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ARNDT AND THE NATIONALIST AWAKENING
IN GERMANY

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Und ihr sollet euch wieder brüderlich gesellen zu einander, alle, die ihr Deutsche heisset und in deutscher Zunge redet, und den Trug bejammern, der euch so lange entzweit hat.—*Kurzer Katechismus für den teutschen Kriegs- und Wehrmann.*

FOREWORD

THIS study does not profess to be a biography of Arndt or an analysis of all his writings and activities. It attempts, rather, to concentrate on such facts concerning his early environment and his intellectual development and achievements as are pertinent to an understanding of the kind of nationalist he was and the type of nationalism which he advocated during the Napoleonic Era and down to 1815. Special attention is given to his work as a propagandist—to his popular and patriotic pamphlets and poems.

The year 1815 constitutes an important landmark in the political history of Central Europe as well as in Arndt's public life, and it has been thought fitting, therefore, to terminate the study at this point. Although Arndt lived for forty-five years after the Congress of Vienna, his nationalism and his reputation for liberalism were suspect by the reactionary regime of those years, and with his suspension from the professorship of history at Bonn in 1819 and his subsequent arrest for being involved in *staatsgefährliche Umtriebe und Verbindungen* he lost a good deal of the immense influence and popularity he had achieved during the Liberation War.

The writer welcomes this opportunity of acknowledging his great debt to Professor Carlton J. H. Hayes, of Columbia University, whose intelligent guidance and sympathetic encouragement must bear a large responsibility for whatever merit this work may possess. The author is also grateful to Professor G. T. Robinson, of Columbia University, for his many helpful suggestions as to form and organization as well as for his innumerable constructive criticisms of detail. Likewise, Professor James E. Gillespie, of the Pennsylvania State College, has been especially helpful, giving cheerfully of his experience as a writer and a scholar. Finally, hearty thanks are extended to the library staffs of Columbia University, the University of Chicago, the State University of Iowa, the Pennsylvania State College, and the Congressional Library, for their courteous service in supplying material necessary for the prosecution of this study.

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CHAPTER I

A SWEDISH SUBJECT

O Eiland, das ich meine,
Wie tut's nach dir mir weh!
Nach Fluchten und nach Zügen
Weit über Land und Meer,
Mein trautes Ländchen Rügen,
Wie mahnst du mich so sehr!

THE career of Ernst Moritz Arndt begins in the natal year of heroes. By a curious coincidence, the same year that saw the birth, on a Mediterranean island, of one of the greatest military geniuses of all time, witnessed also the birth, on another island in the Atlantic of the Duke of Wellington, perhaps Napoleon's greatest military adversary. It was in this fateful year — 1769 — that Rügen, a small island in the Baltic Sea, gave Germany one of her most colorful and devoted patriots.

The paternal connection of the Arndt family reached back to Sweden proper. Our hero's great-grandfather, Andreas Arndt, had served as a corporal in the royal Swedish army and had for some years been attached to a Finnish regiment.¹ After engaging in several wars, Andreas had abandoned military service, and, migrating across the Baltic from Sweden, had married into a family from Rügen, where he subsequently settled down as a serf on an estate

¹ Wolfram, Richard, "Ernst Moritz Arndt und Schweden," in *Forschungen zur neueren Literaturgeschichte*, vol. lxxv (Weimar, 1933), p. 21

of the count of Putbus.² Rügen, being a part of Hither Pomerania, was at that time, and until the Congress of Vienna many years later, a dependency of Sweden.

Ernst Moritz Arndt's father, Ludwig Nikolaus, a younger son in a large family, made his mark in the world as a shrewd and enterprising farmer. When but a youngster, his lord, Count Malte of Putbus, had often employed him as *Jäger* on his travels, and during the Seven Years War, Ludwig was sent on many responsible and dangerous missions. While still a young man he was made inspector of the Count's Schoritz estate. Presently hereupon, in recognition of his services and ability, Ludwig Nikolaus was freed from serfdom. He was a man of mild temperament, not given to extremes or strong partisanship. By nature not a militant Christian, he was nevertheless pious and God-fearing. As a father he was both kind and indulgent.

