Bismarck and the Bourgeoisie:
A Question of Power
1847 - 1873

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Abstract

Much of the study in German history since the appearance of the National Socialist Party has been that of a negative continuity that reached its pinnacle in Fascism capturing the state. It is a position which presumes a weak middle class that abdicated political rule for economic dominance, and it assumes that Bismarck, by perpetuating an authoritarian state under monarchical rule, in effect prepared the way for authority again coming to reside in one man on January 30, 1933. The focus of my thesis is to elucidate Bismarck’s relation to the hidden side of German Unification [1847-1871] -- the monied side -- which was much more powerful than often portrayed, much more diffuse in its influence and much more appreciated, admired and understood by Otto von Bismarck who did not rule in defiance of it. Money, in the history of German Unification, has not lost its sordid almost occult characteristics, thus continuing to remain largely unexplored even today, by historians cautious to challenge the presupposition that Bismarck’s greatness could ever have admitted more than a fleeting disdain for economics. While money, on the one hand, built railroads, factories and financed wars, on the other, it remained tainted, bringing shame with its power and promising only to buy one out of its curse but not provide legitimization on its own merit. A thesis of this nature intends to provide a fuller picture of a very profound individual.
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Introduction

The focus of this entire work is studying Bismarck through the lens of his contact with the bourgeoisie, his understanding of its world, the effects of that world upon him and his response to it. Thus, while the thesis covers things that have been dealt with before -- events in Bismarck's life, aspects of his personality, his role in German unification -- it is analyzing them from an angle that has been given little attention. Historians have often been all too willing to let Bismarck write his own history for them, and as a result, allowances have not been made to deal with things that Bismarck was not overly proud of -- like his mother's bourgeois heritage -- and therefore, what Bismarck sought to negate, hide or distort has often been perpetuated in history as unimportant detail. This apparent beau ideal of the Prussian aristocracy had much contact with the world of the bourgeoisie in his home, education, work and political life. This familiarity with its world left an indelible imprint on his character that reveals a different side of him and a side that is both essential to a better understanding of him and the manner in which he unified Germany.

Until 1847 Bismarck's life was unfocused and undisciplined. Thus, while the bulk of the thesis centers
on Bismarck's life from 1847, when he first entered political life, to 1873 when his alienation from his own class was all but complete because of his cooperation with the liberal bourgeoisie, the first chapter nevertheless dwells upon his struggle up to 1847 during which he drifted between the world of the aristocracy and that of the bourgeoisie -- a struggle that was only resolved when he became anchored in both worlds; in the country through his marriage and in the city through his political career.

There is no doubt that Bismarck was an aristocrat in the sense of his profound understanding and appreciation of the entire world of nature. There was a certain harmony, for example, between Bismarck and the horses he rode, in full abandonment, which was in complete contrast with the bourgeois notion of training a horse, moderating its spirit, conquering it rather than riding the horse through a certain communion with it. Or, Bismarck's love of his land, the trees that grew on it, the power of the land to root him in tradition that he would perpetuate through his own family.

There was, however, another side to Bismarck in that as much as he loved his land and as much as he was attuned to the rhythms of nature, the life of a typical landed aristocrat could never have satisfied him. It was precisely here that Bismarck was different from his father and from the majority of the eastern landed elite, in that the country left him unsatisfied if he could not have along with
it the power that only a political life in the city could offer him. It is this dual aspect of Bismarck's personality and life -- his dwelling between the world of the bourgeoisie and the world of the aristocracy -- belonging exclusively to neither, that is the underlying theme of the following thesis. Bismarck completed the transition away from the meaning of aristocrat as being synonymous with land to a monied aristocracy in which merit and mobility came to play far more than a fleeting role. It was a transition embodied in Bismarck's own life in which he had much more contact with the world of the bourgeoisie and much more understanding of its raison d'être than has often been presented.

To give an idea of the methodology followed in the thesis it is important to elucidate some of the questions posed in both researching and writing it. Did Bismarck understand from experience how the bourgeoisie structured its own world, and further, what structure it had already provided to Prussia and what it would do if given further opportunity? Once his public life began in 1847 he dealt actively with the bourgeoisie but behind this, in his private life, what judgements had he formed; and, was there anything in his private life that later helped Bismarck to deal with the bourgeoisie in his public career? Did he share any of its aspirations or admire any of its achievements? Did he draw any of his friends from it?
The definition of the bourgeoisie followed throughout this work is the upper middle class: the educated elite, professors, lawyers, doctors, journalists, professionals within the civil service, the entrepreneurial businessmen and the private bankers. Further, a distinction is made (especially in Chapters 4 and 5) between the bourgeois dominated civil service, which was liberal in its economic policies but conservative in its politics; and the liberal bourgeoisie which formed the backbone of the National Liberal Party and was composed of men outside of government service and therefore with greater freedom to oppose the government politically.

Some background to Chapter one is essential since it deals with events that were foundational to Bismarck's understanding of the milieu of the bourgeoisie. Thus, what contact did Bismarck have with the world of the bourgeoisie? First, Bismarck's mother not only came from this class but was very proud of it. She admired the intellectual and social goals of her class and she filled her household with the virtues of the life of the mind and imprinted upon her children repeatedly, the worthiness of the diplomatic corps in which her father had served, and the need for ambition to attain what life in the country could never give them. The atmosphere that Bismarck's mother created at home always made him feel like a stranger there. It was striking how his mother's dominance of his father's estate gave the
impression that she was attempting to give credence to her husband’s aristocracy rather than her husband elevating her up to his class.

Bismarck was immersed into the world of the bourgeoisie when he was sent to Berlin for his primary and secondary education. He lived for six years at the Plamann Institute, and ate three meals daily with boys who, for the most part, came from the bourgeoisie. He was also taught by teachers who considered it a mission to prepare these boys to become worthy representatives of their class within the Prussian civil service and who also faintly disdained the aristocrats as lazy, uneducated and uncultured. In a sense, Bismarck was an outsider, not in that he was actively excluded, but that his aristocratic birth separated him. He did not need this education, the other boys did; it symbolized confinement to him, but the chance for a successful career to them.

This shared life with these members of the bourgeoisie gave him an experience and understanding that the majority of the eastern landed elite never received. Bismarck could observe on a daily basis how these boys structured their own world -- from aspirations, to honors, to enjoyment. It reduced the class of the bourgeoisie from an unknown entity to fellow students. It affected Bismarck in a paradoxical manner whereby, on the one hand, he grew to assert even confrontationally his aristocracy; while on the other, he
imbibed the ambition of the school to achieve, an ambition he would later find utterly lacking in the majority of his fellow Junkers. He gleaned the best of both worlds which made him essentially different from both classes -- it made of him an exile -- but it also gave him a depth of understanding into human nature, sharpening his eyes as to the weaknesses of others, forming a firm defense through perception and an aggressive manner against individuals and institutions who challenged his aristocracy.

Perception into something always implies a certain distance from it -- a standing back to see the whole, where details are still clear but not dominant, fitting into something larger, that is interrelated and composite. Bismarck’s perception into people, events and circumstances was profound. He further had not only an ability to see individuals as they really were but also an ability to describe them succinctly and graphically, capturing their essence in a phrase. For example, Bismarck once caustically said that the Russian foreign minister, Prince Alexander Gorchakov, "was a man so vain that he could not even jump over a puddle without first studying his reflection in it." And he described the Prussian foreign minister in 1850, Joseph Maria von Radowitz, "as the clever wardrobe master of his monarch’s medieval fantasies." There is a certain sense that Bismarck, as a result of growing up within a bourgeois milieu, spending so much time with a class not his
own, that it made of him an astute observer, so that the experiencing of the bourgeois milieu might always remain somewhat distant and thus never dominate him. What was so surprising was that Bismarck later revealed that he also took the same attitude toward his own class.

"It is thoroughly characteristic [notes Lothar Gall] of Bismarck's relationship to his mother that it was only at her death that he was free to enter his father's world." The thing, however, that this statement simplifies, making Bismarck's character appear decisively black and white, is that his long stay in his mother's world made him forever ambivalent to the world of his father. The lazy life of the country squire was attractive only from a distance but uninspiring for Bismarck who desired power and thrived on challenge.

As a dual figure Bismarck was ultimately never at home -- even in what he created. He eventually redefined the aristocracy and the manner in which the Prussian Old Conservatives defended it; and with that, he also turned against the bourgeoisie. In this study of Bismarck there is a constant comparing (sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit) of what Bismarck said with what he did and of his public life with his private life. In this way one will see that his understanding of the bourgeoisie was deep and his cooperation genuine -- as far as it went -- as opposed to Bismarck's own version of events, which implied at every
turn that he co-opted, manipulated and feudalized it. The bourgeoisie never attained power, it is true, but it did attain hegemony and it is a credit to Bismarck's perception into this class, into his state and into history itself that a place be made for the bourgeoisie within the state.

Bismarck's defiance was not against the spirit of his age but precisely against his once close conservative friends who clung to a dream of the past that was long dead and who refused to embrace a future even if one of their own facilitated its emergence.
Chapter 1

An Exile Endured
From my earliest childhood I became a stranger in my parents' house and never again felt completely at home there.

Bismarck to Heinrich von Puttkamer - Dec. 21, 1846

That which is most captivating and imposing here on earth . . . always has something of the quality of the fallen angel who is beautiful but without peace, great in his designs and exertions but without success, proud and lonely.

Bismarck to fiancée - Feb. 17, 1847

The oak tree becomes the strongest and the most majestic if it remains alone.

Erich Marcks
Erich Marcks in his book on Bismarck asks a question the relevance of which never diminishes throughout Bismarck's entire life, and the answer to it is as difficult as the perception deep, that went into its asking. "Wohin gehörte er?" To which world did he belong? His father's? -- with the tradition of aristocracy, live and let live, lazily farming his estates, unambitiously working with nature, dominating it only to the degree that it produce adequately but not conquering it so that it produce abundantly, expressing Gutmütigkeit to his children, and Feinfühligkeit to his wife. Or, to his mother's? The woman who came from a proud tradition of bourgeoisie, whose father Anastasius Ludwig Mencken was the very embodiment of the educated elite, who had ambitiously earned what he attained in the service of his king and whose life was constantly held up as a model to her two sons. A woman who dwelt, as it were, physically in the country, but by desire resided in the city. She rejected not only the aristocratic tradition, that received at birth what her father attained in a lifetime of work, but also the sterility of the country, devoid of culture and thus for her devoid of life, future, worthiness. She strove for honors in an intellectual bureaucratic tradition that could only be attained by her sons as it was denied her and only if she pushed them forth from the country to the city.
The intent here is to bring out in this chapter that at the heart of Bismarck's life was a conflict, that ran so deep, that it always remained an essential part of his entire life. A conflict between two worlds that competed for his soul -- one actively, the other passively -- the world of the bourgeoisie, which his mother embodied and the city represented, and the world of the aristocracy which his father signified and the country symbolized. Bismarck had a certain ambivalence to both these worlds and this was the essence of the conflict. The country could offer him beauty and tranquility but no real power and the city could offer him power (once a constitutional life in the state of Prussia opened up the possibility of a political career in 1847) but artificiality, sterility and turmoil accompanied it. Bismarck always remained a nuanced, subtle and complex individual -- far from black and white -- and to add to the complexity he was always in motion. This entire chapter follows Bismarck's movement as he went back and forth between the world of the bourgeoisie and the world of the aristocracy, until finally, with his marriage and his political career, he was sufficiently anchored in both worlds that his life took on a certain stability. This does not mean that he ceased to be in motion but that the motion ceased to be drifting. He then had a purpose and his movement was carefully calculated.
One could of course turn to Bismarck’s own writings either to or about his parents; or even further, his own stance and attitude toward life, in answer to the question posed. Here surely it seems obvious that there was no ambivalence or internal conflict and that analysis is hardly needed to determine the self-evident. After all we have Bismarck’s own words expressing his love for his father and hatred toward his mother, together with a life that scorned the artificiality of the city with its show devoid of substance, its petty pursuits of professors who wrote books for themselves, its honors that were devoid of real power. The country in contrast, was natural, not pretentious, inherently rhythmic, not externally orchestrated, whose towering oaks did not borrow their honor to rise to their majesty, and whose life was part of a landscape that could be cultivated only to a degree, since one could not whistle for a needed rain, and whose power could be shared in only through cooperation and patience.

The civil service that Bismarck’s mother so admired seemed to her son as withering in its effects as it was conforming in its means.

I find it difficult to believe, [wrote Bismarck to his Göttingen university friend Scharlach in 1835], that the complete attainment of my striven for goals; the longest title, the greatest honors in Germany, the most remarkable distinction, will ever compensate for the
bodily and spiritual shrivelling up of my heart, which is the result of such a life. 

In 1853, Bismarck met the recipient of the above letter for the first time in 20 years, to relive the glorious Göttingen days -- but Sharlach seemed altered, pleasant but vacuous, conformed by the bureaucratic system that he had long served, but not conscious of the effects of its mediocrity upon him.

I had in mind a student full of life and wit, [wrote Bismarck to his wife after the reunion], but instead found a sickly bureaucrat whose vigor the long years of pressure, working in the midst of small town circumstances had depleted and whose own capacity for empathy they had narrowed. My friend still manifests a clear mind and is an honorable soul, but he is like someone who has spent several years in jail and whose thoughts rested on the spider webs that he observed there or the one green tree that stood before his cell window.

True as it is that the country of his father offered expanse, independence, a certain financial security and dominion, it provided little challenge in its daily routine, little stimulus in its social life, no real power even if carried out meticulously, and nothing that single-minded ambition would want to call its own. "The day over, [Bismarck wrote laconically in 1834 from his father's estate], I busy myself academically and in the evening I have my tea in the eminent company of our family circle,
listening to and taking part in the conversation about the weather, with a face that looked like it was not saying nearly all that it knew."

Bismarck captured well his predicament that resulted from the contradictory desire of wanting freedom with power in an absolutist state that granted neither, when he said that he "would become either the greatest rogue or Prussia's leading statesman."

In 1955 Leonhard von Muralt published a very significant letter that Bismarck had written in 1851 to his friend Hans von Kleist-Retzow in which he described the brutal sensuality he sometimes suffered from. The letter showed an aspect of Bismarck's character previously suppressed (by the editor of Bismarck's letters) and it led to the obvious quest of finding what else remained distorted or unknown. In 1968 Charlotte Sempell was allowed to see the contents of the original letter that Bismarck wrote about his parents on February 23, 1847. She compared this with what had been published of the letter and filled in what had been omitted. The controversy need not concern us but the resultant portrait of a very complex individual is essential to our understanding of the man who became Europe's dominant statesman -- for the contradictions and conflicts inherent within his personality, became manifest in the Germany he united. More than once the two streams, the aristocratic and the bourgeois, flowed into him.
My mother, [wrote Bismarck to his bride], was a beautiful woman who loved outward show, had a bright and lively mind but little of what Berliners call Gemüt. She wanted me to learn and achieve a lot and it often seemed to me that she was hard and cold towards me. As a little child I hated her, and later I used to deceive her -- successfully -- with guile.9

The rage that Bismarck felt toward his mother did not seem to abate with her death on January 1, 1839. She had robbed him of his childhood by depriving him at a young age of the freedom to live on the family estate, being educated by a private tutor, and instead sent him to a boarding school in Berlin. "I have sinned against no one more than my parents [Bismarck wrote in the same letter] but above all against my mother."9

I really loved my father, [Bismarck continued], and if I was not with him I felt remorse over my behavior towards him, always making good intentions that would only endure briefly; because how often I have repaid his boundless, disinterested warm tenderness towards me, with coldness and indifference; but even more often, because of my adversion to offending against manners which I considered fitting, I outwardly loved him even when my heart was hard and loveless towards his apparent weaknesses, which I had no right to judge, but which aggravated me nevertheless, when he offended against proper etiquette.10

The last line is particularly striking because its veracity is shown in the letters to his father, his care of him, and his own enduring love of nature that he shared with him.
However, it did not erase the fact that Bismarck, to a degree, saw his father through his mother’s eyes, in that he lacked culture, as well as the ambition to overcome this fault.

In 1860, Bismarck underwent a crisis so deep in his personal and political life that it revealed a principle essential to our understanding his growth up to 1847. It seemed, in 1860, that his political career was all but over and it was certain that his friendship with his strongest political supporter, Leopold von Gerlach, had come to an end. Bismarck’s political career which began in 1847 with the calling of the Prussian Diet, rose steadily through the events of the 1848 revolution, as the perception about the reactionary Junker deepened to an appreciation that here stood a man not only capable of delivering biting attacks in his speeches, possessing amazing organizational qualities, protecting well the material interests of his class, but being able also to analyze clearly the international implications of ongoing events. When those events returned superficially to status quo ante, Bismarck was rewarded in 1851 with a government appointment as envoy to the Federal Diet. The man who supported him in his rise to that position was Leopold von Gerlach, adjutant to the King, but as his perception of Bismarck deepened throughout the 1850’s, to the final letter between them in 1860, more than
a question had arisen about Bismarck’s conservative credentials.

There is a sense that as much as the liberals had originally been deceived by his conservatism so too were the conservatives by his liberal traits. Bismarck remained enigmatic, refusing to be ever defined in any terms but power. But to those who thought in terms of ideas, moral principles and party policy, he could only be seen, as he once accused historians of doing, through their own spectacles. In the final letter to his benefactor, the man to whom in a very real sense Bismarck owed everything politically, he again defended his political position to a conservative of an older generation than himself, one who had fought against Napoleon Bonaparte, not one born in the year of his banishment. It was a characteristic of Bismarck, shown also in this letter, that when the opponent determined his conduct according to preconceived principles, rather than current analysis of the present, that he reverted to authority rather than persuasion.

I am a child of a different time than you, but just as true to mine as you to yours. It seems to me that no one ever loses the stamp of the impressions derived in one’s youth: in yours there was the indelible victorious hatred against Bonaparte, whom you name the very embodiment of revolution, and if you knew someone worse you would baptize him accordingly.
Bismarck's analysis of human nature was based on observation and a perception unclouded by humanitarian presuppositions of goodwill. Individuals, for him, supported one course of action over another because it was in their interest to do so, whether they clothed that interest in moral garments or not. Thus Bismarck's principles of conduct were derived from facts not ideas, an ongoing analysis of events, not from prescribed theorems how one should act before the events have even arisen. As shown in the above quote Bismarck realized that an impasse had been reached. Leopold von Gerlach derived his principles of conduct in a completely different manner than Bismarck -- but no less valid. Then, to explain the impasse, Bismarck trying to grapple with an individual who he felt was not only misjudging his own position but utterly denying reality itself, revealed one of his own principles: "It seems to me that no one ever loses the stamp of the impressions derived in one's youth." Here, Bismarck stated a fact as well as a principle, and one no less true of himself than it was of Leopold von Gerlach.

Bismarck, like Gerlach, also formed impressions in his youth. He was immersed by his mother into the world of the bourgeoisie at home, in his education and in his brief career in the civil service. Because of his mother, Bismarck came to know well this bourgeois world from the inside and although he often spoke against it, he imbibed
much from it and even in places admired it. Thus, just as Napoleon Bonaparte left an indelible imprint on Gerlach, Bismarck’s years of growing-up in a bourgeois milieu left an indelible imprint on him. The only difference was that Gerlach proclaimed his impressions whereas Bismarck disguised his.

Otto von Bismarck was born on the 1st of April 1815 on his father’s Schönhausen estate which rested by the Elbe River about 50 miles west of Berlin. He was the fourth of six children, three of whom did not survive early childhood, and of the three remaining children, he was five years younger than his brother Bernard, and twelve years older than his sister Malwine. Bismark’s parents had lived in the Schönhausen castle which was near a village of the same name from 1806 when they married, but in 1816, after a cousin of his father Ferdinand died, leaving three estates in Pomerania to him, the family moved to Kniephof, the largest of the three.

Tradition and land remained two themes that ran through Bismarck’s entire life. He was proud of his family name which belonged to a world of Prussian nobility, rulers not ruled, and long established as one of the oldest families in the area of Brandenburg March. He valued the land not only for its beauty, the appreciation of which would later fill his letters, but its permanency. Land, unlike the world of money, which he came very much to appreciate for its
inherent power to multiply,\textsuperscript{18} did not possess the same security as land because its power was based on its fluidity; money had to be in constant flux, whereas land was an enduring fact that could be manipulated, made profitable, but remained stable. Even as Chancellor, possessing a large and growing fortune and against the advice\textsuperscript{9} of his banker Gerson Bleichröder, Bismarck continued insatiably to amass larger quantities of land.

Of his mother's family tradition which descended from an academic family in Leipzig, Bismarck barely makes even a mention and when he does, it is not done with a sense of pride or belonging to it. It was a tradition of enlightenment, cosmopolitan in nature, opposing absolutism and encouraging a liberal reform from above. Anastasius Ludwig Mencken, the father of Bismarck's mother, had the distinction of serving under three Kings,\textsuperscript{20} first as Cabinet secretary under Frederick the Great, then brought into the Cabinet under Frederick William II and serving also in the Cabinet under Frederick William III until Anastasius died in 1801, orphaning his daughter Wilhelmine at the age of twelve.

When Wilhelmine Luise Mencken married Ferdinand von Bismarck in 1806 she was 17 years of age and he 34. The marriage appears initially a mesalliance both socially and intellectually. However, her own mother, who lived until 1818, remained well-known at court, and Ferdinand, who had
retired from court to manage his estates not even being lulled from them, to the displeasure of his Sovereign, to fight in the Wars of Liberation, shows that at least in terms of access to Royalty, rather than purely in terms of class, the gap between them socially was not that wide.

Bismarck was born about two and a half months before the battle of Waterloo, the final defeat of Napoleon, the restitution of the old order after 25 years of turmoil, with Prince Clemens von Metternich, the Austrian foreign minister, not only coordinating the settlement, securing its maintenance, but embodying the very essence of his age until the 1848 revolution that overthrew him. In much the same way, Otto von Bismarck later came to symbolize his age through a politics where power provided its own legitimacy, an age that not only witnessed Prussia really awaken to her economic potentiality, but a Prussia which saw her way through to fulfilling a national desire of unification without weakening her power by doing it in the name of liberalism.

Little is known of many events outside of a skeletal framework and general spirit of Bismarck’s time spent at Kniephof until he was sent to the Plamann Institute at the age of six to begin his schooling.

I became from early childhood a stranger in my parents’ house and never again felt completely at home there, [Bismarck wrote in 1846], and my upbringing was directed right from the start from the standpoint that
all the education of the intellect be subordinated to the early acquiring of positive knowledge."

From 1822 to 1827 Bismarck lived in Berlin, boarding at the Institute which also gave him his education. He never looked back on this period with fond memories. The teachers he felt were demagogic, the daily schedule rigorous, the food scarce, and nobles made to feel unwelcome --- and he was made all the more bitter when he could not return home in the summers because his mother took her vacation. "My childhood was spoiled for me at the Plamann Institute which seemed to me like a prison."

The course that Bismarck’s mother now set him on, beginning with the Plamann Institute, was thoroughly bourgeois. The entire process, however, of Bismarck’s education gave birth to a struggle within him. The majority of the students with whom Bismarck now lived, twenty-four hours a day, were for the most part from the bourgeoisie. For Bismarck to step down a class, at his mother’s insistence, to succeed in bourgeois terms meant constraint for him. It forced him to grow up with members of the bourgeoisie, which in a sense alienated him experientially from his own class and forced him to earn honors and recognition from the King in state service, rather than rest upon the honors bestowed upon him by his noble birth. Yet Bismarck could only be successful in his mother’s eyes in bourgeois terms. Further, the fact that Bismarck knew, that
in spirit, there was no difference between the Plamann Institute and his mother's dominance left him no real refuge outside of himself and his aristocratic birth, which they (his mother and the educators) might well disdain but could never take away.

The time of childhood in a very real sense came to an end here. Even though his father's estate was dominated by his mother's presence, at least there was space, privacy and freedom there -- even if won with guile. In school, however, the day began at six and was structured throughout whereby even outings on Sunday were with a group unless family members had specifically arranged a meeting.

Bismarck confirmed as an old man that he had never once eaten enough at the Institute -- something which he certainly compensated for later, combined with late rising, general love of undiscipline, land and freedom. He recaptured as best he could, what he had here lost, which included the freedom to defy what he considered derisory.

"When I looked out the window and saw a team of oxen ploughing it made me cry from longing to see Kniephof." This separation from the country, so keenly felt and so bitterly resented, seemed to throw Bismarck back upon his own resources, learning to adapt to two successive situations (his home and then the school) where his nobility was faintly disdained. His mother did not value the noble system of education and the essentially bourgeois
institution he was sent to saw nobles as somewhat of an anachronism in what it hoped was a Prussian state moving toward a liberal constitution. A self-consciousness developed in Bismarck in the face of opposition, whereby the nobility that they sought to shape by making it conform, actually grew in proportion to the intensity with which it was denied, becoming asserted as the one thing that they could never take away.

Frau von Bismarck very actively watched her sons' education, the grades they received, exhorting to greater effort or reproving if sufficient excellence was not shown. In 1825 she wrote to Bernard: "I must warn you beforehand, that if your marks by the autumn report card have not turned out to be exceptionally good, you will not be spending the winter with us, and also only seldom, and never without the permission of Herr Plamann be allowed to visit us." And, on another occasion years later, again to Bernard, she wrote: "If one does not live by the mind then how does one perfect it? What others can do in this regard to help to develop this ability is little, for only our own efforts win us this good, and without this effort it remains eternally dead." A month later she wrote again to Bernard, as if sensing her ambition for him would not be realized:

It has always been the highest goal of my life and I thought my greatest fortune to be able to reach the place where I would have a son who would cooperate in being educated under my eyes, who as a man, would be
able to penetrate more deeply into the realm of the mind than is allowed a woman."

For the present, Bismarck as well as his brother Bernard continued on the course set for them, if not with zeal then at least with resignation. In 1827, Bismarck went to the Friedrich Wilhelm Gymnasium for three years and then in 1830 to the Grey Friary until his graduation in 1832. These years were more bearable as Bismarck himself was to say later," because for the first three years he lived with his brother in an apartment in Berlin, joined in winters by their parents and uncle Fritz. The arrangement lasted as long as Bernard remained in Berlin and uncle Fritz remained alive, [he died in April of 1830], and was able to act as a mediator between a very nervous mother, who complained of sleepless nights, and her two sons who crashed about in a dull roar and spoke with trumpet lungs." For the remaining two years Bismarck boarded first with a professor Prévost, and then with a Dr. Bonell, who was the director of the Friedrich Wilhelm Institute.

His boarding two successive years with two different professors and their families, gave Bismarck a rare opportunity to study another aspect of the world of the bourgeoisie. The circle of people that now surrounded Bismarck was smaller. Meals were now with a family, not eighty-one other boys, in the household of a professor rather than a dining hall. This was important for Bismarck
because he was not invited into this milieu some Sunday afternoon for tea when everyone could be on their best behavior for the young aristocrat, but he lived within the home, saw the furniture, books, food prepared, heard the conversations at meals, and could thus observe first-hand how members of the intellectual elite of the bourgeoisie lived within their own home.

Bismarck began his memoirs with the caustic remark that he left school in 1832 "as a normal product of our state education system; as a pantheist and if not a republican, still with the conviction that the republic was the most sensible form of government." He goes on, interestingly in the same vein, describing his education almost as an attack on what was truly Prussian in him -- his loyalty to the monarch. He remarks that nationalism made some impression on him but remained in a state of theoretical observation and was not strong enough to uproot his inborn feelings of loyalty to the Prussian monarch. He continues: "my historical sympathies remained on the side of authority." True, this was written at the end of a life looking back, but it is nevertheless consistent with the Bismarck who truly did come to identify with his monarch and the power of the Prussian state. In fact, it became the key to his personality. Eventually, Bismarck allowed himself to be used by power or not at all.
At the age of seventeen Bismarck entered the University of Göttingen, choosing a selection of classes that would leave the way open to becoming either a judge, a routine government official or diplomat. Obviously his mother would have preferred the last, in imitation of her father, but as Bismarck's grades upon leaving the Gymnasium were only average, there was a hint of doubt that such an option would remain open if his discipline did not increase and his marks improve. His own attitude to the famous university that drew students from all over the world was a "hopeless institution useful only to ruin one's health and lead a good for nothing existence."

Bismarck developed in two very different ways during his three semesters at the University of Göttingen. On the outside was a person who was determined to be noticed, either by his extravagant apparel, a huge dog which accompanied him even to see the rector of the university, or his yard long pipe which he placidly smoked in the streets although forbidden to do so. On the other side was a deepened interior that met a life-long friend in the American John Motley, came to appreciate Byron, Shakespeare and Goethe, along with a certain interest for the classes of the historian Arnold Heeren.

Heeren, the son of a Bremen merchant family, disciple of Adam Smith and author of highly praised books, showed in his lectures and works one point that figured very
significantly in the later Bismarck, and that was the fundamental importance of material interest in mobilizing agreement within and between nations. It was also a perception behind the founding of the Zollverein, or Prussian Customs Union in 1834, which was the one area in which Prussia followed its own interest, in spite, not because of, Austria’s interests. However, where Bismarck would later show his divergence from this economic liberalism was that he, unlike the liberals, saw it under the auspices of power, not simply binding the state to their material interest but rather binding their economic power to the state.

However, we know none of this from the student at Göttingen. We only have one glimpse from Lauenstein, whom Bismarck knew at this time, that tells us that in Bismarck’s room on a large table were a spread of atlases and historical works relating to Heeren’s class. Other than that we have records of a classload that decreased as Bismarck’s boredom with the few lectures he did attend increased. We know from his memoirs that he first joined the nationalistic Göttinger Burschenschaft but soon left it because they refused to duel, exhibited "uncouth manners", and held "extravagant" political views. He then turned to duelling, drinking and arguing -- the latter, with enough provocation, that even Motley would come into his room in the morning before the contentious Junker had awakened so as
not to waste even a second after his eyes had opened to carry on an argument that had been cut short the night before."

It was a time enjoyed by Bismarck, these three semesters, when a career was still far enough away that it could not cast a shadow on his first days of real freedom since his early years at Kniephof. In 1846 he wrote to Heinrich von Puttkamer, the father of his wife to be, with a certain melancholy that then had passed through what Bismarck was only now beginning. "Not quite seventeen years old I went to the University of Göttingen. In the next eight years I saw my parents house but seldom; with forbearance my father did not hinder me and my mother scolded me from afar when I was neglectful of my studies and work.""

John Motley’s book Morton’s Hope catches well the Bismarck of this period in his character Otto von Rabenmark, who for all the wildness of his public personality was a person of depth in private, showing not only perception into his own behavior, its effect upon others, but also a broad depth of understanding of human nature in general. He was at once the apparent superficial actor who still managed to learn six languages, who entertained the crowds that looked for nothing more, but dropped his guise before friends who realized that there was a depth to divine.
There is one other aspect of this actor exterior but very sensitive, perceptive interior, and that is the facility to control a given situation while appearing to be given up to frivolity in the process. In fact, it is the aristocrat impressing but refusing to be impressed— noting what was worth noting, but not under the auspices of being taught. It was much the same characteristic with which Bismarck was later to describe his manner of reading. "I flip through it. I read the beginning of the book, then the end, then in the middle, this and that [dies und das]. If this proves interesting then I read the whole book, otherwise I lay it aside." The book, especially a scholarly work, under such a description becomes reduced to a novelty, that may entertain for a moment, but not proportionately to the value of its content. Perception, however, without purpose, can become dangerous, as it sharpens one's view of destruction, without either the hope of avoiding it or the obtuseness not to see it. "Smile on -- [wrote Byron in the last two lines of a poem Bismarck copied out] -- nor venture to unmask Man's heart, and view the hell that's there." When he wrote to his wife in 1851, "you are my anchor on the good side of the river," it was written from the experienced understanding of having been adrift.

In the fall of 1833 Bismarck and John Motley transferred to the University of Berlin. The lightness
began to lessen. In November, Bismarck wrote Scharlach with characteristic wit but underlying discontent.

