

**COUNT ARNIM'S REPLY TO THE
CHARGES CONTAINED IN A
LETTER FROM PRINCE BISMARCK
TO THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY,
DATED APRIL 14TH, 1873**

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Count Arnim's Reply to the Charges Contained in a Letter from Prince Bismarck to the Emperor of Germany, Dated April 14th, 1873 by Arnim

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ARNIM

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COUNT ARNIM'S REPLY.

Geneva, September 1876.

ON the 14th of April, 1873, your Highness addressed to our most gracious sovereign his Majesty the Emperor, the following letter in reference to me :

“Varzin, 14th April, 1873.

“*To his Majesty the Emperor and King.*

“I respectfully inform your Majesty that it is my intention to criticise Count Arnim's letter of the 8th instant, by aid of the official documents as soon as the latter shall again be within my reach.

“In the meantime I will only, with due respect, remark that Count Arnim makes but an incomplete report, since he does not mention my telegrams of a decisive nature, sent at the commencement of the negotiations before the

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5th instant; and, on the other hand, places before your Majesty his communication to Thiers of the 5th instant as the complete copy of the Draft of our Convention, and as being in accordance with these telegrams. According to the alternative laid down by Count Arnim, either Thiers or he himself must have told an untruth. The greater degree of credibility is to be found, I fear, on the side of Thiers, and on that of the President's official telegram to Count St. Vallier, with which your Majesty is acquainted.

“Your Majesty will graciously remember that, on the appointment of Count Arnim to his present post, I expressed myself to the effect that nothing but full reliance on the confidence reposed in myself by your Majesty could give me the courage to attempt joint political operations with an ambassador of so uncertain and untrustworthy a character, under the possibility of contests again arising similar to those maintained by me for years with Count Golz.

“Contests of this kind began as early as last autumn, when Count Arnim recommended to your Majesty a line of policy, relative to M. Thiers, opposed to my own, and which I combated from this spot by means of direct

despatches and autographic letters. The result, in my opinion, has shown that I was right. In politics, however, it is impossible to adduce proofs mathematically exact. *W*

“The course of action finally determined upon results from the confidence reposed in the judgment of one or other of your Majesty’s advisers or informers.

“It is easy to impart a colouring of truth to a despatch like that of Count Arnim of the 8th inst., embracing as it does a period of three weeks, during which the political situation was continually varying.

“The brief, the preparation of which I have now intrusted to the Foreign Office, presents a different aspect.

“Until I have had an opportunity of again perusing its details, I shall only take the liberty of making one remark, with all due respect, as to the proceedings of the Ambassador.

“Discipline is certainly as indispensable in the diplomatic service as in the military, but it is much more difficult to maintain in the former case, and it collapses as soon as its forms are laid aside.

“On this ground I most humbly request of

your Majesty the favour of directing the Imperial Ambassador to state to your Majesty his *official grievances*, with regard to his superiors, *through the latter*, in order that I may humbly lay them before you. If this be not done, my subordinates and I will occupy the positions of two contending parties.

“My strength will not allow me, in addition to carrying on contests in the Landtag and Reichstag, and the cabinet, and with foreign cabinets, against the influences of political circles and those of the press, to secure by means of epistolary discussion, such authority as I need for the conduct of public business.

“However willing to devote my remaining strength to your Majesty's service, I cannot conceal from myself the fact that it would be to a great extent wasted, if I were under the painful impression that contests for your Majesty's confidence were to be maintained by me with a man like Count Arnim, after I had enjoyed that confidence unabated during so many years, and—as far as I am aware—having never shown myself unworthy of it.

“Your Majesty has been acquainted *for some years* with my fixed opinion of Count Arnim.

“ I had hoped that the high position held by him in Paris—one of such importance to his country—would perhaps have raised him above petty intrigues.

“ Bearing in mind what happened at Rome, I should have felt it necessary to have urgently requested your Majesty not to intrust him with the post, in spite of his competency for the same.

“ I believe I am not alone in my suspicion that he occasionally makes his zeal for public affairs yield to his private interests. However, this does not admit of proof; but, with such a suspicion in one's mind, it is no easy duty to continue responsible for the manner in which this high functionary carries out his instructions.

“ I have taken the liberty of communicating my suspicions, your Majesty knowing what little confidence I have in the impartiality of his reports; and in order not to cause your Majesty any annoyance, I have avoided giving official expression to my official doubts.

“ The step taken by Count Arnim—having been urged thereto from Berlin—and which it was there expected he would take as early as last week, leaves me no choice. Your Majesty will

graciously remember that I spoke of the attempt to neutralise the dangers arising in Paris, from Count Arnim's character, by removing him to London, but that, at the first mention of it, an emphatic protest was made from the latter quarter, on account of Count Arnim's inclination for intrigue and untruthfulness:—'not a word would be believed of what he might say.'

"My only request with regard to the accusations of a man of such repute is that your Majesty will graciously direct him to put forward his official grievances in an official manner.

"VON BISMARCK."

I had no idea whatever of the existence of this letter. *I was never in a position to defend myself from the accusations contained therein.*

After the lapse of more than three years, your Highness has made this letter public in the *Reichsanzeiger*, together with another of less importance. Having secretly excited his Majesty's suspicion against me, you now denounce me to the world at a time when I am apparently without means of defending myself.

I have been told that it was wrong on my part to maintain that I had for years been persecuted by you: but the two letters you addressed to his Majesty show that I was justified in making that assertion.

Beyond this they prove nothing.

The letter of the 14th of April, 1873, though it only establishes the fact above mentioned, does me great injustice. I cannot shun the obligation of noticing the contents of this letter, and should long since have done so had I not hoped to have learned from the Bill of Indictment against me by which at the instigation of your Highness I was accused of high treason, —whether you thought you had any grounds, and, if so, what grounds for presenting to his Majesty so prejudicial a report of me as that presented three years ago.

I find myself deceived in this expectation. *The Bill of Indictment does not contain a single word that can excuse the contents of your report, or even explain them.*

After this introductory remark, your Highness must graciously permit me to make some comments on your report of the 14th of April, 1873, to his Majesty, point for point.