REFORMIST CONSERVATISM AND POLITICAL MOBILIZATION: A STUDY OF FACTIONALISM AND MOVEMENTS FOR REFORM WITHIN THE GERMAN CONSERVATIVE PARTY, 1876-1914.



D. Phil. Thesis

by

James N. Retallack

St. John's College
Oxford

Hilary Term, 1983

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ABSTRACT

This study of the German Conservative Party (DKP) suggests that two factors - the wielding of high-level influence and the mobilization of popular forces - were particularly important in determining the response of the traditional Right to new social, economic, and political pressures in Imperial Germany.

Caught between the conflicting demands of 'political exclusivity' and 'mass inclusion', German Conservatives were faced with challenges of adaptation which they were, in the main, unable to meet. Due to a lack of unity and an uncertain response to the possibilities of reform within their party, Conservatives continued to try to reconcile elitist and popular brands of politics, even as their inability to cope with the breakdown of the traditional 'politics of notables' became clear.

This thesis presents a new and differentiated picture of the DKP, suspended between 'high' and 'low' politics. An analysis of pre-1914 Conservative politics 'from the bottom up' suggests how demands for political participation at the grass-roots level were registered; conversely, a study of the party leaders' reactions to reformism and dissent indicates how opportunities for participation were conceded - or denied - from above. This thesis places special emphasis on exploring the ways dissident Conservatives expressed their views in the provinces, the press, and the party congresses.

Past views of the DKP as a static, monolithic, and exclusively agrarian vehicle for the defence of a narrow class interest are no longer adequate. Movements for organizational and programmatic reform helped shape the broader dimensions of the Conservative Party's relationship with the government and other right-wing groups, as did perceptions of disunity within the DKP and hopes for 'enlightened' Conservative policies.

By using a number of new sources to examine the DKP's response to problems of factionalism and political change, this study helps redraw the equation between the apparent atrophy of the traditional Right and the awakening of popular politics in Germany.

Abstract

This thesis fills a gap in the historiography of German political parties in the Imperial era. Because past studies of German Conservatism have been either one-dimensional or concerned with developments tangential to the German Conservative Party (DKP), the question of the party's reaction to political change after 1871 has not been answered. One way of approaching this problem is to look at the DKP as a political agent in the Imperial party system which was faced with unique challenges from a number of directions. By arguing the need for a view of right-wing affairs on more than one level of politics, this thesis examines how Conservatives dealt with the twin problems of maintaining influence at the top levels of decision making in pre-1914 Germany and of rallying new groups to support and vote for their political party. The history of factionalism and reformism within the party offers a useful means to portray the diverse and dynamic character of the DKP, as well as to challenge some older orthodoxies about the development of Conservatives' political 'sense'.

Chapter One combines a thematic and chronological approach to emphasise the slow and uneven pace of Conservatives toward organized political activity and a coherent program. Moving beyond a concern for identifying precise stages of development of Conservatism in the nineteenth century, this chapter examines the ongoing effort to reconcile progressive and reactionary tendencies within the Conservative community. It suggests that the varieties of Conservatism which appeared in the first half of the nineteenth century determined that the right-wing response to revolution in 1848 was anything but a unitary one. In the

period of reaction, Conservative organizing activty fell to a new low. However, the early 1860s confronted Conservatives with a number of new problems, as liberal activism increased and as the government could no longer be relied upon to influence elections in favour of extreme right-wing candidates to parliament. After 1866, the ascendance of Bismarck and the national goals he pursued sent the Prussian Conservative Party into disarray. Only after a series of major crises and compromises were the Conservatives able to come to terms with the new Reich and the Reichstag. The founding of the German Conservative Party in 1876, though it marked no caesura in the history of factionalism and movements for reform on the Right, represented a significant step on the road to recognizing new political challenges in the age of the universal franchise.

Chapters Two and Three chronicle the early years of the DKP, showing how pressures for a greater degree of political activism and for a radical anti-liberal policy were deflected by party leaders like Otto von Helldorff, who believed that a close relationship with Bismarck and the other parties of the Right was more important than organizational or programmatic reforms. New and detailed information about the actual DKP apparatus is provided, and the 'Christian' and 'social' elements of Conservatism are analysed. Both chapters draw attention to the importance of the 1880s as a period of growing tensions between different political styles and aspirations within the party, as represented by Conservatives in Berlin parliamentary circles and by rank-and-file DKP members in the provinces.

Chapters Four and Five document how the departure of Bismarck from the Reich Chancellery in March 1890 released these pressures in the party. By analysing the scope of the reformist campaign to topple Helldorff and renew the DKP as an independent Volkspartei, these chap-

ters suggest how closely intertwined were anti-Bismarckian, anti-governmental, anti-liberal, and anti-Kartell motives within the reformist community. Program reform and a more democratic decision-making structure for the party were the twin aims of provincial and 'Kreuzzeitung-group' rebels, indicating that some Conservatives were aware of the need for both policy changes and a new articulation of authority within the party if the DKP were to win the allegiance of 'the people'. Such populist motives, however, continued to be circumscribed by traditional elitist prejudices among the majority of influencial Conservatives, and the prospect of the DKP descending to a level of demagogy produced a reaction against the reformist wave of 1890-1892.

Chapters Six and Seven tell the story of this reaction. They suggest that the resistance to internal party democracy and the motives for limiting anti-governmental sentiment wich were illustrated in Chapters Two and Three were still decisive in the mid-1890s, preventing a radical restructuring of the party or a new definition of its place on the German Right. Nevertheless, this failure of the most significant movement for political change in the history of the DKP tells us much about the nature of Conservative politics in the Imperial era, for it reveals an astonishing depth and diversity among Conservative attitudes to the process of political adaptation.

The antagonism toward governmental party leaders expressed in the Conservative provincial organizations and press indicates that the 'principle of authority' was not universally accepted within the party: the challenge mounted by Conservative activists and editors in the years 1890 to 1896 shows that the political path of the Conservative Party after Bismarck was far more open to question than has hitherto been believed. The reformers launched an embarassingly public debate

on the 'popular mission' of the Conservative Volkspartei; although they exposed the hollowness of previous reforms and popular appeals, one cannot deny the genuine uncertainty about the fate of the DKP felt by contemporaries before February 1896.

Chapter Eight takes a half-turn away from themes developed in previous chapters, and seeks to add a sense of nuance and chronology to past investigations of the Farmers' League (BdL). By examining the views of those DKP members who continued to feel that their first allegiance was to the Conservative Party, not its auxiliary agrarian interest group, this chapter argues that Conservatives who did not wish to ally fully with either the oppositional BdL or the government were correct in believing that their party had an important role to play in trying to resolve conflicts between popular and high-level politics.

Chapter Nine carries the story of reformism in the DKP up to 1914, chronicling the response of the party to ever-increasing pressures for political adaptation. To complement the information about the young party's apparatus provided in Chapter Two, the dimensions of the DKP's organization, leadership, press, finances, and agitational network will be examined, again in the context of a dynamic rather than a static party.