The mother of Ernst Moritz, Friederike Wilhelmine Schumacher, was of a different cast.³ Hers was an emotional and religious nature. With a pietistic and mystical turn of mind she combined a lively intelligence. A soul of simplicity, she was inclined to be more austere than the circumstances of a thrifty lease-holder demanded. Vanity and the desire for pleasure held little seduction for her. In Arndt's own words: "A more cheerful and congenial soul in a fragile body nature has never created; courageous in good fortune, helpful in adversity, modest, pious and energetic, gifted with a rich imagination and a pure heart."⁴

² For much of this early period the writer's chief reliance has been on the autobiographical *Erinnerungen aus dem äusseren Leben*, edited by Hugo Rösch, volume one of the *Erste einheitliche Ausgabe seiner Hauptschriften* (Leipzig, 1892-1909). Henceforth this will be cited as *Erinnerungen*.

³ Cf. Meisner, H., "E. M. Arndts Mutter," in *Vossische Zeitung*, Sonntagsbeilage no. 36 (1897).

⁴ Quoted from a letter of 1805, in *Ernst Moritz Arndts Briefe an eine Freundin*, edited by Erich Gülzow (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1928), p. 28.

This is the picture of Arndt's mother that emerges from his writings.

Professor Steffens colors and further illuminates this picture by the disclosure that Wilhelmine Schumacher had two illegitimate children before her marriage, the second of which was fathered by Ludwig Arndt.⁵ This circumstance, however, must be considered in the light of the contemporary situation—against the background of the tumult and horror of the Seven Years' War in which this orphaned innkeeper's daughter was left to contend against the license and brutality of quartered mercenaries. No doubt her piety and almost religious devotion to her family was an attempt to atone for the weaknesses and passions of her youth.

The early years of Arndt are associated with the estate Schoritz which his father had rented and which was situated on a bay separating the Zudar peninsula from Rügen proper. The Arndt home sat in the midst of large flower gardens and woods studded with tall birch and oak. Here the youthful Ernst Moritz lived in a dream world—a world of abundance, freedom and romance. The fantasy was punctuated by visits from Ernst Moritz's uncle and godfather, Moritz Schumacher, as well as from an old Prussian captain, von Wotke, from Further Pomerania. But the visitors did not always find Ernst's father at home, and in such instances, Moritz Schumacher sometimes amused his young nephew with interesting stories of war and murder as well as with chapters out of his own colorful experiences.

About 1775 the stewardship over the Schoritz estate was abolished, whereupon Arndt's father, encouraged by credits advanced by some Stralsund friends, moved to Dumsewitz, where he leased several farms. Compared with Schoritz, Dumsewitz was in many respects primitive; it was like

⁵ Cited by Wolfram, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

going from palace to hut. There was a new but smaller house and the country roundabout was still comparatively wild. While as a farm it was crude, as a home this country enthralled the emotional and impulsive young Arndt. Since there was no school close at hand, Ernst Moritz divided his time between duties on the farm, bathing in the sound, and tramps through the wilds that he loved.

Meanwhile the education of the Arndt children—of which there now were six, five boys and one girl—had not been entirely neglected. First the parents undertook to teach them the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic during the winter months. When they approached their teens, however, a new arrangement had to be made. Thus the eldest, Karl, was sent off to school at Stralsund, while a certain elderly Mr. Krai was engaged to tutor the rest. But Tutor Krai, feeling himself slighted, soon left, and school was out once more.

At this time Rügen still cultivated a pietistic Christianity.⁶ Here the zeal of the Reformation had persisted in spite of Deism and the Enlightenment. In fact, Rügen was little touched by the outside world, save the court circles, where the French language was spasmodically used. There were then few commoners on the island who even understood High German, Low German being almost everywhere the rule. Even in the best society, after a few stiff introductory compliments in High German, there was a quick and natural relapse into dialect. Thus, although Rügen had long been a part of Swedish Pomerania, the dominant nationality of its inhabitants was German. There also existed a generous hospitality on the island which involved a great deal of visiting and fed a spirit of conviviality.⁷

⁶ Cf. *Pommersche Geschichtsdenkmäler*, vol. v, edited by Theodor Pyl (Greifswald, 1889), *passim*.

⁷ *Erinnerungen*, pp. 12-20.

