the shape of regular troops, as the Austrian regulars were very far from being concentrated; and that a courageous, unrelenting following up of the first advantage over Jellachich, even with nothing but the *Land Sturm* that had fought at Stuhlweissenburg, would have sufficed to effect a junction with the Viennese, and to adjourn to that day six months every concentration of an Austrian army. In war, and particularly in revolutionary warfare, rapidity of action until some decided advantage is gained is the first rule, and we have no hesitation in saying that upon *merely military grounds*. Perczel ought not to have stopped until his junction with the Viennese was affected. There was certainly some risk, but who ever won a battle without risking something? And did the people of Vienna risk nothing when they drew upon themselves--they, a population of four hundred thousand--the forces that were to march to the conquest of twelve millions of Hungarians? The military fault committed by waiting until the Austrians had united, and by making the feeble demonstration at Schwechat which ended, as it deserved to do, in an inglorious defeat--this military fault certainly incurred more risks than a resolute march upon Vienna against the disbanded brigands of Jellachich

would have done.

But, it is said, such an advance of the Hungarians, unless authorized by some official body, would have been a violation of the German territory, would have brought on complications with the central power at Frankfort, and would have been, above all, an abandonment of the legal and constitutional policy which formed the strength of the Hungarian cause. Why, the official bodies in Vienna were nonentities! Was it the Diet, was it the popular committees, who had risen for Hungary, or was it the people of Vienna, and they alone, who had taken to the musket to stand the brunt of the first battle for Hungary's independence? It was not this nor that official body in Vienna which it was important to uphold; all these bodies might, and would have been, upset very soon in the progress of the revolutionary development; but it was the ascendancy of the revolutionary movement, the unbroken progress of popular action itself, which alone was in question, and which alone could save Hungary from invasion. What forms this revolutionary movement afterwards might take, was the business of the Viennese, not of the Hungarians, so long as Vienna and German Austria at large continued their allies against the common enemy. But the question is, whether in this stickling of the Hungarian government for some quasi-legal authorization, we are not to see the first clear symptom of that pretence to a rather doubtful legality of proceeding, which, if it did not save Hungary, at least told very well, at a later period, before the English middle class audiences.

As to the pretext of possible conflicts with the central power of Germany at Frankfort, it is quite futile. The Frankfort authorities were *de facto* upset by the victory of the counter-revolution at Vienna; they would have been equally upset had the revolution there found the support necessary to defeat its enemies. And lastly, the great argument that Hungary could not leave legal and constitutional ground, may do very well for British free-traders, but it will never be deemed sufficient in the eyes of history. Suppose the people of Vienna had stuck to "legal and constitutional means" on the 13th of March, and on the 6th of October, what then of the "legal and constitutional" movement, and of all the glorious battles which, for the first time, brought Hungary to the notice of the civilized world? The very legal and constitutional ground upon which it is asserted the Hungarians moved in 1848 and 1849 was conquered for them by the exceedingly illegal and unconstitutional rising of the people of Vienna on the 13th March. It is not to our purpose here to discuss the revolutionary history of Hungary, but it may be deemed proper if we observe that it is utterly useless to professedly use merely legal means of resistance against an enemy who scorns such scruples; and if we add, that had it not been for this eternal pretence of legality which Görgey seized upon and turned against the Government, the devotion of Görgey's army to its general, and the disgraceful catastrophe of Villagos, would have been impossible. And when, at last, to save their honor, the Hungarians came across the Leitha, in the latter end of October, 1848, was not this quite as illegal as any immediate and resolute attack would have been?