If you want to read this letter in the same mood in which it was written you will first have to drink a bottle of wine. I would apologize for my delay in writing if you were not already familiar with my shyness of the inkwell, and also if you knew not that in Göttingen I heartily drank two bottles of wine before I wrote a letter, which is what happened with my present convulsion of the pen. You have probably already heard how badly things have gone for me of late. I spent, while still on my journey through Brunswick, Magdeburg, Schönhausen and Brandenburg, 3-4 weeks flat on my back with fever. Later, a very unpleasant scene took place between my parents and myself, who refused to pay my debts; it is this which has brought on my present misanthropic mood somewhat akin to that of Charles Moor when he became a robber. 52

Gambling debts were a recurrent problem for Bismarck, and, as he was to admit in 1838 to his cousin, the major reason for his leaving state service to farm his father's estates.

A fundamental reason for my leaving at that time, which I have not told my father, was because of the enormous debts I had contracted through various means, more than I cared to inform him, and from which I saw no honorable way of removing myself other than acquiring an independent income. 53

The gambling was just one level of a much deeper lack of control that Bismarck had over his passions -- to a certain extent they carried him rather than he them. On one
occasion he said: "Constitution inevitable, in this manner to outward glory; but it is necessary to be inwardly pious."54 It is the last of the three phrases that is the most revealing because it gives a glimpse into the internal chaos that Bismarck felt was incompatible with political power. "There are whole regions in my soul, [he said on another occasion], that I shall never let anyone see into."55

The fascination that Bismarck later had for power was not its boundless chaotic nature but its inherent self-restraint. He rose to the challenge of manipulating it with the greatest of finesse even if only he could appreciate the art or its consequences. It was not a fascination that one may have before the raw power of a thunderstorm but the appreciation before the measured power of an ocean, that for all its expanse, has shores and boundaries, and more often than not, does not overflow its banks. It was a perception rooted deeply in his personality.

Bismarck was diplomatic with his mother and he counseled his brother to be likewise. "Do not be so direct in your letters home, [he wrote to Bernard who was now a lieutenant]. The Kniephof Court is far more accessible through cunning and lies than it is through the blunt talk of soldiers."56 However, for all his caution, another late rising in December of 1833, while staying at home, brought the repeated question from his mother that if he was truly serious about his studies, why did he not show it?57 She now
wanted him to become a soldier with the hope that the army could enforce the discipline that her endeavours had failed to bring about.

By March of 1835 Bismarck had finished his university studies, and in May of the same year passed his first law examination. He was now a Referendar or trainee with the Municipal Court in Berlin, in which capacity he worked for a year while preparing for examinations that would admit him to the civil service. The year of work in Berlin was hopelessly dull and a career, even remotely related, uninspiring.

The day before yesterday, [wrote Bismarck in June 1835], I returned from a several week vacation on the estate and am again in the full swing of bringing Berlin's criminals to light and punishment. This service rendered to the state which obliges me with the completely mechanical task of protocol, was appealing or at least reasonable as long as it was new. . . . . My life if looked at closely is really quite miserable. By day I pursue studies that really do not interest me and I spend my evening in the company of courtiers and civil servants affectuating a pleasure that I am not subservient enough to feel or seek. I am still frequently visited by the desire to swap the pen for the plough and the briefcase for the gamebag.

Bismarck, wanting to shorten his three year period of Referendar to two, by serving in the western province, made application to the civil service in the town of Aachen. The exams of entry, two written and one oral, were passed
successfully by June of 1836. It was for this exam preparation that Bismarck was allowed to return home in March of that year, and on May 4 he wrote to Scharlach: "For four weeks now I been sitting in an old enchanted castle, with a pointed arch, four foot thick walls, some thirty rooms, two of which are furnished, magnificent damask wallhangings, whose color is still evident in their tattered remains, rats in abundance, chimneys in which the wind howls -- in short, in my father's castle." The contentment which he felt there, even in studying, was shortlived.

He hoped to pass quickly through his remaining year as Referendar, take civil training in the Prussian Customs administrations, then take the necessary examination for Assessor, from which he was allowed to make application to the foreign minister to be admitted to the examination for the Diplomatic Corps. The process seemed long, involved, prejudiced against nobles, and, the work to achieve it all, utterly routine. Bismarck was far more able to acclimatize himself to the international crowd that frequented Aachen and it became a time, aptly described to his wife, many years later, that consisted of "loving, drinking and gambling."

Bismarck continued in Aachen until July 1837, bored by the bureaucratic small town pettiness but intrigued by the international. "If I have chocolate for breakfast the next day the whole town knows about it" he mocked to his brother
-- but then, was swept off his feet by the daughter of a visiting English country parson with whom he traveled all over Germany for the next four months. In September Bismarck wrote to Karl Friedrich von Savigny, who was also studying in Aachen, in order to ask his friend by some possible "distortion of the truth" to make his unscheduled leave at least acceptable." In December Bismarck lost his new-found love to a one-armed colonel of 50 years, 4 horses and an income of 15,000 taler." Fourteen years later he wrote to his wife while visiting Wiesbaden: "It is with a mixture of wistfulness and precocious wisdom that I see again the place of a former foolishness. I was then twenty-two -- and, like champagne that had burst in bubbles was afterwards left with only the stale remains at the bottom of the glass."

It was the pettiness and constraint of the civil service that Bismarck never seemed able to reconcile himself to. It was robbing him of his taste for life" he told his mother in 1838, beseeching her to allow him to leave it and be given instead some kind of work on the estates. We do not have her reply, but her death the following January allowed Bismarck's father to fulfill his son's wish. It is highly questionable, however, if she could have ever accepted her son's desire, because for her, life was that of the mind, but for Bismarck it was freedom; where she defined herself by intellect, he did by the will. It was a clash of
two absolutes in which only the removal of one made the other possible.

The Prussian civil servant is like one man in an orchestra; whether he is in the first violins or plays the triangle, with no overall view of or influence over the whole he has to play his little part as set before him, regardless of how good or bad he considers it to be. I, however, want to make the kind of music I know to be good or none at all."

Genius smashes restraint whereas bureaucracy is built upon it." Genius thrives on originality but bureaucracy on uniformity. Because genius can perceive nuances it must have freedom to respond accordingly, whereas bureaucracy, based upon rules, regulations and prescribed procedures, must have obedience. The very essence of genius is self-consciousness. Because of its awareness of an almost infinite capacity to provide solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems it refuses to look to anyone else, whereas to bureaucracy self-consciousness can only appear as subversive.

Often I have heard it said by the highest civil servants in Aachen and Potsdam, [wrote Bismarck explaining the various reasons for his leaving the civil service], that this or that rule was harmful, oppressive or unjust; but still not even once did they dare to submit even the most subservient idea that was against it, but on the contrary felt themselves obliged to apply the rule with all their strength even against their conscience."
Because it distresses me very much [wrote Bismarck's father to Bernard in 1838] that Otto should feel so unhappy and because when I was in Kniephof I saw with deep delight how very interested you are in agriculture and what excellent and fitting ideas you have for improving the estates there . . . . I have decided to bequeath the estates there to you both as your property and derive my own livelihood from Schönhausen alone.\textsuperscript{71}

In October 1839, Bismarck left the civil service, effectively putting behind him a predominantly bourgeois career and entering the thoroughly aristocratic world of the Pomeranian Junker. The transition, however, from servant in one world to lord in another, was soon complete. It was challenging at first, thus for Bismarck also entertaining -- but that soon wore off.\textsuperscript{72}

Often in letters, speeches and conversations referring back to this period, which eventually revealed itself to be an interlude before a political career, Bismarck either gave it an idyllic quality or described it as "twelve years of being a landed aristocrat; that is, a boundlessly lazy existence."\textsuperscript{1173} Neither description is fully accurate but the second particularly, in being a caricature, thus magnifying an aspect, distorts the whole in a way that does not do justice to the fact that within two years, through hard work, careful planning, and a relatively modest style of living, the estates were brought back to an even footing financially. There are records of his own careful
accounting which, although he later called boring, he still performed meticulously. Further there were neighbors who were amazed not only at his general understanding of the economic interests of his class but his very detailed understanding of the weather, harvesting crops, planting trees, protecting against frost -- all against a backdrop of current books and newspapers which gave him information on agricultural economics.

Because Bismarck unified incongruities in his person, performing tasks on different levels with equal efficiency at the same time, his posturing about something being trivial was often believed. This was particularly true with economics and especially of his own estates. For example: when he years later described to his wife how experience had cured him of the illusions regarding the "Acadian happiness of a dyed in the wool farmer with double-entry bookkeeping and chemical studies," Bismarck, in effect, used the truth to conceal the truth. A far more accurate picture of his concern for the economic welfare of his estates was given during the war with France. "From Versailles he watched over the economy of Varzin with amazing care, directing its affairs through long written instructions as if there was no war to direct and no Reich to found."

With the separation of the estates between the two brothers in 1841, Bismarck suddenly found himself alone. For two years he had been the gracious host or sought after
guest -- witty, charming, educated, having a broader range of experiences to talk of, and a colorful manner of describing them. There was a sense now, however, of being left only with entertaining, having no one to talk with on a deeper level when the party was over and the guests gone.

In 1841 he asked for the hand of Ottilie von Puttkamer but was turned down by her mother, and in 1842, he decided that travel might bring some variation into his Komödie. For four months, from July to October, he visited Scotland, England, France and Switzerland. The letters written to his father during the trip were those of an aristocrat to an aristocrat, without comment of chartism, social tension or strikes in England, but the social variations of the aristocratic life he found there.

He returned home -- but nothing had changed. He read selectively, liking especially Byron with his melancholy language which captured such a breadth of grandeur and depth of misery. "What exile from himself can flee?" began one of the verses of a poem that Bismarck later sent to his fiancée. It captures well the Bismarck of this time. He was now the Junker who worked independently on his land having dominion over his own but finding the loneliness of the reign as unbearable as the service in the government had been uninspiring.

I have now for five years lived alone on the land, [wrote Bismarck to Scharlach in 1844], and with a
certain success have devoted myself to the bettering of
my new life but I can no longer endure the lonely
aristocratic existence and have long battled with
myself if I should again return to state service or
take another long trip. In the meantime, four months
ago, I returned to government service, worked six
weeks, but just like before, found the work and people
unprofitable and dull, and since then, I am on vacation
drifting aimlessly on the storm of life, without any
direction other than the whim of the moment, and it is
a matter of indifference to me which shore I will wash
up.  

His letters to his sister Malwine, however, still
sparkled with wit. Writing in 1844 from Norderne, a resort
he frequented when longer trips proved too costly, he said:

Sitting across from me is old count Beust, who has the
shape akin to those which appear in nightmares; a thick
frog without legs, who with each bite opens his mouth
to his shoulders like a sleeping bag, forcing me in my
dizziness to grab onto the edge of the table so as not
to fall into this gaping abyss.  

He wrote her other letters, not only to entertain the
seventeen-year-old but to encourage her, by way of example,
to write to their father, who also like Bismarck was lonely.

Bismarck’s father was content with routine and amused
by the slightest variation of the ordinary. Bismarck was
content only with challenge and although he could be amusing
about the ordinary as well as the most profound changes in
his life, it did little to fill the utter emptiness he felt
within himself. The boundless freedom of the aristocratic
life contained no more meaning than the insipid obedience of the bureaucratic. In contrast, Bismarck’s father could say: "I rejoice unceasingly in seeing Otto." A letter from Bismarck to Malwine gives a glimpse of how time was spent.

I am staying with father, reading, smoking, going for walks, and once in a while playing a game that he likes to call foxhunting. . . . On top of all that, we inspect the orchards twice a day, the sheep pens once and the four thermometers in the parlour once every hour.

A year later Bismarck was again with his father.

I still want to remain with him, [he wrote to Malwine], even though Bernard, my present employer, is pushing for my return home. But it would be so sad for the old gentleman if he were to spend alone, what perhaps may be the last weeks of his life, without a single member of his family. My arrival so pleased him and equally so would my leaving hurt him.

He was loved by his father for what he was, not, as with his mother, for what he could become.

"When a ship gets into port [said the Chancellor of the German Reich] only those who have been on board can tell of the storms she passed through." It is an advantage given historians, part of the reason one might suspect that Bismarck was not overly fond of them, that they have an overview of completed events whereas those they describe have a partial view of unfolding events -- the presumptuousness of attributing shape to what was
experienced as chaos. Where Bismarck was drifting aimlessly on the storm of life the historian can see what port his ship will find rest in, and just where he will put down its anchor. On April 28, 1847 Bismarck wrote to his bride from Kniephof, which had been returned to Bernard at their father's death in November 1845, when Bismarck received Schönhausen.

Over the whole area of green meadows, water, and barren oak trees, lay a soft melancholy, when I, after a day of business frustrations went out at sundown to bid my farewell to the places which were dear to me and upon which I have often been dreamy and despondent. On the place where I had wanted to build a house lay the skeleton of a horse. I could recognize from the bone structure the remains of my true Caleb, who for seven years had carried me on his back, exultant, despondent, reckless, over many miles. I thought about the heather and fields, the lakes, houses and those who dwell in them, which the two of us had raced by. My whole life rolled backwards before me until the days when as a child I had played here. The rain drizzled lightly in the bushes and I stared a long time at the red dusk, until, overflowing from wistfulness and regret over the lethargic indifference and blind sensuality in which I wasted all the rich talents of youth, mind, capabilities and health, without purpose or success, until I intruded my shipwreck, whose cargo I foolishly had thrown overboard with my own hands, into the harbor of your pure heart."
Her loyalty to him held him. Bismarck was to anchor his private life here and find his challenge in the public life of politics.

Ernest Engelberg captures perfectly the incongruities of Bismarck's life. "He was a Prussian Monarchist who shied away from military service and abhorred bureaucratic work. He was an aristocrat and yet did not feel at home in the customary aristocratic circles." A sense of purpose which opened the way out of this circle came from Marie von Thadden, the daughter of a leading figure in a small Pomeranian pietistic group, and fiancée of Moritz von Blanckenburg, former fellow student with Bismarck at the Grey Friary.

Pietism was a lay movement that had grown up within Lutheranism in defiance of the rationalistic spirit that had come to imbue many of its pastors. It stressed personal union with God, a very close support system among its members, who met frequently, read Scripture, were directed by lay ministers, and hoped through the very direct influence of two of their members, Leopold and Ludwig von Gerlach, to capture the King's support for their religious-political program. Such was by no means an illusory goal, for in 1840 when the crown prince became Frederick William IV, he appointed Leopold his adjutant and Ludwig president of the superior court of appeals in Magdeburg.
The very sectarian aspects of this group who were literal in their Scriptural interpretation" and adamant in adherence to it, who rejected much of the enlightenment and embraced a Christian foundation as the basis of the state, would seem the last group that Bismarck, a skeptic, pantheist and deist, would find solace in and whose political support he would eventually receive.

Marie von Thadden had a profound effect on Bismarck. She was lively, entertaining, with a quick and perceptive mind. She saw through Bismarck's charm, cynicism and indifference to the disillusionment at the very centre of his soul." She took an active interest in him, empathized with him in the very emptiness he felt life offered him, listened to his unbelief, along with his very cogent reasons for it, and urged him to abandon it. Marie von Thadden was genuine in her concern for Bismarck and certain that his life could become anchored, or she would never have introduced him to her closest friend and his future wife, Johanna von Puttkamer. Marie died in the fall of 1846 in the wake of an influenza epidemic and Bismarck said of her: "This is the first heart that I have lost which I know really beat warmly for me." Marie did not lack Gemüt.

Bismarck first met Johanna von Puttkamer in October of 1844, at the wedding of their mutual friends. The contrast between this nineteen-year-old and Bismarck was remarkable to say the least. The only child of a very religious
aristocratic family in the far east of Pomerania, she was brought up and kept within the close circles of her family, remaining untouched by the world much less the enlightenment, somewhat shy, but natural, and at times lively. She could play the piano well, speak French haltingly, but had no concept of the world Bismarck came from, traveled within or would eventually draw her into. The boundlessness of Bismarck's life was the very opposite to her close well-defined one. He had felt exiled from his home, she sheltered within hers; his best friends were non-German, her few friends were neighbors; he widely traveled, she not at all. The only similarity between them was that they were so perfectly opposite that it allowed for convergence, allowing each to derive comfort from the other.

I have spent many despondent, comfortless hours, [Bismarck later wrote to Johanna's father in asking for her hand], with the thoughts that my existence and that of others, was purposeless and fruitless, perhaps only an accidental result of creation that comes and goes like dust from the turning of wheels. Eternity, resurrection, were to me uncertain and I saw nothing in this life that appeared to me worth the effort to strive for with earnestness and energy.90

However one may like to characterize Bismarck's conversion, that it touched his private life but not his public one, that it remained deism in Christian attire, that he identified with, appropriated the language of power he read in Scripture, allowing himself to speak with the power
of one who could put off life like a soiled shirt" -- it nevertheless remains impossible to deny that his life stabilized, he gained purpose, meaning and a goal.

Marie's initial attempt to match Bismarck and Johanna bore no fruit. Then, in the late spring of 1845 Bismarck and Johanna had their first religious discussion. To Johanna's emotional outpourings of her faith, Bismarck had his own outpouring -- that of laughter. They continued to meet, however, and in 1846 during a trip into the Harz mountains with a number of friends, the scales seemed to fall from Bismarck's eyes, and Johanna appeared different. It was after this trip that marriage was considered and Johanna agreed that Bismarck write her father for his needed consent. Before that letter was written Marie von Thadden suddenly took ill and died.

The epidemic first claimed her brother, then her mother and on November 10, 1846 Marie von Thadden herself died. The effect on Bismarck was lasting. He had prayed for her recovery and, as he later said: "although God did not hear my prayer at that time, neither did He reject it, for I have never since lost the ability to ask things of Him, and I feel within myself if not peace at least a confidence and optimism such as I have never before known in my life." Even in her death Marie provided a platform, a basis of support from which Bismarck could appeal to people for understanding, who without the evident friendship of Marie,
would never have listened. She made Bismarck credible in a religious moral world in which he, on his own, had anything but credibility. She legitimized his private life as much as Leopold von Gerlach would soon legitimize his public one.93

The Werbebrief was built upon and around the trust that Marie von Thadden had in Bismarck's character, honor and ultimate dependability. The implication throughout the letter requesting the very religious Heinrich von Puttkamer to surrender his daughter in marriage, to the of late reputedly very irreligious Otto von Bismarck, was that Marie had taken him into her home, given him what his own parents had not, and had shown faith that God would bring and keep him. Thus the appeal was not to trust Bismarck but rather an appeal to Heinrich von Puttkamer to have faith in God about Bismarck. The marriage he gave his consent to lasted forty-seven years.

With Johanna, Bismarck resolved one of the two major problems of his youth: his need for stability. She provided a point of reference, security outside of himself, unconditional love that could anchor his passions and stabilize his person. In 1851 he wrote to his wife of his former life with a sense of horror at its loneliness, nothingness and meaninglessness when, "I was without God, without you and without children."94 It was as if the memory of such a life was still real enough to Bismarck to send a
tremor of fear through him at the very thought of it. Without Bismarck’s private life being anchored in a home, which his own family never provided for him, the second major problem of his youth -- his ambition -- would have remained unfulfilled because he would have lacked the necessary discipline to attain its desired goal.
Chapter II

To Capture A King
Frederick William IV was incapable of making a truly bold or daring decision; the traditional and the modern battled relentlessly in his soul.

Erich Marcks

Nous ne voulons pas la contre-révolution, mais le contraire de la révolution.

Otto von Bismarck

The first half of the nineteenth century was an age of philosophy; the second half was an age of science . . . . The revolutions of 1848 had seemed to prove, not only that certain theorists were wrong, but that all theories were unimportant.

Robert C. Binkley
Bismarck's transition from private to public life, from landed aristocrat to active politician, from Junker admired in his immediate circle of friends to the man suddenly well known throughout all of Prussia's provinces for his reactionary speeches, was only made possible in the measure that the Prussian state came loose from its absolutist moorings. Bismarck would become and remain the man in the breach: between the modern and traditional orders, monied wealth and landed estates, parliament and His Majesty the King -- and where he appeared, material interest in opposition to a Liberalism that impressed the King with his fearlessness in the face of royal absolutism, or impressed upon the landed aristocracy that the king was forced to leave his throne. The public platform from which Bismarck could impress the King with his fearlessness in the face of liberal absolutism was only possible in the measure that the King was forced to transcend party policy in national interests, and where he appeared, by economic and then politically to leave his throne. In an absolutist state there is no such thing as a rise to power. One of course may rise to prominence, have more access to the King, be more immediate in hearing his orders, have more power. One of course may rise to prominence, have more access to the King, be more immediate in hearing his orders, have more power. But the power must remain exclusively his and his orders are merely to be carried out not deliberated upon. There are things [said Frederick William IV] which one only as King can do.

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This was consistent with the emblem of the King of Prussia who ruled, as it were, "By the Grace of God", with stress on each word, and whose very office raised him above everyone not merely practically but essentially. "The King holds me [wrote Leopold von Gerlach] and all his ministers to be fools that he orders about." Of course from the dizzy heights of Divine assistance in ruling, how could the King not but look upon his ministers as pathetic, who in not being raised up as himself, could not understand what they had not been shown. Thus the King would remain benevolent but master, understanding but misunderstood. Several things, beginning with the calling of the United Diet on February 3, 1847 would actively challenge this royal view of Prussia, and although it never really shook the King's faith in his office, it presented him with events he could not control, and with this, the opportunity of a partial share in his power by individuals who avowed that they could.

On February 3, 1847 the King announced that the United Diet would be convened in Berlin on April 11. That decree became a dividing line in Prussian history. It created a groundswell of liberal anticipation, that at last, political liberalism under a constitutional monarch would finally bring to fruition a liberal economy that was quickly outgrowing its infancy. When it became apparent that these aspirations would not be fulfilled, the United Diet was soon
viewed as too little too late, and rather than alleviate discontent it increased it, until it finally exploded in the revolution of 1848. To the King the calling of the United Diet was a simple matter of his wanting to build a railway line between Königsberg and Berlin and requiring the money to do so, combined with a law of 1820 which stipulated that a loan of this nature would have to be approved by a representative institution. 3 The King had no intention of transforming himself into a constitutional monarch or introducing reforms that would in any fundamental way change a traditional Prussia into a liberal one. What, however, surprised the King even more than the audacity of the United Diet or the 1848 revolution that followed in its wake, was that the maelstrom which suddenly engulfed him in human affairs seemed far less willing to be banished with the same power, as the King’s fiat had apparently beckoned its coming. Its net result was that it allowed Otto von Bismarck to rise to power.

In his memoirs Bismarck wrote of the King: "He saw in me an egg which he himself had both laid and hatched, and if a difference of opinion were to have ever arisen between us, he would have thought it an example of the egg desiring to be smarter than the hen." 4 A difference of opinion did in fact arise as a result of Bismarck’s visit in 1855 to Paris, the home of the enemy of all legitimacy and stability, Napoleon III.
First in the following winter, [relates Bismarck], during which the King had again shown favor towards me, while sitting across from him at table, he asked me in an ironic tone of voice, what my opinion was concerning Louis Napoleon. I replied 'that the Emperor seemed to me a clever and kind man but not nearly as shrewd as all the world judged him to be; ascribing all which happens to his calculation, and if it rains at an unexpected time in East Asia they attribute it to the evil intentioned machinations of the Emperor.' The King laughed at this in a manner which annoyed me and caused me to ask permission to guess what the King was then thinking. He agreed and I continued. The previous Minister of Foreign Affairs, General von Canitz, was giving lectures to the young officers in military training about the war manoeuvres of Napoleon. An assiduous listener asked him how Napoleon could have ever omitted some of the most basic troop movements. Canitz replied, 'yes, you see this Napoleon was a kind hearted fellow, but dumb, dumb.' I fear, [continued Bismarck], that your Majesty's thoughts about me are similar to those that General von Canitz had about his student.

Two things are important here and both reveal not only the King’s inability to appreciate the significance of events, but it is precisely this inability which made Bismarck at first a curiosity, and then, to the subsequent King, indispensable. First, the analogy between Napoleon being called dumb and the King of Prussia, seems apparent except to the King who heard it. Second, the King’s reply
harbors a doubt not only about Bismarck's judgement but about the King's ability to refute it. "The King said laughing: 'You may be right, but I do not know this Napoleon adequately enough yet, in order to be able to contest your impression that his mind is not as shrewd as his heart vulnerable.'" What is more, however, and what made the King faintly vulnerable to Bismarck, was that His Majesty had no desire ever to get to know Napoleon. No, the King's was a mind that dwelt in the heavens, touched the earth in passing, but certainly had no inclination to talk with the devil. If Bismarck's loyalty initially caught the King's attention, his courage finally captured him.

Bismarck's rise to power, however, was by no means smooth and during much of it he remained a curiosity. Two successive patrons, Leopold von Gerlach during the conservative era of Frederick William IV, and Albrecht von Roon during the constitutional crisis of William I's reign, assured their King of Bismarck's credentials, which allowed Bismarck himself to show the King his courage. Both patrons had doubts about their client and their ability to control him -- both were correct, because neither could, and by the time they realized it, it was too late. In 1869 Bismarck wrote a letter to Albrecht von Roon, Minister of War, defending his current policy and his overall strategy. "The form in which the King exercises sovereignty in Germany has never particularly mattered to me; but to the fact of his
exercising it I have devoted all the strength of endeavour which God has given me." Here is the very nucleus of Bismarck's thought -- "that" his King exercises sovereignty, not "how" -- and, it is only within this context that one can appreciate and analyze his perception into the power of the bourgeoisie and his conviction that his King's sovereignty could and should never be built in defiance of it. He saw the economic power of the bourgeoisie as a pearl not to be admired for its own sake, as most liberals were accustomed to do, but for its rightful place in the crown of His Majesty.

The huge man with the incongruous, rather high-pitched voice, who mounted the rostrum on May 17, 1847 spoke with such biting reactionary intensity against the liberal majority he faced, that he seemed the ideal of an aristocratic conservative who would dam up and drive away any hint of the liberalism that had devoured France, England and America. Of course the western provinces of Prussia had already had their taste of liberalism during the conquests of Napoleon Bonaparte and her old provinces had experienced the reforms of Stein and Hardenberg, especially between 1807-1813, but then she returned to her senses, and to his Majesty. Those reforms, however, had a curious effect on Prussia -- economically, militarily and socially. The freeing of serfs, the creation of a labor force, the mobility of land, army reform, the introduction of the
educated bourgeoisie as advisors to the King, and the redefinition of the landed aristocracy in economic terms of wealth rather than of birth, introduced a mobility into Prussian society that was far more bourgeois and far more lasting in its effects than it first appeared. The Prussian state was not unlike a lead drum that could contain this detonation of liberalism and rather than be blown apart by it, be in fact strengthened.

The reforms themselves, however, were not the subject of the speaker whom Bismarck had risen to refute, but rather the meaning of those reforms. It was maintained that those liberal reforms had created a bond between the King and his people, no longer his subjects, filling them with the vigor rooted in loyalty to drive out the French in the 1813 Wars of Liberation. "I must contradict the proposition [Bismarck spoke amidst loud murmurs] that the uprising of the people in 1813 required any other motives than the shame of having outsiders command in our country." It was shouted out that Bismarck could not judge what he had not taken part in. He agreed and regretted that such an honor had been denied him, but he added: "I had always assumed that the slavery against which we fought came from abroad. I have just learned that it was domestic and I am not very obliged for this enlightenment." Here is the key to his battle with bourgeois liberalism with its small number of aristocratic adherents: they wanted to bind, so Bismarck accused, the
King to themselves, their program and doctrine -- Bismarck, however, would bind them to the King.

The liberals, who had tried vociferously to prevent him from concluding his speech, misjudged him. This reactionary Junker had surely had enough contact with the bourgeoisie to pass judgement upon its work. His mother was from the bourgeoisie and the Plamann Institute she sent him to at age six was imbued with the same spirit. The professors he listened to at university, and the bureaucracy he abhorred, were both dominated by the bourgeoisie. Even the poet he most loved, Lord Byron, received his title, as did Bismarck, from his father, but a bourgeois tradition from his mother. He revived his father's estates in a very conscientious and thrifty manner, came to recognize, even admire, the Rothschilds' monied empire at Frankfurt and later chose, on their recommendation, a Jewish banker of the bourgeoisie, Bleichröder, whom he trusted as implicitly as many others did not. Bismarck learned early that without money there was no freedom of manoeuvre -- for himself, his King or his army. True, "Bismarck [nevertheless still] represented the old Prussia -- aristocratic, agrarian, hierarchic -- but it was he who sought to combine the modern elements with the old traditions of the monarchy. In this endeavour he needed Bleichröder."

It cannot be emphasized enough as we enter more into analysis of how Bismarck viewed and dealt with the
bourgeoisie, that he never, as did the conservatives, drew his strength from a vision of the past but from a careful perception of the present. Often in his writings and speeches he refers to things "as they stand" or being "master of the present situation." He viewed history as moving forward irresistibly like a wave or as God walking through it, allowing one only to grasp his cloak in passing. He thus perceived bourgeois wealth as an integral part of that wave that was impossible to stop but perhaps possible to navigate. He was not another Metternich, the symbol of conservatism until his fall in 1848, "who as late as 1851 could give no better advice to his successor, Schwarzenberg, than to strengthen the landed aristocracy, as if the bourgeoisie could still be crushed."

Thus the Bismarck who returned home in late June 1847 after the closing of the United Diet, viewed as a medieval reactionary by the liberals and a true champion of the conservative cause by his friends -- was in fact neither. He followed now the principle he later stated: "Only Kings make revolutions in Prussia." The advisors to the King were those who now supported Bismarck and to speak overtly any language but theirs would have made no impact whatsoever on the King he was trying most to impress.

However, this was not a simple situation of a duplicitous Bismarck, putting on conservative clothing to receive a blessing from the King that in any other attire
would have never been given. No, Bismarck was a conservative landed aristocrat and there was a very real convergence of interests with those he represented -- and where there was not he spoke the same language but with a different meaning. "Do you believe that Stahl [the political theorist of the court conservatives] and company were sympathetic to me? [Bismarck stated years later] Most certainly not! But at least they had a tangible goal, and I could go a way with them; yet I knew exactly where our ways separated."

They in fact did separate as the conservatives slowly came to realize that Bismarck was not against the liberals in principle but in practice, that he would legitimize the bourgeoisie in Prussia just as easily as he would Napoleon III in Europe, as long as power remained not with parliament but the King, and that Germany, not France, would be the arbiter of Europe.

Bismarck could adhere to the conservative program in its support of the landed aristocracy, its fidelity to the crown, its rejection of bureaucratic absolutism and its desire to keep Prussia conservative in domestic affairs. However, he differed with them, albeit not openly for many years, in that he saw a natural convergence of interest with the bourgeoisie in an economy based on the market and a society based on the law. True, he wanted the crown to remain free, but as much from the conservatives as from the liberals, and while he rejected bureaucratic absolutism he
did not see the solution in going back to a decentralized Prussia based on landed estates, but in finding a widened social and economic base upon which the crown could comfortably rest. And, where he did want a domestically conservative Prussia, it was only to carry out a revolutionary policy in foreign affairs. In writing on May 2, 1857 to his political benefactor, Leopold von Gerlach, he revealed what he much earlier held: "As much as we are united in our position concerning internal affairs I feel equally unable to share your views concerning foreign affairs, making the general reproach that you ignore the facts."

The need for money was also a fact. If Prussia was to become a great power, and Bismarck always identified with the Prussia of Frederick the Great, then the activity which produced money must be encouraged along with a climate in which it can multiply. He continually complained to his government of its absence in Frankfurt. Where other governments were liberal with their money supply, and Rothschild extravagant with his, Prussia remained spartan. The Prussian soldiers were poorly dressed, their living allowance parsimonious, their pride smarting, and Prussia's image tarnished.

Bismarck's was a very different brand of conservatism, and its convergence with the bourgeoisie is best captured by a phrase used in one of his newspaper articles written after
the outbreak of the 1848 revolution: "We live in a time of material interest." This was not the doctrinal conservatism of the Gerlachs who thought of the bourgeoisie, as did Metternich, as being the very embodiment of revolution. Metternich had reserved his best epithets for this presumptuous man of the bourgeoisie. Bismarck, in complete contrast, admired its railroads and the power of capital that moved them, and, could only build more of them in a market orientated economy. He offered the bourgeoisie a place, he recognized its power, but the revolution he led would not be done in the name of liberalism but of the Prussian state. By placing the emphasis on material interest as opposed to ideas, he could appeal to the bourgeoisie independently of political liberalism and propose to it that the crown could much better attain and maintain its interests, than ever could a parliament.

