

Zheng Chen
History 133A
Professor Harold Marcuse

Erinnerungen, Elard von Oldenburg-Januschau

Biography:



Elard von Oldenburg-Januschau (1855-1937), was an ultraconservative German politician (Reichstag deputy) and east Prussian junker who was influential in the nationalist and antisemitic Agrarian League from the 1890s to the early 1930s. When Oldenburg-Januschau died in 1937, the east Prussian Oldenburg family lost its former vibrancy and influence in both East Prussian society and German politics. The family estate, now in Poland, experienced multiple ownership transfers since the death of Oldenburg-Januschau and suffered severe damage during World War II and Soviet occupation. Nonetheless, the legacies of the old east Prussian junker lived on in both the *Erinnerungen*, and in the works of his grandson Hans Graf von Lehndorff (1910-1987) who was a German surgeon and writer¹. Today, the *Westpreußen - Archiv*, a personal database run by Christa Mühleisen has kept a record of the Oldenburg-Januschau family along with a collection of rare photographs where one can learn about the old junker who stubbornly hold onto the outdated junker beliefs, and revisit the past grandeur of the Januschau estate².

¹ Lehndorff wrote about his childhood in Januschau and about his grandfather in two of his works. Lehndorff, Hans Graf von. *Menschen, Pferde, weites Land, Kindheits, und Jugenderinnerungen*. Munich: Biederstein Verlag 1980, 139-181. And Lehndorff, Hans Graf von. *Ostpreußisches Tagebuch. Aufzeichnungen eines Arztes aus den Jahren 1945 - 1947*. München: Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 1985, 212-257. Both cited by Mühleisen on http://www.aefl.de/ordld/Januschau/januschau1/januschau_1.htm

² http://www.aefl.de/ordld/Januschau/januschau1/januschau_1.htm

Summary:

“The Rural Landlord and His People”, in *Erinnerungen*.

In this excerpt from his memoir, Oldenburg-Januschau draws upon his own experiences (c. 1883) to argue that the selection of obedient, resident farm laborers was essential for the successful operation of a large estate.

For the purpose of this project however, the *Erinnerungen* in their entirety are traced as the original source. I found no translated versions nor reprinted versions of the *Erinnerungen* originally published in 1936, except for the excerpted passage on GHDI, which is also collected in the *Deutsche Sozialgeschichte 1870-1914. Dokumente und Skizzen* in 1982. Nevertheless it is an important historical source for the reconstruction of late 19th and early 20th centuries German politics and elite society. *Erinnerungen* should not be read as a simple autobiography. Instead, for the many academic works found in this research, the value of the Junker’s memoir lies in its historical accounts and its ability to provide a Junker’s perspective on late 19th and early 20th century German conservative politics, east-Elbian agrarian society, and the attempts of Prussian conservative elites to restore their power in the post-WWI period.

The most frequently quoted sentence from Oldenburg-Januschau’s memoir (and from, seemingly a Reichstag record as well as memoirs of other Prussian politicians) is the quote “The Kaiser and King of Prussia, must be able at any time to tell a lieutenant to take ten men and close the Reichstag.” Due to the lack of a complete translated version of the *Erinnerungen*, the exact wording of the quote in English varies from author to author. Nevertheless, it is a quote filled with Prussian conservatism and monarchism and best describes the mentality of Prussian conservatives and Junkers like Oldenburg-Januschau himself. While being a windfall of this project, a separate source exploration dedicated to the origin and later applications of the quote seems to be doable and will prove to be an enchanting quest.

Exploration Results:

Searched Terms: Elard von Oldenburg-Januschau, *Erinnerungen*, Bund der Landwirte, Januschau, Junker, Junker Prussian

- von Oldenburg-Januschau, Elard. *Erinnerungen*. (Memoirs). Saxony, Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1936.
http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=487
From GHDI. Excerpt taken from the original publication and translated by Erwin Fink from German into English.
- “Some Recent Books on International Relations.” In *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 15, 1. New York: Jan 1, 1936. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1290235922>
From UCSB Library Search. Cites the original publication of the book on p. 763. Described as “The memoirs of one of the most influential and intransigent of the old Prussian Junkers, who was close to Hindenburg when the latter was President.”
- New York Times. “ELARD VON O. JAUSCHAU.” In *New York Times*. New York: Aug 17, 1937. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/102199359>
From UCSB Library Search/ New York Times Archive. Announces the death of Oldenburg-Januschau. “Berlin, Aug. 16. Elard von Oldenburg-Januschau, author of a vivid volume of memoirs, died today at Marienwerder in East Prussia. His age was 82.”
- Pascal, R. “The Junkers.” In *The Contemporary Review*. (United Kingdom). Jan 1, 1945, 197-201. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1294695574>
From UCSB Library Search/ Proquest. Quotations *presumably* taken from the *Erinnerungen*. Oldenburg is described by Pascal as the representative of the “Junkerdom” who the “tough, violent, ruthless” East Prussian Junkers (to be distinguished from Brandenburg and Pomeranian Junkers) found to be a worthy champion for the cause of maintaining their political influence and agricultural interests. Oldenburg, reactionary and monarchist, supported military dictatorship and said that “The Kaiser, as commander in chief, must be able to command a lieutenant to take ten men and shut the Reichstag”³.
- von Mayr, Wilfred Ernest. *Elard von Oldenburg-Januschau, the Portrait of a Junker Under William II*. M.A. Diss. University of Maryland: 1954.
From WorldCat/ Melvyl. Request pending, University of Maryland. This is the only