We are known to harbor no unfriendly feeling toward Hungary. We stood by her during the struggles; we may be allowed to say that our paper, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, [8] has done more than any other to render the Hungarian cause popular in Germany, by explaining the nature of the struggle between the Magyar and Slavonian races, and by following up the Hungarian war in a series of articles which have had paid them the compliment of being plagiarized in almost every subsequent book upon the subject, the works of native Hungarians and "eyewitnesses" not excepted. We even now, in any future continental convulsion, consider Hungary as the necessary and natural ally of Germany. But we have been severe enough upon our own countrymen, to have a right to speak out upon our neighbors; and then we have here to record facts with historical impartiality, and we must say that in this particular instance, the generous bravery of the people of Vienna was not only far more noble, but also more far-sighted than the cautious circumspection of the Hungarian Government. And, as a German, we may further be allowed to say, that not for all the showy victories and glorious battles of the Hungarian campaign, would we exchange that spontaneous, single-handed rising, and heroic resistance of the people of Vienna, our countrymen, which gave Hungary the time to organize the army that could do such great things.

The second ally of Vienna was the German people. But they were everywhere engaged in the same struggle as the Viennese. Frankfort, Baden, Cologne, had just been defeated and disarmed. In Berlin and Breslau the

people were at daggers-drawn with the army, and daily expected to come to blows. Thus it was in every local center of action. Everywhere questions were pending that could only be settled by the force of arms; and now it was that for the first time were severely felt the disastrous consequences of the continuation of the old dismemberment and decentralization of Germany. The different questions in every State, every province, every town, were fundamentally the same; but they were brought forward everywhere under different shapes and pretexts, and had everywhere attained different degrees of maturity. Thus it happened that while in every locality the decisive gravity of the events at Vienna was felt, yet nowhere could an important blow be struck with any hope of bringing the Viennese succor, or making a diversion in their favor; and there remained nothing to aid them but the Parliament and Central Power of Frankfort; they were appealed to on all hands; but what did they do?

The Frankfort Parliament and the bastard child it had brought to light by incestuous intercourse with the old German Diet, the so-called Central Power, profited by the Viennese movement to show forth their utter nullity. This contemptible Assembly, as we have seen, had long since sacrificed its virginity, and young as it was, it was already turning grey-headed and experienced in all the artifices of painting and pseudo-diplomatic prostitution. Of the dreams and illusions of power, of German regeneration and unity, that in the beginning had pervaded it, nothing remained but a set of Teutonic clap-trap phraseology, that was repeated on every occasion, and a firm belief of each individual member in his own importance, as well as in the credulity of the public. The original naivety was discarded; the representatives of the German people had turned practical men, that is to say, they had made it out that the less they did, and the more they prated, the safer would be their position as the umpires of the fate of Germany. Not that they considered their proceedings superfluous; quite the contrary. But they had found out that all really great questions, being to them forbidden ground, had better be let alone, and there, like a set of Byzantine doctors of the Lower Empire, they discussed with an importance and assiduity worthy of the fate that at last overtook them, theoretical dogmas long ago settled in every part of the civilized world, or microscopical practical questions which never led to any practical result. Thus, the Assembly being a sort of Lancastrian School for the mutual instruction of members, and being, therefore, very important to themselves, they were persuaded it was doing even more than the German people had a right to expect, and looked upon everyone as a traitor to the country who had impudence to ask them to come to any result.

When the Viennese insurrection broke out, there was a host of interpellations, debates, motions, and amendments upon it, which, of course, led to nothing. The Central Power was to interfere. It sent two commissioners, Welcker, the ex-Liberal, and Mosle, to Vienna. The travels of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza form matter for an Odyssey in comparison with the heroic feats and wonderful adventures of those two knight-errants of German Unity. Not daring to go to Vienna, they were bullied by Windischgrätz, wondered at by the idiot Emperor, and impudently hoaxed by the Minister Stadion. Their despatches and reports are perhaps the only portion of the Frankfort transactions that will retain a place in German literature; they are a perfect satirical romance, ready cut and dried, and an eternal monument of disgrace for the Frankfort Assembly and its Government.