Finally, the Appendices present new (although preliminary) information about the history of Conservative organizations in the provinces and regions of Germany. Besides providing a handy reference to the personnel, press organs, and organizational histories of Conservative movements 'on the periphery', these appendices are designed to make clearer the factional nature of the party. Disparities between provincial organizations are juxtaposed with the very uneven electoral fortunes of the DKP, to indicate some of the reasons why tensions between

the Berlin party leadership and the provincial groups - and indeed between the provincial organizations themselves - persisted up to 1914 and beyond.

Overall, this thesis presents a differentiated picture of the DKP, suspended between high and low politics, between the centre and the periphery, and between a style of politics which had already passed in Imperial Germany and one which had yet to arrive. By analysing the Conservative experience as distinct from other developments on the German Right, this study examines the unpredictable and ever-changing pressures working on many levels to shape a new Conservative Party or preserve the old one. In this way, the dilemma faced by Conservatives trying to reconcile a commitment to both elitist and popular politics is explored as a part of the wider problem of political change in modern Germany.

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List of Abbreviations

1. Contemporary Newspapers and Journals

AugsZ	Augsburger Zeitung
BadLp	Badische Landpost
BayrLb	Bayrischer Landbote
BBC	Berliner Börsen-Courier
BNN	Berliner Neuest Nachrichten
BT	Berliner Tageblatt
DtEvKirchenZ	Deutsche Evangelische Kirchenzeitung
DtRp	Deutsche Reichspost
DtReichsZ	Deutsche Reichszeitung
DTZ	Deutsche Tageszeitung
DAB	Deutsches Adelsblatt
DTbl	Deutsches Tagesblatt
DtWochenbl	Deutsches Wochenblatt
DresN	Dresdener Nachrichten
FkZ	Frankfurter Zeitung
FsZ	Freisinnige Zeitung
Ger	Germania
HE	Hamburger Echo
HN	Hamburger Nachrichten
HannP	Hannoversche Post
HannTN	Hannoversche Tagesnachrichten
H-pBl	Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland
KJ	Kasseler Journal
KVZ	Kölnische Volkszeitung
KnZ	Kölnische Zeitung
CC	Konservative Korrespondenz
KonsMon	(Allgemeine) Konservative Monatsschrift
KWbl	Konservatives Wochenblatt
KdBdL	Korrespondenz des Bundes der Landwirte
LeipNN	Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten
LeipZ	Leipziger Zeitung
DKP Reports	Mitteilungen aus der konservativen Partei
MAZ	(Münchener) Allgemeine Zeitung
NZ	National-Zeitung
KZ	Neue Preußische (Kreuz-) Zeitung
NWVZ	Neue Westfälische Volkszeitung
NAZ	Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung
OstprZ	Ostpreußische Zeitung
PommRp	Pommersche Reichspost
PrJbb	Preußische Jahrbücher
Rb	Reichsbote
RWZ	Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung
SchlMbl	Schlesisches Morgenblatt
SchlMZ	Schlesische Morgenzeitung
SchlZ	Schlesische Zeitung
StaatsbgZ	Staatsbürger Zeitung
StraßP	Straßburger Post
SCC	Süddeutsche Konservative Korrespondenz
SüddLP	Süddeutsche Landpost
TR	Tägliche Rundschau
Vk	Volk
Vorw	Vorwärts
WestdtZ	Westdeutsche Zeitung

2. Current Journals

CdnJH	Canadian Journal of History
CEH	Central European History
GG	Geschichte und Gesellschaft
GWU	Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht
HJ	Historical Journal
HZ	Historische Zeitschrift
JCEA	Journal of Central European Affairs
JCH	Journal of Contemporary History
JMH	Journal of Modern History
SH	Social History
ZfG	Zeitschrift für Geschichte
ZfGW	Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft
ZfRG	Zeitschrift für Religion- und Geistesgeschichte

3. Other Abbreviations

Aufstieg	H. v. Arnim and G. Below, eds., Deutscher Aufstieg (Berlin/Leipzig, 1925).
BdL	Bund der Landwirte
BAK	Bundesarchiv Koblenz
CSP	Christlich-Soziale Partei
Cons./kons.	Conservative/konservativ(e)
DKP	Deutsch-Konservative Partei
DSP	Deutsch-Soziale Partei
FKP/RP	Freikonservative Partei / Reichspartei
FrVgg	Freisinnige Vereinigung
Fricke	D. Fricke et al, Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1968-70).
GStA Dahlem	Geheimes Staatsarchiv preußischer Kulturbesitz
H-W Corr.	Heydebrand-Westarp correspondence, Gärtringen
Kl.Erw.	Kleine Erwerbungen
M-	Member of ...
NL	Nachlaß
NL F	Nachlaß Fechenbach
NLP	Nationalliberale Partei
NDB	Neue Deutsche Biographie
PAH/PHH	Preußisches Abgeordnetenhaus/Herrenhaus
Rkz./Rkz.	Reichskanzlei(akten)
RT/LT	Reichstag/Landtag
Ritter	G. Ritter and M. Niehuss, Wahlgeschichteliches Arbeitsbuch (Munich, 1980).
Sg	Sammlung
SgF	Sammlung Fechenbach
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
StA	Staatsarchiv
St.Min.	Staatsministerium
VdSWR	Vereinigung der Steuer- und Wirtschaftsreformer
WVgg	Wirtschaftliche Vereinigung
Z	Zentrum
ZSg	Zeitgeschichtliche Sammlung
ZStA I, II	Zentrales Staatsarchiv I (Potsdam), II (Merseburg)

Preface

My debt of gratitude to the many people who have provided research and travel grants, archival assistance, scholarly discussion, and general encouragement, will be paid at a later date. At this point, however, I should like to thank my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, for his reasoned and helpful guidance at each stage of this project.

Introduction

As long ago as the mid-nineteenth century, Heinrich Heine sought to identify the essence of Conservative influence:[1]

> A handful of Junkers, who have learned nothing but a bit of horse-trading, card sharping, dice-throwing, or other stupid rascally tricks with which at best peasants at fairs can be duped, think that they can befool an entire people.

Despite the inadequacy of Heine's portrait of right-wing politics, it highlights the same problems of elitist influence and public opinion as will be considered in the following study of the German Conservative Party (DKP). Looking at a crucial phase in the evolution of German politics, this thesis suggest that two factors - the wielding of high-level influence and the mobilization of popular forces - were particularly important in determining the response of the traditional Right to new social, economic, and political pressures in Imperial Germany.

Separately and reciprocally, the problems of maintaining influence at the top levels of government decision-making in pre-1914 Germany and of rallying new groups to support and vote for their political party presented German Conservatives with challenges of adaptation which they were, in the main, unable to meet. Slowly but not inevitably, Conservatives came face to face with a dilemma which demanded a full commitment to either elitist or popular politics. Due to a lack of unity and an uncertain response to the possibilities of reform within their party, Conservatives continued to attempt a squaring of the circle, even as their inability to cope with the breakdown of the traditional 'politics of notables' (Honoratiorenpolitik) became increasingly clear and as their historically close ties to the government worsened under the impact of economic conflicts and national crises. By looking at the

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1 Cited in A. Gerschenkron, Bread and Democracy in Germany (New York, 1946), p. 26.

way the Conservative Party was caught between the demands of different styles of politics, this study will help to redraw the equation between the apparent atrophy of the traditional parties of the Right and the awakening of popular politics in Germany.