³ R. Pascal, “The Junkers,” in *The Contemporary Review*, (Jan, 1945), 200-201.

English academic work on the person of Elard von Oldenburg-Januschau that I could find.

- Muncy, Lysbeth Walker. *The Junker in the Prussian Administration under William II, 1884-1914*. New York: Howard Fertig, Inc., 1970 by arrangement with Brown University Press.

From UCSB Library Search; original edition was a dissertation published in 1945. For Muncy, Oldenburg-Januschau was a prominent conservative leader and aggressive agrarian who represented the interests of the larger Junker society. His memoir serves as evidence of the shift of Junker political tendency in both the Reichstag and Prussian Diet from a party of principle to a party of interests that felt obliged to follow the elective and parliamentary system.

- Gerhard A. Ritter and Jürgen Kocka, eds., *Deutsche Sozialgeschichte 1870-1914. Dokumente und Skizzen* [German Social History 1870-1914. Documents and Sketches], 3rd ed. Munich: C.H. Beck, 1982.

http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=487

From GHDI. A collection that contains the reprinted version of the *Erinnerungen* excerpted on GHDI, on page 188-89. The first edition was printed in 1974, the second edition in 1977.

- Carsten, F. L. *A History of the Prussian Junker*. Brookfield, Vermont: Gower Publishing Company (Scolar Press), 1989.

From UCSB Library Search. For Carsten, the memoir plays multiple roles. Oldenburg-Januschau's family history serves as an example of the rapidly increasing estates of the Junker class in the 19th century. It demonstrates a classical model of Junker estate operation, and the relationship between the lord and his tenants. It also demonstrates the Junker sentiment and reaction to the agrarian crisis that occurred after 1878. Lastly, it records the political and social life of the Junkers and the Prussian Officer Corps, and their reactions to the abdication of Wilhelm II and to the political changes that followed. (To the many Junkers and the Prussian Officer Corps, as described by Oldenburg-Januschau, the abdication of the Kaiser meant the collapse of their world).

- Lüdtker, Alf. *Police and State in Prussia, 1815-1850*. Translated by Pete Burgess. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

From UCSB Library Search. Lüdtké describes Oldenburg as a Junker who incarnated the classical idea of the Prussian Landjunker in the Wilhelmine Reich, and who during the first days of the 1918 November Revolution sought to the last to organise a military counter-revolution in Berlin⁴. Oldenburg's reference in his memoir provides a direct pointer to the life and qualities of an east-Elbian Prussian Junker. It not only "testifies to the arrogance of power," but also "denoted a ruling claim which distinguished between conscious assent and blind obedience" between the Prussian landed-elites and their tenants⁵.

- *Landownership and Power in Modern Europe*. Edited by Ralph Gibson & Martin Blinkhorn. London: Harper Collins Academic, 1991.
<https://books.google.com/books?hl=zh-CN&id=G5c6s97kimUC&q=Elard+von+Oldenburg-Januschau#v=snippet&q=Elard%20von%20Oldenburg-Januschau&f=false>
From Google Book. The book takes Oldenburg-Januschau's memoir as an example of land ownership in 19th and early 20th century Prussia⁶.
- Bessel, Richard. *Germany After the First World War*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993. From UCSB Library Search. A passage from the *Erinnerungen* cited from Lüdtké, *Police and State in Prussia, 1815-1850* (Lüdtké, 1989). "The memoirs of the Junker... Oldenburg-Januschau are often presented as evidence of the persistence of old habits of dominance and deference in the countryside despite the collapse of the old order in Berlin"⁷.
- von Müller, Sven Oliver & Torp, Cornelius. *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich in der Kontroverse*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008.
<https://books.google.com/books?hl=zh-CN&id=XmqJNR5SSa8C&q=Elard+von+Oldenburg-Januschau#v=snippet&q=Elard%20von%20Oldenburg-Januschau&f=false>
From Google Book. Text in German. Please refer to the end of assignment for the excerpt.