The Diet, for all its tenuous status, which the King brought to an abrupt end on June 26, had not been without its significance. It had crystallized discontent, gave very valuable political experience to a country that had little, and through the publication of the speeches made notables out of individuals previously unknown outside of their province or outside of their class. Further, it created boundaries among the members themselves, making clear where regions stood on national questions and members on specific issues.
As far as the King was concerned the Diet soon betrayed
its utter presumption. First it demanded a constitution,
definite and regular sessions, and then it had the audacity
to refuse the King the one thing that they were supposed to
give him, outside of humble obedience of course, and that
was money— for a railway line between Königsberg and
Berlin. Bismarck, for his part, established himself
resolutely as a loyal court-conservative and an excellent
spokesman for that cause.  

It is important to realize that Bismarck was looked
upon by this ultraconservative group first in religious
terms and only then in political terms. He was a wayward
son brought back, now part of the brotherhood and sent just
in time to represent politically the conservative cause. He
was carefully counseled by the Gerlach brothers, urged to
have the right understanding on a particular issue before he
gave a speech on it to the United Diet. Bismarck’s own
personal raison d’être was that the King remain free with
his full authority intact, and thus, his speeches rejecting
the Diet’s demands on the King for the right of periodic
assembly, were not because Bismarck did not desire the same
or that he was simply following the Conservative Party’s
position but rather, it was because he did not want to meet
in this Diet again, if the Diet decreed it and not the King.

Bismarck’s speech on the place and rights of the Jews
within Prussia, however, is more complex. The essence of
the speech was clear in that he maintained that positions of authority remain closed to them." However, three separate levels have to be differentiated before one can glimpse Bismarck's own thought. First the Jews represented the weak flank of liberalism to him, the most vulnerable place of an essentially vulnerable bourgeoisie. Bismarck enjoyed being provocative, shockingly blunt in his speech, and the Jews of the bourgeoisie allowed him always to assert his lordship, his membership of an aristocratic class in a Gentile nation and his championship of a Conservative Party with a Christian theory of state. There was no better example of this than the exceedingly powerful and yet perpetually vulnerable Rothschild family. Just before the outbreak of the Crimean War Bismarck received a telegram indicating its imminence.

I was just at the club when news of the recall of the Russian ambassador from Paris arrived [he wrote to Gerlach] and I considered whom I could best frighten with it. My eyes fell upon Rothschild. He turned as white as a sheet when I gave him the news to read. His first remark was 'if only I had known it this morning', his second 'will you do a little business with me tomorrow?' I declined his offer in a friendly way, thanking him, and left him to his agitated thoughts.

Second, there was the caricature of the Junker, which, even if Bismarck on many counts did not typify, he certainly knew how to exemplify in jest. On April 7, 1834 when
Bismarck's university career seemed less than illustrious and his interest in it less than intense, he wrote mockingly to Scharlach about the perfect stereotype of the landed aristocrat that Scharlach would find in ten years.

You will find here a corpulent home guard officer with a moustache, who curses and swears until the earth trembles, cultivates a proper repugnance of Jews and Frenchmen, and thrashes his dogs and domestics with egregious brutality when bullied by his wife. I shall wear leather trousers, make a fool of myself at the Stettin wool market and when people address me as baron I shall stroke my moustache benignly and knock a bit off the price. I shall get thoroughly smashed on the King's birthday and cheer him vociferously, and the rest of the time I shall act as ostentatiously as possible, and my every other word will be: Gad, what a splendid horse! In short, I shall be happy in the rustic circle of my family for such is my pleasure."

Third, Bismarck made a very definite distinction between those Jews who were religious, conservative and thus trustworthy and those who were liberal editors of newspapers or members of parliament, and thus to him, presumptuous and dangerous. This is a distinction that the Gerlachs would not have made. They were religious in relation to the Jews whereas Bismarck was pragmatic, they could have Julius Stahl as the political theorist of their party since his Judaism was forgotten in his baptism,
whereas Bismarck to his wife still referred to Stahl as a Jew, and where the conservatives on religious grounds would refuse Jews authority in a Christian state, Bismarck would later give complete authority to Bleichröder and recommend to his government the service of the Rothschild, as long as their authority was ultimately advisory and not mandatory. Bismarck’s lifelong test of those who served him was personal loyalty to himself and fidelity to the King, whereas to the ultraconservatives it was religious doctrine very clearly defined.

In June of 1847 the King put before the Diet a draft of proposed legislation that would increase the rights of the Jews, and although it would still restrict their political rights, it would grant more social mobility as it would open up the civil service to them. Bismarck’s rejection of this proposed emancipation was based firmly on a Christian definition of the state, and where the liberals argued for it, as a sign of progress based on humanitarianism, Bismarck argued against it because it would uproot Prussia from her Christian tradition, and in effect deny that the King’s sceptre was received from God, for the express purpose of fulfilling His will within the state, according to "Revealed Truth". Thus, Bismarck here presented tradition, authority, and purpose of the state as having exactly the same source.

This speech was very important for Bismarck’s political career. In 1845 he had disagreed with Ludwig von Gerlach
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precisely on the end and purpose of the state. He had then proposed a complete separation of Church and state, \textsuperscript{35} whereas now he advocated a Christian state. There is no doubt that the speech contained some very basic points that genuinely corresponded to his own views, but there is equally no doubt that his clothing it so forcibly in overtly religious language was intended as much to offend the liberals as it was to please his supporters.

The essence of the speech was Bismarck's definition of the purpose of the state as being a fulfilment of revealed truth. It not only gave a metaphysical source to the state but it directed all the activity of that state to fulfilling specifically a Christian goal, and thus excluding by definition the Jews, as not marching with the same purpose to reach the same goal. This, however, does not correspond to the career that followed or the thought that directed it. "My understanding [Bismarck said in 1882] is directed towards the purely practical."\textsuperscript{11}

Bismarck drew his principles from events, not ideas, from reality as he saw it, not revelation as others interpreted it. For example: after the establishment of the North German Confederation in 1866, Bismarck remarked on the caution necessary in breaking the continued recalcitrance of southern Germany. "Force can be useful against a resistance which can be broken by a single blow, but it can be justified only by necessity against a
resistance which would have to be continually held down."³⁷
Such is a principle, ever so characteristic of Bismarck,
that was derived from the nature of things. It was the
empiricist who remained the eternal pragmatist, refusing to
theorize about events separate from their unfolding and
refusing to reduce politics to a book of conservative
maxims. Either to begin with a book of revealed truth or
end with one of theoretical concepts was equally
inconsistent with Bismarck's political life. "One clings to
principles [wrote Bismarck to his wife in 1847], only as
long as they are not put to the test; when that happens one
throws them away as the peasant does his slippers and walks
in the manner that nature intended."³⁸

However, the fact that the liberals, in supporting the
proposed legislation, wanted to change the actual basis and
structure of the traditional state, was opposed very
genuinely by Bismarck. Where a Christian God of power was
consistent for him with the power of the state,
humanitarianism was seen as destroying its very foundations.
That the Jews were to be admitted within the structure of
authority that represented the King, and that such would be
done in the name of progress, undermined, according to
Bismarck, both cornerstone and edifice.

I am no enemy of the Jews . . . . I would even
grant them every right short of holding positions
of authority in a Christian state . . . . For me
the phrase 'By the Grace of God' is no mere empty
sound, but an acknowledgement rather, that the princes thus entrusted with God's sceptre are meant to rule on earth in accordance with His will, as revealed in His Gospel, and I do not see this end would be promoted in any way by the help of the Jews. 39

He who bases his life on absolute moral principles, transferring them untouched to political life, as did Ludwig von Gerlach, cannot but judge one who does not do likewise as unenlightened or deceitful. In Gerlach's looking back on this period Bismarck was characterized as the latter.

The April issue of the newspaper (1849) describes Stahl's brilliant speech which I accompanied with a very elaborate one of my own -- [Gerlach pedantically wrote]. Bismarck belonged to our newest battle recruits. In his capacity as secretary he was sitting to the left and somewhat below the raised-up platform of President Simpson. Bismarck said: 'What would my father have said, if he would have learned, that I had been the secretary for a Jew?' -- Now, in 1873 in the German Reich which is the creation of Bismarck, this same Simpson is the President of the Reichstag. 40

As the French Revolution temporarily seemed to sweep away the hegemony of the old order in Prussia, the revolution of 1848 almost swept away its throne. It was not that the latter revolution was more powerful than the former, but that the Prussian King was weak in the face of it; and it was not that the 1848 revolution was overly
enduring, except in its negative effects, as it was sudden in its onslaught. It was ignited on February 23, 1848 in Paris, swiftly overthrowing the King of the French, and spreading like a brush fire throughout the rest of Europe putting a strain even on Rothschild’s banking system in its attempt to keep up with the rapidity of events."

It was as if the French had simply grown tired of Louis Philippe, casting him aside not because he represented the aristocratic order but the worst of a bourgeois one, without any of the redeeming features of a glorious Empire. However, to the rest of Europe it meant the fall of a King, an attack on the traditional order, the dissemination of ideas that did not need to lead armies to destroy kingdoms as long as the infected" subjects proved strong and their governments weak. The added fear of another revolution in France was that its essence was the very antithesis of self-containment, carrying rather a implicit universal application, a mission directly against the system of restraint that Clemens von Metternich had come to embody.

Metternich, as the Austrian foreign minister, had effectively ruled Europe for the past forty years. For all his diplomatic finesse, political understanding and overall efficiency of manoeuvre he had excelled in perpetuating a system of inefficiency -- such of course had been his status-quo intention. The Congress of Vienna in 1814 had based diplomacy on a balance of power between England,
France, Austria, Russia and Prussia -- and the latter three had further aligned against revolution. The two pivotal points of this system were France and Germany and both for negative reasons. The very union of the other nations had originally come about because such was the strength needed to defeat Napoleon -- twice. Germany, which had been organized into a Confederation of forty-one states, was the perfect combination of weakness and strength as it could fend off an attack but not lead one. It could also declare war and it did garrison fortresses against France, but its appointed representatives did nothing without consultation with their respective governments and then usually nothing against Austria who presided over the Assembly at Frankfurt. It served its purpose, however, since Prussia feared a liberal Germany and Austria a nationalistic one. Prussia, because political liberalism was totally foreign to her domestic policy and thus threatened absorption; and Austria, the China of Europe, because nationalism would threaten internal disintegration. One can thus grasp the tremor that rippled through kings and kingdoms alike when on March 13, 1848, Metternich was dismissed.

The King of Prussia, not fully grasping the gravity of the situation, on March 6th had granted that the United Diet be recalled for April 27th. This, however, was viewed as nothing more than a gesture and did little to stem the growing wave of discontentment. On the 16th the news of the
Vienna uprising reached Berlin both delighting and terrifying the various groups of society because Metternich, the symbol of stagnation to many, stability to others, had fallen. Then suddenly on March 17th the King of Prussia himself seemed to capitulate to the revolution. He increased the powers of the United Diet and rescheduled its calling for April 2. He granted freedom of the press, promised a constitution, as well as a determination to take a hard look at the German Confederation, Prussia's role within it, and the very prevalent nationalistic desire, among his subjects, to unify it.

The army, in the ensuing excitement of a jubilant population, did not seem to know its role; and the King, who had sunk into a torpor of indecision after his declaration of the 17th, seemed unable to offer any clarification to a situation he himself was immobilized by. There was still a sense, however, that although the King had betrayed his conservative landed elite, he had not yet severed himself from his army, and maybe the latter could yet recover what the former had lost. The crowd that gathered in the courtyard of the King on the 18th to cheer him for his concessions was viewed uneasily by the army. A shot was fired, panic ensued, barricades went up and more than 250 were killed. At least, however, as far as the army was concerned, the enemy was now coalesced in his defiance and vulnerable in his defense. Then the King completed his
capitulation by ordering on the 19th the withdrawal of his troops from Berlin, on the 22nd he made it clear that the army would have to swear allegiance to the new constitution, and then on the 25th, while meeting his officers at Potsdam, he assured them that he had never felt freer than among his citizens."

On December 3, 1850 in a speech to the Prussian Parliament, Bismarck stated a principle, so integral to his thought, that it provides a key to understanding his immediate reaction to the 1848 revolution as well as his actions throughout its turbulent course. "The Prussian army will always be the army of the King and seek its honor in obedience." He viewed the army as the executive will of the King and if anything were to come between them, either a constitution, romantic or humanitarian sentiment, then the King would have effectively lost his power and the army its reason for being. Bismarck no less than the army, drew his own political raison d'être from this same source of the King's will.

Upon hearing of the events of March 18 and 19 Bismarck was immediately set in motion, and even the almost forty years that separated those events from his writing of them in his memoirs, did not mitigate the intensity of his reaction to this attack on the King and his army. There is more than a hint throughout his entire description of the events of 1848 that Bismarck had been chosen by fate to save
the King first from the mob, and then from himself. As events unfolded and Bismarck discovered the extent of the King's inability to direct those events, rather than be directed by them, Bismarck could not disguise nor contain his bitterness. Where Ludwig von Gerlach could bemoan the failings of the King he nevertheless called them "natural and forgivable" in the circumstances, whereas Bismarck in describing the speech that the King made to his officers in Potsdam on March 25, almost by inference accused his King of treachery. "With the words: 'I have never been more free or secure than under the protection of my citizens' arose such a murmur of men and striking of scabbards, that a sound like it a King of Prussia has never heard and it is hoped it will be never heard again." The inference is not that the officers revolted but that the King had rejected their protection for that of his citizens, and in doing so, betrayed both his office and his army.

Bismarck was at a neighbor's estate when he first heard of the revolution in Berlin. His first thought, he tells us, was of the soldiers who had been "murdered" and his second, that such occurrences could not have happened if the King were free -- "I saw the next task in the freeing of the King, who had fallen into the hands of the rebels." The next day he asked the peasants of the neighboring district if they wanted to defend the King, "and they answered in lively unison: 'yes!'" He himself hoisted the
black and white flag of his King on the Church tower in
defiance of the black, red and gold flag of the nationalists
that was being raised in neighboring areas and then
proceeded alone to Potsdam to learn more of the situation
before bringing with him his armed supporters of the King.

At the train station Bismarck saw Karl von
Bodelschwingh who until the previous day had been the
Minister of the Interior. "It was obvious, [relates
Bismarck], that he did not wish to be seen talking to a
reactionary. He replied to my greeting: 'don't talk to me!'
'The peasants of my area are ready to fight' I replied.
'For the King?' 'Yes.' 'This tightrope-walker', he said,
brushing the tears from his eyes." Bismarck then went to
the palace of Prince Friedrich Karl, whom his friend
Albrecht von Roon served as adjutant and in whose palace he
lived. There he obtained a clearer picture of what had
happened and things as they now stood. He found a general
attitude of discouragement among the army commanders who
would not act independently of the King's command to
withdraw from Berlin, but felt that order a humiliation to
obey.

Later that day, after unsuccessful attempts to see the
King in Berlin, Bismarck was again in Potsdam in the midst
of the army commanders who fumed at their impotence but also
at the King who they feared, through more concessions, would
legally bind them in the weakness into which his verbal
command had already cast them. "I returned the same day to Potsdam and spoke again with Generals Möllendorf and Prittwitz about the possibility of independent troop action. 'How should we begin?' asked Prittwitz. I played the opening bars, on the piano I was sitting next to, of the infantry battle march."

This incident was indicative of the intensity of Bismarck's reaction that would save the crown from self-immolation before it condemned the country to its permanent demise. It was an anger that did not abate until after his April 2 speech to the United Diet, in which he again reproached the crown, and almost lost for himself his entire political support.

However, beneath all the anger there was still loyalty and it was this which indelibly imprinted itself both on the present King and his brother, the Prince of Prussia, the future King. After the closing of the United Diet in 1847 Bismarck, while on his honeymoon, was invited to dine with the King who expressed appreciation both for Bismarck's support and that of the party he represented. During the revolution, Bismarck while not seeing the King, sent him a written note of support. "The King did not then reply, but later said to me, [Bismarck recounts in his memoirs], that he had saved the poorly written note on the poor quality paper as the first sign of sympathy that he had received."

Further, the future King who had fled to England in the immediate wake of the violence, when greeted by Bismarck
upon his return, said: "I know that you have worked for me and I shall not forget it."\footnote{55}

On March 29th the King fell further from his conservative stronghold as he appointed a liberal ministry headed by the Rhineland entrepreneur Ludolf Camphausen. Interestingly enough, Bismarck did not view this last move as a concession to and alliance with revolution but a new course that the King would chart through the revolution, at least temporarily, with the direct support of the bourgeoisie. Just four days after this apparent new direction taken by the King, Bismarck acknowledged to the United Diet that "this ministry is the only one that can lead us out of the present situation into an ordered and legally constituted state of affairs... [but then added bitterly] -- The past is buried and I regret it more deeply than many of you that no human power is able to bring it back to life, now that the Crown itself has cast earth on the coffin."\footnote{56} If the King chose to defeat revolution through an alliance with the bourgeoisie then Bismarck bowed to this fact, for victory could only belong to the King since only he could legitimately wage the war.

As the next chapter will describe how the Zollverein gained a dominance in Germany this chapter must now describe how the bourgeoisie gained a momentary dominance in Prussia, and finally had to settle for a hegemony that redefined the aristocracy rather than defeating it in direct battle.
Because Bismarck cannot be studied in a vacuum, separated from his political, economic and social surroundings and because not only he, but the bourgeoisie as well, came to power as a result of the 1848 revolution, it is essential to give some background as to how the liberal bourgeoisie had gained enough bureaucratic and social prominence within Prussia before 1848 that the King could suddenly offer it political power in 1848. Equally important, we must investigate both the immediate and historical reasons why the bourgeoisie failed as leaders of the government.

Men of wealth had suddenly been given power but their inexperience in handling it, their failure to understand the King who had bestowed it upon them, and their refusal to satisfy the demands of the artisans who helped them attain it, soon led to their alienation, isolation, and defeat. As Bismarck desired to capture the King, the bourgeoisie desired to capture the state, and where the King was certainly more than incidental to it he was less than essential. That which the liberal bourgeoisie learned best through the revolution of 1848 and its brief reign over it, was that the King was essential to order.

The revolution of 1848, the immediate economic conditions that produced it and the long-term economic development that led up to it, was full of anomalies. The revolution itself, for example, could produce a makeshift union between the bourgeoisie, artisans, industrial workers
and peasants, all against the aristocratic order but for very different reasons. However, once that order seemed to crumble at the King's behest, and the bourgeoisie suddenly had the task of taming the chaos that had brought them power, the real unveiling of the great divergence that separated those four groups became readily apparent. For, where the artisans wanted a return to the corporate control of the guild, the peasants wanted the end of manorialism, and where the artisans desired essentially a halt to the conditions that would favor industrial growth, the industrial workers sought not to reverse the growth but to better their own position within it. And where the bourgeoisie could find some sympathy for the peasant, living under feudal conditions that either bound him to his master's land or held him in tow by debt, it nevertheless feared that satisfying too quickly the peasant's desire for land and freedom, might simply increase his presumption, and make it impossible for him to grasp the "sacredness" of private property.

The bourgeoisie itself, to a degree, was also an anomaly. Its most vocal wing of university professors did not represent its most powerful wing which was the Rhineland businessmen. Granted, it was ideologically committed to liberal ideals, but not if attaining them meant losing what it had already gained under conservative domination. The bourgeoisie hesitated in its attack on the traditional order
because it did not desire to overthrow the aristocracy as much as redefine it; it was not that the best (ψευδοτος) would cease to rule but that the best would be defined by Bildung⁶⁹ (culture) rather than birth.

The growth of bourgeois ideals up to 1848 had been surreptitious. Take for example the word aristocracy which means "rule of the best". The very fact that "the best" today is inconceivable outside of education, experience, and ability, shows how far removed we are from 18th and early 19th century understanding of aristocracy, and how the bourgeoisie has redefined the term without overthrowing the office.⁶⁰ Inherent to the original meaning of aristocrat was that he did not have to attain "worth" and continue proving his worth to maintain his position -- everything rather flowed from his existence -- his name, land, tradition and benevolence. The King chose from the nobles his officers in the army not because they proved themselves to be better in training or war, but because their birth had a noble stamp that would develop into a noble character. It was given rather than something proven.

The reforms of 1807-1813 injected bourgeois ideals into this aristocratically dominated world. The presuppositions behind these reforms rather than the reforms themselves concern us now, and the reason to underline their importance is because, while political power remained elusive to the bourgeoisie, many of its presuppositions came to dominate
German society. The bourgeoisie, in an aristocratic order, had nothing to show from birth -- its worth was derived from service to the ruling elite and service was valuable if well-informed through education, experience, and a refinement of character. However, once acquired knowledge became the criterion of service to the ruling elite, it slowly undermined the ruling elite who based its service to the King on its noble birth.

Imperceptibly at first, the aristocratic world was redefined. The bourgeoisie was industrious, which made the aristocrats look indolent, the bourgeoisie was striving to earn what it attained, which made the aristocrats look utterly presumptuous in resting upon what they had inherited. Of course the fact that by 1859, fifty-seven percent of the nobles' estates had passed into bourgeois hands, could appear to prove that the aristocracy remained the ideal for the bourgeoisie. One must, however, note that aristocratic land was desired for a very different reason than the presuppositions which had imbued the aristocratic world. Retirement into rest, for the bourgeoisie, was an ideal because it was the ultimate proof of merit for a life of hard work -- but, for the aristocrat, the very fact of the land, its existence and his inheritance of it, was proof that he did not have to work.

This of course does not mean to imply for a moment that the aristocracy in Prussia was a parasitic class -- it was
not." In fact, particularly the nobles of the east were very industrious, working their own land, not only producing grain but building distilleries, sugar beet factories, manufacturing bricks and selling their timber." However, the essential point is that this industriousness of the landed aristocrat did not proceed from need but desire, and it was not evidence of defensiveness in the face of the bourgeoisie, but confidence in spite of it. Further, and in complete contrast to the aristocratic order, "liberalism values achievement rather than enjoyment of one's achievement, acquisition rather than consumption." The aristocrat's careful cultivation of his land was proof of his lordship over it, not proof of his worthiness to be lord.

There was another aspect of bourgeois inroads into the aristocratic dominance of Prussia that was very perceptible. In 1807 Baron von Stein was responsible for the edict that ended "hereditary servitude [and declared] land a free commodity purchasable by all citizens regardless of class." Although this edict was limited in its effects on the peasants, almost thrusting freedom upon them, the cost of which was their means of self-support, the edict nevertheless was important in that it made a static rural economy one based on mobility." Further, it freed their masters from feudal obligations transforming them into entrepreneurs. Then, in 1810 and 1811 Karl von Hardenberg
brought in two successive laws which effectively destroyed
the controlling power of the guilds, and in 1845, those
laws were applied to all the provinces of Prussia, throwing
thousands out of work. It was part of a transition in
Prussia where the new was mixed with the old, each in a
sense receiving the stamp of the other, always remaining
unique but not separate, ambivalent but not reactionary,
tolerating the symbiosis rather than risking death through
amputation of a vital organ that the other provided.

It is essential to grasp that when the traditional
order was ostensibly restored in 1815 and again in 1851, the
new order of industrialization was more than tolerated if
not nurtured -- and this gave a stake in the maintenance of
that order rather than its overthrow.

Leo Kofler has argued that the state tolerated the
bourgeois economy only to the extent that it could
be used as a tool of the feudal state order. But
might it not make sense to complete the
proposition by adding that the reverse is also
ture: that the feudal state order was tolerated
only to the extent that it guaranteed the
bourgeois economy?

It is true that the conservative rule that followed the
liberal intervals in 19th century Prussia often wrote the
laws so as to negate much of their effect. The law of May
29, 1816 effectively curtailed by two-thirds those whom the
law of 1811 had made eligible to attain their own land; and
the law of June 7, 1821 which was to define the economic status of those leasing land, in reality, only affected a small number of the millions concerned. However, under that same conservatism grew factories, railroads, steam production and steam travel, along with the financial institutions needed for this economic development. The first railroad was completed in 1835 but within 15 years there was a network transporting goods between cities. The production of pig iron increased fivefold between 1825 and 1850, the output of coal tripled and the availability of horsepower increased 500% between 1840 and 1850, while the volume of goods that moved up and down the Rhine doubled between 1836 and 1846.70

However, as impressive as this growth had been there were many repercussions and there was much left to do. The textile factories of cotton had destroyed much of the linen trade of the artisans and the breaking of the guilds had reduced the proud skilful artisan to less than the despised presumptuous industrial worker. The introduction of the railroad and steamship threw the canal workers and coach drivers out of work as well as redefining the very fabric of a static localized economy to a national mobile one. But with this movement of goods and interaction of many of the forty-one states of the German Confederation, arose the problem of tariffs, tolls, different monetary systems, commercial codes and weights and measures. It is not all
that surprising that the bourgeoisie was willing to work
together with the aristocratic order to complete what they
had both begun together.

In the 1840's the problems resulting from industrial
growth were accentuated by a general downturn in the economy
throughout much of Europe, crop failures, and increased
demand for what little grain there was, by the repeal of
the English Corn Laws. Prussia lost a large market when
Austria annexed Cracow in 1846, and where the Zollverein was
usually an exporter of grain, in 1846, it had to import
165,000,000 litres. Prices in Prussia rose almost fifty
percent and what Alexis de Tocqueville stated in the French
Chamber of Deputies soon proved true for all Europe: "We
are sleeping on a volcano, do you not see that the earth
trembles anew? A wind of revolution blows, the storm is on
the horizon."?

The period from 1848 to 1851 seemed all too full of
pitfalls for the King of Prussia. First he seemed to join
with the revolution and then with the bourgeoisie to
overcome it. Once he had disabused the Camphausen Ministry
of the misunderstanding that it led a government rather
than served a King, he had reasserted his authority in
Prussia, but then wanted to assert it in Germany. While he
was able to reject the "crown from the gutter", as he called
it, offered him in April of 1849 by the Frankfurt Diet, he
immediately opened himself up to a plan proposed by his
advisor of late, Joseph von Radowitz, who proposed a unification plan of Germany based on agreement between its crowned heads. To Bismarck these wanderings of his King were but varying forms of liberalism. When, in the wake of the very sobering threat of war with Austria and coercion from Russia in 1850, and Radowitz was dismissed, Bismarck rode around the table on his chair for joy. Prussia was conservative again, and the old order was at least superficially reestablished, with the restoration of the German Confederation.

Although the Conservative Party held together remarkably well throughout this wayward period of their King, there was a marked difference in approach as to how the Gerlachs' thought revolution should be defeated and how Bismarck in fact worked for that defeat. If the battle cry of the Gerlachs' was "backs to the dung heap and faces to the foe" the guiding principle of Bismarck was "we do have to be so material as to defend our material interests." Each statement reveals what each group understood to be under attack -- for the older generation of conservatives it was ideals but for Bismarck it was material privilege.

The conservatives rallied quickly after the revolutionary outbreak in March of 1848. A camarilla was established by the Gerlachs before the end of March and was located at Potsdam near to the King so as to influence him the better. Work began actively on a newspaper, and the
first issue of the *Neue Preussische Zeitung* or the *Kreuzzeitung*, as it came to be called, appeared in July. Then an interest group of conservative supporters, labelled sarcastically by the liberal press as the "Junker Parliament", met on August 18-19 to discuss the policies of the liberal ministry, and set forth a plan of strategy against the proposed abolition of feudal rights without compensation. This "Association for the Protection of the Interests of Landed Property" soon became the basis of appealing for the support of other segments of the population, especially the peasants and artisans, and was similar in tenor to Bismarck's repeated speeches and articles that portrayed the present government as fulfilling the economic program of industrialists and businessmen, favouring cities over the provinces in their restructuring of taxation. The key to all of Bismarck's campaign activity was that nothing should change if the motor of change was liberalism.

In a speech given by Bismarck on April 10, 1848 he questioned the sincerity of the government who had requested authorization of the Diet to levy a sum of forty million talers that would be used for military expenditure and restabilization of the economy. Bismarck made it clear that he would vote against such an authorization stating:

> I protest against it all the more since these latest moves of the financial administration have
aroused the fear that the system guiding our finances sees the conditions of our fatherland through the spectacles of industrialism rather than with the clear eye of the statesman, who oversees all interests of the country with the same impartiality. 81

This statement sums up Bismarck's position perfectly: that the liberals represented themselves, not Prussia, and that their material interests, clothed in patriotic language, were those of the cities they represented, not those of the provinces that formed the backbone of Prussia; that the bourgeoisie was not a ruling class, 82 as were the statesmen, who were born nobly and thus ruled justly.

The revolution of 1848 seemed to recede from Prussia as quickly as it had ravaged it. The Camphausen Ministry which needed order to bring about reforms, was shaken in its last vestiges of trust in the lower classes because they desired reforms before they restored order. The civic guard formed because of the revolution, a Prussian version of a French citizen's army, seemed best to embody the contradictions of the revolution which led to its defeat. On June 14, the civic guard caused concern because it failed to fend off successfully an attack by the mob on the Berlin arsenal, and then on October 16, when it fired on rioting canal workers, it was viewed as less trustworthy 83 than the Prussian army it had replaced. The bourgeoisie was suddenly isolated -- without support from the lower classes and soon to be
alienated also from its King. First, it attempted to gain constitutional control over the army and then added insult to injury by demanding that the emblem, "By the Grace of God", be struck from the King's title. Both were far too much for the King, and the ministry's resignation was accepted on September 10. On December 5 the King, who had quite enough of this constitutional business, imposed a constitution of his own on Prussia and then promptly turned to solve Germany's problems.

However, as a revolution in Europe seemed unable to begin without France it seemed equally unable to be quelled without Austria. In November of 1848, Prince Schwarzenberg was appointed to take over the government in Austria, and then he proceeded to "appoint" the Emperor's nephew as Emperor. It was soon apparent that "this aristocrat who despised aristocrats, and who impressed all who came in touch with him with his strength of will and his cynical contempt for his fellow men", was of a much different stamp than Prince Metternich, with a far different plan than his predecessor for Germany. But because the ultraconservatives in Berlin desired a strong Austria as guarantor of the traditional order in Germany, they failed to see that Schwarzenberg was not traditional but revolutionary in his policy, and that he desired to put down the revolution only to conduct one of his own. He, however, did not deceive Bismarck, whom he most resembled, and as Austria reordered
her kingdom and then turned to reorder Germany, Bismarck's clear perception and explicit presentation of what Prussia should do in response, changed completely his King's perception of him, as reactionary of the right, to a diplomat of his government.
Chapter III

A Leverage of Power
O Bund, du Hund, du bist nicht gesund.

Heinrich Heine -- quoted by Bismarck

I am a child of a different time than you, but as honest a one of mine as you of yours.

Bismarck to Gerlach

Austria’s bold political strivings failed because of her lack of economic breath.

Ernst Engelberg
If one thing could capture the essence of Bismarck's speeches from 1849 to 1851, as he responded to his government's meddling in Germany, it was that as long as this intervention occurred either in the name of liberalism or nationalism, it was unworthy of Prussia,¹ and in effect, it was a case of Prussia having succumbed to revolution rather than leading a revolution, undergoing rather than undertaking. And, if one thing could capture the core of Bismarck's thought expressed between 1851 and 1859, when as envoy to the Frankfurt Diet he could view first-hand the Austrian political dominance of Prussia-Germany, it was that Austrian arrogance must be checked.² It was a fact, ever so regrettable to Bismarck, that Prussia was not a great power, did not desire to become a great power, and accepted presuppositions that would keep her from ever becoming one. It was precisely these presuppositions that Bismarck eventually changed.

The question that faces us in this chapter and will remain with us to the conclusion is: what, in Bismarck's view, would make Prussia a great power? What would be the leverage that could be used to drive Austria out of Germany and draw Germany to Prussia? Bismarck's answer would be: "fear and only fear"³ -- but one might smile, as many did, and ask: fear of what? "I would prefer that Prussia remain Prussian", Bismarck stated in a speech given in 1849. "As
such she will always be in a position to prescribe her laws to Germany and not receive them from others."