The left side of the Assembly had also sent two commissioners to Vienna, in order to uphold its authority there--Froebel and Robert Blum. Blum, when danger drew near, judged rightly that here the great battle of the German Revolution was to be fought, and unhesitatingly resolved to stake his head on the issue. Froebel, on the contrary, was of opinion that it was his duty to preserve himself for the important duties of his post at Frankfort. Blum was considered one of the most eloquent men of the Frankfort Assembly; he certainly was the most popular. His eloquence would not have stood the test of any experienced Parliamentary Assembly; he was too fond of the shallow declamations of a German dissenting preacher, and his arguments wanted both philosophical acumen and acquaintance with practical matters of fact. In politics he belonged to "Moderate Democracy," a rather indefinite sort of thing, cherished on account of this very want of definiteness in its principles. But with all this Robert Blum was by nature a thorough, though somewhat polished, plebeian, and in decisive moments his plebeian instinct and plebeian energy got the better of his indefiniteness, and, therefore, indecisive political persuasion and knowledge. In such moments he raised himself far above the

usual standard of his capacities.

Thus, in Vienna, he saw at a glance that here, not in the midst of the would-be elegant debates of Frankfort, the fate of his country would have to be decided. He at once made up his mind, gave up all idea of retreat, took a command in the revolutionary force, and behaved with extraordinary coolness and decision. It was he who retarded for a considerable time the taking of the town, and covered one of its sides from attack by burning the Tabor Bridge over the Danube. Everybody knows how, after the storming, he was arrested, tried by court-martial, and shot. He died like a hero. And the Frankfort Assembly, horrorstruck as it was, yet took the bloody insult with a seeming good grace. A resolution was carried, which, by the softness and diplomatic decency of its language, was more an insult to the grave of the murdered martyr than a damning stain upon Austria. But it was not to be expected that this contemptible Assembly should resent the assassination of one of its members, particularly of the leader of the Left.

LONDON, March, 1852.

FOOTNOTES:

[8] "Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung" (The New Rhenish Gazette). After the March revolution, 1848, Marx returned from Paris to Germany, and settling down--for the time being--at Cologne, founded this paper. Although the "Neue Rheinische Zeitung" never went in for propounding "Communist schemes," as Mr. Dawson, e.g., says it did, it became a very nightmare to the Government. Reactionaries and Liberals alike denounced the "Gazette," especially after Marx's brilliant defence of the Paris Insurrection of June. The state of siege being declared in Cologne, the "Gazette" was suspended for six weeks--only to appear with a bigger reputation and bigger circulation than before. After the Prussian "coup d'état" in November, the "Gazette" published at the head of every issue an appeal to the people to refuse to pay taxes, and to meet force by force. For this and certain other articles the paper was twice prosecuted. On the first occasion the accused were Marx, Engels, and Korff; on the second and more important trial, they were Marx, Schapper, and Schneider. The accused were charged with "inciting the people to armed resistance against the Government and its officials." Marx mainly conducted the defence, and delivered a brilliant speech. "Marx refrains" (in this speech) "from all oratorical flourish; he goes straight to the point, and without any peroration ends with a summary of the political situation. Anyone would think that Marx's own personality was to deliver a political lecture to the jury. And, in fact, at the end of the trial, one of the jurors went to Marx to thank him, in the name of his colleagues, for the instructive lecture he had given them." (See Bernstein's work, "Ferdinand Lassalle.") The accused were unanimously acquitted by the jury. Among the better known of the contributors of the "New Rhenish Gazette," edited by Marx, were Engels, W. Wolff, Werth, Lassalle; while Freiligrath wrote for it his splendid revolutionary poems. Perhaps one of the grandest of these is the celebrated "Farewell of the 'Rhenish Gazette'," when on the 19th May, 1849, the final number of the paper--suppressed by the Government--appeared, printed in red type.

"When the last of crowns like glass shall break,
On the scene our sorrows have haunted,
And the people the last dread 'Guilty' shall speak,
By your side ye shall find me undaunted.
On Rhine or on Danube, in word and deed,
You shall witness, true to his vow,
On the wrecks of thrones, in the midst of the freed
The rebel who greets you now."

(Translated by Ernest Jones.)

XIII.

THE PRUSSIAN ASSEMBLY--THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

APRIL 17th, 1852.