When Fritz Fischer published his work, Griff nach der Weltmacht, in 1961, the attention of German historians was focussed on Fischer's thesis that Germany's territorial aims during (and even before) the First World War had been far more expansionist than previously believed. As the 'Fischer controversy' was carried forward during the next decade, both critics and disciples of Fischer looked more deeply into the internal structure and working of the Wilhelmine establishment, partly to see what effect the illiberal and authoritarian heritage of the Imperial era had had on the anti-democratic development of Germany in the 1920s and 1930s. Thus there gradually arose what James Sheehan has termed a 'new orthodoxy' in German historiography.[2] This school employed the tools and concepts of the social sciences to study the social, economic, and political institutions of the Kaiserreich. It argued with some force that the feudal-military aristocracy which ruled Prussia and Germany retained most of its power in the German Reich after 1871 through a number of techniques of political and social control. These techniques included such now-familiar terms as repression, manipulation, diversion, compensation, indoctrination, and negative integration.

The emphasis on structures and broad generalizations inherent in the approach of the 'new orthodoxy' undoubtedly challenged old dogmas and introduced new lines of enquiry which have been salutary and provocative. Indeed, this school has served as an Aunt Sally for a number of important recent studies, whose introductions chronicle the dimen-

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2 JMH, 48 (3), Sept. 1976, pp. 566f.

sions and scholarly works of the 'new orthodoxy' so completely that further details need not be provided here.[3] Yet as Richard Evans has noted in his introduction to a collections of essays by British historians who have taken issue with this school, what is surprising about the approach of the 'new orthodoxy' is its continued concentration on high politics: political decision making and motives for change in the Kaiserreich are seen to flow downwards, while the activities and ideals of the masses are the object, not the subject, of studies concentrating on manipulative elites. Thus, as Evans has put it, 'the German Empire is presented as a puppet theatre, with Junkers and industrialists pulling the strings, and middle and lower clases dancing jerkily across the stage of history toward the final curtain of the Third Reich.'[4]

Evans's collection and other subsequent criticisms of the 'new orthodoxy' have suggested the value of fresh approaches which have little to do with abstractions and formulae, and instead emphasise the importance of further empirical reseach on regional histories, pressure-group politics, social mobility, women's history, and so on. Current arguments for viewing politics 'from the bottom up' or for insights derived from studies of the Kaiser and his court indicate how different and enlightening can be the reactions to the 'new orthodoxy'.

This thesis integrates a number of these historiographical currents to examine the Conservative Party as a unique political agent responding to the demands of both high and low politics. A lack of party histories for the Wilhelmine period, especially on the right of the political spectrum, indicates that such an investigation can fill a

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3 See, for example, R. J. Evans, ed., Society and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany (London, 1978); and D. Blackbourn, Class, Religion and Local Politics in Wilhelmine Germany (New Haven and London, 1980).

4 Evans, Society and Politics, p. 23.

gap in our understanding of social and political change in pre-1914 Germany. As David Blackbourn has understated it:[5]

> The political parties have continued to be somewhat neglected, occupying rather a blank space between the wire-pullers of government and the functionaries of the various pressure groups and Verbände.... It was the parties, however, which acted as the essential mediators of change.

Past studies of the Conservative Party have tended to obscure as much as they illuminate the party's development and political role in the Kaiserreich, partly because the party has often been treated only obliquely within other studies. Contemporary works on the DKP and the memoirs of Conservative politicians offer only polemical and tendentious reports.[6] Hans Booms's study of 1955 provides a catalogue of Conservative speeches in parliament enunciating the purely Prussian viewpoint of the party, but it overemphasises the unchanging nature of Conservative ideals.[7] Thomas Nipperdey's pioneering work from the early 1960s on the organization of political parties in Germany draws attention to the loose and informal structure of Conservative politics, but chronology and the self-conscious reactions of Conservatives to internal party changes are neglected.[8] Hans-Jürgen Puhle's work from the mid-1960s on the Farmers' League (Bund der Landwirte) represents the most intensive study to date of Conservative agrarianism, and his subsequent writings have prompted useful consideration of the way

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5 Blackbourn, Class, Religion and Local Politics, p. 11.

6 Including H. Maier, Die Konservativen (Munich, 1910); H. von Berger, Der Konservatismus und die Parteien (Berlin, [1910]); O. Pommer, Die Konservativen (Berlin-Schöneberg, 1912); O. Pfister, Deutsch-Konservativ (Berlin, 1913); O. Stillich's Die Konservativen (Leipzig, 1908), is relatively even-handed. See the bibliography for works by Heydebrand, Limburg, Oldenburg-Januschau, and Westarp.

7 H. Booms, Die Deutschkonservative Partei. Preußischer Charakter, Reichsauffassung, Nationalbegriff (Düsseldorf, 1954).

8 T. Nipperdey, Die Organisation der deutschen Parteien vor 1918 (Düsseldorf, 1961); cf. articles by Nipperdey, listed in bibliography.

interest groups introduced important structural and ideological changes in the Wilhelmine political establishment.[9] Yet concentration on the Farmers' League has left little room for a study of the problems experienced by the Conservative Party leaders themselves, as they reacted to conflicts between the BdL and the government and as they attempted to meet challenges to their own authority from rank-and-file Conservatives. Geoff Eley's recent book on the Navy League and other radical nationalist pressure groups has provided another impetus to further discussion and research; but once again, little in the way of a party history is provided.[10] Abraham Peck's book, entitled Radicals and Reactionaries, seems to have rather missed the point, attempting to define the 'crisis of Conservatism' primarily with reference to the DKP leadership's reaction to new völkisch and expansionist movements after 1912.[11] Lothar Wallraf's Marxist study of the party offers a similarly one-dimensional view of the DKP's later years.[12] To be sure, each of these works has helped define the 'reshaping of the German Right' in its broader context, and might be considered prerequisites to a proper party history. But the internal affairs of the party and the evolution of its organization and decision-making apparatus have been consistently ignored. Thus, the story of the Conservative Party's reaction to political change before 1914 remains to be told.

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9 H.-J. Puhle, Agrarische Interessenpolitik und preußischer Konservatismus im wilhelminischen Reich, 1893-1914. Ein Beitrag zur Analyse des Nationalismus in Deutschland am Beispiel des Bundes der Landwirte und der Deutsch-Konservativen Partei (Bonn-Bad Godesberg, 1966, 1975^2); cf. other works in bibliography.

10 G. Eley, Reshaping the German Right. Radical Nationalism and Political Change after Bismarck (New Haven/London, 1980); cf. other works in bibliography.

11 A. J. Peck, Radicals and Reactionaries: The Crisis of Conservatism in Wilhelmine Germany (Washington D.C., 1978).

12 L. Wallraf, 'Zur Politik der Deutschkonservativen Partei in den letzten Jahrzehnten ihres Bestehens (1898-1918) unter den Bedingungen der imperialistischen Epoche' (Diss., Jena, 1970).