The only laws that Prussia could give Germany in 1850 were those controlling the economy -- for, while Metternich had dominated Prussia politically, above the ground as it were, she acceded to a quiet economic development, like the iron webbing in a concrete foundation, beneath the ground. Prussia, first with a tariff law in 1818, then with the founding of the Zollverein in 1834, slowly but ever increasingly became the economic lifeline of more and more German states -- and, if the economic blood of another begins to flow through one's veins, then fear of that supply being cut off becomes as great as the dependence upon it for life.

Politically, Austria gave Prussia no more than a borrowed power within the German Confederation -- and, a borrowed power could be taken away as quickly as it was given, and the fall back to reality would be much harder, because the pride assumed had raised her much higher. To Metternich, the Confederation had been the perfect solution of socially monitoring Germany and politically binding Prussia to an Austrian program, that somehow elevated Austrian survival, in an age of nationalism, to the status of European policy of legitimacy. To a Prussian nationalist, of course, the Confederation made of Prussia a self-proclaimed prisoner holding out her hands in order to
better convenience their manacling; or, as Bismarck later described Prussian policy in general: "We commit suicide out of our fear of death." It was a peculiar characteristic of Prussia which Metternich had carefully noted: "There exists [in Prussia] a conspiracy of mediocrities united by a common terror of any decisive action. . . . There is nobody to remind the King that his army might perhaps be utilized to greater advantage on the field of battle than on the plains of Berlin and Potsdam."

Yet Prussia had not always been obedient to Austria's bidding -- if she had, Metternich would have presumed on her good will, rather than his policing. Prussia was like a parvenu: pretentious yet ingratiating, impudent yet obsequious, occasionally recalcitrant, but most often obedient. Count Thun, Austrian envoy to the Frankfurt Diet from 1851 to 1853, once compared Prussia to "a gambler who once having won a hundred-thousand thaler jackpot now based every year's budget on reproducing the same feat." It was as if Prussia would first have to coalesce in intention to act decisively, not obsequiously, to achieve one goal, before she would shake free of her fear of political-social disintegration, and realize that she did not need to borrow power to appear powerful, but assert it if she had the will to prove it.

As the King of Prussia wavered in his response to revolution within Prussia, he did likewise to the
manifestations of revolution within Europe. He was at first in agreement with Prussian-ruled Poland becoming self-governed and he was equally supportive of Schleswig and Holstein in their bid for independence from Denmark. To Bismarck both decisions were rewarding revolutionaries for their revolt, and, to the conservatives, they were destroying legitimate authority in the name of nationalism.

However, on April 28, 1849 the King rejected the German Imperial Crown offered him by the Frankfurt National Assembly, and with that appeared to Bismarck to be returning to a right understanding of the revolution. Then, on May 9, under the influence of his advisor, Joseph Maria von Radowitz, the King put forward his own plan to unite Germany into a federation under the leadership of Prussia, and once again in Bismarck's view, his King had succumbed to the spirit of the revolution.

Radowitz, a Hungarian Catholic, thoroughly distrusted by the conservatives because of his taint of liberalism, was described by Bismarck as a "man without an idea in his head ... who became the clever wardrobe master of his monarch's medieval fantasies." For two years Radowitz had sought the implementation of his plan for German unity, which combined nationalism and liberalism, but without the overthrow of legitimate authority. In effect, however, the plan sanctioned the revolution's destruction of the German
Confederation and established Prussia as the new political authority in Germany.

The most important feature of Radowitz's plan was its exclusion of Austria from Germany. The federation would replace the German Confederation which Austria had presided over, and only after Prussia had unified Germany would she agree to a German-Austrian union, in order to facilitate harmony between them in foreign affairs. The plan was as daring as it was ill-conceived. For the first time in forty years Prussia was attempting to take the political lead away from Austria in Germany, but it was attempting to do so on the basis of blind refusal to face the fact that Austria would not surrender Germany without a war.

The plan provided for a constitution with the King of Prussia as head of a college of princes that would have full control over executive affairs and a legislature divided between a house of states and a national assembly. The house of states would be composed of envoys sent by the respective states, and the national assembly would be made up of members elected according to a class system based on property qualifications. Thus, the official proclamation of this plan on May 15 was a call both to the rulers of Germany, as well as, the potential members of a national assembly, to come together and work out a constitution for Germany. Practically, of course, in the essentially absolutist state of Prussia, the rulers were invited
immediately, and the parliament, to be called later, would discuss their agreements.

On May 17, representatives of Bavaria, Württemberg, Hanover and Saxony arrived in Berlin for discussions of the Union Plan. The talks continued until May 26, and while Bavaria and Württemberg remained noncomittal, Prussia, Hanover and Saxony signed an agreement called the Three Kings' Union, with the expressed purpose of unifying Germany. In the following months Prussia attempted to cajole, threaten, and coerce as many rulers as she could into accepting the plan, but the tide began to move against Prussian hegemony, as Austria, in October of 1849, with the help of Russia, put down the revolution in Hungary and began immediately to turn her gaze to Germany.

On September 6, 1849 in a speech to the Prussian Diet Bismarck rejected the Three Kings' Union, counseled the reestablishment of the German Confederation, along with a policy of realignment of Prussia with Austria against revolution in Germany. The speech could not have been more tailored to the conservatives who believed in the legitimate authority of Austria over Germany and who failed utterly to perceive that Bismarck spoke to a specific situation, but not from an absolute belief in Austria's legitimacy. As Bismarck would say in 1892 looking back on this period: "While Austro-Prussian duality existed in Germany ... the fruit of German unity was not yet ripe."
Bismarck began the speech by appealing to the assembly's "Prussian understanding rather than their German hearts." Prussian understanding to the conservatives meant legitimacy, but to Bismarck it meant dignity as a great power. He did not think of German unity based on culture, as did the liberals, but unlike the conservatives he did nevertheless think of unity, but one based on the security and stature of Prussia. Later in the speech as Bismarck delineated the problems with the Three Kings' Union, he appeared implicitly to support the German Confederation as the means of German unity, thus appearing to recommend that Prussia surrender completely any notion of a foreign policy for Germany. Here, however, was the very essence of Bismarck's difference from the conservatives. For the conservatives the only true course was the return to the status quo ante, but for Bismarck it was the only possible course, as a choice between the lesser of two evils. Bismarck, who admired Frederick the Great, especially in his sudden conquest and annexation of Silesia in 1740, saw in the wavering of his King, combined with the volatility of a revolutionary situation, no possibility of repeating such a bold policy, so that the only other option was to return to the status quo ante. Frederick the Great, in Bismarck's view, would have been bold either in putting down the revolution or in taking advantage of it" -- but the current
policy of the Three Kings Union was an example of Prussia being taken advantage of by the revolution.

To lead Hanover and Saxony was not wrong to Bismarck, as it was to the legitimists, but foolish -- because it meant no increase in power and was based on the presupposition that Austria would tolerate it. Further, in counseling the return to the German Confederation, Bismarck was not advising a subservience to Austria, but a condominium of shared power with Austria over Germany. However, little of this was apparent then -- and, with this speech Bismarck attained the status of the spokesman on foreign affairs for the conservative party. How they misunderstood the man whose speech also contained the phrase: "In this wonderful time when the strong is weak through his hesitations and the weak is strong through his boldness."

As Austria regained her military strength throughout 1849, the attitude of the King of Prussia regarding Germany became increasingly ambiguous. On September 9, 1849 Prussia signed an interim alliance with Austria concerning the status of Germany. This alliance with Austria and the Three Kings' Union were incompatible, since the first provided the basis for the reestablishment of the German Confederation, and the latter its abrogation. Yet the King of Prussia continued with his Union Plan.
The King even attempted to draw Bismarck into taking at least a more moderate approach to German unification. A meeting was thus arranged between Bismarck and the liberal, Heinrich von Gagern. The meeting of course came to nothing, as Bismarck with his tactic of complete frankness only confirmed Gagern's worst fears about his political position.

I presented my position to Gagern [Bismarck reported years later] in a very clear and factual manner. Well, you should have heard Gagern! He made this jupiter face, raising his eyebrows, bristling his hair, rolling his eyes around, fixing them on the ceiling till it almost cracked, and then spoke in such grandiose phrases that I felt as if I was at a public meeting. Naturally, he got nothing out of me. I answered him quite coolly and we remained as far apart as ever.  

The Reich Parliament promised by the Three Kings Union was convened on March 20, 1850. The attempt to give the impression that the parliament was representative of Germany, not just Prussia, was severely hampered by the fact that Hanover and Saxony, in fear of Austria, had withdrawn their support of the Union Plan. When, however, the parliament came to a close on April 29, the Radowitz plan of German unification had easily won the desired constitutional approval from its liberal majority, thus allowing Radowitz to proceed with implementation.

The crux of Prussia's confused and torturous path to unify Germany constitutionally had its source in the ambivalent attitude of the King of Prussia. It was as if
two separate planes of thought existed in his mind -- a romantic notion for German unification on one level -- and a belief, on another level, that his true place as King was as the standard-bearer of the Emperor of Austria, who alone possessed the historical right to rule over Germany. Prince Schwarzenberg now proceeded to bring these two levels into one with an ultimatum that left only the choice between submission or preparation for war.

In June of 1850, Schwarzenberg stated his intention to reestablish the German Confederation. Then, in October, Hesse-Cassel brought the tension between Austria and Prussia to a head. A constitutional conflict had arisen in this middle-sized territory which separated Prussia's eastern and western provinces, and the elector appealed to Austria, while the parliament appealed to Prussia. The Tsar of Russia, who saw all constitutions as a threat, bluntly told the King of Prussia that his support was entirely with Austria -- and, the King of Prussia, once directly confronted with the possibility of war with Austria, drew back in horror at the thought. On November 29, at Olmütz, Prussia signed a treaty with Austria, agreeing to the reestablishment of the German Confederation, and effectively surrendering entirely all its political aspirations for Germany.

In a speech to the Prussian parliament on December 3, 1850 Bismarck gave his full support to the King's
capitulation" to Austria -- and, with that support, just six months later, won the position of envoy of the Frankfurt Diet. In this speech, of which 20,000 copies were later printed by the conservatives, Bismarck appeared to his legitimist supporters to acknowledge completely the right of Austria to rule Germany and therefore appeared as the perfect representative of an obedient Prussia at the German Confederation. The legitimists, however, failed to realize two things -- first, that Bismarck's Olmütz speech was only a tactical postponement of a conflict with Austria he viewed as inevitable, and second, that the Austria of Prince Schwarzenberg, was not satisfied with a return to the status quo, but desired to expand the power of the Confederation in order to debilitate Prussia permanently, by not only dominating her politically, but by bringing the Zollverein under the control of the Confederation.

With Olmütz, Austria won a major political victory over Prussia. However, while that battle had been diplomatically fought in full view, on a much less obvious front, Prussia had been defending herself against an economic offensive, that Austria had launched in 1849. A better example to prove that the conservative Austria had become revolutionary under Prince Schwarzenberg could not be found than in this attempt to lay the axe to the root of Prussia's economic dominance in Germany. Thus, while Prussia crossed the political line of Metternich's Germany, Austria crossed the
economic, both showing that the peace of 1850 was no more than a truce.

As it was necessary in the last chapter to show how the bourgeoisie gained a substantial economic influence in Prussia, it is necessary in this chapter, to show how the Zollverein gained a dominance in much of Germany. For just as the bourgeoisie grew within the soil of a bureaucratically absolutist Prussia, making it difficult for it to do anything other than put down deeper roots in familiar soil,24 so too in Germany, the roots of the Prussian economy had gone so deep, enmeshing the economies of so many individual states with the Prussian, that Austria’s attempt either to join this network, or destroy it, was little less than a dream.25

The central point of Schwarzenberg’s political agenda, which encompassed his economic policy, was so radical that it changed the entire equation of Prussian-Austrian relations. Schwarzenberg wanted a greater Austria not a greater Germany.26 It was a comparable theme to the one that ran, like a thread, through many of Bismarck’s speeches during the revolutionary years, whereby he tried to make his King see that Prussia should absorb Germany, rather than Prussia becoming dissolved in Germany.27 A revolutionary can well recognize another revolutionary -- and so Bismarck understood Schwarzenberg.
Under Metternich Austria had shown concern in 1834, when Prussia established the Zollverein, but did little to stop its growth and development. This policy changed entirely under Prince Schwarzenberg. In absorbing Germany into Austria, Schwarzenberg also envisioned drawing the Zollverein into an Austrian dominated Zollunion. Through a customs alliance with the Zollverein, he planned to establish a bridge-head whereby, over time, he could exploit the protectionist southern part of Germany and the weak industrial sector in Prussia, to side with Austria's desire to raise tariffs within all of Germany. In accomplishing this, Prussia's principle of low tariffs, that was especially popular in the northern states, would be broken. In essence, the Schwarzenberg plan would transform Germany into Austria's major market for manufactured goods, as well as the major supplier of raw materials; and would turn Prussia away from European trade, into becoming a middle state partner in an Austrian-controlled self-sufficient trading block.

In an economic war with Prussia, Austria was at a distinct disadvantage. Austria lacked capital, raw materials, railroads, and most important, an ideological incentive to develop her economy. In complete contrast, Prussia's true revolutionary spirit took conscious form in the field of economics. It was essentially the product of the peace settlement that ended the Napoleonic age, because,
by giving Prussia three provinces in the west of Europe separated from her seven provinces in the east, it provided her with an incentive to achieve economic union and uniformity of tariffs. The Zollverein was the initial means for Prussia to bind her provinces together, the railway was a second stage and nationalism completed it. Austria, on the other hand, could only propose a loosely knit union, because she feared most the nationalism that became Prussia's strength, and not just because it could unite Germany under Prussia, but because nationalism would destroy an already polyglot Austrian Empire.

Karl von Bruck, who had established and developed the Lloyd shipping company in the city of Trieste, supported Prince Schwarzenberg's overall plan of a German Zollunion, and was appointed Minister of Commerce in November of 1848 to carry out this plan. However, there was one major difference between what Schwarzenberg desired and what Bruck would attempt to carry out. Bruck, as a man of trade and shipping, was fundamentally cosmopolitan in his business interests and therefore wanted a common customs union with Germany, so that as a single unit this alliance would have tremendous possibilities in international trade; whereas Schwarzenberg wanted a Zollunion with Germany, so as to break Prussia, and make Austria self-sufficient enough that she would not have to turn to other countries.
On October 26, 1849 in an apparently innocuous article printed in a Vienna newspaper, Bruck anonymously tested public opinion with suggestions for the initiation of an Austrian-German customs agreement. It was presented as a four-stage plan and it was the opening shot in the ensuing economic war between Austria and Prussia for Germany. In the first stage Austria would change her prohibitive tariffs into protective ones, and it was hoped, in turn, that the Zollverein would raise its tariffs proportionately to become compatible with those of Austria. The customs border between Austria and the Zollverein would be removed and both would be treated as a common market area. Raw materials and food stuffs would pass freely, and Austria would either lower or remove her tariffs on raw and treated textile materials. Currency, weights, and measures would become common; and, laws of trade and freedom of movement would be drawn up. Further, Austria would develop her very undeveloped railway, telegraph, shipping, and postal systems, in order to catch up with the more advanced system of communications within the Zollverein. Then, in three successive stages, tariffs between Austria and the Zollverein would be reduced to 3/4, 1/2, and 1/4 of what they were in stage one. The plan was an ambitious one, and even though it was not certain that the article was a statement of official policy, Prussia responded quickly and in kind -- in a newspaper article on November 7.
It was thoroughly characteristic of Prussia,\textsuperscript{14} that a bureaucrat, Rudolf von Delbrück, not a private businessman who had suddenly like von Bruck risen to public office, was chosen to give the reply to the Austrian proposal of tariff reform. Delbrück, who would later become Bismarck's chief free trade negotiator, had entered government service in 1837, became very well-versed in the economic affairs of the Zollverein, as well as those of Austria, was given a position in the Ministry of Commerce in 1848, and possessed the full confidence of August von Heydt, the Minister of Commerce. Delbrück was a very capable opponent of Freiherr von Bruck, and he recognized immediately the threat to Prussia's economic position in Germany. Even in his memoirs, written many years later, Delbrück acknowledged that it was precisely the magnitude of Bruck's plan that gave it its power of allurement.

The plan was well thought-out. The dazzling scope of its goal was so impressive that it almost made one forget that it was Austria who proposed it. It appeared to be realizable without significant difficulties, with each stage providing increasing advantages, promising concrete trade with the Zollverein and a political-economic power which, through its advantaged position geographically, and a proposed 70 million in population, would be unparalleled in Europe.\textsuperscript{15}
Thus, Delbrück’s strategy became one of temporization where Prussia’s interests were in jeopardy, and a positive response where they were not.

The most important point to Delbrück was to keep the reins of the Zollverein exclusively in Prussian hands. Thus, in the newspaper article of November 7, 1849 he anonymously welcomed cooperation on transportation, coinage, telegraph and post, but continued that it was unreasonable to consider a policy of tariff harmonization because of the wide disparity that existed between Austria and the Zollverein. He added that an agreement of an easier exchange of goods between them could be discussed, but the actual inclusion of Austria in the Zollverein was inconceivable. In effect, Delbrück was offering concessions in trade of raw materials but he was not offering, in any way, an actual economic union of the territories.

On December 30, 1849 Bruck presented an official memorandum of Austria’s position, which was a somewhat shorter version of the original newspaper article, in that it reduced the four stages to two. It was at last official that Schwarzenberg was determined not to leave the affairs of the Zollverein solely to Prussia. Prussia responded officially on February 28, 1850 agreeing to discussions of a separate trading alliance, but not admission of Austria into the Zollverein. However, Prussia was in a delicate position, “with the current Zollverein treaty expiring in
1853, and Bavaria and Württemberg especially making known their desires for a more protectionist tariff policy.

Delbrück, nevertheless, was not convinced that Bruck’s plan could not be turned to Prussia’s favor. Because Bruck had private business interests, appreciated the importance of a competitive market, and desired to be part of an international trading network, Delbrück thought that Prussia, who had behind her sixteen years of experience, had the ability to lead rather than be led by Austria. When Delbrück, however, visited Vienna in March of 1850 and met Prince Schwarzenberg, he realized that it was more important to the Prince to weaken Prussia through a trade agreement, than it was to strengthen Austria.

In a memorandum of May 1850, Bruck took a different course of attack. This time he proposed a federal agency that would negotiate a trade agreement between Prussia and Austria. Then, once an agreement was reached, the federal agency would have wide-ranging powers to watch over the agreement’s implementation and settle whatever disputes arose. The plan was no more than a thinly veiled attempt gradually to bring the Zollverein under the German Confederation which would guarantee Austrian domination. Prussia continued her delaying tactics and when Bruck’s plan was presented on July 7, 1850 at a Zollverein conference, it was decided that Prussia, Bavaria and Saxony would carry out the negotiations with Austria on behalf of the Zollverein.
Slowly Bruck began to realize what Otto von Bismarck would come to see very clearly during his eight years in the Rothschild financial capital of Frankfurt -- that the Zollverein was as much an economic leverage against Austria, as the Confederation to control Prussia politically. While the southern German states may well have resented Prussia’s economic dominance, they were equally unwilling to give up the economic benefits derived from the Zollverein. With each delay by Prussia, Bruck’s support within Austria was eroded until he resigned on May 23, 1851.

In 1851, however, Prussia was still on the defensive, for while Bruck had resigned, Schwarzenberg had not. Thus, Delbrück, who was still fearful that the Zollverein might dissolve in 1853, worked indefatigably to reach a trading alliance with Hanover. On September 7, 1851 an agreement was reached, and with that, Prussia felt strong enough to renounce the Zollverein agreements and begin their renegotiation. Hanover was immensely important to Prussia. It provided a link with her western provinces if Hesse-Cassel refused renegotiation, was a large market with her 1.7 million population, and strengthened Prussia’s position of a free trade tariff system against Austria.

During this time of negotiation with Hanover, Delbrück got to know Bismarck in Frankfurt. While the negotiations were very secretive, once the treaty had been signed, Bismarck immediately realized its implications: first, as
an incentive to **Zollverein** members to enter into an even broader market, and second, by greatly increasing Austria's difficulty to challenge the low tariff policy of the **Zollverein**. However, a further complication arose. In Hanover, there was a battle between the more liberal orientated government that had signed the trade agreement and the conservatives known as the Hanoverian Knights, who had appealed to the German Confederation for support. The Hanoverian Knights of course were pro-Austrian in sympathy, and their victory would jeopardize the trade agreement.

Delbrück's observations of Bismarck's response to this political crisis in Hanover, is as interesting as it is significant.

Herr von Bismarck had been named to the Federal Diet a few weeks before my arrival in Frankfurt. I found him and his wife still busy with furnishing their villa which they had rented on the Eschenheimer Landstraße. We had met only briefly before in Berlin and it was only in Frankfurt that we really came to know each other. I held him to be a tendencious politician, who would make the demands of conservative interests the focal point in our negotiations with other states, but was pleasantly surprised, when it became clear to me after a few days, that my view had been wrong. He had no doubts about the political importance in Germany of our September trade agreement with Hanover, and once he was convinced of the necessity to maintain the current ministry in Hanover in order to implement the trade agreement, he immediately decided to oppose the current efforts of the Hanoverian conservatives within the
Diet, thus sacrificing a conservative cause for Prussian self-interest.  

How ironic that Delbrück, a liberal bureaucrat signing a liberal trade agreement for a conservative government, found political support in the very man he thought the most reactionary of the conservatives.

Bismarck was later to maintain that his years in Frankfurt, from 1851 to 1859, were the period in which his eyes were really opened. "He was not only at the centre of German political affairs, but also at the centre of trade and mobile capital. He talked on several occasions of his contact, dinners and conversations with the Rothschilds, and although he often maintained an ambivalence to their wealth, one senses that the overstating of his indifference only confirms that it was more than tinged, in fact, with admiration. He came to see the role of private mobile capital not only for his own life but for the advantage it could render to Prussia."

The economic life of Frankfurt revealed another essential aspect of the world of the bourgeoisie to Bismarck, giving him a more rounded and profound understanding of its inner workings. He had already lived within the cultural world of the bourgeoisie at home, prior to his mother's death. Then, at primary and secondary school, later at university, he lived within its intellectual world. For more than a year he worked within
the bureaucracy that the bourgeoisie dominated, and then for seven years he farmed his estates, not according to the tenets of feudalism, but with the expertise of one very capable of competing in a market orientated capitalist economy. Now, in Frankfurt, the seat of the Imperial Diet since 1312, he lived neither frivolously nor prentiously. The majority of the aristocrats sent, like Bismarck, to represent their governments in Frankfurt, lived well and worked little. Bismarck, in stark contrast, lived modestly and worked indefatigably.

Bismarck’s university friend, John Lothrop Motley, a member of the American bourgeoisie, had always been struck by the class distinction in Germany. In 1834 Motley had written to his mother:

The Germans generally may be divided very conveniently into two great classes -- the von and the not von. Those who are lucky enough to have the three magic letters v o n before their names belong to the nobility and are of course aristocratic to the last degree. Those who have not these three may have all the other letters of the alphabet in all possible combinations and are still nothing but plebians."

Yet when John Motley visited Bismarck in Frankfurt, he did not see the structure or boundless opulence of what one might expect in the household of a man who was now both statesman and aristocrat -- but rather freedom of movement and a generous but measured extravagance.
It is one of those houses where everyone does what one likes. The show apartments where they received formal company are on the front of the house. Their living rooms, however, are a salon and dining room at the back, opening upon the garden. Here there are young and old, grandparents and children and dogs all at once, eating, drinking, smoking, piano-playing, and pistol-firing (in the garden), all going on at the same time. It is one of those establishments where every earthly thing that can be eaten or drunk is offered you, porter, soda water, small beer, champagne, burgundy or claret are about you all the time, and everyone is smoking Havana cigars every minute."

In this friendship a "von" and a "not von" came together.

Of course my politics [continued Motley] are different from his, although not so antipodal as you might suppose, but I can talk frankly with him as I could with you, and I am glad of an opportunity of hearing the other side put by a man whose talents and character I esteem and who so well knows the inside information about events."

As envoy to the Frankfurt Diet, Bismarck had been given an important political position but one tightly controlled from Berlin; and, although soon after arrival he began to complain that things arrived already decided, leaving him only to follow directions, he never accepted this minor role of little more than that of a political bureaucrat, but acted more as if he were a member of the King’s cabinet. In all his years in Frankfurt he never ceased to bombard the foreign minister, Otto von Manteuffel, or Fra Diavolo as he
called him, with observations, analysis and advice, on foreign, economic, and domestic affairs; and, he never ceased at the Frankfurt Diet to challenge the presuppositions that Austria had the right to decide policy in Germany without Prussia.

Bismarck was careful to conceal two things from his conservative supporters in Berlin, now that he was considered by them to be the representative of conservative-legitimist interests at the Frankfurt Diet. First, he gave the impression that his anti-Austrian stance, which he assumed almost immediately upon arrival, was not the result of some pre-conceived bias against the venerable Empire, but the direct result of the discovery, that it was no longer worthy of veneration. The subtlety was characteristic of Bismarck, as it implied that Metternich’s Austria had been corrupted by Schwarzenberg, and in the name of all conservative decency Bismarck could not stand idly by -- what it concealed was that Bismarck’s principle of state egoism was incompatible with Austrian dominance of Germany, whether that dominance came in the form of Metternich or Schwarzenberg. It was certainly true that Schwarzenberg’s politics was revolutionary in comparison to that of his predecessor, but this was not the source of Bismarck’s opposition, but rather an opportunity to reveal his opposition and appear as the conservative conscience in the face of an Empire gone astray. Second, Bismarck
deliberately downplayed economic matters at the very same time that he emphasized the importance of them.

I would consider it very advantageous [wrote Bismarck in his first letter to Leopold von Gerlach from Frankfurt], if one began early to look into the German material question. Those who grab the initiative, be it the Bundestag, the Zollverein or Prussia alone, will have a great advantage winning the sympathies of the participating members, because these things, designated by number and weight, are more important to the majority of Germans than they are to you and me."

In one of his first official letters to his government, Bismarck gave his impressions of Austria under Prince Schwarzenberg and the life at the Diet of the German Confederation under Count Thun:

Count Thun has a somewhat boyish appearance mixed with a touch of a wily Viennese. . . . Under this exterior Count Thun conceals, I will not say a high level of political energy and mental ability, but an unusual degree of cleverness and calculation, that issue forth with a great presence of mind from under the mask of a harmless good fellow, as soon as politics comes into question. I consider him an opponent who might be dangerous to anyone who genuinely trusts him, instead of paying him back in his own currency. If I may venture to give an opinion, in spite of the little official experience that I have had, it is that we must never expect from the statesmen of the Schwarzenberg school that they will accept or maintain justice as the basis of their policy for the sole reason that it is justice."
To his wife, Bismarck described the Frankfurt Diet, and the city, with its diplomats and citizens of wealth.

Frankfurt is terribly dull. . . . My colleagues are unbearable. As soon as I ask anyone a question he assumes the face of a diplomat and thinks what he can answer without saying too much, and what of our conversation he can report to his government. . . . Of the local nobility do not be afraid; in terms of money Rothschild is the most prominent."

One of the first battles outside the strict confines of the Diet, was in fact, with the Rothschild family, who offended Bismarck because they showed a greater fear of Austria’s disapproval than Prussia’s -- a concrete proof to Bismarck, that this great monied power held Prussia to be of less stature, and thus less of a threat, if offended. The conflict arose because the Rothschild family, as the official bankers of the Confederation, agreed, at Austria’s request, to give an advance of 60,000 gulden on a promised loan to the Confederation. Bismarck protested directly to the Rothschild family which in turn enraged Count Thun because the ambassador of Prussia "would appeal to a Jew" against the Confederation -- to which Bismarck sharply replied:

It is not our fault, as you say that the Diet has been dragged through the mud because of arguments with a Jew; it is the fault of those who have exploited the Diet’s business connection with a Jew; in order, in an unconstitutional manner, to divert moneys that were in
the Jew's keeping from the object to which they had been assigned.\(^5\)

For the moment Thun won the battle, and the loan was granted -- but for months, Bismarck refused all invitations or apologies from the Rothschild family, and only with the transfer of Thun from the Diet in November of 1852, did Bismarck resume contact with it.

It was not only in the Rothschild affair that Bismarck offended Count Thun. The very demeanor of Bismarck, the fact that he had no diplomatic experience and seemed to be cast upon the shores of the Frankfurt Diet by the revolution itself, offended the sensibilities of Count Thun, an aristocrat of the Austrian Empire. The key to the conflict, however, was that the Confederation no longer suited their needs, and where Austria desired to strengthen it, Bismarck desired to restrict it, if he could not convince his government to demand its restructure. In its present form, Hanover, with a population of 1.7 million, had as much power as did Prussia with a population of 17 million -- and, even more important, it subsumed Prussian foreign policy under that of the Confederation.

The theme of this chapter has been that the revolution of 1848 destroyed the foundation of the conservative order in Europe, and that the so-called reactionary period of the 1850's, was far more in name than in fact. The central question, however, is: if the consensus that held together
the old order had eroded, then what would replace it? Thus, for the remainder of this chapter we must study the cracks in the conservative order, Bismarck's analysis of them, what he saw as the emerging order, and what place the bourgeoisie had within it.

Bismarck's attention was by no means wholly fixed on the affairs of Frankfurt. In fact, what he later said of Europe "that it was brushed and combed in ten to fifteen minutes at breakfast" could also be said of his view, during this period, of the Confederation. Bismarck always liked the phrase, "the river of time", and he used it on more than on occasion during this period in Frankfurt to describe the changes that were occurring not only in Prussia but in Europe. These changes were both quiet and momentous, whereby Prussia took off industrially, and France replaced Austria as the arbiter of Europe. It was precisely here that Bismarck's difference from the reactionary conservatives became most apparent, and where his own paradoxical nature was most manifest. He could understand change and they could not, he could adapt to it, they were unwilling. However, his accommodation to change was in view of stability, thus at one point putting a restraint on the change and conserving the stability -- in part, this would later make of Bismarck a stranger to his own creation.

On December 2, 1851 Napoleon III came to power in France, and a year later the republic turned empire. These
events again renewed concern among the Prussian ultra-conservatives about the necessity of vigilance against revolution. Bismarck, in a speech given in the Prussian parliament on March 20, 1852 again spoke with such ferocity against not only the revolution but against cities which, he alleged, were its very source, that he grew even more in the estimation of those who could think in no other terms than the negation of all that revolution meant. Then, on April 5, 1852 Prince Schwarzenberg suddenly died. It appeared at first that Austria may again revert to a more conciliatory foreign policy and a more acquiescent attitude in relation to the Zollverein. In fact, however, Austria kept the audacity of Schwarzenberg but lacked his judgement how to use it. Delbrück, in his memoirs, said that he immediately knew that Karl von Buol, Schwarzenberg's successor, would never pursue the Zollverein negotiations with the same ability as his predecessor. "Those who knew both men had no doubt that the creative power and the ruthless energy behind these plans had been extinguished."

During the early 1850's Russia remained fitful. The Tsar betrayed a certain ambivalence to the conservative order. Like the Prussian conservatives he feared the rise of Napoleon III, and in May of 1852, he urged Prussia and Austria to settle their trading differences so that political repercussions would not impair conservative solidarity against France. At the same time, the Tsar acted
as if he had been poorly paid for all that he had done to restore and maintain the conservative order during the 1848 revolution. Austria was particularly indebted to Russia, for her help in suppressing Hungary, and there was a sense that Russia might see fit to reward herself in the near future and expect Austrian acquiescence.

In response to Russia’s attempt to reconcile Prussia and Austria, Bismarck was sent personally by the King of Prussia, in May of 1852, to Vienna, to meet the Austrian Emperor. It was a delicate mission and although it brought no apparent success, it showed clearly to what heights Bismarck had risen. Eyes in the Prussian court began to narrow on Bismarck, not only with regard to his political stance, his obviously privileged position, but his personal ambition. And, even more importantly, where those gathered around the King desired harmony with Austria, those gathered around the crown prince were still angry about submission to Austria at Olmutz, and wanted Prussia to reorientate her foreign policy completely to England. Bismarck was precisely between these two positions, wanting to be free of Austria but not in order to become dependent upon England. Although Bismarck well concealed his true position, suspicions about him began to abound.