In 1780 the Arndt family moved from Dunsewitz to Grabitz, which was situated in the northeast corner of the island, about four English miles from Stralsund. Here Ludwig Nikolaus leased the estates of Grabitz and Breesen from a Colonel von Schlagenteufel. Although the land here was not so romantic as at Schoritz, much of it was still uncultivated and wild.

These early and formative years Arndt subsequently recalled as the happiest of his life. The unrestrained and spontaneous existence, unhampered by any formal and rigorous discipline, appealed strongly to his emotional and mystical temperament. He describes himself at this time as "a faithful, obedient and industrious young man," as "impetuous, obstinate and self-willed, both more stubborn and more bashful than any of my brothers." Visiting strangers, according to the same account, generally put him down last in the family.

It was at Grabitz and Breesen that Ernst Moritz attended a regular school for the first time. A private tutor, Müller, was jointly engaged by his father and a certain neighbor, Lange. He taught the Arndt children and Lange's daughter writing, arithmetic, Bible, some history, geology and Latin. As a tutor Müller had his limitations, however, for he had been a soldier by profession, having served in the Prussian and Swedish armies. His whole bearing and approach were military and betrayed an ostentatious contempt of the peasantry and day-laborers, a circumstance that led, in 1783, to his displacement by Dankwardt, a theological student.

Dankwardt had come largely through the initiative of the local pastors Stenzler and Krüger and of Ernst Moritz's mother with whom these two had great influence, and it was not long before he had thoroughly ingratiated himself with the Arndt parents. He was cheerful, sincere and pious. As Arndt later writes of him, he "had an eloquent

head, a keen mind, and, although mediocre in French, weak in English and very weak in Greek, he was a passionate Latinist.”⁸ Later, as pastor, he remained a warm friend of the Arndt family.

In spite of his late initiation into formal education, there were meanwhile many influences shaping the character and mind of the young Arndt. Life on the estates as renter, even in those days of post-coaches and poor roads, of few, little-read and expensive newspapers, did not necessarily entail isolation from the larger world wherein one lived. There were contacts through the visits of friends and relatives and the stimulus of such newspapers and books of legends, fairy tales and history as could be had. It is noteworthy that even the far distant American Revolution, which was then in progress, became a subject of lively controversy in the Arndt home. The young Arndt quickly championed the cause of England. Although early inculcated with liberal sympathies, he was firmly attached to the monarchical principle, for the whole setting of Rügen was strongly royalist.

While Arndt's father took little interest in politics prior to 1800, the uncles, Hinrich Arndt and Moritz Schumacher, who were frequent visitors at Ernst Moritz's home, discussed politics at length and with strong partisanship. Both of the older men kept the youth informed of current events. Often on week-ends, too, young Ernst Moritz went to Posewald to visit with "Father" Arndt, as uncle Hinrich was reverently called. Radiant with cheer and goodness of heart, this man was truly a venerable patriarch. With a keen appreciation of the poetic and romantic, he enchanted his young nephew with old Rügen and Swedish fairy tales, stories and anecdotes. While Hinrich was all Swedish, Arndt's maternal uncle, Moritz Schumacher, was

⁸ *Erinnerungen*, p. 30.

a staunch Prussian. He felt an unstinted veneration for everything Prussian, admired and respected many Prussians in Rügen, who as nobles and army officers had served under Prussian banners, and even took to wearing his own clothes in the style of a Prussian cavalryman. But Moritz Schumacher brought not only a sincere veneration for things Prussian into the Arndt home; he also carried with him a royalist air and a fervent worship of Frederick the Great. For the "*alte Fritz*," still ruling with his iron hand from Sans Souci, was fast becoming in those days a legendary figure, a veritable god, in large sections of northern Germany.

In addition to the rival uncles who often came to the Arndt home, there was frequent association with the Lutheran pastors, Stenzler and Krüger. On their way to Stralsund these men frequently stopped over at Grabitz as old family friends and usually left books for the children to read. In turn the Arndt boys, in company with the *candidates*—students of theology and candidates for ordination as preachers—often visited the houses of both Stenzler and Krüger.

