

King Frederick William I's Handwritten Instructions to the East Prussian Land-Tax Commission [*Generalhufenschoß-Kommission*] (April 23, 1716)

Abstract

In this famous statement, the Prussian “soldier king” (r. 1713-40) bluntly expresses his determination to break aristocratic opposition in East Prussia to his fiscal and other administrative innovations (though he consents to the convocation of the noble-dominated provincial estates, where the airing of discontent could be expected).

Source

You should read this to the lords and the notes I have made. You should write me with your opinion, whether it is not solely to my disadvantage that I have the estates [*Landtdahge*] called and also give 4,000 [taler] fees. However, the land commission [*hubencomis*, i.e., *Generalhufenschoß-Kommission*] should continue. I come to my purpose and stabilize the sovereignty and establish the crown firmly like a rock of bronze [*Rocher von Bronse*] and allow the lord Junkers the hot air [*windt*] of the estates. One allows the people [to blow] hot air when one comes to the purpose. I await your thoughts.

F William

Source: *Die Behördenorganisation und die allgemeine Staatsverwaltung Preußens im 18. Jahrhundert* [*The Organization of the Authorities and the General State Administration of Prussia in the 18th Century*]. Volume 2: *Akten vom Juli 1714 bis Ende 1717* [*Documents from July 1714 to the End of 1717*], ed. G. Schmoller, D. Krauske and V. Loewe. Berlin: Parey, 1898. (*Acta Borussica*) p. 352 (no. 175).

Reprinted in Helmut Neuhaus, ed., *Zeitalter des Absolutismus 1648-1789* [*The Era of Absolutism, 1648-1789*]. *Deutsche Geschichte in Quellen und Darstellung*, ed. Rainer A. Müller. Volume 5. Stuttgart: P. Reclam, 1997, pp. 337-38.

Translation: Ben Marschke

Recommended Citation: King Frederick William I's Handwritten Instructions to the East Prussian Land-Tax Commission [*Generalhufenschoß-Kommission*] (April 23, 1716), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/the-holy-roman-empire-1648-1815/ghdi:document-3543>> [July 16, 2024].