In September of 1852 Bruck returned to government service in an attempt to salvage some of his customs union plan. Direct negotiations with Prussia were established,
and on February 20, 1853 an agreement was reached whereby goods could travel more freely between the Zollverein and Austria. It is true that Prussia gave way in conducting negotiations with Austria in the first place, and further, that she allowed a differentiation of tariffs to accommodate Austria's industrially weak economy. The victory, however, still belonged to Prussia, because her economic authority over the Zollverein was implicitly recognized when Austria sought direct negotiations. Equally important, this economic armistice gave Prussia 12 years -- the length of the agreement -- to unify the Zollverein and widen the industrial gap between her and Austria.

It was not until the latter part of 1853 that Bismarck began in his letters back to Berlin to point out the bankruptcy of the old order. He began slowly to attack the very presuppositions of his conservative colleagues with regard to their world view -- first, of the Confederation and Austria's dominance of it, then, with the outbreak of the Crimean War, and the new European order issued forth from it, he analyzed France's role at the head of it. The letters are brutally frank in their analysis, and when Gerlach appealed to a theory of conduct, Bismarck opposed it with situations that contradicted it; and, when Gerlach defended what to him was sacred, Bismarck brought evidence to show it was moribund. As much as Gerlach refused to be
reconciled to the emerging new order, Bismarck refused to deny its emergence, and the need for Prussia to adapt to it.

The first false presupposition of the old order was faith in the German Confederation and trust in the goodwill of Austria.

Austria [began Bismarck] misuses the Confederation and exploits it so that it is the means to neutralize our influence in Germany. . . . She wants to play an important role in Italy, the lion in Germany and to command us about in European politics, without the slightest thanks. It seems to me that we always commit the error of a stupid adolescent who allows himself to be persuaded, by the arrogance and charm of his overbearing companion, to believe how unjustly he acts, if he does not sacrifice himself for him.\textsuperscript{56}

Then, a little less than a month later, Bismarck attempted to show that his opposition to Austria issued forth from facts not prejudice. "There is only enough air for one of us, one must either yield or be forced to yield, and until then, we remain opponents; this to me is an undeniable fact no matter how unpleasant it may seem."\textsuperscript{57}

A second false presupposition was the belief that Prussia should not carry out a foreign policy independently of Austria.

We tremble at the thought of being alone, [Bismarck said -- putting his finger on the very crux of Prussia's weakness], and thus we hold tightly to the coat of Austria. . . . Our foreign policy is bad because it is fearful. . . . We must quickly become the hammer in order not to be the anvil. . . . Would
you [said Bismarck to Gerlach] my most honored friend, if you had agreed on a duel of swords and your opponent drew a pistol, keep yours in a sack, only to threaten that you also had one, but preferred, to remain by all honor and rules and let yourself be shot? Not I."

The collapse of the old order really became both apparent and irrevocable during the Crimean War. The key to that war was that in destroying the Conservative League it turned Russia into a revisionist power,³⁹ France into an apparently conservative power, and Austria, into a country without friends internationally, and without cohesion internally. Prussia's neutrality in fact obligated Russia, but Austrian neutrality was refusing to repay Russia, and thus incurring her wrath.

Where Gerlach languished over the fall of Austria in international importance, Bismarck simply pointed to it as a manifest truth of her long time worthiness of scorn. And, where Gerlach was horrified that France, during the Crimean War, was able to capitalize on the enmity between Austria and Russia, replacing their union of a generation against revolution, with herself as peacemaker, Bismarck, in complete contrast, decided to visit Paris, to see the city and the Emperor first hand. Where Gerlach was now completely focused on the past, seeking its restoration, Bismarck was examining what the present offered for the future.
Bismarck visited Paris in August of 1855. If anything should destroy the myth that Bismarck was a reactionary aristocrat out of touch with his age it is surely this visit. But equally the opposite is not the truth — that the visit turned him into a Bonapartist and that his admiration became emulation. Rather, as Ludwig Bamberger said years later: "His entire political system, was based on the continuous attempt to create an equilibrium between reaction and progress, power and interests, aristocracy and the general public — between the past and the future."  

"This is a wonderful city, this Paris [Bismarck wrote to his wife on September 2, 1855]. Think of Frankfurt magnified ten times." Gerlach, in contrast, compared Bismarck's visit to Paris to going to Babylon — for him the essence of all evil. "Fear not [wrote Bismarck] for my political well-being; I have much the same nature as a duck, who shakes off the water from his feathers; to me, it is a great distance from my exterior skin to the heart." Bismarck continued to analyse Paris for Gerlach, pointing out that the people were thoroughly indifferent to the outcome of the Crimean War, and that especially the military desired peace. In doing this, he was attempting by first hand information to show that the France of Napoleon III, was not the conquering revolutionary France of Napoleon Bonaparte. What then occupied the interest of this new
France? "Money is everything in Paris and an army general is like a dog next to a Rothschild. . . ."63

On April 11, 1857, Bismarck was even more direct with Leopold von Gerlach, as he drew a parallel between the world of Napoleon III and that of the ultraconservatives in Prussia. The letter, in fact, quoted Napoleon III to Gerlach -- somewhat akin to quoting the devil to a pastor. "He spoke repeatedly [Napoleon III] about the Kreuzzeitung party and said: 'if everyone wanted to attach themselves to the politics of souvenirs, then two nations, that once fought, would do so for eternity; it is the future that should concern political men.'"64

Where does the bourgeoisie fit into this wider political scheme, be it in international order, the German Confederation, or the effect of the tremendous industrial growth in Prussia during the period of 1850-1857? One must realize, that Bismarck, who converted everything into terms of the power that it could produce, did not look upon economics as an end in itself. Thus, it has been necessary to give the political situation first, before turning to the economic, because this was the order it took in Bismarck's own thought.

When Bismarck went to Paris he very carefully noted the relation between the bourgeoisie and the army.

It is true, [wrote Bismarck to Gerlach], if I think back to my last visit to Paris, under Louis Philippe, I
find now that the French have made amazing progress in their discipline and manners. The only one now who still crosses the street with arrogance is the soldier, from the General to the private, and if one would not know better, one would conclude from the customs of the street, that the power of the July Monarchy bourgeoisie had gone over to the army. 65

There were two levels to this observation: first, Bismarck was contradicting Gerlach’s assertion that the army was in charge of France, and would soon be in charge of Europe. Second, he was implying that because the bourgeoisie had not rooted itself in the army, then as admirable as its wealth may be, it was harmless because it was defenseless. In Prussia, Bismarck would reverse what the French had done. He would convince the Prussian liberal bourgeoisie that its interests could only be protected by the army.

Again we find Bismarck precisely in the middle of various groups. Bismarck was the statesman who would stand in the center of a triangle made up of the aristocracy, army, and the bourgeoisie. He belonged exclusively to neither of these groups, and the state would not belong exclusively to any of the three. The question that was central to Bismarck’s thought was what could each of these groups contribute to the power of the state? The army was the material force of defense, over which the statesman, not the generals, would have ultimate authority. The aristocracy were rulers by birth, but would be cast aside if
they failed to recognize the tremendous potentiality of the bourgeoisie, through money, law, and industry, to strengthen the state. And, the bourgeoisie would have to fully realize, that unlike the bourgeoisie in France, the state would not belong to the Prussian bourgeoisie, but the bourgeoisie to the state, and the state would ensure it a permanent place, enshrined in the law.

Now that the place of the bourgeoisie in Bismarck’s political worldview has been established, let us take a brief but closer look at what allowed the industrial takeoff in the 1850’s, and how the money of the bourgeoisie became the basis of the Prussian-German economy. "The passing of the old order was more apparent in banking ... between the revolution of 1848 and the depression of 1857 about 14 major joint-stock banks were established starting with the Schaffhausen Bankverein in Cologne." And, as Helmut Böhme underlines: "The reforming of the Schaffhausen Bank as a joint-stock company ... was the starting signal for the take off in Germany."

The importance of the joint-stock banks and companies can hardly be overstated. Prussia, as the leading member of the Zollverein, took the initiative in the late 1830’s and 1840’s with the building of railways, and the necessary corollary, of development in mining and heavy industry." However, there was always a risk for the private businessman to undertake these heavy industry projects, because the
necessary outlay of capital was enormous, and the need for quick returns necessary. With the joint-stock banks a close union was formed with industry, and, with private joint-stock companies a much wider base of money supply was able to be tapped. Security and investment became a reality not before known in Prussia outside of government securities.

"The 1850’s were the first great speculative period which Germany had experienced. In them modern capitalism was definitely made the basis of the national economy." This was especially important for Prussia because it distributed wealth on to a far wider base, not only transforming burghers into bourgeois, thus increasing the class, but also enmeshing this class into the very structure of the state growth. "Bismarck, who was conscious in all his moves of the economic power and extraordinary industrial growth in Prussia", looked for ways to bind the bourgeoisie irrevocably to the state, so that its best interests were served by obedience to that state. The solution to this problem was in large part already present in the Zollverein. It provided a longstanding economic basis to unity which could also provide the spiritual basis to nationalism. Through the basis already formed in the Zollverein a potential existed for Bismarck to separate political liberalism from economic and legal liberalism. What the Rhinelander Hermann Beckerath said in the 1840’s only became
more true in the decade that followed it. "The material interest in a people so profoundly philosophical and moral -- which is to become the bond among our state, otherwise so divided . . . the economic activity of the nation bears it toward the idea of unity." And, what the bourgeoisie said of Bismarck in the 1860's, many already began to think in the latter part of the 1850's -- that he would be a decisive Minister President. "We cannot deny the Prussian Minister credit for having banished through swift action that helpless timidity that weighed on Prussia like an incubus."

Bismarck's analysis of the new order, however, had already alienated him from most of his original conservative supporters. The letters between himself and Gerlach became very few and those few were either abrupt in manner or inconsequential in matter. By late 1857 Bismarck was excluded from both circles at court; the former Camarilla, that were dismissed when the crown prince began ruling for his brother who had succumbed to mental illness in October 1857, and the moderately liberal group that surrounded the crown prince and hoped to enact through him a political liberalism. In early 1859 Bismarck was relieved of his post at Frankfurt and sent to St. Petersburg.

Bismarck accepted with characteristic indifference his transfer from the center of political affairs -- as if bowing to fate. The years at Frankfurt would later serve
him well, but in late 1858 they appeared like the high point of a career all but over. Bismarck wrote to his wife:

It is all merely a matter of time; nations and individuals, folly and wisdom, war and peace, they come and go like waves and the sea remains. What are our states and their power and honor in God's eyes but ant-hills or bee-hives, that the hoof of the bullock tramples flat or fate overtakes in the person of the beekeeper come to collect the honey?"
Chapter IV

A Man In The Breach?
An echo of 1866 was already heard in July of 1862 when the liberal member Twesten stood up in parliament and said: "If a Prussian Minister were to enter here and declare: 'I have overrun borders, trampled on the people's rights and torn up treaties, just like Count Cavour has done', Gentlemen, I believe that we would not condemn him -- but rather we would build a memorial to honor him -- just as Italian history will do to Count Cavour."

Michael Gugel

King William I, objecting to Bismarck's proposal of a national parliament elected through general franchise, said: "What you are proposing to me is the revolution." Bismarck replied: "But what difference can that make to your Majesty, if in the general shipwreck you will be seated on a rock which will not be overrun by the water and on which all who do not want to perish will have to seek refuge?"

Bismarck's long battle with the liberal bourgeoisie had been waged not for the purpose of crushing it, a task he considered impossible, but of making it compliant.

Theodore Hamerow
By early 1859 so much had already changed in Prussia under the Prince Regent,¹ that it seemed only a matter of time that political liberalism would at last take root. The political reorientation that had shuffled Bismarck off to Russia in March of 1859 had earlier banished the court conservatives under Otto von Manteuffel and replaced them with moderate liberals. The Prince Regent's speech of November 1858, which promised a new era in which Prussia must make "moral conquests in Germany,"² helped prepare the way for the liberal landslide victory in the elections that followed soon after, thus sweeping the chamber of its conservative dominance. It was a time that also witnessed the formation of a wide variety of nationally orientated volunteer associations.³ The most important political association was the Nationalverein, which drew its impetus from the Italian war of unification in 1859⁴ and whose fundamental program was Germany without Austria under Prussian rule. And, the most significant economic association was the Congress of German Economists⁵ that pushed for major reforms to the Zollverein which would increase Prussian power over it and lead to German Unification through it. The question, however, that soon ground the momentum of the new era to a halt was that of power -- the liberal bourgeoisie was determined to acquire it and the King became resolute in not relinquishing it.
Bismarck was suddenly a persona non grata without any support either at court or with Prince William who identified him as a Kreuzzeitung reactionary who would only "turn everything upside down" if given a chance. The shift from Frankfurt to St. Petersburg was not an easy exile to endure but Bismarck made the most of his exclusion from Berlin and consoled himself with the warm reception granted him by the Tsar of Russia. The day that Bismarck announced (February 24, 1859) in the Bundestag of the German Confederation that his recall from this posting was imminent had been an especially bitter one for him. It was not just the transfer, the demotion it implied, the defeat of his aggressive anti-Austrian stance, or the gloating he had to endure from enemies of every political stripe, but the fact that it was the date of his mother's birthday.

I said at the time [Bismarck later told his secretary Moritz Busch], 'you will be repaid' and further he underlined to Busch, with obvious pleasure, that the proclamation of the constitution of the North German Confederation, April 24, 1867 also took place on the same day as his mother's birthday -- the 24th -- although not the same month.

It was no small boast therefore when at the end of the Austrian war Bismarck had said: "I have beaten them all! All!" for in effect he had, especially through the Indemnity Bill, when he shared the fruits of a conservative victory with the liberals whom he had equally defeated.
through the same war. His willingness to cross party lines allowed him to win his mother’s world and impose it upon the landed elite. That the victory over the liberals was readily apparent in 1866, has tended to obfuscate the fact that by 1871, many of his former conservative allies were looking upon Bismarck a traitor to his class. In fact, in many ways Bismarck turned out to be like the Trojan horse to the conservatives who had depended upon his leadership the most -- for, if he led the liberals by a way they did not want to go, he equally led the conservatives to a place they did not want to go.

Bismarck was by no means passive to the change in political climate that the new monarch ushered in. In 1858 he wrote a very detailed analysis of what amounted to a clear distillation of his diplomatic experience in Frankfurt, in which he talked candidly of the German Question, the necessity of reorganizing the Zollverein on a basis of majority rather than unanimity, as well as the importance of reaping the fruits of nationalism without undermining the authority of the crown by embracing liberalism to do it. Bismarck also showed in a letter to his brother a much more judicious appraisal of the Prince Regent’s new era speech than the liberals who so wholeheartedly received it. Bismarck, in contrast, was pleased that the Prince seemed to be avoiding "the push to the left."
Bismarck tried to show in his reports with which he continued to inundate the foreign office, that he by no means had resigned himself to permanent banishment, and that his analysis of current events was far more perceptive, nuanced, and flexible than that of any of the conservatives he was being accused of representing. He made precisely the same point to the very influential Hanoverian liberal leader and cofounder of the National Union movement, Hans Victor von Unruh, when the two men met in March of 1859. This conversation was very significant for Bismarck for through it he was able to disassociate himself from the Kreuzzeitung conservatives specifically on the point of nationalism, thereby winning the support of the liberals who surrounded Unruh. Unruh confirmed this support of Bismarck in a letter written to him in September of 1859:

We also, both myself and my friends have placed the national question entirely in the forefront and you can infer therefore that we, including Mr. Bennigsen, [leader of the Nationalverein] without any ulterior motives, would be very pleased at your appointment as foreign minister. Prussia needs now more than ever, a clear, definite and bold policy. The most bold is commensurately the least dangerous. ¹³

It was precisely on the point of nationalism that the Prince Regent's views diverged most from those of Bismarck. On the most fundamental level the Prince misjudged Bismarck's boldness for recklessness and where the Prince
was ambivalent and thus unclear in the German Question, Bismarck was single minded and crystal clear. Thus, where the Prince seemed for the first year especially to be working against nationalism in foreign affairs but with liberalism domestically, Bismarck would have reversed the order completely and by doing so forced the liberals to do so also if they wanted a united Germany.

Bismarck had always maintained the centrality of the army within the state and that one’s view of the army determined one’s view of the state. It was precisely this view that led Bismarck to power, combined with his determination to defy a parliament that refused to grant the necessary funds to reorganize the army. This army reform, which began in late 1859 and by 1862 had become a constitutional crisis, was the culmination of two opposed world views: those of the liberal bourgeoisie and those of the King -- and, while it is true that a certain amount of the mutual suspicion and resultant hostility was misunderstanding, it still returned to the antithetical views of the role of the army within the state.

It was not that the liberal majority was against the army in itself. After all, since the second plank of its entire program was nationalism, after first liberalizing Prussia, the liberals well recognized the need for an army in the face of Austria’s refusal to allow a united Germany that excluded her. The point of contention, however, was
that in increasing conscription, reducing the bourgeois dominated Landwehr and in introducing three instead of two year service, Prince William was not preparing a powerful army to support a policy of national unification, but rather to serve as a bulwark against the liberal bourgeoisie. Thus, the liberal bourgeoisie feared that at root the Prince Regent was neither liberal nor national in his views and the Prince in turn regarded the liberal bourgeoisie as disloyal to him and destructive to his state.

The liberal bourgeoisie failed to realize, however, that for the Prince to weaken his army reform in any way would have been tantamount to denying the most central point\(^{16}\) of his entire life. He was the brother, not the son of the previous King, thus not of a different generation and very much of the mold of the Prussian soldier kings.\(^{17}\) He had been in the army since 1807, when at age 10 he received his first appointment -- and, over the years he watched closely and knew precisely what were its strengths and weaknesses. The revolution of 1848, and especially the capitulation to Austria at Olmütz, led the future King to write a detailed memorandum on how the army should be restored to a true military discipline that would purge it of its bourgeois civilian minded spirit that was best characterized by the Landwehr.\(^{18}\)

The liberal bourgeoisie was therefore correct in its suspicion that the strengthening of the army was in effect a
direct attack on it, but it was foolish to think that the
King could deny the army reform without denying himself. It
was true that the army reform clarified an initially hazy
almost romantic situation in which it had seemed as if
parliament, not the army, would become the right arm and
executive will of His Majesty. With the clarification of
the situation the state of Prussia became locked in
conflict, with the King on one side and the liberal
bourgeoisie on the other, in what appeared as an either-or
situation. What is more, Bismarck appeared as the man in
the breach who saved his King and his class by delivering
the state from the bourgeois onslaught, defeating liberalism
through nationalism. Certainly this is the view that the
proud aristocrat himself perpetuated, disowning his later
decade of collaboration with the very same bourgeoisie, much
as he disowned his mother’s bourgeois heritage.

The first thing that the army reform did that was of
major importance to Bismarck was to cause both the
resignation of the Minister of War in late 1859, as well as
bring about his replacement with General Albrecht von Roon,
a long-time friend of Bismarck. This appointment of Roon in
December of 1859 again provided a point of leverage within
the government for Bismarck, and however suspicious the King
remained of Bismarck’s reputation for "irresponsible
violence",19 as the government proceeded more toward an
impasse, Roon became more vocal in recommending to the King, Bismarck's appointment as Minister President.

Bismarck and Roon only appeared to share the same political and social views. There is no doubt that they were both aristocratic conservatives -- but of a different ilk. Roon was and remained a military man unable to view the bourgeoisie as other than subversive, unable to really accept the constitution even in its most limited sense and incapable of adapting to the public life that a constitution implied. He was, and viewed himself as, an expert in his field and considered it impudence on the part of the liberal bourgeoisie to demand budgetary control over an army that it knew nothing about. Bismarck, in contrast, was the statesman who identified with the monarch and to preserve the monarchy, he had come to realize that to exclude the bourgeoisie was equivalent to resisting history and making of the monarchy an anvil rather than a hammer.

There was, however, much agreement between Roon and the King both in their view of events and the fundamental beliefs which supported them. Roon was not a reactionary like Edwin von Manteuffel, Head of the Military Cabinet, who would use the constitutional conflict simply to revoke the constitution, but because Roon was so unable to adapt to the public forum of politics, justifying policy rather than simply carrying it out, he was more inclined to want to subvert the premise that a constitution demanded public
support, whereas the King simply resisted the reality. Thus where Roon could deny the constitution in practice, even revoke it if necessary, the King rather denied it by inference, wanting neither to revoke it, nor be bound by it. Their mutual inability to deal with parliament created the need for Bismarck.

Much had changed since the revolution of 1848. "As businessmen became more and more conscious of their economic power and social significance, they became less and less willing to accept the state's tutelage." And, where one can point out that much of the old order was still socially in place within the government and the army, the success of the economy during the 1850's had made the liberal bourgeoisie an integral part of the state's power, and the potential of industrialization was not lost on the general staff of the army. Further, the shift in distribution of wealth also led to a fundamental social shift in the distribution of land. The liberal bourgeoisie was thus representing very real and powerful social and economic interests and seeking equitable redistribution of political power properly to reflect those interests in government.

In a very real sense the liberal bourgeoisie in Prussia was brought to birth by the bourgeois-dominated bureaucracy. So it was not a hostile liberal bourgeoisie that had received nothing from the government and now sought its overthrow, but rather a liberal bourgeoisie that had so
matured economically during the 1850's that it had outgrown the confines which the state imposed. Economically the liberal bourgeoisie had reached a stage where it began to think nationally, desiring freedom of industry, occupation, movement and capital. Further, it began to think in German rather than Prussian terms, and a place in Europe as a unified and powerful nation, rather than have a state where the army and bureaucracy ruled domestically.

The political liberalism of the bourgeoisie became clearer in its demands as the King became more entrenched in defending his own authority. For all the invoking of the Rechtsstaat or rule of law, it meant democratic ideals for only a few of the liberal bourgeoisie, whereas for the majority it meant its own enfranchisement in the law, and the protection of itself and its private property as much from the lower classes as from the King. It wanted the same liberty as the aristocracy since it paid the same taxes. In relation to the King the liberals, especially the Progressive Party that broke away from the old constitutional liberals in June of 1861, wanted ministerial responsibility, the reform of the upper house and obedience of the monarch to uphold the constitution ("the only indissoluble bond which holds Prince and people together"), leaning upon parliament rather than the army.

Socially the liberal bourgeoisie was seeking to destroy the old order whereby the aristocrat controlled all levels
of rural government from police to magistrate, and the guild controlled the town on issues such as whether a "barber trained to trim beards [was] also allowed to cut hair or a hairdresser also to shave." The liberal bourgeoisie desired a free society whereby market demands would determine the movement and occupation of the population but this was not the same as desiring a free people. Rather, it was asserting an aristocracy of wealth whose social authority should be commensurate with its economic power.

The most fundamental weakness of the liberal bourgeoisie in Prussia was that the more it ground the government domestically to a standstill, the more it gave up its national dream of a unified Germany that only the state could bring about. And, as much as it might despise the intransigence of the eastern landed elite, as opposed to the more liberal minded aristocracy of Silesia and the Rhineland, the liberal bourgeoisie was immensely pleased with the free trade policy of the bureaucracy. This again showed its need of the authority of that very bureaucracy to eliminate all the barriers to trade within Germany through a policy that would effectuate common weights, measures and currency along with a central bank and a nationally applied commercial code. The liberal bourgeoisie was thus both hampered and helped by the very same government making a question of active resistance come down to one of power and
Bismarck solved the power question before the freedom question."

Bismarck's solution of reconciling the liberal bourgeoisie to the crown, especially from 1866 to the mid 1870's, was mirrored in his own personal decision in 1859 to employ Gerson Bleichröder as his banker. It was a working relationship between aristocratic political power and bourgeois economic power. It made Bleichröder a conduit of information to and from Bismarck and it gave Bismarck access to the entire world of the mobile capital of the Rothschild family. Bleichröder could not only help promote Bismarck's personal wealth, but as Bismarck's authority grew, Bleichröder made available needed money for the government as well as provided information through the Rothschilds on how other courts were financing their governmental programs. A relationship does not have to be public to be powerful nor apparent to be effective and the more public Bismarck's life became the more secretive he became about his private life -- so too with his banker upon whom he bestowed public honors but no commendation in his memoirs." Again, this was like his later political cooperation with the liberal bourgeoisie, in which he played the part of the proud Junker deigning to work with it. (We will later investigate this version of events, however, and see if they actually corresponded to what Bismarck's fellow Junkers were saying.)
The distance at which Bismarck was kept from Berlin during the first three years of the constitutional conflict was indicative of the King's fear of how Bismarck would resolve it through an active foreign policy. As the constitutional struggle intensified, however, throughout 1861 to the May elections of 1862 in which the Conservatives fell to eleven seats and the Progressives became the strongest party in the chamber, the King was forced at least to consider the choice of either appointing Bismarck Minister President or abdicating. Bismarck was recalled from Russia in May, but when the King could not decide if he would appoint him as Minster President, and Bismarck would not accept the position unless he was also named foreign minister, the King gave him a temporary appointment in Paris.

When Bismarck finally did come to power on September 22, 1862 he inherited a situation that greatly limited his room for manoeuvre. For, first and foremost, he had won his appointment from the King because of professed loyalty to the King and especially to the King's determination to have the army reform approved unaltered -- thus anything short of defiance of the liberal bourgeoisie would have undermined his own position. Further, the impasse on the domestic front, the tremendous hostility that he met from parliament who viewed him as the King's last-ditch effort to save the monarch who ruled by "By the Grace of God", hindered
Bismarck's attempts to move the battle to a different plane through success in German Unification. To his advantage, however, Bismarck also inherited a very powerful Prussian bureaucracy which in March of 1862 had concluded a free trade agreement with France. He also had access to the secrets of the state along with the power to present the government's position officially and unofficially in a wide variety of newspapers. What turned out, however, to be Bismarck's most tendentious inheritance was the aspiration of the conservatives and army alike that he deliver the state once and for all from the bourgeoisie, for the one thing that neither of these groups contemplated was that Bismarck would preserve them by compromise with the bourgeoisie."

Once in power Bismarck immediately assumed the position of the statesman who no longer represented any individual interest or party position but rather state power that would look judiciously upon all interests in terms of their effect upon the state. Further, the most fundamental characteristic of the state was that it was not static but moving, much like the wave on the water that never rests" -- a favorite expression of Bismarck. Thus, when Bismarck gave his first speech on September 30, 1862 for all his arrogant manner, the underlying theme was that the government would move forward. He was offering the liberals a choice between abandoning their domestic struggle for liberalism, and
joining him in working towards a national solution in the German Question, or face the fact that he would proceed on both fronts without them. The very heart of the speech was that: words, debates -- in essence parliament -- would not decide the great questions of the day, "that was the mistake of 1848 and 1849" but the army would. The most important shift from 1848, however, and the reason why a policy of defiance could not be permanent, was that the liberal bourgeoisie no longer simply represented views but real economic power that was essential to the state.

The very purpose of chapter one had been to show that Bismarck needed to be rooted in both the world of the bourgeoisie through a political life in the city and in the aristocratic world with his wife and family in the country. Now that he has attained power, the very same principle that pertained to his own life, he now proceeded to apply to Prussia. He now sought to win the freedom for the state of Prussia which had resolved the crisis in his own life -- freedom not only to be rooted in both worlds but freedom to accentuate one, then the other, at will. Hegel had once written that the state was "the embodiment of concrete freedom" and the National Liberal Heinrich von Treitschke said that "the essence of the state is, first of all, power; second, power; and third, power." Power, however, if limited in movement, is bowing to some restraint and has lost its freedom. Does the lawgiver have to obey the laws
he has the power to establish? This, in large part, would become Bismarck's legacy, for in demanding absolute freedom for the state, with which he so identified, he guaranteed the bondage of all to that state.

The Conservative Party thought that Bismarck represented it and therefore had to maintain not only its interests but its ideology. Bismarck, in contrast, had shown clearly to Leopold von Gerlach that he did not share many of the beliefs of the legitimists -- and, much to the horror of the party it would slowly learn, beginning with the Indemnity Bill in 1866, that Bismarck's representation of his monarch's interests was not synonymous with the interests of his former friends. The conservatives would pay dearly for their presumption. Bismarck would use them just as he would use other parties, earthenware vessels just the same as vessels of gold or silver, and not with preferential care. If they refused to recognize this then he would smash the vessel and destroy the party.

The King of Prussia assumed obedience rather than sought to win it. Bismarck, in contrast, realized that the transition to a constitutional state meant that the King had opened the door, however slightly, to a public life, in which his position would be eroded if it was not actively maintained. In a memorandum to the King, dated December 25, 1862, Bismarck sought delicately but clearly to explain to him, why Prussia had fallen from the importance she once had
in European affairs under Frederick the Great and even maintained until 1806. Bismarck attributed the first reason for this fall in international importance not to the loss of the powerful figure of Frederick the Great and to the decadence of the state he once ruled, but to the inclusion of Prussia in the German Confederation -- an inclusion which made Prussia subservient to Austria and reduced it to a German rather than a European power.

Another cause of the lessening of our influence with other states lies in the increased independence of the state of Prussia from the annoyances of parliamentary life, from the fluctuations of public opinion and from the constitutionally protected republic of civil service within the state. 41

The position that Bismarck presented here was carefully crafted to persuade Wilhelm that to follow national goals was not a capitulation to the liberals, who also desired that Prussia solve the German Question by destroying the German Confederation, but rather reverting back to the heritage of Frederick the Great who would never have submitted to such a Confederation.

The conviction of the correctness of this view has until now been represented in parliament and the press by all the varying shades of liberal parties who have even claimed that the Confederation with its diet no longer has the right to exist. 42

Bismarck went on to say to the King that even though the liberals have spoken against him -- at times even impudently
Thus, Bismarck attempted to legitimize the liberals by showing to the King that their nationalism was patriotic at least in the sense that it drew its strength from the heritage of Frederick the Great -- a heritage that King William surely could not deny. This was a central point in Bismarck's later reconciling the liberal bourgeoisie to the monarchy, because here he had shown the monarch that part of its opposition to his rule was rooted in his not following the true Prussian nationalism of Frederick II.

Once having established the legitimacy of nationalism Bismarck now described the means to pursue such a policy in Germany. Since the German Confederation weakened Prussia it was only outside of it that she could really develop her full strength. "The way has been long initiated through the Zollverein." This was a crucial point to make with the King, since it formed a second point of agreement between the King and the liberal bourgeoisie who, just a few months previously, had both applauded and passed by a resounding majority of 264-12 a free trade agreement between France and Prussia. Bismarck wanted to use precisely that agreement as a leverage to reorganize the Zollverein, bind the member states more closely to Prussia's will, and reap the liberals' support for the monarch through it.
The most fundamental point of this letter, however, was that after 1815 the state of Prussia had drawn into itself in fear of liberalism. Once, however, a constitution had been granted, the public domain could no longer be ignored by the state, or it would leave the reading public to a liberal press and find no support in a liberal parliament. It was almost incomprehensible to the King that his existence alone did not justify obedience -- I am King therefore you must obey -- but that loyalty must instead be merited by action and achievement. It was only Bismarck's subtlety that moved the battle in the King's mind from working with a band of liberals to fulfilling the heritage of Frederick the Great. The perception, however, that infused that subtlety, separated him totally from the conservatives. Where they thought that the state could only be preserved by keeping the liberal bourgeoisie out, Bismarck understood that the state could only be preserved by drawing it in. And, as we will see later, this was not a simple co-opting of the bourgeoisie but a very active cooperation with it, so that the unified Germany of 1871 bore its imprint and was far more recognizable to the bourgeoisie than it was to the conservatives.

Bismarck sought to win the public domain for his King in a variety of ways. It is true that the support of parliament remained out of his grasp until 1866 but even here "his long battle against the bourgeoisie had been waged
not for the purpose of crushing it, a task he considered impossible, but of making it compliant. Metal can only be forged together in great heat and the better the iron the more delicate the work — thus, the public battle on the parliamentary front only increased in its intensity while Bismarck sought on other levels to show the liberals a way out of their opposition. He used the press, the Zollverein negotiations, and nationalism to make the King popular in the face of what increasingly appeared as liberal intransigence. We must now investigate each of these three areas in turn.