Meanwhile young Arndt had done a great deal of promiscuous reading, mostly in the form of poetry. While still at Grabitz he had read *Pamela* and the *History of Sir Charles Grandison*, by Samuel Richardson, Gellert's *Swedish Countess*, Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther*, Wieland's translations of Shakespeare, and various writings of Lessing, Eschenburg, Claudius, Bürger and Stolberg. This romantic propensity was naturally accentuated by "heaven-storming youths" like Kosegarten and Hagemeister who, with the *candidates*, often held literary sessions in the Arndt home, as well as by Ernst Moritz's poetically inclined younger brother Frederick. Often the latter and Frederick Schumacher joined young Ernst Moritz in "versifying" sessions.

Even the stone walks in the Arndt garden presently bore the names of contemporary poets, such as Uz, Lessing and Bürger.

Along with a youthful pre-occupation with romantic poetry went also much reading of another sort—in the realm of fantasy and history. The inspiration for much of young Arndt's historical interest came from translations of Pufendorf, dealing mostly with the Thirty Years' War, with the work of Gustavus Adolphus and that of the Great Elector Frederick William. As the court historiographer successively of Sweden and then of Brandenburg, Pufendorf had not always maintained a strictly objective attitude, especially in his treatment of France and French politics.⁹ It was natural, therefore, that Pufendorf's work should strongly move the impressionable Arndt against the "ambitious and atrocious deeds of Louis XIV" and inculcated in him a profound hostility toward the whole French people. Already at this early age he was prepared to celebrate an English victory over the French. It was at this time, too, that Arndt's interest in fairy tales was rapidly developing, so that he took special delight in vying with his brother in the extemporaneous telling of stories.

Such was the carefree, congenial and romantic life of young Ernst Moritz until his seventeenth year, that is, until 1787. In this year his father gave up his holdings at Grabitz and Breesen and took an eighteen-year lease on the so-called Löbnitz estates, situated on the main highway between Stralsund and Rostock, about thirteen miles from the former. In the same year young Arndt entered the *Gymnasium*¹⁰ at Stralsund, beginning in the second form.¹¹

⁹ Rödning, Hans, *Pufendorf als Historiker und Politiker* (Halle, 1912), p. 49 *et seq.*

¹⁰ A *gelehrte Schule* corresponding to the later *Gymnasium*.

¹¹ The *Sekunda*, next to the highest form or grade.

As his father was in straitened circumstances, some unknown patrons were induced, through the initiative of pastor Stenzler and a certain Mr. Brunst, to supply sufficient funds to keep Ernst Moritz in Stralsund. Here Arndt spent the next two years as a diligent and industrious student.

Although his academic work at Stralsund was largely a continuation of what he had previously been studying, this Stralsund period nevertheless marked an important development in him. This was due, on the one hand, to the novel environment and, on the other, to his introduction to a new field of interest. Stralsund was then a city of considerable importance. In the Middle Ages it had been the second city in Pomerania. Broad market squares, quaint old town buildings and imposing churches, all attested to its ancient glory — impressive reminders of a glorious past. To a young man inured to the hardy but pious and somewhat austere routine of a thrifty and enterprising farmer, however, Stralsund seemed “loose” in both manners and morals. The whole atmosphere of the city seemed sensual to him, that of a population given over to the enjoyment of ease and pleasure. Moreover, the existence of the Swedish-Pomeranian soldiery, a band of mercenaries gathered from the four corners of the world, constituted an unedifying local influence, “a cancer in the healthy body of the citizenry.”¹² The consciousness of dawning manhood as well as the fortifying admonitions of his ageing and sickly mother both tended to give Ernst Moritz a more serious mood. It was a crisis in his life.

On the other hand, here were new sources of inspiration and interest in the form of new associates, teachers and books. Upon his arrival he had taken lodging at the home of the assistant principal, Furchau. As his room was adjacent to the assistant principal’s library, it was not long until

¹² *Erinnerungen*, p. 57.

he began to explore its stores. Then when Furchau became a family friend these opportunities were definitely assured. Coming to Stralsund as a rustic, his unsophisticated manner and homespun clothes at first provoked derision among his fellows. But his competence in the art of self-defense as well as his methodical and assiduous enterprise soon made a favorable impression and in two years he counted among his companions Karl Rudolphi, later professor of anatomy at Berlin, Johann Pommer-Esche, subsequently the historian of the island of Rügen, Friedrich Reincke and Ernst von Gagern. These he often joined in tramps into the country and, in the winter, in skating and sleighing. Young Arndt also frequently made visits to friends and acquaintances of his father in Stralsund. Many of these, with a view to cutting down his expense, invited him to dinner. But, while such dinners brought him into the best society, he declined many of them lest they should tempt him to epicurean living and a neglect of his studies.

