

DEDUCTIONS FROM THE WORLD WAR

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Deductions from the World War by Baron Von Freytag-Loringhoven

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DEDUCTIONS FROM THE WORLD WAR

BY

BARON VON FREYTAG-LORINGHOVEN

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL

AND

DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE GERMAN IMPERIAL STAFF



G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Baron von Freytag-Loringhoven, the author of this book, is the most distinguished soldier-writer of Prussia. In other words, since none will dispute Prussia her militarism, he is the most distinguished living writer on militarism in theory and practice.

Freytag comes of a Baltic family. He was born in Russia, the son of a Russian diplomatist, and he served in the Russian Army before, at the age of twenty-one, he joined a Prussian Guard Regiment. Before the war he was an influential member of the General Staff in Berlin, and had made a reputation by his writings on the history and science of war. On the outbreak of war he became the German representative on the Austro-Hungarian General

Staff. The military weakness of Austria has in recent years been a commonplace in Berlin, and Freytag duly tells us how the "brave troops" of the Dual Monarchy "had to suffer for the sins and omissions of which the Parliaments had been guilty." When Count Moltke, the Chief of the German General Staff, was superseded by Falkenhayn, after the failure of the original German offensive in the West, Freytag became Quartermaster-General in the field, and Moltke became Deputy Chief of the General Staff—that is to say, head of such parts of the General Staff Organization as remain in Berlin, while the main business of the General Staff is conducted from "Great Headquarters" in the field.

At the beginning of August, 1916, Falkenhayn was superseded in his turn by Hindenburg, after the German failure at Verdun. Freytag's post of Quartermaster-General was merged in the larger post which was now created for Ludendorff, and,

Moltke having died in June, Freytag was appointed in September, 1916, to the post, which he still holds, of Deputy Chief of the General Staff.

Shortly before his appointment, Freytag's position as chief writer to the Prussian Army was put beyond dispute by his decoration with the Order Pour le Mérite (Peace Class). The Order Pour le Mérite (Military Class) was founded by Frederick the Great, and has now been conferred upon innumerable Prussian officers. Freytag is apparently the only officer who has received during the present war the Order Pour le Mérite (Peace Class), which was founded by Frederick William IV in 1842, and is conferred for distinction in "Science and Arts."

"DEDUCTIONS FROM THE WORLD WAR" was written for German consumption. As soon as a few German newspaper reviews called attention to its contents, and especially to the chapters

"The Army in the Future" and "Still Ready for War," with their candid explanation of the way in which Germany proposes, this war finished, to prepare for the next, all comment was restricted or suppressed. Circulation of the book in Germany was promoted, but its export was prohibited, and very few copies have found their way across the frontier.

This book is interesting as an attempt to lay the foundations of "history"; it is comparable with the "popular edition" of Moltke's "History of the Franco-German War of 1870," upon which a whole generation of Germany was brought up, while the real history of the war was being written in France—for posterity. The book is very instructive as a denunciation of international ideals and as a warning of the plans which are being made in Berlin for the cold and reasoned application of the lessons of the war and the development of a still more scientific military system, a still

more perfect war-machine, than existed in 1914. Again, we have here, on the best possible authority, the warning that Germany—with all her avowed indignation at the idea of an economic “war after the war”—is determined not only to rebuild her military system, but to build it this time upon an indestructible economic foundation. But above all Freytag’s book is a revelation because he says what Germany thinks. “War has its basis in human nature,” he writes, “and as long as human nature remains unaltered, war will continue to exist, as it has existed already for thousands of years.” That view is universal in Germany, and to the German people Freytag’s deductions will seem to be only logic and common sense. In reality, Freytag the soldier says nothing a whit stronger in praise of militarism than is said in his apt quotations from Prince Bülow the civilian. Militarism is not a Prussian invention; militarism is Prussia herself. And so