Bismarck had long understood the importance of the press. On one occasion he had written to Herman Wagener, the editor of Kreuzzeitung, recommending that he use more advertising to create interest, and in other letters to Leopold von Gerlach he advised that the paper be much less doctrinal and more political in its tone. And, Moritz Busch, a journalist who worked for Bismarck, said of the press instructions that he received from the Chancellor: "they show that the statesman whom I had the honor to serve, thoroughly understood the business of journalism . . . ." The newspaper was an aspect of a new and modern age, which was an age of change and not status quo and therefore, once in power Bismarck completely revamped the press agency of the government, firing those who lacked a sense of good writing, and drew to himself a variety of men from the
literate bourgeoisie. "It is striking how unconventional Bismarck was in his choice of press agents. Nearly all were bourgeois in origin and many had radical and revolutionary backgrounds." Lothar Bucher, for example, who became Bismarck's personal secretary in 1864 and who held a doctorate in philosophy was completely ignored by the King whenever he saw him with Bismarck because of his revolutionary background. Moritz Busch, who was Bismarck's foreign press secretary from 1870-1873, had a similar background as did August Brass who became editor of the semi-official Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung. He even thought of hiring Karl Marx. Thus, while Bismarck was fighting the liberal bourgeoisie on a public level, he was surrounding himself with members from the same class on a private level.

Hermann Wagener was somewhat of an exception to the other journalists who came to surround Bismarck, for although being of bourgeois origin, his credentials were conservative. Their friendship was close until a financial scandal in 1873 forced Wagener to resign from his government position and caused a strain to enter into their friendship. Wagener, who had been a law student under the jurisdiction of Ludwig von Gerlach, had originally been drawn to the pietistic circle of aristocrats not only because of their estate view of the monarchy, but their Christian view of society. The conservatives, in turn, had welcomed Wagener
into their midst, in spite of the class difference, precisely because of his journalistic skills, thus using him as a liaison between the conservatives and the world of the bourgeoisie. Bismarck himself had belonged far more to this same position of liaison between the two worlds (one could also add between the old and new orders) than was readily apparent at first, and thus, his friendship with Wagener was based far more on similarity of views with Wagener rather than manipulation of him.

Wagener was the first person whom Bismarck had dined with him upon becoming Minister President. Wagener represented Bismarck’s link with the conservatives and one of his means to draw them in his wake as his policies became more liberal. On the other hand, Wagener’s intense interest in social issues, especially the plight of the industrial workers, although somewhat radical to Bismarck, was still carefully noted, because it provided ideas of how to reconcile the workers to the government and thus protect the state from those he considered its true enemy — the socialists — rather than the bourgeoisie. Ironically, almost exactly a year before Wagener was so politically destroyed that he became a liability to the Chancellor, Bismarck had written to him: "You are the only one in my entourage with whom I can speak frankly and openly and when I cannot do that any more, I will drown in my gall."
Bismarck had access as Minister President not only to privileged information but the means to disseminate it. Through a variety of writers he could disguise articles, plant them in liberal newspapers under pseudonyms and then quote them the next day in parliament. He was thus not only familiar with the world of the bourgeoisie but he understood how to use its tools of shaping public opinion equally as well as it did. Moritz Busch has written how he received from Bismarck instructions several times daily, during the war with France, as to which newspaper articles of the day before had to be refuted, how they should be written and in what paper they should appear. Bismarck had a very fine-tuned sense of what tone should be struck in a given article. Moritz Busch, for example, wrote in his diary for March 7, 1870:

Read over to Minister, at his request, an article which he ordered yesterday and for which he gave me the leading ideas. It was to be dated from Paris, and published in the Kölnische Zeitung. He said: 'Yes, you have correctly expressed my meaning. The composition is good both as regards its reasoning and the facts which it contains. But no Frenchman thinks in such a logical and well-ordered fashion, yet the letter is understood to be written by a Frenchman. It must contain more gossip, and you must pass lightly from point to point. In doing so you must adopt an altogether French standpoint. A liberal Parisian writes the letter and gives his opinion as to the position of his party towards the German Question,
expressing himself in the manner usual in statements of that kind.’ (Finally Count Bismarck dictated the greater part of the article, which was forwarded by Metzler in its altered form to the Rhenish newspaper.)”

In the area of economics Bismarck was equally as perceptive of the interests of the bourgeoisie. There was a persistent demand among bankers and industrialists for freedom from usury laws which controlled the rate of interest at which money was lent. Further, industry wanted freedom from government restraint whereby new incorporations of companies were not continually held back by a bureaucratic administration that did not follow a standardized central procedure but allowed delay to be the norm. Bismarck, in contrast, praised "boundless competition", which the bourgeoisie well knew would mean an absolute deathblow to corporate society, and showed that he was not only a supporter of the free trade agreement with France that had been signed August 2, 1862 but would use it as a weapon against the Zollverein members who refused to accept it.

On March 23, 1860 France and England had concluded the trade agreement which set Europe on a course of free trade for the next decade. The agreement had been momentous and, as Delbrück pointed out, it could not be ignored by Prussia because it immediately put Prussian goods on an unequal footing within France against English goods that now entered
at a much lower tariff." There were advantages to both France and Prussia in coming to an agreement, as it allowed Napoleon III to play the role of European mediator he so came to cherish, as well as draw Prussia away from Austria; and, it allowed Prussia a chance to seal Germany off from Austria whose economy could never support a free trade agreement. "The treaty initialled on March 29 and signed August 2, 1862 was basically the work of free trade Kleindeutsch bureaucrats who were willing to give France more than they received in order to give Austria less than they promised.""  

Napoleon III initiated discussions with Prussia just two days after the treaty with England had been signed. He met the King of Prussia at Baden-Baden in June of 1860 and the following year at Compiègne, accentuating the importance that the two rulers attached to the talks. In 1856 Frederick William IV had underlined the need to reorganize the Zollverein on a new basis of lower tariffs so that Austria would be unable to comply," and Napoleon who had just fought a war against Austria over Italian unification, saw a potential junior" ally in Prussia. The two most important aspects of the agreement, when it was signed, was that it represented a breakthrough for the economic policy of free trade and it granted France a most favored nation status.
Free trade gave Prussia a strong advantage especially against the protectionist inclined southern states of Bavaria and Württemberg, and the most favored nation status destroyed Austria's hope, however impractical it had been, of forming a German Customs Union on a protectionist basis which included Austria. The Zollverein agreements were due for renegotiation in 1865 and in December of 1863 Bismarck forced the issue by renouncing the present treaty with the other member states and categorically demanding that a new agreement would only be granted with each state on the basis of the French treaty. The Austrian Prussian trade agreement of 1853, also due for renegotiation in 1865, was now doomed in its present state for that agreement had granted special privileges to Austria which would now have to conform to the most favored nation clause with France. In fact, by the end of 1865 when all the treaties within the Zollverein had been renewed on the basis of lower tariffs, and Austria had renewed her treaty on a much less favorable footing, Austria was economically locked out of Germany. The finality of Prussia's economic victory partly determined the need for Prussia to ensure her supremacy on the battlefield as well.

Bismarck's policy of nationalism was his most tortuous and the most difficult for both foes and friends to comprehend. He supported Russia's suppression of the Polish revolt in 1863 and then supported the legitimacy of international treaties when Schleswig and Holstein wanted to
break away from Denmark. Both these actions brought scorn and outrage from the liberals and immense satisfaction from the conservatives. But then Bismarck turned around, to the utter astonishment of the conservatives, and called for a national German parliament elected by universal manhood suffrage as well as leading Prussia into a war against Austria. Most conservatives, however, except most notably Ludwig von Gerlach, were willing to follow Bismarck into war even though it contradicted much of what they believed, and the liberals remained publicly against him even though the war was aimed at much they desired. "The liberals were afraid that he would not change sides and the conservatives were afraid he would."

To bargain from a position of strength -- this was the fundamental meaning of the Indemnity Bill which Bismarck offered the liberals at the end of the successful war. The conservatives who rejoiced in the victory, would have used it to secure the old order both in Prussia and in the North German Confederation. In contrast, Bismarck wanted peace with the liberals on the domestic front so that he could work with them on the national level to achieve full unification. He conceded much to win their support. It is true that there were no absolute constitutional guarantees that Bismarck would not again obtain money in an unconstitutional manner if refused it again by parliament -- that, however, was not the point. The point was that he had
won the power question, he offered a truce, and he would now solve the freedom question. As he had said to the Hanoverian liberal Johanes Miquel: "Later, after we have been victorious, you will have constitutions enough." The Indemnity Bill began almost ten years of cooperation with the liberal bourgeoisie and through it he lost the support and friendship of the conservatives who had brought him to power.
Chapter V

The Magnitude of Money
The bourgeoisie was evidently not a ruling class in the sense in which the old-style landowner was, whose position gave him, *de jure* or *de facto*, the effective state power over the inhabitants of his territory. . . . What it did exercise was hegemony, and what it increasingly determined was policy. There was no alternative to capitalism as a method of economic development, and at this period this implied realization of the economic and institutional program of the liberal bourgeoisie (with local variations), and the crucial position in the state of that bourgeoisie itself.

E. J. Hobsbawm

With the appointment of Delbrück to the Federal Chancellery in 1867 Bismarck once again showed his intention that although he would not allow the Liberals to rule he would grant them an influential role as advisors.

Helmut Böhme

We will solve together what remains to be solved but only together will this be achieved, as two sides of this same fatherland, serving it with the same good will, without either doubting the sincerity of the other.

Bismarck to the liberal bourgeoisie

I do not believe that we have failed in our loyalty. Many times we have been forced to sacrifice our convictions to your person, Your Excellency, not to the Prussian Ministry. What has this brought us however? . . . Every single law has been directed against the landed aristocracy and conservative interests -- and, no matter how painful the reality may be, the belief is quickly spreading that Your Excellency has abandoned conservative interests.

Landrat von Waldon Steinhöfel to Bismarck
With the Indemnity Bill the Constitutional Crisis came to an end. This is not to deny that points of possible future contention, like the budgetary control of parliament over the army, lay more than slightly beneath the surface, but the state of open warfare between the government and the liberal bourgeoisie was over. The obvious question, and the focus of this final chapter, is on whose terms was the war settled? If one answers the question purely in terms of power then the defeat of the liberal bourgeoisie seems obvious since the King remained head of the government, appointing his own ministers, not even selecting them from parliament, and leaving parliament with no legislative initiative but rather one of response to government policy. If one, however, looks at the question in terms of interests then the resultant picture is considerably altered. Bismarck won the support of the liberal bourgeoisie because he now embarked on an era of government policy that in many ways completed what Stein and Hardenberg, more than fifty years earlier, had been forced to abandon because of conservative aristocratic intransigence.

The victory over Austria had completely changed the domestic situation because the army had achieved what parliament had not, making words suddenly seem specious, empty, devoid of the very power that the army had just displayed. Further, with this victory, Bismarck had
transformed the army from a threat against the liberal bourgeoisie to an ally that had partially united Germany. But victory alone would not have been enough to gain the cooperation of the liberal bourgeoisie. Its support was gained not simply by a victorious war against Austria that somehow charmed the liberal bourgeoisie into passive adulation, but rather through an active governmental policy of nationalism which fulfilled much of what the liberal bourgeoisie had long demanded. Modernity, capitalism, and industrialization fully broke through under Bismarck's direction and the subsequent transformation of society is what increasingly alienated the ultraconservatives from him.

The era of Bismarck's cooperation with the liberals was always tenuous because at root it could never be wholehearted from either side. Since Bismarck would never subordinate the executive branch of government to the legislative, the King to parliament; and since the liberals, although pleased by much of what they gained from Bismarck, never gave up during the period of cooperation, the aim of binding the government to a political liberalism along with the conceded economic, legal and social liberalism, the cooperation always remained in part a contest of wills. It is not correct, however, to deny the reality of the cooperation as far as it went. It is so easy to look back on this period between 1866-1876 from the vantage point of Bismarck's later return to his conservative roots, and
declare the liberal era not really liberal and no more than a manipulative interlude. Bismarck himself contributed much to this myth by later calling his battle for civilization (Kulturkampf) a dead end and by saying that free trade had been "a harmful interlude that had damaged Prussia's well-being."

Several things have to be kept in mind when analyzing this period of cooperation with the liberals and Bismarck's later shift back to an overtly conservative policy in 1878-79. First, that the Prussian Old Conservatives began tentatively in 1868 then tenaciously after German unification to oppose Bismarck's liberal policies. The unification of Germany was viewed by these conservatives, who were Bismarck's friends until his policies separated them, as essentially the work of liberalism. Second, this period was later characterized caustically by these same conservatives as the Bleichröder-Delbrück-Camphausen era -- a time when bankers and Jews had come to dominate society and nothing remained untainted or uncorrupted by money. Third, nearly a hundred of these very conservatives publicly declared their support for the Kreuzzeitung after Bismarck had declared in February of 1876 that it should be boycotted. Fourth, Bismarck's return to the Conservative Party was in part due to the crisis in liberal thought that followed the 1873 financial collapse and depression; and partly due to the transformation of the conservatives into
the German Conservative Party in 1876, which left the ideological roots of the Prussian Old Conservatives and based their cohesion on material interest.

Bismarck was a reform conservative until he achieved the unification of Germany; and remained one until it suddenly seemed that his liberal policies had led to the financial collapse of 1873. Slowly he turned into a status quo, almost reactionary conservative, on two separate levels. First, his nationalism went no further than the unification of Germany. He had always liked Metternich’s statement that Prussia would not adhere to the European system of alliances until it was sated in German unification. And, to show that sated in fact meant satisfied, Bismarck, unlike the later adherents of Pan German ideology, always kept within the boundaries established in 1871. While he did pursue a colonial policy in the 1880’s, it was readily apparent that he never liked the idea of having vulnerable pieces of land outside the Reich and thus outside the tangible control of the army if Germany’s authority was challenged. To an enthusiast of colonialism, Bismarck in 1888 replied: "Your map of Africa is all very fine but my map of Africa lies right here in Europe. Here is Russia and here is France and we are in the middle; that is my map of Africa." Second, Bismarck became a status quo conservative because he began to feel threatened by his own liberalism -- that it had cut him off
from the past, trapping him in a present that made him feel uncomfortable and a future that appeared untenable. It was not that he had failed to attain what he had desired but rather that once having attained it he discovered that it was not what he expected. In effect, as he grew older, he lost the desire to walk on a tight-rope, an activity which had once so exhilarated him, in that it had been both a challenge and it had left him the freedom to fall either to the left or the right. After he had reshaped conservative politics to his own image, he could fall definitively to the right.

The Kreuzzeitung conservatives, in contrast, were reactionary in their conservatism and their vision of the present was found in the past. They wanted a feudalized, static and organic society, where birth, not achievement, defined status and where life in the local community was vibrant precisely because it was serving the needs of that community. It was a view of society that for many of these conservatives held that an individual was fruitful specifically because he remained in the place where God planted him. Liberalism, in contrast, was godless. It threatened the very fabric of society as it uprooted peasants to draw them to factories, and by centralizing the economy, it sucked the very life out of local communities. It atomized society, alienating individuals from their
proper habitat and then mechanistically reordering the resultant chaos into an artificial harmony.

In 1856 the conservatives had published a short pamphlet in which they stated their view of society, the direction in which it should go and the unfortunate effects that liberalism had already had upon it. It is worth quoting from because it is a statement of principle and one no less true, for the Old Conservatives, and no less firmly held by them, ten years after its publication.

Liberalism has destroyed the bond, whose purpose it was to bind together the different parts of society . . . and has instead called forth an intense and destructive war of all against all. . . . The task at hand is to bind together the new and altered relations that have emerged in society, and are now hostile to each other, into an organic and effective union. . . . The economic life of a state is the fundamental basis of social and political development and therefore of preeminent importance. The harmonious relationship between the economy and the other systems of an organic society is the condition of healthy, natural and consistent growth. In Prussia, however, for the past half century, the overwhelmingly dominant economic doctrine that has guided the economy has been liberalism, and, it has ignored the fundamental social and political characteristics of society. Liberalism is concerned only with the moment, desiring to produce the highest quantity of goods, completely unconcerned about the effects of sustained production, as to whether morality vanishes and the workers are exhausted and exploited.18
One can readily see that these criticisms of liberalism by the Old Conservatives were by no means peripheral but fundamental; and the accusation that liberalism destroyed the very fabric of society through a program of competition and confrontation was such an essentially philosophical position that it was not open to discussion. Thus, while they may well have praised Bismarck, as loyal followers, for his successful establishment of the North German Confederation, they were still at root the same doctrinal conservatives whose views were contained in the document of 1856. What offended these conservatives most was the emphasis by the liberal-bourgeoisie on the individual -- for the very assertion of the individual’s authority, was predicated on the upheaval of society, in order to subjugate those he sought to dominate.

The main characteristic of the bourgeoisie as a class [notes E. J. Hobsbawm] was that it was a body of persons of power and influence, independent of the power and influence of traditional birth and status. To belong to it a man had to be a 'someone'; a person who counted as an individual, because of his wealth, his capacity to command other men, or otherwise influence them.19

The Old Conservatives, in contrast, emphasized society and focused on a consolidation of conservative interest. "In a word [continued the document of 1856] the feudalization of landed property in a commensurately modern sense as has been
achieved by monied wealth; this is the task of agrarian politics. . . ." Imagine the astonishment and bitterness when they slowly came to see that Bismarck ushered in, rather than blocked out, the very liberalism they so abhorred. In the exhilaration of victory, however, they remained confident.

Almost synonymous with Bismarck's overt cooperation with the liberals was the sudden visibility of Bleichröder as Bismarck's banker. This needs to be emphasized for it came to represent the very embodiment of the liberal era. While Bismarck became the symbol of unification Bleichröder became the symbol of monied wealth. It was a curious relationship where both rose in stature, Bismarck inside the tower, Bleichröder climbing a staircase outside that wound around the tower, allowing each ascendant step to be appraised by the crowd who watched. While Bismarck became a prince Bleichröder remained a parvenu, and a paradox dominated his rise in Berlin society that proportionately with his increase in power was a commensurate increase in his vulnerability. While he followed a careful course in seeking to gain legitimacy, even purchasing Albrecht von Roon's estate in 1872, he was caught in a self-fulfilling prophecy that the very thing he thought would give him legitimacy actually increased his alienation. His search to free himself from the stain of money by buying land fulfilled the worst fears harbored by the conservatives, who
saw in that very money the corruption of society -- and the buying up of aristocratic land by a man of wealth -- the height of subversion. Bismarck, in contrast to the Anti-Semites who would emerge among the ultra conservatives, focusing their venom on Bleichröder, never seemed threatened by Bleichröder’s ascent. Legitimacy had been denied Bismarck by his mother (since he did not succeed in bourgeois terms which were the only terms that his mother considered as constituting success) and he knew it would be denied Bleichröder by society.

The victory of 1866 effected three other significant changes that must be briefly mentioned before an analysis is begun of Bismarck’s cooperation with the bourgeoisie. First, two new parties began to take shape shortly after the war, the Free Conservatives headed by William von Kardorff and the National Liberals headed by Rudolf von Bennigsen. Both parties grew out of debates over the Indemnity Bill and both parties became Bismarck’s most fundamental sources of support over the next decade.

Second, over four million new subjects now came under Prussian rule. The kingdom of Hanover, the dutchies of Nassau and Hesse-Cassel, Schleswig and Holstein, and the free city of Frankfurt were outrightly annexed; and, while the annexed territories may have feared the hegemony of Prussian Old Conservative rule, the Prussian Old Conservatives feared precisely the opposite -- especially
that the National Liberals of Hanover would seep into Prussia, subvert and corrupt her." The Prussian King now became the President of the North German Confederation with wide sweeping powers both in foreign and domestic affairs. The government of the Confederation was divided between an Upper and Lower House -- the **Bundesrat** and **Reichstag** -- but unlike an Upper House the **Bundesrat** also had executive as well as legislative powers." It was composed of salaried delegates who were directly appointed by their respective governments and who were also directed on how they were to vote on given issues. Of the forty-three votes cast within the **Bundesrat** Prussia possessed seventeen. Prussia's representative to the **Bundesrat** was Bismarck who as Federal Chancellor was in a position to dominate both proceedings and policy. The **Reichstag**, in contrast, was composed of unpaid members who were elected by universal manhood suffrage and although it did have the right of legislative initiative, it was summoned, opened and closed by the Prussian King in his role as president."

Third, the **Zollverein** was put on a firm legal foundation and while it is true that Prussia dominated it **de facto** prior to 1866 it dominated it thereafter **de jure**. Prior to 1866 the **Zollverein** had no representative body. Agreements were between sovereign states and general policy was decided only by the unanimity of the official delegates, representing their respective governments at a General
Congress which was periodically convened. Cooperation had been tenuous and progress slow since the areas represented often had very disparate interests and the veto of just one member could block a change in policy. This state of affairs was now altered in several ways. The General Congress was now replaced by a Federal Customs Council, decisions were taken by majority not unanimity, and of the fifty-eight votes Prussia possessed seventeen. There was now also a popular representation of the Zollverein in the Customs Parliament, which consisted of the Reichstag of the North German Confederation and members elected on the basis of universal manhood suffrage in the southern states which were still outside the North German Confederation. The Zollverein became more centralized with the appointment of customs officials that were representative of the Zollverein rather than of the individual member states, and the Customs Council was convened and directed by Prussia.

Each of these changes were separate but all were set in motion by the victory of 1866 over Austria and the subsequent truce that Bismarck offered the liberal bourgeoisie. The elections to the Reichstag were held on February 12, 1867 and the National Liberals gained the most seats with 79 of 297 deputies. The constitution of the North German Confederation was approved on April 16, 1867 in the Reichstag and then on May 31 it also passed in the Prussian Landtag. The establishment of the Zollparlament,
however, was much more difficult for Bismarck to achieve since the southern states, especially Bavaria and Württemberg, were wary of Prussian infringement on their sovereign rights but on April 27, 1868 this Customs Parliament met for the first time in Berlin. With this background, we can now turn to Bismarck's direct cooperation with the bourgeoisie.

Although the majority of the Prussian conservatives supported the Indemnity Bill, they were both stunned by it and less than wholehearted in their support of it. On the very day that Prussia fought Austria in the decisive battle at Königgrätz, elections in Prussia had reduced the liberals from 253 to 148 and increased the conservatives from 38 to 141. This election victory, combined with the victory in war, was like vindication from heaven to the conservatives that at last their fortunes had been turned around. But then Bismarck, their standard bearer, sought reconciliation with the liberal bourgeoisie. It seemed almost unbelievable at first that Bismarck was going to invalidate the entire constitutional crisis. Further, he was going to transform a glorious victory over another state into an ignominious truce with an internal foe -- a foe that even had the audacity to maintain that the means to that victory had been an unlawful act by the King of Prussia. Initially, for the majority of conservatives, the complaints remained private but the bitterness ran deep -- and, while they could console
themselves with the thought that indemnity was only a word, they neither believed it nor did Bismarck's actions confirm it. Seven years later Gustav von Diest summed up well the pervasive discontent among the conservatives, when he reproached the Chancellor "who fought a victorious war only to ask permission for it; 'when you with the conservatives had everything, at that time in your hands.'" For the moment, however, things still hung in a balance.

In the throne speech at the end of July 1866 the King first mentioned the government's intention to return to constitutional rule through a Bill of Indemnity. Since, however, the active animosity had been between Bismarck and parliament, it was not until he spoke September 1 of the same year, that a certain trust began to pervade the liberal camp that Bismarck was in fact sincere in his determination to seek reconciliation.

We desire peace [said Bismarck] not because we have grown weary in this domestic battle . . . but because we believe that the fatherland needs it much more than before. . . . We desire it precisely because we believe it is now to be found; we would have sought it earlier if there would have been hope to find it. . . . We have offered you our hand and we believe that you will accept it. We will solve together what remains to be solved but only together will this be achieved, as two sides of this same fatherland, serving it with the same good will, without either doubting the sincerity of the other. . . . At this moment there is much still to do; the brilliant victory of our army has certainly
raised our fortunes but there is now more to lose than before and the complete battle is not yet won -- however, the more united we are internally the more certain we are to win it. . . . One only has to glance at southern Germany to recognize with certainty that a common fatherland is not yet present as long as Bavarian troops fire on Prussian soldiers. . . . It has often been said that what the sword has won the pen has destroyed, but I have full confidence that it will never be heard that what both the sword and pen have won has been annihilated from this podium.32

It was the fullness of Bismarck's offer, combined with the hesitancy to as fully trust him, that led to the splintering of two existing parties and the establishment of two new ones.33 On September 6, the initial development of the Free Conservative Party was begun, as a small group broke from the Prussian Old Conservatives to give wholehearted support to Bismarck. And, on September 9, a group broke from the Progressive Party and was joined by nine members from the left center to form the National Liberal Party. Where William von Kardorff, leader of the Free Conservatives, was responding to Bismarck's call for internal unity within Prussia, the National Liberals were drawn by Bismarck's call for German unity.

There had already been rumblings in the Conservative Party before Bismarck's speech. On May 8, 1866 Ludwig von Gerlach had published an article in the Kreuzzeitung that vociferously accused Bismarck of leading Prussia into a
fratricidal war against Austria. On May 12, Kardorff responded with a blistering attack on Gerlach.

Quoting Carlyle [English historian and writer, 1795-1881] he said: 'Nothing is more reprehensible and nothing less conservative than to fight for that which has lost its meaning in a given age; and nothing is more praiseworthy or more truly conservative than to take up the battle against such shadows and unrealities. Prussia not only has the right but the duty to remove with sword in hand such nonentities.'

The meaning was clear -- Austria and the German Confederation were anachronisms, as was Gerlach for defending them. The crucial point, however, is that the majority of conservatives at that time did not support Gerlach or his position, but later, when Bismarck increasingly appeared to be truly turning to the liberals, the Old Conservatives followed him reluctantly, all the while wondering if Gerlach had been right. In contrast, Kardorff followed him resolutely, forming a new party which had no apprehensions about him at all.

The Free Conservative membership was more German than Prussian in its politics and more industrial than agricultural in its economics. For both these reasons it was closer in its overall party platform to the National Liberals than to the Prussian Old Conservatives. Unlike the National Liberals, the Free Conservative Party was still dominated by the aristocratic class, but unlike the Prussian
Old Conservatives, it did not want the maintenance of the existing order in Prussia, but sought a progressive development of constitutional life in both Prussia and Germany. This last point was the most essential difference between the two conservative parties; for where the Old Conservatives wanted to Prussianize the North German Confederation the Free Conservatives wanted the very opposite. And, where the Free Conservatives rejoiced that old and new were uniting in the North German Confederation, the Old Conservatives were single minded in desiring that the old dominate the new, and that the union be more in name than reality. This was a central point that the Old Conservatives would never abandon. Even when Germany was fully united, as far as these conservatives were concerned, William I became the Emperor only because he was first of all King of Prussia. And, even when they changed their name in 1876 to the German Conservative Party, it was not because they had given up their Prussian particularism but only that they had shifted in their means to attain it. Bismarck, by that time, had at last imprinted upon them the need to adapt to the reality of public life, and he forced them from being court conservatives to becoming a political party -- if only in name.

The real concern for the Prussian Old Conservatives in the founding of the North German Confederation with its constitution, its economic life and resultant social
structure was the place that the National Liberals would have within it. Further, since the victory of 1866 had reduced Hanover from a sovereign state to a Prussian province, and within that province the National Liberals were both strong and very supportive of union with Prussia, the Prussian Old Conservatives were equally apprehensive of what position Hanover would receive. For their part, the Hanoverian National Liberals thought that possibly Bismarck was genuine in his offer of reconciliation but they wanted public proof of it in specific policies. Part of the reason that they were able to cooperate with Bismarck for so long was because of the great number of things that needed to be done, thus postponing any immediate political struggle between them. The Confederation was united only in name in 1866 and the many laws that would determine what shape it would have were yet to be decided. It is therefore presenting only a partial picture if one maintains that the National Liberals, by allowing Bismarck to keep the political reins in his hands, gained nothing from their cooperation with him. Bismarck may well have kept the mint but society came to bear the liberals' image\(^n\) -- the Kreuzzeitung conservatives certainly came to know this -- and even more certainly they came to assert it publicly.

We have never misjudged the difficulties of the task [stated the founding program of the National Liberals June 12, 1867] in working together with a government who for years continued the constitutional conflict and
ruled without a lawful budget, while we with only very imperfect constitutional weapons continued to demand constitutional freedom. We have undertaken this task, however, with a resolute will and with confidence that through a recommencement of serious work we will overcome the difficulties, and that the great goals before all of us will invigorate the strength of the people. . . . The unification of all Germany under one and the same constitution is the most important task for the present. . . . The entry of southern Germany, which the constitution leaves open, must be fought for with all our strength, but under no circumstances can this union either weaken or call into question a central authority. . . . The annexation of newly acquired territories makes an energetic reform of the law an immediate need -- a reform which was delayed by the conservatives and brought to a standstill during the constitutional conflict. There are also many deplorable conditions in all parts of the land that demand immediate rectification -- such as the significant lack of real credit, the limitations on freedom of movement and the current enchainment of industry. . . . Also, we owe the new provinces who already enjoy many advantages in their justice and administrative systems that these institutions will be protected and not revamped according to the demands of the Prussian Old Conservatives. . . .

It is blatantly clear from this document that the National Liberals, just as much as the Prussian Old Conservatives, saw the union of Prussia and Hanover under the same fundamental perspective, not in the sense that there was the slightest agreement between them, but rather
that both realized the same essential question: that the new was joining the old and which of the two would dominate? Bismarck made it very clear in his speech of March 11, 1867 which dealt with the constitution of the North German Confederation, that whenever Prussia’s political domination was challenged, he would reassert Prussia’s authority.40 Thus, political power remained in the King of Prussia’s hands and for all practical purposes there was no ministerial responsibility. Bismarck, however, still talked openly of cooperation with the liberals and he concluded the speech in a curiously foreboding manner as far as the Prussian Old Conservatives were concerned: "Let us set Germany in the saddle -- she will know how to ride."41 The implication of this, precisely as the Hanoverian National Liberals desired, was that Germany, not Prussia, would provide the economic, legal and social framework that was to emerge. Bismarck kept the state but the liberals would shape the nation.