In the following study, five main themes will be developed. The first of these concerns the Conservatives' desire and capacity to reconcile the conflicting demands of what may be termed 'political exclusivity' and 'mass inclusion'. Without doubt, the introduction of universal manhood suffrage at the birth of the Reich, and the subsequent expansion of political participation, communication, and activism at the local level, confronted traditional Conservatives with what has been rightly labelled a 'new form of politics' in the post-1871 era. As turn-out for Reichstag elections and the number of run-off ballots increased dramatically, as publishing enterprises expanded, as transport opportunities were extended to the common man, and as regional awareness of national issues grew, the character of politics in Germany changed rapidly in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. For Conservatives and other 'establishment' groups, this quantum leap in participation threatened their traditional political prerogatives in the sphere of decision making. Within the constituencies of all parties, new political demands for inclusion in the circles of party (and national) influence were registered, and the central question of 'mass' politics became: participation on whose terms?

Studies by Puhle and Eley have broadly suggested that before 1893, Conservative Party members paid little or no attention to these demands and the difficulties they posed, and that after that date, it was the agrarian Farmers' League and the radical nationalist pressure groups like the Navy League and the Pan-German League which turned their attention to the problem of mobilizing new forces behind right-wing policies and ideologies, leaving the Conservative Party on the dustheap of political activism, as it were. To the extent that these other groups eventually drew the allegiance of many individuals who failed to make their demands heard within the Conservative Party, and proved more successful than the DKP in creating potent means for influencing public

opinion, Puhle and Eley have correctly suggested that efforts to adapt the Conservative Party to the 'new politics' did not succeed. However, contrary to their assertions that the young Conservative Party had 'no **ambitions** to broaden its mass appeal' and that turn-of-the-century German politics presented 'a series of problems for which the party-political right had no answer,' the following study will show that substantial ambition and a plethora of answers to the challenges of popular politics were to be found in the ranks of the DKP, and indeed had been voiced with considerable energy and conviction long before 1893.[13] Thus, the first major theme of this thesis is the working-out of the ambivalent but not uniformly negative Conservative response to new modes of political participation. In contrast to other studies of the DKP, special attention will be given to the crucial period **before** Conservative reformers and dissidents decided to abandon the DKP and traditional party politics.

As a means to analyse Conservatives' self-conscious reactions to changes within their party, their vocabulary will be a second major focus here. As new pressures to become popular pushed Conservatives to espouse increasingly radical ideologies and techniques of agitation, the formerly ingrained nomenclature describing Conservatives and their loyalties - with terms like 'monarchist', 'nationalist', and 'anti-socialist' - began to give way to a new political vocabulary which sought to define friends and foes, positively or pejoratively, as 'independent', 'governmental', 'oppositional', 'demagogic', 'democratic', and - most problematically - 'popular' (volkstümlich). Significantly, the word 'völkisch' will hardly appear in these pages; instead,

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13 Puhle, 'Conservatism in Modern German History', JCH, 13, 1978, p. 700; Eley, German Right, esp. pp. 184-191. The following pages show that radical nationalists were not the only figures on the Right who launched 'a larger offensive against the political establishment as a whole, whom they accused of debilitating caution, social élitism, blindness to Germany's national needs, and a refusal to obey the dictates of mass politics.'

the terms 'volkstümlich' and 'Volkstümlichkeit' will be found frequently, indicating that the need to mobilize popular forces behind Conservatism was perhaps more central to DKP political ambitions than was a concern for racial or radical nationalist theories and slogans.[14] Concomitantly, the right-wing reaction to 'mass society' can be investigated by exploring Conservative attempts to become - or appear to become - a 'party of the people' (Volkspartei).

As an extension of this concern for definition, the third theme centres on the factional nature of the Conservative Party. This problem is central to Chapters One and Eight, but the study as a whole will indicate why previous views of a monolithic, static, exclusively agrarian party neglect crucial aspects of Conservative political activity before 1914. Indeed, an argument could be made for stucturing a study of the DKP not chronologically but rather in terms of the various brands of Conservatism which made up the whole. This, however, would necessarily compromise the effort to understand the evolution of the party. Therefore, the different sections of the traditional 'Conservative constituency' - including Protestant pastors, army officers, estate owners, government officials, courtiers, right-wing intellectuals, and many more groups - will be investigated with reference to their divergent aspirations for DKP politics and their non-unitary response to the challenges of political adaptation.

It will be suggested that the very lack of definition of Conservative policy, as well as the relatively loose organizational structure of the party, allowed a broad range of social, intellectual, and even political groups and sympathies to co-exist within the DKP. Moreover, the perception of opportunities to reform the party, to bring it in

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14 The orientation of past studies is illuminated by the singular concern with the problem of nationalism, as found in the subtitles of the major works by Booms, Puhle, and Eley.

line with any one of these divergent ideals of Conservatism, helped nourish hopes within the Conservative community, and in other elites too, that the DKP could successfully balance reactionary and progressive motives for change, which had always been a part of its character. The list of those who declared an allegiance to, or wished to work with, 'enlightened', 'healthy', or 'reasonable' Conservatism is a very long one indeed. The line of Chancellors who sought to detach moderate or reformist Conservatives from their intransigent party colleagues and, with some sort of 'middle-party' grouping, pursue the 'politics of the diagonal', extends unbroken from Bismarck to Bethmann-Hollweg. The problem of factionalism, then, because it suggests why groups at different levels of political influence did not 'lose faith' with the Conservative Party, can help explain the ability of the party to survive throughout the Kaiserreich.

The fourth theme emerges as a corollary to the third. This concerns the need to move away from concentration on the 'winners' of Conservative Party history and from a neglect of individuals or movements which had an impact only in an episodic or tangential way. Thus, this study will offer an analysis of the Hammerstein-Stöcker revolt of 1888-1892 as an unprecedented attack on the traditions of Honoratiorenpolitik rather than as a specifically anti-Semitic event. It will also introduce a number of 'little men' who did not break through to the first rank of party leaders but who wielded a degree of public and party influence which has been neglected in past histories of the DKP. Familiar names like Mirbach, Kanitz, Limburg, and Hahn will have to make room for Heinrich Engel, Karl von Fechenbach, August Klasing, and Hans von Durant, all men who managed, from the periphery, to stand in the vanguard of reformist movements after 1876.

A second thread to this argument will consider the problem of regionalism within the Conservative Party. Once again, the strong

reformist impulse among 'outsiders' in the provinces and states of Germany will figure prominently. As David Blackbourn has noted in his study of Catholic politics in Würtemberg, and as Dan White has illustrated through a study of National Liberalism in Hessen, the tension between 'politics from above' and 'politics from below' has its analogue in conflicts between party leaders in Berlin and rank-and-file activists in the provinces. That this study will look at independent spirits from Königsberg to Kassel, from Stettin to Stuttgart, means that the exploration of this regional motif can only be preliminary. Nevertheless, it will demonstrate 1) that Conservatism was anything but a purely Prussian phenomenon; 2) that differences of opinion between Berlin parliamentarians and DKP members at the grass-roots level resulted in a number of important challenges to the authority of the top party leaders; and 3) that local circumstances profoundly affected the way political demands were expressed 'from below' and the way opportunities for participation were conceded - or denied - 'from above'.

