



Volume 2. From Absolutism to Napoleon, 1648-1815
Joseph von Görres, "Something to Sell" (1798)

Here, the celebrated German publicist Joseph Görres (1776-1848) lampoons the Landgraves of Hesse, who, in the eighteenth century, fattened their budgets by leasing companies of Hessian-trained soldiers to foreign rulers, including the kings of England for use against the American revolution.

Something to Sell

We, William IX, through God's grace Count of Hesse, Master of the Order of the Brave and the Order of the Golden Lion, Proprietor of the castles of Spangenberg and Babenhausen, Builder of a new Bastille, Superior Supervisor of all Katte pantaloons and hats, world famous dealer of swine, («The swinish Multitude.« Burke.) etc. etc. wish hereby to present our greeting to all of our business friends and patrons and to make them aware of what kind of complete and choice assortment of 12,000 head of human livestock we have. Because these goods are in demand, we issue the request to all to kindly honor us with your reply. We have seen to it that only picture-perfect, young people, like milk and blood, were herded together. With them we hope to outdo all competitors and to do a great honor by our customers. They are admirably dressed, and they know to chop, shoot, stab, turn left and right, and more of the same arts. A twelve-year training of beatings and whippings has ultimately had the effect that they will let themselves be shot dead for their master, without complaining or even making a face. We have the well-founded hope that in the forthcoming division of the German Reich there may fall to us some neighboring districts, which our official hunters assure us, swarm with the most beautiful wild game. So we believe — because after this acquisition we will not spare any effort to catch the same — that we can give our correspondents the assurance that they need not fear that we will run out of these goods. We will not, however, deliver retail, but only by the ton, and namely 100 head per ton, for 40 pounds sterling: a price that one will not find elsewhere now, because of the great rarity of such goods since the Turkish and French wars. However, please add 6 shillings [*Groschen*] per ton for packaging. Of course all moldy ones will be taken back. We also want to take this opportunity to ask, incidentally, whether our patrons might have use for women, which we would gladly deliver for a pittance, because we have entire depots full. In our opinion, they could serve the great powers admirably in some emerging war by filling in the trenches of a besieged city, but we leave all of that to your own discretion. Please send all letters with postage.

We remain favorably disposed towards you, in grace.

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Source of the original German text: Joseph Görres, "Was zu verkaufen" ["Something to Sell"] (1798), *Jakobinerschriften* [*Jacobin Writings*]. Salzburg, 1953, pp. 27-28.

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