Georg V had been the King of Hanover. He believed firmly in his divine right to rule, was closely allied with his nobles and as he saw war approaching between Prussia and Austria he feared that his kingdom would soon be occupied by Prussian troops. He therefore, prior to the outbreak of war, sent vast sums of valuables to be deposited in the Bank of England. When the war was over and Georg without a kingdom, pleading for its return from his new residence near
Vienna, Prussia impounded his palaces and estates, and demanded the return of his sequestered capital.⁴²

Georg always maintained his refusal to bow to the Hollenzollern family but his kingdom had nowhere to flee. The National Liberals represented the bridge through whom Bismarck sought to turn conquered subjects into loyal citizens. The practical problems that needed quick solution were numerous. Suddenly a diplomatic corps was no longer necessary since Hanover was no longer a state; and her army officers were either retired or they put on Prussian uniforms. The bureaucracy, in many ways, was left as Bismarck tried to ease the transition -- but two⁴³ actions in particular won him much more committed support from the National Liberals and the first real public opposition from the Prussian Conservatives. However, even in 1866, and long before the battle became public it was fought in private by these same conservatives. In September of 1866, for example, a Prussian National Liberal wrote the future leader of the party Rudolf von Bennigsen:

The King holds all that we do for pure hypocrisy. . . . The orthodox aristocracy is always ready to ambush Bismarck and the Minister of Commerce von der Heydt has already for a long time intrigued against him. . . . Bismarck is now the only dam against the mounting reactionism.⁴⁴

Bismarck added greatly to this internal intrigue against him when on December 5, 1867 he had the Prussian
Justice Minister Graf zur Lippe dismissed and replaced him with none less than the Hanoverian Dr. Adolf Leonhard. Leonhard was born in 1815 in Hanover, was a student of Professor Dahlmann at the University of Göttingen, practiced law and then became a legal advisor to the Hanoverian government in 1848. He was the author of the Hanoverian Judicial law, which he worked on between 1850-1852 and in 1865-66 he himself became the Hanoverian Justice Minister. The importance of his appointment as Prussian Justice Minister can hardly be overstated. He was a bourgeois liberal, an expert in Judicial matters, a Hanoverian, and he was now appointed to the very position which would allow him to revamp the entire Prussian legal code along liberal lines. It not only opened the door to further liberal appointments such as Otto Camphausen as Finance Minister in 1869 and Adalbert Falk as Kulturminister (Minister of Education and Religion) in 1872, but it epitomized all that was wrong, according to the Old Conservatives, with Bismarck’s new course. To them a Justice Minister played both a practical and spiritual role -- to place a Hanoverian liberal in it was tantamount to appointing a heretic to become guardian of the faith. It was this appointment, which the conservatives privately called a betrayal, that helps to explain the intensity with which they fought the government’s proposed Hanover Funds Bill that was introduced into parliament in early 1868.
In 1867 the Provincial Diet in Hanover was given more leeway in its decision making than had previously been accorded other Prussian provinces. They were granted not only the right to levy taxes and borrow money, but any legislation affecting their communities could not be enacted without their consent. Further, and even more fundamental from the Prussian conservative perspective, was that those who made up the Diet (twenty-five members from each of three groups: estate owners, urban property owners and landed commoners) no longer had to satisfy the property qualification in land but could now do so in interest on capital or investment. Capital was now being rewarded social power and, within limits, even some political power. Therefore, when this Provincial Diet asked, as a result of its very first meeting, that Prussia return the funds confiscated from the Royal Treasury, it seemed to the Old Conservatives, the logical outcome of liberal bourgeois arrogance. Bismarck himself refused to return the funds, but he was willing to ask parliament to allot the equivalent amount of money in order to facilitate Hanover's administrative costs of local government. The Old Conservatives simply refused to support the Chancellor in this preferential treatment of Hanover and it was only an amended Bill which provided a much smaller annual sum to Hanover that received parliamentary approval (197-192) on February 6, 1868.
Bismarck was furious. During the debate he had wheeled on the conservatives with a boiling rage that hardly seemed mitigated when he wrote about it in his memoirs over twenty years later. The conservatives, in response, were stunned that what they thought was a friendship was being treated as presumption and what they thought was raising valid objections against the injury to conservative interests was being regarded as impudence. Their wounded pride, which they managed to conceal for a while after this open confrontation, was not unlike the feeling that a member of the Upper House expressed to Bismarck in a letter dated January 18, 1868:

I do not believe that we have failed in our loyalty. Many times we have been forced to sacrifice our convictions to your person, Your Excellency, not to the Prussian Ministry. What has this brought us however? . . . Every single law has been directed against the landed aristocracy and conservative interests -- and, no matter how painful the reality may be, the belief is quickly spreading that Your Excellency has abandoned conservative interests. I do not ask pardon for this frankness for I owe it to you. . . . Prussia is a poor country and we are going, of this I am certain, toward difficult financial times, and therefore, in questions of money such as the Hanover Funds we can only surrender our convictions if we are to receive compensation in some other area.51

Bismarck, however, was unrelenting -- he would not be dictated to and neither would the conservatives -- so the
estrangement grew. In fact, it grew to such a degree that when Bismarck in 1872 began the *Kulturkampf* he had become a very dark figure indeed, who was seeking to dechristianize the Reich.

Bismarck showed in other ways that his course had become national rather than old Prussian and that his collaboration with the liberals was far from momentary but enduring. The cooperation with the liberals, however, is best understood as a meeting between the Prussian bourgeois-dominated bureaucracy that had been economically liberal since Stein and Hardenberg and the liberal bourgeoisie (especially banking and industry) that had become integral to the state but was still treated with a certain hostility within it. Bismarck’s appointment of Delbrück in August of 1867 as head of the newly created Federal Chancellery was simply giving more authority and more freedom to use it to a man who had already been integral to the free trade agreement with France in 1862. Delbrück, however, was ideologically committed to economic liberalism while Bismarck viewed it through the lens of nationalism, knowing full well that only nationalism had the sufficient power to integrate Germany.

Therefore, where Delbrück could bring in legislation that allowed freedom of movement and occupation, standardized weights and measures, unified postal administration, abolition of usury laws, and a liberal
industrial code, it was because he believed that liberalism in itself was good for the country; whereas for Bismarck it was because freedom of movement, whether of capital or people, helped create a homogenous whole. And, although Bismarck well recognized and respected Delbrück’s abilities, and through him delivered the deathblow to the beloved corporate society of his conservative Junkers by unchaining industry and capital, he still smiled at Delbrück’s dogmatism. When once asked how he would describe Delbrück he replied: "the prototype of civil servants."  

The opposition of the Old Conservatives continued unabated and even increased in intensity. The law establishing freedom of movement had been allowed by them in the spring of 1867, even though it brought on the feared dislocation and atomization of the population; but the removal of the usury laws (1867) and the new industrial code introduced in 1869," which granted among other things freedom of occupation, was like loosing two ravenous beasts that in no time would first ravage then devour the entire country. Albrecht von Roon summed up well the inability of the Old Conservatives to comprehend the new order that Bismarck unleashed upon them: "They must at last understand that their views and objectives must be essentially different from the time of the Constitutional Conflict; they must become a party of progress rather than act as an impediment to it."  

Bismarck had said much the same when he
had addressed the Upper House in January of 1867: "A great state does not rule according to the desires of one party but takes into account the views of all the parties and from that draws itself a path to follow." It is ironic, but just as Austria had once kept Prussia from becoming a great power, his very friends were trying to keep her from becoming a great state -- and, as he declared war on Austria to resolve the one issue he did likewise on the conservatives to resolve the other. He built the North German Confederation with the bourgeoisie, not against it, but once liberalism faltered in 1873 on the shoal of over-speculation due to over-optimism, Bismarck began slowly to make his way back to the conservatives.

Prior to the war of 1870 the conservatives tried repeatedly to appeal to Bismarck privately, and the *Kreuzzeitung* began to attack him publicly about the entire agenda and direction of his governmental program. It took only a glance at the first legislative period of the North German Confederation to see that the Old Conservatives had nothing that could offer them any consolation. Their Prussian view of Germany had simply been cast aside by Bismarck and the numerous legislative bills that had now been passed into laws enforced a liberal world upon them. Then, in 1870, with the prospect of the next election only increasing the power of the National Liberals, the new criminal code was published. There could not be an irony
more bitter to the Old Conservatives than in this law code, which had been heavily influenced by the National Liberals, for even if the Old Conservatives held many positions of power, the law of the land was not theirs at all. "With the conclusion of the criminal code [stated an article that appeared in the Kreuzzeitung in April of 1870] we have only further proof of the sterile, destructive and immoral efficiency of the National Liberals." There was certainly no doubt on the part of the Prussian conservatives as to the answer to the question that began this chapter: on whose terms was the constitutional conflict resolved? The answer was simple, no matter where they turned it was the same -- The National Liberals'.

For the conservatives, the errors made in unifying the North German Confederation were simply extended to all Germany when it was united in 1871. With the establishment of the Reich, they felt that the Prussian crown had first been melted down, before it was given its new shape. Bismarck completed his estrangement from the conservatives by further legislation. The Kreisordnung reorganized the structure of authority in rural Prussia, giving him more centralized control over local appointments and reducing the power base from which the conservatives could defy him. He then began a direct attack on the Catholic church, but an attack that was felt by all the churches, since through it
Bismarck sought to remove education from clerical control. Both the *Kreisordnung* and the *Kulturkampf* fulfilled the worst fears of the Old Conservatives; the first because Bismarck destroyed the last vestige of a corporate society that based authority on land and with this he succeeded where Stein and Hardenberg had failed -- even having the King appoint twenty-four new peers when the legislation was initially defeated in the Upper House; and the second, because it threatened to destroy totally the spiritual basis of conservative society and place everything on the level of material interest.

Bismarck dedicated an entire chapter of his memoirs to his break with the conservatives. The animosity between them was deep and personal. Kleist-Retzow, once a close friend with whom Bismarck roomed during the 1848 revolution, now led the opposition. Moritz Blanckenburg, through whom Bismarck met his wife, and Albrecht von Roon, through whom he became Minister President, also opposed him now. Later, Ludwig von Gerlach, a staunch protestant, even came to oppose the Conservative Party, when it ceased to oppose Bismarck, and sat with the only party he felt still held principles -- the Catholic Center. "It is a hard test on the nerves of a man [wrote Bismarck with a measured intensity] who in the fullness of his years must suddenly break with all or almost all those who until then had been his close friends and familiar acquaintances." He had lost them
because of cooperation with the bourgeoisie in the face of aristocratic opposition and because he allowed liberalism to give shape to the most fundamental aspects of German society. With that, he returned to a situation akin to that he had experienced as a child in his mother's house -- that of an exile -- but this time from his own class.
Conclusion

One can readily see that the thesis is centered on Bismarck and that he is the thread that has held it together. It is for this reason that chapter one went into detail in showing what gave shape to Bismarck’s character, perception and general stance toward life and toward the bourgeoisie. It was not presented as an interesting but inconsequential prelude to an eventful political career, but as an integral part of the foundation that made that political career successful. He had learned to find a place for the bourgeoisie in his own private life, taking some of his closest friends from its ranks, and he later made a place for it in Prussia-Germany.

Chapter two dealt with the 1848 revolution, the beginning of Bismarck’s political career and the near death of the Prussian monarchy. It also moved with Bismarck to the public stage in giving the economic background which helped explain what the bourgeoisie had already received from the Prussian government, and why, when it was briefly given the reins of power, it was unable to hang onto them. It showed the ambivalence of the bourgeoisie to the monarchy and it showed also that Bismarck rose a level higher in the estimation of those who supported him. Where initially Bismarck was viewed by the Conservative Party as dangerously provocative in his speeches, and thus used with caution, he came to be seen as a loyal supporter of the German
Confederation and an implacable enemy of the bourgeoisie. This transformed him into the perfect representative of the Conservative Party in both foreign and domestic affairs. The 1848 revolution had a searing effect on Bismarck as it did on the bourgeoisie -- where it intensified Bismarck’s determination to preserve the monarchy, it temporarily diverted the attention of the bourgeoisie from idealism to materialism, from seeking power to increasing profits and consolidating its control over its property.

Chapter three traced Bismarck’s move to Frankfurt, the home of the Federal Diet and the Rothschild banking empire. It provided the international background to Prussia’s position within Europe and within Germany. It dwelt on Bismarck’s profound grasp of the breakdown of the conservative order in Europe as that order changed irrevocably during the 1850’s and on how his analysis of events slowly began to alienate him from the representatives of that conservative order in Prussia. There was so much in his letters to show how Bismarck was not at all the stereotype of the Prussian Junkers -- backward and reactionary, uncomprehending but unyielding. He saw the new order as inevitable, but the conservatives saw it only as regrettable; where Bismarck sought to prepare for it, the conservatives sought only to resist it. In this struggle of giving shape to the new order Bismarck saw clearly the power of material interest, the leverage that the Zollverein
offered Prussia against Austria and the freedom that the financial arm of the monied bourgeoisie could offer Prussia in both Germany and Europe.

Chapter four followed Bismarck to his position of control over Prussian policy. He could now give shape to policy and he immediately introduced a new intensity into public life that was at once both confrontational and enigmatic. He defied the bourgeoisie publicly but he sought a compromise with it privately. He had to appear as the very embodiment of his class's wishes, especially those of the Old Conservative eastern landed elite since, at the time, he had no other power base, while at the same time he sought to achieve some success that would free him from the need of that support. The war of 1866 granted him precisely this freedom and the Bill of Indemnity brought about a tenuous but genuine reconciliation with the bourgeoisie -- tenuous because accessibility to Bismarck was always based on subservience, but genuine because he was fulfilling the national program which the bourgeoisie had long desired.

The last chapter delineated Bismarck's cooperation with the bourgeoisie and the concomitant of his alienation from the aristocrats who had long been his friends and political supporters. The very purpose of the chapter was to show that Bismarck unified Germany with the bourgeoisie and that he gave it a place within the very foundation of the state. It was specifically arguing against the position which
asserts that Bismarck built Germany in defiance of the spirit of his age, best represented in the bourgeoisie, and that his sealing off the state from its liberalizing influence, perpetuating an authoritarian state under monarchical rule, in effect prepared the way for authority again coming to reside in one man on January 30, 1933. Second, it was opposing the position that Bismarck represented purely the interests and ideology of his class (rather than the state as a whole) and that his concessions to the bourgeoisie were inconsequential. The fact that the eastern landed elite came to oppose his policies with increasing ferocity showed clearly that his governmental program diverged widely from its interests.

The German Reich lacked cohesion because Bismarck secured the entry of the bourgeoisie into its very structure rather than guaranteed its permanent exclusion. The Old Conservatives could never reconcile themselves to the fact that the Reich was built without them and that the work of the bourgeoisie had left an indelible imprint on its structure and growth -- this remained to the Old Conservatives, a permanent stain on something that could have been perfect. For them, power was a question of means as well as end, but for Bismarck it was "that" his King ruled not "how". Bismarck understood his age of capitalism and industrialization enough to facilitate its emergence but not enough to be at home within it once the transformation
was complete. Ironically, he then withdrew behind the barricades somewhat akin to those that the eastern landed elite had never left.

In 1866 the United States Consul in Hanover, Calvin Brown, wrote to the Secretary of State William Seward about the Prussian victory: "It is not so much, Sir, that the Prussian soldier, with his needle gun fired six or ten times, while the Austrian soldier fired his old-fashioned musket once: -- as that the quick and powerful brain of Count Bismarck fired twenty times faster and harder than the whole brain of the old House of Hapsburg." The same could be said of his relationship to and victory over the Old Conservatives of Prussia. Bismarck viewed power, the monarchy, political life, the press, German unification and the role of the bourgeoisie within it, in a much deeper and different manner than did the Old Conservatives. Where they absolutized the interests of their class, he absolutized the power of the Prussian monarchy, and where they wanted to preserve their rights even against the monarchy, Bismarck wanted the monarch to be as free from their dominance as from the political dominance of the bourgeoisie.

Bismarck used his aristocracy so much differently than did the majority of the Old Conservatives. Where they sought to heighten their distinction by exclusion, withdrawing as it were, behind the walls of their class, Bismarck in complete contrast, distinguished his aristocracy
not by exclusivity but by freedom -- freedom to cross class boundaries and do things against unwritten class codes. Thus Bismarck's aristocracy was not negatively defined in that as an aristocrat he could not do certain things, but rather positively defined in that because he was an aristocrat, he could do precisely what he wanted. The problem this created for his class was that at times it was scandalized by his policies and his associates, but the problem it created for the government was that its success depended on Bismarck's absolute freedom which, in effect, bound everyone to him.

There is no doubt that the Emperor ruled in Bismarck's Germany but an integral part of his powerbase was the bourgeoisie. "The creator of that new order inevitably became the sorcerer's apprentice who had to pay for the magnitude of his success with the magnitude of his defeat, not in personal but historical terms." Where Bismarck is open to criticism is not that he built Germany in defiance of the bourgeoisie but that he molded Germany's governmental structure so thoroughly to himself, strengthening the state rather than building the nation, that Germany became like Bucephalus, the horse of Alexander the Great, whom only he could ride.
Notes - Introduction

1. A few aristocratic children were sent here by parents, who like Bismarck's mother, admired the system of education and the teachers who taught in it. This, however, does not negate in any way that the institution was anything but bourgeois and that its spirit was an alien one to the majority of the eastern landed elite.


5. A cultural and social domination is meant here that emanates from the rule of capital but is not overt but implicit in its domination. It is evidenced where an ideology is so prevalent and pervasive that a fundamental alternative is inconceivable. A library, for example, does not dominate its patrons, coercing them either how to use it, or for that matter, to use it at all. But its very existence betrays a certain view of human nature -- that one is capable of education and has a right to it, since knowledge opens up the possibility of upward mobility in society. A library also implies a given center of knowledge and the free exchange of ideas. The idea which caused the library to be built in the first place had to coincide implicitly with the citizens of a given city or the building would not remain standing. Many of those citizens may never use it, but also never question its existence. The fact that its existence is not questioned elucidates the pervasiveness of a given ideology, that although dominant, most often reveals itself as an unspoken presupposition rather than domination. Chapter two, beginning on page 66, goes into this idea of hegemony, whereby the bourgeoisie did not overthrow the ruling class but changed the basis upon which it ruled. Corporate society gave way to individualism, land to capital, birth to merit and a static society to one in constant motion. Perry Anderson’s article on the Italian Communist Party leader Antonio Gramsci is very useful here. Gramsci, who was imprisoned by Mussolini in 1926, died in 1937 without ever being released. While in prison, Gramsci wrote letters that contain many helpful references to his theory of hegemony which Perry Anderson carefully analyzes in his article entitled, "The Antimonies of Antonio Gramsci", *New Left Review* 100 (Nov.-Jan. 1977), pp. 5-78.
Notes - Chapter 1


8 Ibid., p. 609-10.

9 Ibid., p. 610.

10 Ibid., p. 611-12.

11 Throughout this work the revolutions of 1848 will be referred to in the collective singular of revolution.

12 Bismarck could never be equally defined as a conservative because conservatism, unlike power, is not absolute in its freedom.


16 Gerlach, Briefwechsel, p. 353.

17 "Mostly, he had a keen appreciation of money, as did his fellow landowners. Even as a young man he thought he
needed 'a large fortune in order to enjoy state service so that I can appear at will with the brilliance I consider decent but also so that I can easily renounce all advantages of office as soon as my official functions prove incompatible with my convictions or my taste.'” Fritz Stern, Gold and Iron: Bismarck, Bleichröder and the Building of the German Empire, New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 12.

18 Paul Dehn, Bismarck als Erzieher (München: Lehmanns Verlag, 1903), p. 400.

19 Stern, p. 102 "Bleichröder wanted Bismarck to understand that by satisfying his ravenous land hunger he was not acting as 'economic man’".

20 Gall, p. 4.


23 Marcks, p. 46. "Er hat das künstliche Spartanertum, die Dürftigkeit der Nahrung, das turnerhafte Deutschtum mit seinen Übertreibungen, die Feindseligkeit gegen den Adel gerügt."


25 Ibid., p. 95.

26 Ibid., p. 96. "Niemals, so versicherte der alte Bismarck, habe er sich bei Plamanns satt gegessen."

27 Ibid., p. 97.

28 That is: both his mother and the instructors at the Plamann Institute. To be a stranger at school was one thing but to feel that home life with his mother was essentially no different, made Bismarck an exile, and forced him into depending solely upon himself for survival.


30 Ibid., p. 100.

31 Ibid., p. 100.
This friendship brought to the surface all the paradoxes of both individuals. Motley, a member of the American bourgeoisie, was diligent in his class work, attending all his lectures, writing to his parents of the privilege he felt in being able to attend the lectures of such eminent scholars and yet at the same time choosing a close friend in Otto von Bismarck, who, in contrast, prided himself in acting in a cavalier manner as possible, which implicitly meant missing classes and being provocative enough to incite a series of duels. On the other hand, Bismarck, who scorned the bourgeois universities of higher learning, disdained to attend their lectures, and yet chose a friend of that very class, always delighted to see him, never outgrowing his appreciation of him, and learning to appreciate through him Byron, Shakespeare and Goethe.
auch ein Mitglied aristokratischer Kreise. Die Tatsache besteht: er behielt ein grosses Stück von sich außerhalb seiner Verbindung und blieb sein eigner Herr."


51 Bismarck to wife, April 1, 1851: GW, vol. 14, p. 187.


53 Sempell, p. 610.


56 Engelberg, p. 120.

57 Ibid., p. 125.


60 It is only after becoming an Assessor that one was allowed to make application for the Diplomatic Corps.

61 Gall, p. 13.

62 Eyck, p. 29.


66 Eyck, p. 28.
67 Gall, p. 15.

68 Bismarck to Father, Sept. 29, 1838: *GW*, vol. 14, p. 15.

69 Kissinger, p. 889.

70 Bismarck to Father, Sept. 29, 1838: *GW*, vol. 14, p. 15.

71 Gall, p. 15.

72 Eyck, p. 35. "Ich habe das unglückliche Naturell, daß mir jede Lage, in der ich sein könnte, wünschenswert erscheint und lästig und langweilig, sobald ich darin bin."

73 Engelberg, p. 167. "Und auch später noch erzählte er, daß er bodenlos faul gewesen sei, ein Bummler, der nichts getan habe, als mit der Flinte im Arm auf der Jagd herumzustreifen."

74 Marcks, p. 150.


76 Marcks, p. 151-152.

77 Bismarck to wife, Feb. 1, 1847: *GW*, vol. 14, p. 52.


79 Bismarck to Malwine, Sept. 9, 1844: *GW*, vol. 14, p. 28.

80 Engelberg, p. 207.


84 Bismarck to wife, April 28, 1847: *GW*, vol. 14, p. 84.

85 Engelberg, p. 182.

Eyck, p. 39. "Ich glaube, [schrieb er schon als junger Mensch], das eher die ganze Welt lügt, ehe ein einziges Jota in der Bibel falsch ist."

Marcks, p. 208.

Meyer, p. 43.


Meyer, p. 47.


It is striking that, just as Ludwig von Gerlach questioned the worldliness of Marie's faith, he would later question the depth of Bismarck's conversion. She was not able to legitimize Bismarck here. "Den strenggesinnten Freunden des Hauses, wie ihrem Onkel Ludwig Gerlach, war Marie immer zu weltlich." Marcks, p. 229.

Notes - Chapter 2

1 Erich Eyck, Bismarck: Leben und Werk vol. 1., p. 60.

2 Ibid., p. 60.

3 Ernst Rudolf Huber, Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte. Vol 2, Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1960, pp. 484, 496.

4 GW, Gedanken und Erinnerungen, vol. 15, p. 65.

5 Ibid., p. 110.

6 Ibid., p. 110.

7 GW, vol. 6b, p. 134.

8 "Put differently, because economic liberalism gained the upper hand on the land market, the Prussian landed aristocracy, as a class, became increasingly demarcated by economic factors." Hans Rosenberg, Bureaucracy, Aristocracy and Autocracy: The Prussian Experience, 1660-1815 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 220.


10 Ibid., p. 10.


12 Helmut Böhme, Deutschlands Weg zur Großmacht (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1966), p. 56 "der mächtigsten Geldmacht."


14 One of the best examples of Bismarck's seeing things 'as they stand' was given in March 1859 in a conversation with Hans Victor von Unruh.

"Ich bin derselbe Junker, wie vor 10 Jahren, als wir uns in der Kammer kennen lernten, aber ich müßte kein Auge und keinen Verstand im Kopfe haben, wenn ich die wirkliche Lage der Verhältnisse nicht klar erkennen könnte."

19 This was the very thought that Bismarck had of his King at the outbreak of the 1848 revolution. "Würde der König bald Herr der Sache werden . . . ." and it is ever so characteristic of Bismarck's overall view of history upon whose waves one steers his ship through the storm. GW, vol. 15, p. 18.

16 "Die ganze Weltgeschichte läßt sich überhaupt nicht machen; auf ihrem Strom kann man ein Staatsschiff steuern. . . ." Paul Dehn, Bismarck als Erzieher, p. 4.


21 "The state -- and here, he said, he agreed with the liberals -- was essentially a legal system" p. 31 and also p. 39 "in which a wholly materialistic, pragmatic concept of law shone through the mask of his equating custom with what was ordained by God." Lothar Gall, Bismarck: The White Revolutionary, vol. 1.


23 How Leopold von Gerlach misunderstood Bismarck's choice of Frederick the Great as a model! To Gerlach, Frederick the Great was an honorable King who had led Prussia well, but to Bismarck he was an aggressive King who had led Prussia in battle and then ruled over his conquest.


25 "Übel fällt es auch ins Auge, daß die Uniformen unserer Leute abgenutzter sind, während die große Zahl von Rekruten und die kurze Dienstzeit an und für sich die Unsrigen in weniger soldatischer Haltung erscheinen lassen, und demzufolge vergleichende Urteile von Hiesigen und
Fremden oft etwas Verletzendes für die Preußen haben."

Ibid., p 6.

26 A reprinted newspaper article Bismarck included in his memoirs. GW, vol. 15, p. 28.

27 "On June 8, in the course of a discussion of the government request for new appropriations, Hansemann recited the liberal businessman’s credo: 'When questions of money arise, there is an end to Gemütlichkeit'." Theodore S. Hamerow, Restoration, Revolution, Reaction (Princeton: University Press, 1958), p. 91.


29 Kohl, Reden, vol. 1, p. 23.


31 Bismarck to Scharlach, April 7, 1834: GW, vol. 14, p. 4.


34 Recommend, not in the sense of initiating, but supporting so thoroughly his government’s proposal as if to give the impression it had all along been Bismarck’s


36 Bismarck als Erzieher, p. 2.

37 Pflanze, p. 395.


"The reforms of Stein and Hardenberg were not liberal in the sense that their intention was the overthrow of the old order and traditional Prussia. In fact, their reforms began the symbiosis between wealth and birth, culture and tradition, making them interdependent and eventually inseparable.

44 GW, vol. 15, p. 22.

45 Speech of December 3, 1850: Kohl, Reden, vol. 1, p. 266.


47 GW, vol. 15, p. 22.

48 Albrecht von Roon's reaction to this speech of the King was even stronger than Bismarck's: "Ja, ich sage es unumwunden, das Heer, das ist jetzt unser Vaterland, denn hier allein sind die unreinen, gärenenden Elemente, die alles in Frage stellen, noch nicht eingedrungen." Hanns Martin Elster, Graf Albrecht von Roon: Sein Leben und Wirken (Berlin: Verlag Karl Siegismund, 1938), p. 156.

49 GW, vol. 15, p. 18.

50 Ibid., p. 18.
51 Ibid., p. 18.
52 Ibid., p. 19.
53 Ibid., pp. 21-22.
54 Ibid., p. 21.
56 Speech of April 2, 1848: Kohl, Reden, vol. 1, p. 46.
57 Hamerow, Restoration, p. 102. "The liberals gave the Revolution its leadership, but the artisans provided it with defenders and martyrs." Their stake in the Revolution was high, but a liberal government certainly could not reward their devotion with a return to guild control.
58 Ibid., p. 113.
59 Rosenberg, pp. 182-183.
60 Ibid., p. 186. "Bildung undermined the traditional separation of the classes, but also the ancient practice of equating the aristocracy with the nobility."
62 Rosenberg, p. 33.
63 Hamerow, p. 51.
64 Ernest K. Bramsted, Aristocracy and the Middle Classes in Germany (Chicago: University Press, 1937), p. 120.
65 Hamerow, p. 46.
67 Hamerow, p. 29.
69 Ibid., p. 246.
70 Hamerow, p. 5.
There was the added factor of population increase -- for as Anderson points out on p. 11: "Between 1816 and 1858... the population of Prussia had increased from 10,320,000 to 17,673,000."

Hamerow, p. 77.

Hobsbawn, p. 21.


"Im übrigen mißbilligten die Gerlachs auch bei Otto von Bismarck anläßlich seiner maßlosen Klagen über das Jagdgesetz, daß ihm Privatrecht heiliger sei als der Staat." Engelberg, p. 304.

Actually there were two themes that Bismarck stressed if one looks at the entire revolutionary period from 1848-1851 -- privilege and state-egoism -- and, in that order because the events themselves arose in that order. I made a choice to deal with the revolution in Prussia before Prussia turned to Germany because the shift from domestic affairs to the German Question and the Zollverein, first needed some separate background that will be dealt with in the next chapter.

There were positive effects from this short-lived government. "The Camphausen government had produced, in April, a significant economic program. It urged above all a substantial expansion of credit by the government which signaled an important reversal of traditional Prussian fiscal policies. In the long run this helped set the basis for Prussian encouragement to industrial development as opposed to the previous use of credit and taxes to retard this process; in the not-so-long run the policy helped speed up economic recovery." Peter N. Stearns, 1848: The Revolutionary Tide in Europe (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1974), p. 152.

Rosenberg, P. 181. To quote someone else but one completely consistent with Bismarck's thought: "Bourgeois people know only how to work, not how to govern."
Bleichröder could look after and increase Bismarck's fortune but this is not the same as Bleichröder having political power to rule over Bismarck's life.

The civic guard, for not being able to restore order in the attack on the Berlin armoury, gained the mistrust of the ruling bourgeoisie, and in restoring order against the canal workers, gained the mistrust of the artisans.

Notes - Chapter 3

1 For Bismarck the essence of the state was power, and thus its actions had to correspond to this power, or it would deny itself.

2 Otto Pflanze, Bismarck and the Development of Germany 1815-1871, p. 83.

3 I am not intending to imply here that this was from a speech, given during the revolutionary period about Prussia's economic policy -- it was not. It was in a letter, and I am using it here as I believe Bismarck meant it -- as a principle, applicable either to politics or economics. Further, it is precisely the same type of language he used during the revolutionary period. Thus, what is being implied, is that given that type of thinking, which is what people found amusing, is that the strategy of the Zollverein was the only strategy in Prussia really akin to Bismarck, and therefore eventually adopted by him -- as a leverage of power. Bismarck to Leopold von Gerlach, October 25, 1854: GW, vol. 14, p. 372. Also: "Nur, soweit als man fürchtet, nimmt man Rücksicht auf uns." Kohl, Leben, p. 95.

4 Horst Kohl, Die politischen Reden des Fürsten Bismarck vol. 1, p. 93.

5 Bismarck described this characteristic of Austria as "making a virtue out of a necessity." Bismarck to Leopold von Gerlach, July 9, 1853: GW, vol. 14, p. 310.


8 Horst Kohl, Bismarcks Leben und Wirken, p. 80.

9 While it is true that the economic foundation in Prussia and Germany was well established without Bismarck, it is equally true that it was still a defensive policy; and, it is the contention of this thesis that Bismarck was essential to Prussia's economic growth, as well as the political unification of Germany, because he made Prussian policy active, decisive, and within limits, also aggressive.

10 Leopold von Gerlach, on one of many occasions, expressed his distrust of Radowitz: "Dienstag wurde ich zur Tafel nach Charlottenburg befohlen. Nach derselben sagte mir der König, er wollte mich nach München schicken. Radowitz kam nach Charlottenburg und hielt dem Könige über
den Deutschen Verfassungs-Entwurf einen Vortrag, der mich wieder in Erstaunen setzte. Alles war ihm klar und abgemacht, mich aber hatte er in keiner Weise überzeugt."


13 Ernst Rudolf Huber, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*. vol. II p. 887.


17 "After the break with Frankfurt he [Frederick the Great] would have had the choice of either of alllying with Austria, his old conrade in arms, and assuming the glorious role played by the Emperor of Russia in assisting Austria to annihilate the common enemy, revolution; or it would have been possible to him, after rejection of the Imperial Frankfurt crown, with equal right as that by which he conquered Silesia, to decide for the Germans in the matter of their Constitution at the risk of his casting the sword into the scale." *Ibid.*, pp. 111-112.


20 Gordon Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945*, p. 130. "The King was plainly horrified at the thought of serious conflict with Austria for, despite his apparent enthusiasm, for Radowitz's project, he still held romantic notions of his youth, according to which the Austrian Emperor was the natural ruler of the Germanies with the Prussian King standing at his side as his loyal retainer and Reichserzfeldherr."

21 This was not an easy task for Bismarck, considering how angered and exasperated the army, especially the crown prince, were at the capitulation. Take for example Roon's account to his wife: "Endlich sagt Stockhausen (der Kriegsminister!!): "Und es ist auch noch sehr die Frage, ob unsere Armee sich gegen die Österreicher schlägt!" Bei diesen Worten springt der Prinz auf . . . und widerspricht

22 "Drei Faktoren kennzeichneten hierbei seine Politik."
Helmut Böhme, Deutschlands Weg zur Großmacht, pp. 19-20.


Further, as James Sheehan points out, because the Prussian state was so pervasive, often employing those who outside of the employment were hesitant to work for liberal reforms, as well as, the problems of unification being so enormous, that it seemed only the state of Prussia could solve them, that again one begins to understand more clearly, why the bourgeoisie both inside Prussia, and later inside Germany, began to side more and more with the government. "The fact that to be a liberal required civic courage, a rare enough quality in any time or place, is too often overlooked by those who dismiss German liberalism as empty phrases or the mask of material self-interest", p. 37. "On the basis of his experience as an entrepreneur in the Rhineland, Gustav Mevissen believed that 'only a powerful state policy will be able to give economic life the basis for expansion'", p. 42. James Sheehan, German Liberalism in the 19th Century (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1978), pp. 37, 42.