The fifth major subject of enquiry will be the reciprocal effect between changes in the Conservative Party itself and the relationship of the DKP to the government and the other parties of the Right. The DKP, of course, was not the only political institution being transformed by new, popular forces in Imperial Germany. Bismarck's Reich, and his own ascendancy in its government, were predicated on the most popular of mid-nineteenth-century political ideals in Germany, nationalism. After 1888, Wilhelm II was a German Kaiser singularly needful of popular approval. Caprivi and Bülow, who accepted majorities where they found them or honed the techniques of high-level Willensbildung to a new edge, were other government tacticians of popularity. With only qualified justification, historians have taken the National Liberal Party as the paradigm of an Honoratiorenpartei which failed to maintain its popular capability after the 1870s, while the Free Conservatives,

despite being labelled a party of 'leaders without followers', were intent to be popular with all Germans who wished to be more conservative than partisan. Even the left liberal groups were seeking a popular formula for a united party, while the Centre Party and the SPD were trying to overcome their own uncertainty as to the popularity of opposition to, or participation in, the political establishment of the Second Reich. Competition for 'popularity' coloured the relationships between the DKP and each of these other agents in the Wilhelmine political system.

The following pages will show that the DKP's position on the German Right was directly affected by factional disputes and movements for reform within the party; conversely, the success or failure of these reformist impulses depended largely on the degree of independence from other groups which the Conservative leaders believed they could afford at any particular moment. The Bismarckian 'Kartellpolitik' of co-operation between the two Conservative parties and the National Liberals was established and then defended in the 1880s by the leaders of the young DKP, for whom Honoratiorenpolitik and the anti-socialist alliance of right-wing parties were the natural means whereby influence was to be won and exploited. In the twin reformist campaigns for organizational and programmatic change, however, the older style of politics was challenged, as was the Bismarckian party alignment which it supported. Before the dismissal of Bismarck in 1890, demands for a more starkly anti-liberal DKP program and for a reform of the top Conservative decision-making structure were stifled by the Chancellor's wish for a stable and supportive Conservative Party. Between 1890 and 1896, however, pressure mounted for the refashioning of the Conservative Party as a popular Volkspartei, and reformist Conservatives found new opportunities to make their claim for a truly independent DKP. Along the way, the raison d'être of political Conservatism was questioned

more searchingly than ever before. In the period 1905 to 1914, new movements for party reform illustrated that the question of Conservatives' ability to adapt to changing political circumstances remained an open one.

As a final introductory comment, it should be noted that this study seeks to augment, not supplant, earlier studies of the Conservative Party. It provides no complete chronicle of DKP affairs in the Kaiserreich. Hence, such things as the details of Conservative policy in parliament and a full picture of the avenues of institutional power through which Conservative influence was asserted in the Prussian and Reich political establishments have necessarily been subordinated to the task of drawing out these five main arguments, emphasising their mutual reinforcement, and discussing their impact on the tempo and direction of change in the DKP.[15] The presentation of new evidence on the diversity and dynamism of Conservative politics has meant that some older sources have been passed over, and some less familiar records used instead. Indeed, a study of politics 'from below' and 'on the periphery' has demanded a new approach, to make up for a relative paucity of Conservative memoir literature and private papers.[16] The use of press archives amassed by 'fringe' Conservatives has provided important access to provincial publications and obscure Conservative journals, while a documentation of the efforts of the reformist community has been eased by its members' relative willingness to indulge in

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15 On other dimensions of Conservative influence in local politics, the army, the bureaucracy, the Prussian Landtag, the Protestant Church, and the royal court, see works listed in the bibliography by R. Berdahl, G. Bonham, L. Cecil, W. Deist, J. Flemming, J. Gillis, W. Görlitz, I. Hull, M. Kitchen, B. Mann, M. Messerschmidt, L. Muncy, J. Nichtweiß, K. Pollmann, M. Rauh, J. Röhl, H. Schissler, M. Schumacher, R. von Thadden, N.-U. Tödter, U. Trumpener, and P.-C. Witt.

16 Conservative leaders' disinclination to commit their views to paper was reflected when the party chairman, Manteuffel, wrote to a reformer in 1896: 'I have learned to be very careful in letters because one always risks having them stolen....' Manteuffel to Fechenbach, 6.5.96; BAK, NL K. v. Fechenbach, 'Interna 1896'.

programmatic flights of fancy and to express their alienation from traditional Conservative leaders openly. At the same time, extensive use has been made of government files, the political correspondence of chancellors and higher officials, and hitherto neglected sources documenting the political views of leading Conservatives like Helldorff and Heydebrand, in order to suggest that a view of Conservative affairs 'from the top down' is not methodologically incompatible with newer lines of enquiry. Overall, this thesis presents a differentiated image of the DKP, suspended between high and low politics, between the centre and the periphery, and between a style of politics which had already passed in Imperial Germany and one which had yet to arrive. By analysing the unpredictable and ever-changing pressures working to shape a new Conservative Party or to preserve the old one, it seems, the most novel - and challenging - interpretations of political change on the German Right can be presented and explored.

Chapter One: The Factional Heritage

This chapter will consider the question: If conservatism existed as a political force before there was a German Conservative Party, how did the various elements of pre-1876 conservatism and the conflicts between them hinder or advance the development of techniques for successful political mobilization?

1.1 Vormärz Conservatism

The lack of political parties and parliament in Prussia before 1848 did not mean that early conservatism was somehow 'unpolitical'. Whether Vormärz conservatism be viewed primarily as a system of ideas, a group of individuals, a particular set of social or economic policies, or merely a preference for the status quo, there is no doubt that all initial forms of conservatism related in some way to the question of where authority lay within the state. Because Prussian conservatism developed initially in reaction to the ideas and events of the French Revolution, its various modalities all had an anti-democratic premise.[1]

Intellectual and agrarian brands of conservatism were among the first varieties of a tangible political creed to appear on the German Right. By the second decade of the nineteenth century, the Stein-Hardenberg reforms and the threat they presented to certain aristocratic preserves had prompted the appearance of small conservative dis-

1 Cf. G. von Below, 'Die Anfänge einer Konservativen Partei in Preußen', Int. Wochenschrift, 1911, 35, pp. 1089-1102, 36, pp. 1121-1134; S. Neumann, Die Stufen des preußischen Konservatismus (Berlin, 1930); O.-E. Schüddekopf, Die deutsche Innenpolitik im letzten Jahrhundert und der konservative Gedanke (Braunschweig, 1951); K. Epstein, The Genesis of German Conservatism (Princeton, 1966); D. Allen, 'From Romanticism to Realpolitik: Studies in Nineteenth-Century German Conservatism' (Diss., Columbia University, 1971.)

