

THE BATTLE OF KÖNIGGRÄTZ AS A HISTORICAL TURNING POINT

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The 19th century can well be called the age of the two dangerous „ersatz“ religions — nationalism and the class struggle — which largely came to take the place of the universal principle which holds that God is the centre of the universe. The Battle of Königgrätz not only led to the final eclipse of the Holy Roman Empire, but it also decided between two fundamental political concepts: the principle of nationality triumphed over the idea of the supra-national empire.

In the fifties of the last century federalistic ideas still played a considerable role in European politics. Königgrätz imposed the irrevocable decision that Central Europe in its new form would not follow the pattern of the Holy Roman Empire in a confederation of states stretching from the North Sea to the Balkans, but was to adopt the „kleindeutsch“ concept of national states. This blocked the way to a federally united Europe for more than fifty years. With the „Little German“ solution, that pattern of small national sovereign states was stabilized which was to be the origin of both World Wars of the 20th century.

On the other hand a development in favour of the wider idea of larger territorial units can be observed in history. We find here the principle of „universal monarchy“ opposed to the principle of Empire. The concept of universal monarchy is based on a collective unit, which by reason of its superiority imposes its will upon others with the object of attaining unity and progress by centralism. The idea of the Empire, on the other hand, seeks to create larger territorial units, not by domination but on the basis of the principle of subsidiarity.

In the struggle for power in our own day it is significant that the two world powers tend towards universal monarchy. Between these two world powers is Europe, a Europe in which elements of the supra-national Empire predominate. This leads us to hope that by creating a Paneurope, Europe may attain primacy in the next age of humanity.