25 Böhme, Deutschlands Weg zur Großmacht, p. 15. "Doch seine Rechnung sollte sich als irreal erweisen."


27 Kohl, Reden, pp. 93-94. "I want Prussia to remain Prussian. . . . The crown of Frankfurt may seem very brilliant but its luster is to be obtained by smelting it with that of Prussia. . . ."


30 "From the forties, in the wake of the railways, the economic awakening of Germany began." Tom Kemp, Industrialization in Nineteenth-Century Europe (London: Longman, 1969), p. 94. "The building of railways in Germany had many important results. 'The German Empire', declared Wilhelm Raabe enthusiastically', was founded with the


37 Delbrück, p. 254. "Dem Fürsten war die sachliche Seite dieser Angelegenheiten vollkommen gleichgültig, schon weil er gar nichts davon verstand. Ihm kam es darauf an, Österreich zur leitenden Macht nicht nur für die politischen, sondern auch für die wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse Deutschlands zu machen."

In a letter written about a month and a half before the agreement was signed, Bismarck spoke of its significance if signed. "Es würde mir sehr interessant sein zu hören, ob die Unterhandlungen zwischen dem Zollverein und Hannover noch im Gange sind und fortschreiten, denn die Consolidirung der gesunden Norddeutschen Elemente durch das Band materieller Interessen, selbst wenn sie mit Verlust an Süddeutschen Bestandtheilen des Zollvereins erkauf werden sollte, würde für die Richtung unserer innern Politik nicht ohne conservative Rückwirkung sein und uns berechtigen, mit mehr Kaltblütigkeit auf die Entwicklung der Bundestagspolitik zu sehn."

Bismarck to Leopold von Gerlach, June 22, 1851: GW, vol. 14, p. 223. Further, as Helmut Böhme notes, with this trade agreement, Prussia gained the liberal economic reputation throughout Germany, restoring at least in part her tarnished image after her political liberalism had been so thoroughly crushed at Olmütz. "In zunehmendem Maße erhielt Preußen von nun an die öffentliche Anerkennung des liberal gesinnten Besitzbürgertums in Deutschland." Böhme, Deutschlands Weg zur Großmacht, p. 36.

Delbrück, Lebenserinnerungen, p. 295.

Lothar Gall, Bismarck: The White Revolutionary, p. 199.

Bismarck never denied facts -- he used them, like pieces on a chessboard. How could the Rothschild’s monied empire be used? Bismarck seemed to trust them. He noted that they were religious, kosher, and desired to be held in high esteem by the Prussian Government. He also took notice of their explanations in the money market fluctuations during the Crimean War, and eventually accepted in 1859, their recommendation of Gerson Bleichröder as his financial advisor. However, much more important, Bleichröder would later render a service to Bismarck, and through him to the Prussian Crown, somewhat akin to what the Rothschild family had done forty years earlier. Eckart Kehr records how the King of Prussia in 1818, in order to avoid falling under the control of short-term creditors, borrowed long-term loans from the Rothschilds; Bismarck, in order to avoid the veto of parliament, used Bleichröder to raise the needed money, that parliament would not grant. Eckart Kehr, Economic Interest, Militarism, and Foreign Policy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), p. 156.


Ibid., p. 177.


50 Count Corti, The Reign of the House of Rothschild (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1928), p. 324. My purpose in highlighting this is to show that the world of money was most powerful when it was most hidden -- for all the economic power of the Rothschild family, once their financial support of Austria was drawn overtly into the public realm, Austria immediately assumed a position of wounded pride, and reduced that powerful family to the status of one without any legitimacy.


53 Kohl, Reden p. 413. "Letzteres wird vielmehr, wenn die großen Städte sich wieder einmal erheben sollten, sie zum Gehorsam zu bringen wissen, und sollte es sie vom Erdboden tilgen."

54 Delbrück, Lebenserinnerungen vol. 1, p. 305.

55 Böhme, Deutschlands Weg Zur Großmacht, pp. 49-50.


59 Especially because of the Black Sea Clauses.

Bismarck to wife, September 2, 1855: *GW*, vol. 14, p. 414.


Ibid.


Even the large private bankers for the most part, would not tie their money up in long-term loans to industry. "The great bankers, of the Rothschild type, were occupied with the financial needs of the more important governments and stood aloof from struggling business concerns. . . . It was primarily to fill this place that the new credit banks were formed, and accordingly they gave a prominent place in their program to the promotion of joint-stock companies." P. Barrett Whale, *Joint-Stock Banking in Germany* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1968), pp. 11-12.

Krieger, p. 345.


Krieger, p. 314.


Bismarck’s description of his alienation is very striking. There is almost a faint sense of panic as he fears that even Leopold von Gerlach has turned against him.
"Why am I writing all this to you? Because I would like to get rid of my ill-humor and receive from you some assurance that all is well between us, as before, or if not the reason for it, so that if possible I can refute it. A court always remains a court. In the first years of my present position I was treated as kind of a favorite, and the sunshine of the King's goodwill toward me beamed back from the faces of those of the court. This has now changed; either the King has found that I am nothing special but like everyone else or he has heard something bad about me, perhaps true, since everyone has his dark side. In short, His Majesty now has less need to see me than before and the ladies of the court smile at me more coolly than before and the men shake my hand less firmly, the good opinion of my usefulness has fallen, and only Manteuffel [Prussian Minister President] is more friendly towards me. . . . but you my most honored friend I hold as one free from these attitudes of those at court, and if your trust towards me may have lessened then I ask you to give me other reasons than those of the court." Bismarck to Leopold von Gerlach, December 19, 1857: GW, vol. 14, p. 482. How this supplicatory attitude later changed to bitterness when Bismarck realized that Gerlach could not be won back! "I will not come again to Berlin unless I am ordered to do so. One can be very badly treated if he does not belong to the elite of the court. You, as a child of the court, would have never known this." Ibid., p. 486.

1 He ascended to the throne on January 18, 1861 as William I.


4 Volunteer associations were widespread, from gymnastic to rifle clubs, and they played a significant role in fostering the growth and dissemination of liberal and national ideas. At their most fundamental level their very existence implicitly challenged the idea that the King was the source of all beneficence within his kingdom. These clubs were another aspect of the same world of thought that the printed word flowed from in newspapers "threatening the monarchical state with the fact that the literate bourgeoisie might in a very real sense become competitors for symbols and power." And, although the bourgeoisie did not succeed in bringing the monarchy under its control, it did redefine the basis upon which the King ruled. Take for example if the King supported a writer through private patronage as opposed to the King buying the writers’ published work from a printer. The basis upon which the support is granted is entirely different in each case. In the first, the writing is flowing in effect, from the King, but in the second the writer has become an authority separate from, not because of, the King; and the King by buying his work is supporting another source of authority within his kingdom other than himself. This challenge to the King was also implicit in public parks, public zoos and public libraries. (Blackbourn, pp. 199, 204) A public world was mushrooming in front of the King that did not have its source in the King. And, it is the basis of this chapter that through Bismarck the King was drawn into this modern world in which political and social life ceased to be the King’s private affair and was actively maintained in the public sphere. The part of the above in quotation marks is from: Robert H Keyserlingk Media Manipulation: A Study of


6 This organization was especially significant in its support of free trade. "Until 1848 the free trading areas of the German coast exercised little direct influence over the tariff policy of the Zollverein. . . . In the 1850's, however, when a popular free trade movement was launched, the free trading interests of the entire German coast did gain indirect influence over the tariff policy of the Zollverein. . . . It was Victor Böhmer of Bremen who, in his Bremer Handelszeitung, took the initiative in 1857 for the formation of the Congress of German Economists. Henceforth, the North German commercial interests became an important element in the German free trade front. Ivo Nikolai Lambi, Free Trade And Protection in Germany 1868-1879 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1963), pp. 2-3.

7 Quoted in Lothar Gall, Bismarck: The White Revolutionary vol. 1, p. 163.

8 Johanna Bismarck is quoted by Robert Keudell: "Bismarck ist zuerst in Berlin von Aegern krank geworden, weil man alles so hinterrucks abgemacht hatte, aber er denkt jetzt auch, daß er sowohl hier wie in Berlin gar nichts nützen kann, und in Petersburg sowohl politisch wie persönlich beim Kaiser eine sehr angenehme Stellung haben wird." Robert V. Keudell, Fürst und Fürstin Bismarck, pp. 69-70.


13 Meyer, Bismarck: Der Mensch und der Staatsmann, p. 159.


15 In the founding program of the Progressive Party, dated June 9, 1861 it states: "Für die Ehre und die Machtstellung unseres Vaterlandes, wenn diese Guter durch einen Krieg gewahrt oder erlangt werden müssen, wird uns niemals ein Opfer zu groß sein; im Interesse einer nachhaltigen Kriegsführung aber erscheint uns die größte Sparsamkeit für den Militäretat im Frieden geboten." Wolfgang Treue, Deutsche Parteiprogramme 1861-1956 (Berlin: Musterschmidt Verlag, 1956), p. 53.

16 "Like so many men of his class and generation, he believed that in 1815 the ghost of the revolution had been very inadequately laid. In his Wanderjahre, in the early 1820's, he had travelled in Italy during its spasmodic revolts, he had visited Russia while the reverberations of the Decembrist conspiracy were still echoing through the corridors of St. Petersburg; and he lamented the failure, in 1831, to settle with the new French revolution while the opportunity offered ... Thus the Prussian Army, into which he had been commissioned in 1807 on his tenth birthday and in which he was to hold active command uninterruptedly until 1848, had to be considered not only as an active fighting force but as a bulwark of the established order ..." Michael Howard, "William I and the Reform of the Prussian Army", A Century of Conflict 1850-1950 editor Martin Gilbert (1967), p. 93.

17 Bismarck realized just how much the King viewed life first as a soldier, then as a ruler. In his memoirs Bismarck wrote of him: "Das Leben für König und Vaterland einzusezten, war die Pflicht des preußischen Offiziers, um so mehr die des Königs als des ersten Offiziers im Lande. Sobald er seine Stellung unter dem Gesichtspunkte der Offiziersehre betrachtete, hatte dieselbe für ihn ebenso wenig Bedenkliches wie für jeden normalen preußischen Offizier die instructionsmäßige Vertheidigung eines vielleicht verlorenen Postens." GW, Gedanken und Erinnerungen, vol. 15, pp. 195-196.

18 Albrecht von Roon, who was appointed the Minister of War in December of 1859, shared the same views with the
Prince Regent as to the 'politically and militarily false institution of the Landwehr.' The Landwehr, according to Roon, not only lacked proper discipline but was devoid of the true, sound and correct spirit of a soldier, Hans Martin Elster, Graf Albrecht von Roon, p. 252.


20 "Before Roon accepted his new office he told William bluntly that he did not hold by 'all of this constitutional business', that he could only serve as an 'expert adviser', and that, if the regent wanted a minister of the 'right constitutional perfume', he had better look elsewhere." Craig, The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945, p. 144.

21 Sheehan, German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century, p. 109.


23 Count Mirabeau, the French statesman of the early revolutionary period, has been accredited with the caustic remark: "Other states have an army; Prussia is an army that has a state." Although exaggerated this remark catches in part the same fear that the army reform awakened in the liberal bourgeoisie. Rudolf von Thadden, Prussia: The History of a Lost State (Cambridge: University Press, 1987), p. 37.

24 "The open clash between the liberals and the Prussian government involved two distinct, albeit connected, issues -- the army reorganization that dominated politics until September, 1862 and the constitutional conflict concerning the budget rights of the representative Chamber that grew out of it and became the primary problem thereafter." Quoted in Leonard Krieger, The German Idea of Freedom, p. 433.

25 "The political issues involved the character of fundamental Prussian institutions, whether the country should preserve caste structure, autocracy and mercantilism or become liberal." Anderson, The Social and Political Conflict in Prussia, 1858-1864, p. 291.
"The majority of those in the movement remained uncertain and ambivalent about both state power and popular sovereignty." Sheehan, p. 108.

"Die Ursachen für die engen Beziehungen sind nach Keudell in der Stellung Bleichröders zu dem Pariser Bankhaus Rothschild zu suchen, die ihm mitunter politische Aufträge zugeführt hätten. Otto Jöhlinger, Bismarck und die Juden (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1921), p. 92. He was actually close to the House of Rothschild both in Frankfurt and Paris. He was initially recommended to Bismarck by Baron Meyer Carl Rothschild in Frankfurt, but he also wrote often to Baron James in Paris. Gold and Iron, pp. 17, 27.

Bismarck’s silence about Bleichröder was indicative of a prevalent view of money. As one of the characters in Theodore Fontaine’s novel Stechlin advises: "do not marry for money -- money is degrading . . ." Thadden, p. 31. The shame attached to material wealth, in general, as opposed to land, was akin to one saying to another, 'you dig for the gold in the mudied earth and I will wash it and buy land with it, and no one will know of the mudied gold.' Fritz Stern notes: "Bleichröder’s rise to respectability, his struggle for a place in society, is but an instance of this universal effort to legitimize new wealth." Gold and Iron, p. 112.


Here is an example where bourgeoisie is applicable both to the bourgeois-dominated civil service as well as the liberal bourgeoisie. The conservatives and the army liked neither the government-employed bourgeois nor the political bourgeois. While it is true that Bismarck made a compromise specifically with the liberal bourgeoisie, as represented in the National Liberal Party, it is also true that he not only worked with the bourgeois dominated civil service but even extended its rule and refined its effectiveness.

37 Ibid.


39 "The gradual fragmentation of the conservative party after 1866 cannot be blamed on an initial failure to support Bismarck's policies; ironically, it resulted from the fact that in supporting these policies conservatives abandoned the very principles that had bound them together. The party had never developed an effective organizational structure; now, cut from its philosophical roots it began to divide." Robert M. Berdahl, "Conservative Politics and Aristocratic Landowners in Bismarckian Germany" Journal of Modern History, vol. 44(1) (1972), p. 5.

40 This will be dealt with in the next chapter but just to give one example of the effect of the cooperation between Bismarck and the liberal bourgeoisie, on the conservatives: Albrecht von Roon, the man who was most responsible for Bismarck's appointment in 1862, said several years later: "Speaking confidentially, I too belong to the conservative opposition, because I do not like to be led blindfolded against my will to who knows where. But Bismarck avoids any conversation on this subject . . . . He continues to neglect his most loyal and devoted friends, and he will not hesitate eventually to treat them brusquely." Hamerow, Social Foundations vol. 2, p. 365.


42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., p. 8.


Busch, Tagebuchblätter vol. 1, p. 6.

Keyserlingk, p. 90.

Ibid.

Gold and Iron, p. 277.

"Das Ideal des christlichen Staates als einer Synthese von politischem Denken und pietistisch-gläubigem Handeln prägte sich ihm hier tief ein." Wolfgang Saile, Hermann Wagener Und Sein Verhältnis Zu Bismarck (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1958), p. 9. However, there was another side, equally as important, to Wagener's relationship to the conservatives. In his memoirs, which show a penetrating mind, and a passionate interest in the social and political implications of industrial development and the rise of the bourgeoisie, he said of the conservatives: "The great majority of the conservatives had absolutely no comprehension of these sorts of questions . . . and they were most often completely satisfied that they could once again drink their glass of wine and play in peace their game of cards" (Erlebtes 1, p. 61). Bismarck was far different from these inveterate Junkers. They never really forgave him for dragging them into a world that they did not understand and he never forgave them for refusing to relinquish a dream of the past that was no more. They were only willing to take advantage of capitalism but they were unwilling to face its social and political consequences.


Keyserlingk, p. 89.

Busch, Tagebuchblätter vol. 1, pp. 9-10.

"The most important reform sought by the advocates of capitalistic enterprise was industrial freedom . . . [And] the economic reformers of the new era fought for the repeal of the usury laws as vigorously as for the
introduction of industrial freedom". Hamerow, Social Foundations vol. 2, pp. 50 and 53.

59 Poschinger, Aktenstücke vol. 1, pp. 72-73.


61 "The Prussian government felt that it could not allow the British to gain a privileged position in the French market, and, encouraged by the agitation of the Congress of German Economists, it was not unwilling to offer the French tariff concessions in return for facilitated exports into France." I. Lambi, Free Trade and Protection, p. 5. Delbrück said of the treaty: "Due to our position and our developed industry, we could not have permitted our exclusion from the market of the richest country on the continent, located before our very door, if this market would be opened, as it was expected, to everybody else." Ibid.

62 "Rudolf Delbrück admits that the definite exclusion of Austria from the Zollverein was one of the main reasons for the conclusion of the commercial treaty with France." Ibid., p. 6.


65 The French cartoons of the period show a certain condescension toward the parvenu Prussian power.


67 Ibid., p. 266.
1 In September of 1866 the National Liberals first formed as a new party and published a founding program. In it they made clear the central importance of the Indemnity Bill as the basis of their cooperation with the government. "Das Anerkenniss des Geschehenen war der Ausspruch der Indemnität, welcher zugleich die Mitwirkung der Landesvertretung vorberietete." F. Salomon, Die Deutschen Parteiprogramme Heft 1 (Berlin: Druck und Verlag von B. G. Teubner, 1907), p. 75.

2 This lack of legislative initiative applied also to the drafting of the constitution of the North German Confederation. "In contrast to the situation in 1848, the parliament was not expected to draft a constitution but rather to respond to a document which Bismarck and his advisers had already prepared." Sheehan, German Liberalism in the 19th Century, p. 130.

3 The most significant point here is the success that Bismarck had through the Kreisordnung which reordered rural Prussia in a manner that took away some of the powers of the aristocratic landowners (notably police powers) and replaced them with a more centralized bureaucratic control. The eastern landed elite viewed the bureaucratic machine of the government of Prussia as an enemy -- so did Bismarck until he had control over it. But, once he had that control he worked indefatigably to make it efficient, obedient, and pervasive; even against his once close friends, whose ideal of society was based on estates not state power, local authority not centralized hegemony.


5 Ibid., p. 368. "Eben daß beide Seiten in gewissen Punkten nachgaben, machte das geschlossene Bündnis echt und gab ihm die Chance der politischen Dauer."

6 While Kulturkampf is usually translated "battle against the Catholic Church", the liberals gave it the wider definition of "the battle for civilization" and I have left their translation to underline the reality of Bismarck's liberal course, not only in the view of the liberal bourgeoisie, but also in the view of the old conservatives,
who, as shown in this chapter, very much felt that Bismarck's policies were not simply negative and against one aspect of society, i.e., the Catholic Church -- but, in contrast, fulfilling the broad liberal goal of a battle for civilization.

7 The conservative Moritz von Blanckenburg called it a dead end (Sackgasse) but Bismarck in his memoirs clearly appears to have adopted the same description as his own. GW, vol. 15, p. 342.


9 "Diese Erkenntnis [that Bismarck had simply acted in the tradition of Frederick The Great in the aggrandizement of Prussia] konnte sich aber in konservativen Kreisen zunächst nicht durchsetzen, weil das Reich hier als ein politisches Gebilde gesehen wurde, das liberalem Denken entsprungen und mit liberalen Kräften verwirklicht worden war. Die Reichseinheit galt den Konservativen als liberale Konzeption, die sie von starken zentralistischen Kräften getragen sahen." Hans Booms, Die Deutschkonservative Partei (Düsseldorf, Droste Verlag, 1954), p. 17.

10 Take for example the following quote from one of the so called Era Articles, of June 1875, which was printed in the Kreuzzzeitung: "The financial and economic policy of the newly founded German Empire gives many observers the impression of being purely the policy of a banker. It is no wonder, for Herr von Bleichöder is himself a banker, Herr Delbrück is related to a banking house (Delbrück, Lee and Co.), and Herr Camphausen is the brother of a banker. If, on the other hand, the fiscal and economic policy of the German Empire gives one the impression of Judenpolitik, then that too is explainable since Herr von Bleichröder himself is a Jew, . . . Messers. Lasker, Bamberger, and H. B. Oppenheimer who are also Jews are the actual leaders of the so-called National-Liberal majority in the Reichstag and the Prussian parliament. Jewish banking houses influence the nomination of ministers, and they try to make the states and statesmen dependent on them." Quoted in I. N. Lambi, Free Trade and Protection in Germany, 1868-1879, p. 85.

The shift here was not an essential change in the fundamental goals that were desired but rather what was permissible as to the means used to attain those goals. Seeking popularity, the basis of political parties, was something long denied by the Prussian conservatives, as a lawful means to a good end because to them it was akin to a prostitution of the truth. Count zu Schelenburg-Beetzendorf captured this shift well in his address to the Association for Reform of Taxation and Economy in 1876: "The number of the followers of conservative principles is at present small. If we want to win over to conservatism wider circles, we must go along with the times. Indeed we cannot betray our principles, but must at the same time follow the trends which move the people. We live in an era of material interests", quoted in I. N. Lambi, Free Trade and Protection in Germany 1868-1879, p. 138.

Klaus Epstein's definitions of the three different types of conservatives are useful here. "Voluntary cooperation with history is the main characteristic of the reform conservative. He has an understanding of the course of historical development and sees the inevitability of certain changes, although he does not pretend any enthusiasm for them. He is, however, impressed by their inevitability (in the sense of being dictated by objective irreversible causes) . . . ." This is completely consistent with Bismarck's use of phrases like 'we must become the hammer in order not to be the anvil' as it implies a necessity of change. "Change will occur [continues Klaus Epstein in his definition of the reform conservative] either with the active cooperation of men like himself, who will spare whatever can still be preserved from the past, or by radicals, who will frequently go much farther than necessary in destroying the ancien régime and will place no value whatsoever upon maintaining the maximum possible historical continuity." Klaus Epstein, The Genesis of German Conservatism (Princeton: University Press, 1966), pp. 8-9.

"The status quo conservative is satisfied with enjoying what he has rather than pursuing something he wants. . . . The third type of conservative, the reactionary, is logically speaking not a conservative in the strict sense of the term, since he does not wish to conserve what now exists, but rather to restore an earlier condition which history has passed by." Ibid., pp. 7 and 10.

"So lange Preußen nicht zu einem der deutschen Nationalität annähernd entsprechenden Staatsgebilde gelangt war, so lange es nicht nach dem Ausdruck, dessen sich der Fürst Metternich mir gegenüber bediente, zu den Saturirten 

16 "Ich kämpfe [said Bismarck in the Reichstag in 1884] gegen die Beförderung der Auswanderung; ein Deutscher, der sein Vaterland abstreift wie einen alten Rock, ist für mich kein Deutscher mehr. . . ." Bismarck als Erzieher, p. 61. In contrast to this position taken here by Bismarck, was that taken first by the Emigrationists, then later by the Pan German League. "The emigrationist argument was particularly emphatic that the strength and vitality of the Reich were inextricably linked to the fate of Germans living abroad and that the assimilation of these people into the other cultures represented an irreparable loss to the German nation. The German nation, in other words, could no longer be coterminous with the frontiers of the Reich, the nation comprehended people who spoke German and carried German culture everywhere in the world." Roger Chickering, We Men Who Feel Most German (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1984), p. 30.


19 The Age of Capitalism 1848-1875, p. 286.

20 Salomon, p. 36.

21 It was also during this period that Bismarck's own knowledge of the interdependence of the economy of his own state as well as other nations profoundly deepened. His own assertion, which he made on various occasions, that he left economic affairs to Delbrück neither corresponded with the facts nor with Bismarck's own personality -- which demanded a knowledge of what he dominated so as to dominate the better -- even if that dominance remained, as in the field of economics, much more hidden than in the area of politics. "In these years [writes Fritz Stern], Bismarck's horizon steadily widened, and his grasp of economics -- that is to say, of the interconnectedness of things -- deepened. Bleichröder transmitted to him the best financial intelligence of the period: by virtue of Bleichröder's investments, Bismarck perforce became concerned with the economic progress of the United States, of Russia, of German railroads. He learned about the capital market, and as one of Prussia's large landowners he learned about land credit, timber sales, and paper manufacturing in a continually
fluctuating market. Under expert guidance and with the most pressing incentive -- his own profit -- the chancellor came to appreciate the intricate nature of an agrarian-commercial world." Gold and Iron, pp. 104-05.

For example the Era Articles published in 1875 focused on Bleichröder. "The articles, which had been carefully subedited by the publisher, Philipp von Nathusius-Ludom, had centered on the figure of Gerson Bleichröder, for many years the Chancellor’s private banker and economic policy adviser; the lengthy and relatively insubstantial remarks about Delbrück and Camphausen could not conceal this fact. The author had portrayed Bleichröder as the embodiment of the unscrupulous profit-seeking of big capital -- while the fact that Bleichröder was a Jew had in addition invoked every prejudice." Gall, Bismarck: The White Revolutionary, vol. 2, pp. 76-77.

While it is true that Bleichröder did become a baron it nevertheless did not alter the fact that he continued to be looked upon as a parvenu.

Gold and Iron, p. 172.


The hegemony that is meant here is a cultural and social domination, whereby the bourgeoisie took over society by redefining it. Take, for example, Karl Marx’s description of the effects of the bourgeois revolutions in France and England which represented "the victory of bourgeois property over feudal property, of nationality over provincialism, of competition over guild, of the partition of estates over primogeniture, of the owner’s mastery of the land over the land’s mastery of its owner, of enlightenment over superstition, of the family over the family name, of industry over heroic laziness, of civil law over privileges of medieval origin." Quoted in The Peculiarities of Germany History, p. 145. These victories of the bourgeoisie had once been simply goals and they were infused with a specific world-view. The question is not simply one of political domination but the very values that are deemed worthy in a given society. "The bourgeoisie rested on common assumptions, common beliefs, common forms of action. They believed in capitalism, in competitive private enterprise, technology, science and reason. They believed in progress, in a certain amount of representative government, a certain amount of civil rights and liberties, so long as these were compatible with the rule of law and with the kind of order which kept the poor in its place." The Age of Capital 1848-1875, p. 287. The very basis of this thesis is that while
Bismarck never surrendered political power, he still brought about in Prussia-Germany many of the bourgeois victories that Marx listed above; and, the presuppositions that E. J. Hobsbawn notes of the bourgeois mentality came to pervade German life.

27 Pflanze, Bismarck and the Development of Germany, p. 343.

28 Ibid., p.339.

29 Henderson, The Zollverein, p. 316.

30 One of many examples that the first reference to an Indemnity Bill, which was made by the King in the Throne Speech, caused tension between Bismarck and the conservatives was the reaction that his friend Kleist-Retzow showed. "Bei der Verlesung der Thronrede zur Eröffnung des Landtages, worin die bedeutungsvolle Stelle von der Indemnität vorkam, vermied Kleist eine Grußung Bismarcks, stellte sich aber so im Weißen Saale, so das dieser ihn sehen konnte. Der feierliche Akt ging vorüber. Die beiden Jugendfreunde warteten, bis alles hinausgegangen war. Dann kam Bismarck auf Kleist zu und fragte, mit Mühe den freundschaftlichen Ton während "Aber du alter Junge, woher hattest du denn die Thronrede?"

Kleist: "Das werde ich dir nicht sagen."
Bismarck: "Darin verstehe ich keinen Spaß, ich werde Dir sonst mit dem Staatsanwalt kommen müssen."
Kleist: "Ja, Du kannst mich auch einsperren lassen, aber erfahren wirst du es doch nicht."
Grollend drehte sich Bismarck um und ging. Kleist tat dasselbe." This particular rift was later healed but as Kleist Retzow later became more vociferous in his attacks on Bismarck, Bismarck in turn became far less amenable to reconciliation. Also Sprach Bismarck, pp. 236-37.


32 Gall, Bismarck: Die großen Reden, pp. 78-80.

33 Both parties did not become well defined as political parties until almost a year after each had their initial meetings. On June 12, 1867 the National Liberals announced their party platform while that of The Free Conservatives was dated October 27, 1867.

34 Siegfried von Kardorff, Wilhelm von Kardorff: Ein Nationaler Parlamentarier im Zeitalter Bismarcks und


36 "Erhaltung des preußischen Staates innerhalb des Reiches einerseits und die Führung dieser Reichseinheit durch den in seinem König repräsentierten preußischen Staat anderseits, das waren die beiden wesentlichen politischen Programmpunkte der preußischen Konservativen." Booms, Die Deutschkonservative Partei, p. 10.

37 Hans Booms makes clear that the only way that the Prussian conservatives changed, other than their name, was a certain determination to become actively involved in the political life of the Reich. Their active support of Bismarck became truly possible because in a sense he refounded the Reich in 1878-79 -- this time on a conservative foundation. "Somit bot sich den konservativen Kreisen Preußens in der neugegründeten Deutschkonservativen Partei die Chance, im Deutschen Reich herrschend zu werden, sobald sie sich positiv zur Reichsgründung einstellen und sich aktiv an der Reichspolitik beteiligten." Ibid., p. 19.

The conservatives of the Eastern landed estates, however, could not ever really become politically active for two reasons. First, as Otto von Hellendorf, a nobleman from Saxony who in the mid-seventies tried to better organize the conservatives, complained -- "that he was fighting an uphill battle because of the rank and file in the countryside who were unbelievably lazy, indolent and stingy." Second, seeking popularity negated their understanding of themselves as noblemen by birth, defined by essence rather than activity. The quote is from: James N. Retallack, Notables of the Right (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1988), p. 31.

38 The position often taken here is that Bismarck bought off, as it were, the liberal bourgeoisie with a few rather meaningless economic concessions. The liberals, in turn, by accepting them in fawning adulation of Bismarck, guaranteed the rule of the landed elite. The position taken in this thesis argues against the above position on several points. First, that Bismarck was not synonomous with the interests of the landed elite. The Germany he united was not according to their wishes at all -- he destroyed, rather than completed their ideal of a corporate society based on guilds and estates. Second, the concessions granted to the liberal bourgeoisie were significant enough to redefine society in liberal -- not democratic terms -- but modern,
industrial and capitalistic. To keep political hegemony of the State he gave up social hegemony to the bourgeoisie. This was something that the conservatives that had put Bismarck in power would never have done -- but he, unlike them, understood history and that rule in a constitutional state must be based on consent. Very pertinent here is Geoff Eley’s discussion of Antonio Gramsci’s understanding of the meaning of hegemony in Reshaping the German Right (Yale: University Press, 1980), pp. 163-4. Third, the liberals’ cooperation with Bismarck was not a sell-out. As Helmut Böhme notes: "With the appointment of Delbrück [as head of the Federal Chancellery in 1867] Bismarck once again showed his intention that although he would not allow the liberals to rule he would permit them an influential role as advisors." Deutschlands Weg zur Großmacht, pp. 257-8. Last, precisely because united Germany was liberal to the Prussian Conservatives, and further that Bismarck seemed to be absolutely intent to continue within the Reich on the same liberal course, did the conservative opposition become so intense that it threatened Bismarck with complete alienation from the landed elite.

39 Solomon, pp. 78-80.
40 Gall, Die großen Reden, p. 81.
41 Ibid., p. 99.


The first was the replacement of Graf zur Lippe with Dr. Adolf Leonhard as Prussian Justice Minister and the second was the increase of the powers of the Hanoverian Diet.


46 Ibid., p. 374-75. "Der Sturz des Ministers Graf zur Lippe war nicht nur ein situationsbedingter politischer Einzelerfolg des Parlaments; er eröffnete vielmehr den Prozeß einer allgemeinen Liberalisierung des preußischen Regierungssystems, der bis 1878, dem Zeitpunkt des erneuten Kurswechsels der Bismarckschen Politik, dauerte."

47 The conservative opposition already began before the new year in three sessions of the Budget Commission on the 13, 18, and 19 of December but this was still, to a large
degree, behind closed doors. In early 1868, however, the conservative opposition to Bismarck spilled out into the open. Gerhard Ritter, *Die preußischen Konservativen und Bismarcks deutsche Politik 1858 bis 1876* (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1976 (c1913)), p. 267.

" Schmitt, pp. 44-5.

Stuart Stehlin notes that since the nobles in Hanover were particularistic in their loyalties whereas the bourgeoisie was supportive of union with Prussia, it was very much to Bismarck's advantage to give the bourgeoisie more power in running its own local affairs. Stewart A. Stehlin, *Bismarck and the Guelph Problem 1866-1890* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), p. 175. This again underlines that Bismarck was not old conservative in the means he used to unify Germany, for the Old Conservatives under no circumstances would ever have given more power to the bourgeoisie.


Ibid., p. 293.


Ibid., p. 355.

*GW*, vol. 15, p. 352.
Notes - Conclusion

1 Stehlin, *Bismarck and the Guelph Problem 1866 - 1890*, p. 32.

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