cussion groups to debate the new political issues of the day. In the relatively broad social and intellectual make-up of such early conservative societies, and in their interest to associate themselves with journals to disseminate their points of view, these groups represented the foundation of an intellectual brand of conservatism which remained an important element of the right-wing community up to 1933. The 'Christian-German Circle' (founded 1811) reflected the romantic conservative ideas of the first theorist of the German Right, Adam Müller. As one historian has put it, the Circle represented a 'literary aesthetic, social-poetic need to infuse civic and political life with poesy.' But even this romantic tendency did not prevent criticism of its political discussions, and the Circle soon disbanded. Five years later, another conservative society, the Maikäferei, took as its theme a celebration of the ideal of legitimacy and as its inspiration the writings of Karl Ludwig von Haller. Like its predecessor, however, the Maikäferei was short-lived. Urban conservatives were too few in number to support such salons, and landed aristocrats were wary of having their views represented by groups of propertyless literati. They preferred spokesmen of their own ilk, like the leaders of the opposition to Hardenberg's agrarian reforms, Ludwig von der Marwitz and Count Karl von Voß-Buch.[2]

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2 On early Conservatism, cf. DKP Reports, 19, 9.5.14, 'Aus der Geschichte der kons. Partei'; Allen, 'Romanticism', pp. 67ff; H. Witte, Die pommerschen Konservativen (Berlin/Leipzig, 1936), pp. 1-18; H.-J. Schoeps, 'Die preußischen Konservativen', in G.-K. Kaltenbrunner, ed., Rekonstruktion des Konservatismus (Freiburg, 1972), pp. 183f; K. Mannheim, 'Das konservative Denken', Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik, 57 (1927), pp. 68-142; R. Berdahl, 'The Transformation of the Prussian Conservative Party, 1866-1876' (Diss., University of Minnesota, 1965), pp. 1-13; F. Aandahl, 'The Rise of German Free Conservatism' (Diss., Princeton University, 1955), Ch. 1. Also, R. Berdahl, 'Prussian Agrarian Reform and the Politics of the Junkers', presented at the AHA Gen. Meeting, Washington D.C., Dec. 1982: 'The German Nobility Confronts Social Change: Strategies for Survival.'

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, conservatives nurtured their journalistic and agricultural enterprises. The scale of German publishing expanded, while east-Elbian estate-owners, far from suffering economic disaster or social dislocation in the wake of peasant emancipation, found that technical innovation and rising grain prices brought unprecedented prosperity. But while agrarians were not wholly divorced from new press initiatives in these years, conservative editors were less concerned to discuss the state of agriculture than to propagate new religious and constitutional insights developed by right-wing thinkers. Among the most important conservative journals of the day was the Berliner politische Wochenblatt. Founded in 1831, the Wochenblatt represented an amalgam of legitimist, corporatist, and so-called 'Christian-Germanic' ideals, with the motto: 'Nous ne voulons pas la contre-révolution, mais le contraire de la révolution.' Its Catholic editor, Karl Ernst Jarcke, proclaimed after one year that the journal's success proved 'that a battle against the revolution, when it is carried through with honest boldness and determination, is even in our day neither useless nor - as the cautious would have it - excessively dangerous for the defender of the legitimate order of things.'[3] But Jarcke's brand of conservatism was not designed for the masses: the 'success' of his journal was proclaimed when its readership reached 1000.

Conservatives' attempts to define their ideals and aims were furthered by the religious movement in the 1830s and 1840s known as the

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3 Cf. J. Droz, 'Préoccupations sociales et préoccupations religieuses aux origines du parti conservateur prussien', Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine, II, 1955, p. 282; K. Koszyk, Deutsche Presse im 19. Jahrhundert (Berlin, 1966), p. 131.

Great Awakening.[4] This Pietist challenge to the rationalism of the Young Hegelians affected the development of party politics in 1848 and beyond because the battle against reason and disbelief impelled Orthodox Protestants towards a number of anti-liberal political standpoints. Thus, the 'Christian view' emerged in a way which set up an antithetical relationship between Christian and liberal politics. In terms of conservatives' willingness to appeal to popular forces for political advantage, this religious basis to conservatism circumscribed early right-wing 'activism' in a number of ways.

Conservative journalism between 1830 and 1848 had a pronounced religious character. Friedrich von Tippelskirch's Volksblatt für Stadt und Land, founded in 1838, was almost entirely given over to Church affairs. As the forerunner to the Allgemeine Konservative Monatsschrift, the Volksblatt was somewhat more enlightened than Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg's widely-read Evangelische Kirchenzeitung, but its image as another organ of conservative Protestant opinion was hardly a popular one.[5]

On the other hand, these and other journals emphasised Protestant concern on the social question, seeking to combat the 'individualistic' and 'un-Christian' aspects of early industrialization. Chief among the first 'social conservatives' was the leader of the Inner Mission in Prussia, Johann H. Wichern. Wichern's strong influence on Victor Aimé Huber, who sought to relieve the evils of the factory system through

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4 For this and other background information, see J. E. Groh, Nineteenth-Century German Protestantism (Washington, 1982); Witte, Konservativen, pp. 18ff; W. Shanahan, German Protestants Face the Social Question (Notre Dame, 1951), esp. pp. 126ff; K. Buchheim, Geschichte der christlichen Parteien in Deutschland (Munich, 1953).

5 E. Reuß, Philipp von Nathusius (Neinstedt am Harz, 1900), p. 124, cites the 'Güldenen A.B.C.' of 1845, under the heading "V":

'Von Tippelskirch ein Volksblatt schrieb
das ziemlich fern vom Volke blieb.'

the co-operative movement, was reflected in the journal, Janus, which Huber edited in the 1840s.[6] Yet before the 1860s, conservative social thinkers were not very concerned to attract popular support for a particular brand of partisan politics. Mid-century social critics in general did not focus on the misery of the working classes, but instead on the dissolution of corporate social entities, like guilds. In effect, social policy for most conservatives never went beyond a comment on the ideals of community and authority. Privation was met with charity and evangelism, not legislation or technical measures of relief.[7]

In many ways, pre-1848 Christian patriarchalism was a way to avoid active politics. The 'organic social bonds' of the Christian-Germanic view seemed, in non-revolutionary times, to relieve elites of the odium of creating popular allegiance to their anti-democratic goals. Thus, a certain 'political' yet 'non-activist' conception of public affairs could be said to have bound conservatives together before 1848. Anti-revolutionary editors, Orthodox pastors, profit-oriented agrarians, social critics, and intimates of the royal court - all shared a loose commitment to preserving a world in which political theories took little account of the common man.

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6 Cf. Shanahan, Protestants, pp. 149ff; D. Mende, 'Kulturkonservatismus und Konservative Erneuerungsbestrebungen' in Dr. H. Thierbach, ed., Adolf Grabowsky. (Cologne, 1963), pp. 90ff; Droz, 'Préoccupations', pp. 282f; and F. Fischer, 'Der Deutsche Protestantismus und die Politik im 19. Jahrhundert', HZ, 151 (1951), pp. 505ff.

7 Cf. W. Shanahan, 'The social outlook of Prussian conservatism', Rev. of Pol., 15, 1953, pp. 209-252; A. von Martin, 'Weltanschauliche Motive im altkonservativen Denken', in G.A. Ritter, ed., Deutsche Parteien vor 1918 (Cologne, 1973), pp. 142-164.