It was while at Stralsund that Arndt experienced his first serious conflicts of conscience. Now, for the first time, he was left to shift for himself somehow, remote from the restraining and fostering solicitude of fond parents. Then, too, these years marked the noon-tide of his adolescence, a circumstance which imposed upon him trying problems of self-discipline. Moreover, in a youngster reared in a rural atmosphere of simplicity and true Christian piety, the sophisticated manners and lax morals of urban Stralsund aroused many qualms of conscience. Thus we see his transition from the simplicity, the blissful innocence and freedom of country life to the rigorous discipline of the *Gymnasium* as a process of disillusionment, struggle and renunciation.¹⁸

¹⁸ Meisner, Heinrich, "Ernst Moritz Arndt und Charlotte Quistorp," in *Nord und Süd*, Band 78 (July, 1896), Heft 232, p. 105.

During the Stralsund period, Arndt's greatest intellectual interest was in history, which was then taught there according to Schröck's *Lehrbuch der allgemeinen Geschichte*. This "exalted a kind of historical pragmatism, connecting and applying all events with and to the present, according to the methods of the Enlightenment."¹⁴ Tutor Dankwardt had already introduced him to Caesar and Livy, both of whom helped to intensify his subjective outlook upon history in general. Now he read Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Terence's poems, and presently Cicero's *Letters*, Tacitus, Virgil and Horace. But he never became partial to the Romans whom, with the Spartans, he regarded as perverted—perverted by virtue of their militarism which, while cultivating and exalting the warrior virtues of moral courage and physical strength, at the same time fostered the most abject slavery and indisposed them to the cultivation of the arts.¹⁵

When, in 1789, Arndt finished his course at Stralsund, he hardly knew what to turn to. At the annual presentation and examination of the students, he had come off among the first, and it was confidently expected that he would attend a university. Most of the graduates of the school at Stralsund continued their education at the university of Göttingen, but the thought of university life roused serious misgivings in the impressionable young Arndt. It seemed too easy, too monotonous and dull, and student life in his mind was too much identified with carousing, debauchery, vice and ostentation. Prices had gone up as a result of the Revolution in France, and his father's farms were flourishing, yet the prospect of a university career left him unmoved. Much more congenial to him was the life of a farmer, or, at all events, a career closely associated

¹⁴ Müsebeck, Ernst, *E. M. Arndt* (Gotha, 1914), p. 26.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

with what in his imagination was the fine, hardy, wholesome and simple life of the peasant.

Thus, without notice to anyone, young Arndt set out from Stralsund in the fall of 1789 with the object of finding a post as secretary to a farmer. With ten dollars in his pocket and a bag of clean linen on his back, the young man went forth to seek his fortune. After two days of wandering, he came within sight of Greifswald, but fearing to meet with acquaintances, he avoided the city proper and then proceeded up the Peene river. Along the way he sought among the gentry and the more well-to-do farmers a position as secretary or bookkeeper. Finally, after many failures, an old captain, von Parsenow, after proffering him food and lodging, agreed to employ him, pending his father's consent. But his father urged him to return home immediately where he should have every opportunity to learn farming. This was soon agreed to, and the years from 1789 to 1791 Ernst Moritz spent at home in Löbnitz; not so much in farming, however, as in studying. This course had been strongly urged upon him by teachers and friends, and now an eager pursuit of knowledge was joined to a self-imposed Spartan discipline to mold a cultivated mind in a hardy body.

In the meantime Arndt had been seriously considering entering the ministry. He had very probably been led to this not only by his mother but also by his own impressionable and sensitive nature which instinctively recoiled at the more sordid aspects of reality. In any event, the following two years, 1791 to 1793, young Arndt studied theology at the university of Greifswald. But he also found time for the study of natural science, philosophy, history, geology and languages, the latter entirely on his own initiative. His principal teachers at Greifswald were Muhrbeck the elder, a native of Sweden who lectured on philosophy and an