⁴ Alf Lüdtké, *Police and State in Prussia, 1815-1850*, trans. Pete Burgess. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), xi.

⁵ Alf Lüdtké, *Police and State in Prussia, 1815-1850*, trans. Pete Burgess. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), xv.

⁶ *Landownership and Power in Modern Europe*, ed. Ralph Gibson & Martin Blinkhorn, (London: Harper Collins Academic, 1991), 8-9.

⁷ Richard Bessel, *Germany After the First World War*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 195.

- Muncy, Lysbeth W. “The Junkers and the Prussian Administration from 1918 to 1939.” In *The Review of Politics*. Vol. 9, 4, p.428-501. University of Notre Dame, 2009. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1404518.pdf?>
From JSTOR. Oldenburg-Januschau is described by Muncy as a stalwart old reactionary who was ever eager to close the Reichstag with “a lieutenant and ten men” (Muncy, 2009, 484). For Muncy, Oldenburg-Januschau’s memoir serves to reconstruct the Junkers’ post-WWI attempts for political influence, where they, including Oldenburg-Januschau, sought to influence Weimar Republic president Hindenburg’s political decisions. Under which they were able to remove every chancellor and minister who threatened their interests and eventually put Hitler into chancellorship⁸.
- Linklater, Andro. *Owning the Earth: The Transforming History of Land Ownership*. Reprint Edition. New York: Bloomsbury, 2015. (Original edition published in 2013).
From Google Book/ UCSB Library Search. The book accessed the excerpt “The Rural landlord and His People” in *Erinnerungen* from GHDI. For Linklater, the account serves as an example to depict the dynamic relation between peasant resistance to landlord power and the order and obedience enforced by the landlord with an iron fist⁹. It is also used to show the Junkers’ response to the gradual dismantling of the Gutsherrschaft and the fall of traditional aristocratic dominance over eastern Prussian lands by the end of the 19th century.

German Text:

von Müller, Sven Oliver & Torp, Cornelius. *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich in der Kontroverse*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008.

“Was schließlich, und dieser Punkt war und bleibt in den Vorstellungen über den Landadel zentral, die Fähigkeit zur Manipulation der Landbevölkerung angeht, hatte der Adel in den Landbünden, vor allem in von bürgerlichen professionals geleiteten Apparaten mitgestaltet, die sich auf Massenorganisation und -agitation verstanden. Die neueren empirischen Arbeiten zum Wandel ostelbischer Herrschaftsverhältnisse auf dem Land

⁸ Lysbeth W. Muncy, “The Junkers and the Prussian Administration from 1918 to 1939,” in *The Review of Politics*, vol. 9, 4, p.428-501, (University of Notre Dame, 2009), 484-486.

⁹ Andro Linklater, *Owning the Earth: The Transforming History of Land Ownership*, reprint ed, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015), 294.

betonen jedoch die Handlungsspielräume der Landbevölkerung gegenüber den adligen Gutsbesitzern. Die berühmte Schilderung der Niederschlagung der Revolution von 1918, die der ostelbische gutsbesitzer, Anekdoten-König und Hindenburg-Vertraute Elard v. Oldenburg-Januschau im Jahre 1936 in die adlige Selbstbildproduktion einspeiste, fehlt in Hans Rosenbergs Fußnoten so wenig wie bei allen Autoren, die seither über den Knecht zu Boden zwingt und mit dem Satz "Ich hau Dich in die Fress' bis Du Kopp stehst" den sozialen Frieden restauriert, (Erinnerungen, p.208) entsprach schon im Kaiserreich den Realitäten nicht mehr. Zuletzt haben Patrick Wagners Arbeit über ländliche Herrschaftsverhältnisse im 19. Jahrhundert und die neueste Regionalstudie von Rainer Pomp für die Zeit nach 1918 die Grenzen adliger Manipulationsmacht und die Fähigkeit der Bauern demonstriert, erheblichen Druck auf den Landadel auszuüben. Pomps Studie zur Verbandspolitik in Brandenburg legt zudem nahe, daß in der Endphase dieser Entwicklung die Bauern nicht vom Adel in die Nähe der NS-Bewegung geführt werden mußten. Wo Reihenfolge und Dynamik hier kausal verbunden waren, verlief der Prozeß eher umgekehrt. Das oben verwendete Bild, das den Adel eher als getriebene denn als treibende Kraft zeigt, trifft auch hier zu."