1.2 Revolution and Reaction

Among the Conservative groups which reacted to the events of March 1848, east-Elbian agrarians were perhaps those who most swiftly - and most cynically - donned the populist mask. On the one hand, the Junkerparlament of 18/19 August 1848 represented an attempt at the very highest level of politics to block the agrarian reforms proposed by the National Assembly in Frankfurt. On the other hand, however, the 'Association for the Protection of the Interests of Landownership and the Welfare of all Classes', led by E. von Bülow-Cummerow, is noteworthy for the limited attempt it made to harness popular support for the agrarian cause. Its organization included an extended executive Committee of Fifty; an effort was made to establish a network of branch associations; and great attention was given to generating press reports on large meetings of landowners from all regions in Prussia.[8]

These efforts at recruitment and propaganda were ultimately unsuccessful, suffering from many of the same liabilities as would continue to plague Conservative agitation for many years to come. The isolation of scattered estate owners in rural Prussia made it very difficult to overcome the problems of transport and communication; this militated against united political activity. Slow post and distribution of newspapers meant that no quick reaction of grass-roots elements to events in Berlin was possible; in any case, only the most committed agrarians would travel the necessary distance to local meetings to hear of nothing but Berlin excitement.

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8 Cf. E. Jordan, Die Entstehung der konservativen Partei und die preußischen Agrarverhältnisse von 1848 (Munich/Leipzig, 1914); K. Klatte, 'Die Anfänge des Agrarkapitalismus und der preußischen Konservativen' (Diss., Hamburg, 1974), esp. pp. 281ff; K. Canis, 'Verein zur Wahrung der Interessen des Grundbesitzes und des Wohlstandes aller Volksklassen', in Fricke, II, pp. 786-788.

In the provinces, no consistent organizational pattern was established, and relationships with local newspapers were rarely cultivated. Often local branches folded after less than five meetings, or accomplished nothing more than the publication of a founding declaration in a local newspaper by a large estate owner. Thus, when the 'Bülowverein' collapsed completely in 1849, the limits of pure agrarianism, untouched by a more comprehensive view of politics, had been shown.[9]

Ludwig von Gerlach was closely associated with more than one group of Conservatives who in 1848 conceived of political action and aims in terms other than class interest or a defence of a particular economic sector. Looking back on the Junkerparlament, Gerlach said in October 1849 that 'the Conservative Party has recently been characterized, by someone as accurate as disparaging, as the party of those who want to lose as slowly as possible what they own and enjoy.' It was no impetuosity which had prompted Gerlach's moving speech at the Junkerparlament the year before, in which he explored the theme of aristocratic social and political resonsibility. Gerlach declared that 'property itself is a political idea; ...as purely a means for indulgence it is not holy, but tarnished. Against property **without** responsibilities, the communists are right.' The long-time editor of the Volksblatt für Stadt und Land, Philipp von Nathusius, expressed the same thought in his diary entry of 17 November 1848: 'The eternal unrest of this year has had the highly salutary effect of shaking me out of the delight in property which is becoming a habit. ... Wealth is an office from God.'[10]

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9 Klatte, 'Agrarkapitalismus', pp. 286, 299.

10 Reuß, Nathusius, p. 109; KonsMon, March 1896, p. 300; Stillich, Konservativen, p. 211.

The religious basis of these attacks on agrarian chauvinism represented a decisive element in the Conservative reaction to the revolution of 1848. When Hengstenberg called Conservatives to arms in April 1848 with the cry, 'Christianity rejects all revolution,' he was only echoing Gerlach's sentiment, expressed in the words: 'We must give our consciousness of God a political form.'[11] Yet when one tries to determine how the Christian response to revolution impelled Conservatives to define their political creed more precisely and take steps to defend it before the people, one finds that Bismarck had a certain justification when he complained that political argument with Conservatives was futile because any disputed point could be turned into an aspect of religious belief. Thus, the different ways Christianity was used as a point of departure for a defence of Throne and Altar meant that the Conservative response in 1848 was anything but a unitary one.

One feature of this response which coloured the later history of Conservatism was the degree to which an awareness of Protestant-Catholic affinities was strengthened in 1848. In fact, the ecumenical community of interest discovered by the opponents of revolution had a long pre-history, most notably in journalistic undertakings after 1830, in early clerical involvement in social activism, and in the interconfessional make-up of early conservative cliques like the 'Club on the Wilhelmstraße.' The view of revolution and absolutism as the twin consequences of rationalism first made Pietists and Catholics, defending Church rights in the 1830s, appear to be waging the same battle. As well, the early conservative discussion groups inspired by Müller and Haller - both converts to Catholicism - included important Catholics like Clemens Brentano and Count Cajus

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11 Droz, 'Préoccupations', p. 287; Stillich, Konservativen, p. 34.

Stolberg, who in turn influenced Ludwig von Gerlach and other Protestants.

Finally, social concerns led Protestant Conservatives like Huber and Wichern to win the support of, and maintain contact with, leading social Catholics around Bishop Ketteler at mid-century. Together, Protestant and Catholic conservatives explored the political implications of their concept of order. Doing so, they tended to find that the authoritarian and hierarchical ideals they shared argued the basic inequality of individuals or, rather, disregarded the individual as such altogether.[12]

Interconfessional co-operation characterized the right-wing counter-attack to the liberal onslaught on institutionalized religion and education. To be sure, the Catholic response, in 1848 and afterward, was always a complex one, as it incorporated elements of both liberalism and conservatism. Yet pulpits in every village levelled swingeing critiques on the new democratic ideas, and soon clerics were taking the lead in arguing that the Church, the nobility, and the Christian-conservative solution to the social question were threatened by the same god, Demos. Cheaper and more popular newspapers were founded by these anti-revolutionaries, and clerics played a significant role in helping organize patriotic associations in defence of the monarchy. In this way, Protestant antagonism was directed away from the rival Christian Church toward the liberals. In the 1870s and afterward, this ecumenical illiberalism was to affect party politics

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12 Cf. Martin, 'Weltanschauliche Motive', p. 145; A. von Martin, 'Der preußische Altkonservatismus und der politische Katholizismus in ihren gegenseitigen Beziehungen', Dt. Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, VII (1929), pp. 489-514; Allen, 'Romanticism', pp. 236ff, 250ff; Fischer, 'Protestantismus', p. 498; Buchheim, Christliche Parteien, pp. 135f; Shanahan, Protestants, pp. 207f, 282ff; H.-J. Schoeps, Das andere Preußen (Honnef, 1957^2), pp. 69-76.

in Germany most profoundly. But this particular 'Christian form of politics' was a product of 1848: in his memoirs, the social Conservative leader, Hermann Wagener, looked back at the decade after the revolution with 'special satisfaction at the friendly, indeed somewhat intimate relations which bound us at that time to our Catholic colleagues and which ensured the possibility of mutual understanding in settling religious-political questions.'[13]

Both Wagener and Gerlach were among the Conservative leaders for whom neither a purely agrarian nor a purely religious defence of the Conservative position was sufficient in 1848. They became involved in a number of associations which sought to recruit other elements of the Conservative community to a defence of the monarchy. These associations included the Preußenverein für konstitutionelles Königtum and the Patriotischer Verein; but by the summer of 1848, the Verein für König und Vaterland had emerged as the most significant of these groups. In late August 1848, Ludwig von Gerlach described the purpose of the latter Verein:

> Its goal is the organization of a political party. Such a party may not base itself exclusively upon material interests if it does not want to create artificial conflict when unity is a much more important matter.

By September, Gerlach had induced the other main patriotic associations to ally themselves with the Verein für König und Vaterland. The Patriotischer Verein brought with it a strong membership of Conservative academics, officers, and officials, while the Preußenverein incorporated mittelständisch anti-revolutionaries. Gerlach even succeeded in discouraging some branches of his main Verein from allying themselves with the agrarian movement under Bülow, and he and Moritz August

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13 K. Canis, 'Der Wandel in der Funktion konservativer Organisationen 1848-1866' in Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, 14, 1965, pp. 223f; H. Wagener, Erlebtes (Berlin, 1884), p. 35.

von Bethmann-Hollweg made a clear effort to convince the uncertain artisan rebels of 1848 that political Conservatism could ameliorate their economic distress.[14]

The practical organizational results of Gerlach's efforts were, however - as described by the mid-nineteenth-century historian and observer of Conservative affairs, Heinrich Leo - 'pitifully thin'. By January 1849, other campaigns in the counter-revolution were well under way, particularly in the highest Berlin circles, so the Verein für König und Vaterland began to fade from view. In the new Conservative newspaper, the Neue Preußische (Kreuz-) Zeitung, Huber criticised the Verein for failing to exploit the electoral opportunities presented by the Prussian Landtag campaign in January 1849, and he complained, rightly, that the Verein suffered from a lack of unified leadership.[15]

It is not possible at this point to include either a full study of the personnel and influence of the Conservative Camarilla around the Prussian king, or a detailed discussion of the evolution of Conservatives' constitutional ideas around mid-century.[16] The reconciliation of anti-absolutist and anti-parliamentary motives within Conservatism is such a complex theme that attention to it will have to be focussed on the period after 1876. Undoubtedly, however, the impact of revolution in 1848 and the dimensions of the political reaction in Prussia which followed were milestones in the effort of Conservatives

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14 K. Canis, 'Verein für König und Vaterland (VfKV)' in Fricke, II, p. 732; Shanahan, Protestants, p. 198; Schüddekopf, Innenpolitik, p. 41.

15 Cf. D. Langewiesche, 'Die Anfänge der deutschen Parteien. Partei, Fraktion und Verein in der Revolution von 1848/49', GG, 1978, 360.

16 Esp. useful here is H. Diwald, ed., Von der Revolution zum Norddeutschen Bund. Politik und Ideengut der preußischen Hochkonservativen 1848-1866. (Göttingen, 1970), I; W. Orr Jr.'s 'The Foundation of the Kreuzzeitung Party in Prussia, 1848-1850' (Diss., University of Wisconsin, 1971) could not be consulted by the author.

to adjust to new realities of political power in the nineteenth century.

As William Orr Jr. has shown, the most important Conservative theorist at mid-century, Friedrich Julius Stahl, was instrumental in 1848 and afterward in pushing Conservatives like Ludwig and Leopold von Gerlach to accept a degree of constitutionalism as another necessary step into the forum of active politics.[17] Certainly this and later steps were taken with extreme reluctance. Leopold von Gerlach conceded that 'constitutionalism with all its consequences must be chewed up thoroughly and digested. Nothing good can come of it, only after it.' But the bitter pill of constitutional compromise was considerably sweetened as Conservatives succeeded in working through both parliament and the court to protect their interests and expand their influence, as through the patently illegal reactivation of provincial parliaments. These and other elements of the Reaction in the 1850s inclined Stahl, Bethmann-Hollweg, and other 'enlightened' Conservatives to complain of the 'stupid reaction' and 'Junkerism' which through the decade held sway in Conservative ranks. But even a die-hard anti-constitutionalist like Ludwig von Gerlach was forced to concede that 'etatist representation must become national representation, etatist monarchy constitutional monarchy, as England provides such an instructive example for us.'[18]

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17 F.J. Stahl, 'Der Banner der Conservativen', KZ, 20.7.48, in W. Orr Jr., 'The Prussian Ultra Right and the Advent of Constitutionalism in Prussia', CdnJH, IX (3), 1976, p. 300; also Berdahl, 'Conservative Party', pp. 25f.

18 A. v. Bethmann-Hollweg, Reaction und Sondertümelerei: Sermon an die Conservativen (Berlin, 1848), cited in Orr, 'Ultra Right', p. 300; also see B. Michniewicz, 'Stahl und Bismarck' (Diss., Berlin, 1913).

Through the 1850s there existed a deep tension within Prussian Conservatism as reformist and reactionary groups oriented themselves to new political circumstances. In protest against the Manteuffel ministry's policy of forfeiting on as many of the concessions granted in 1848-49 as possible, and to decry the Conservative abandonment of social policy, there appeared in the 1850s a number of separate groups of Conservatives who hoped to turn the tide of reaction and bring Conservatism back onto its legitimate course (as they perceived it.)

One of these groups was the clique around Bethmann-Hollweg and the Preußische Wochenblatt, which he helped found in 1851. Strongly represented in the Wochenblattpartei, as it was called, were diplomats, upper officials, and west-German nobles. Bethmann was certainly a monarchist, but he saw the greatest peril for the throne in the failure to reconcile new political undertakings with older responsibilities and promises of the king. Thus, in line with some of Stahl's leading ideas, Bethmann criticised both absolutism and intransigent Conservatism. The Wochenblattpartei directed its antagonism especially against the government's repressive press laws, and came into conflict with the Kreuzzeitung when it defended them. The Wochenblatt never seriously challenged the Kreuzzeitung as the 'official' Conservative organ, but its influence was significant: with a strong readership among Prussian officials, the Wochenblatt's circulation hovered between 1000 and 1500 in the period 1851-55, in contrast to the sharp drop in Kreuzzeitung subscriptions, from approximately 25,000 in 1850 to 6000 a decade later. In addition, Bethmann's group had close relations with Wilhelm, the Crown Prince, who embraced many of their quasi-liberal constitutional views at that time. These factors induced King Friedrich Wilhelm IV to seek compromises with this 'coterie of malcontents',

as Bismarck labelled them, and Bethmann and his colleagues continued to press the government for responsible policies.[19]

Bismarck's scorn for Bethmann's group was based on his belief that a Conservative opposition during the Reaction was a dangerous new trend in politics. As he wrote to Manteuffel in September 1851:[20]

> The possibility of a Conservative-oppositional line is based on a fallacy; a Conservative opposition can only be led by and through the king, in that His Majesty is drawn in against his own ministers, not through public pamphlets but rather through personal influence at court; with us, any other type has no foundation, or it must turn radical.

There were cogent reasons, however, why many Conservatives were dissatisfied with the Camarilla-Kreuzzeitung group. High-level intrigues were seen to be perpetuating the inactivity and lack of commitment in the 'party' at this time. Leopold von Gerlach lamented: 'What sort of times are these? Everything has the character of boredom, even Stahl's speeches.' Ludwig von Gerlach wrote later of the apathy of the Conservative deputies in the 1850s: 'Ours do not follow the debates, they do not read the various documents, and they are repulsed by state business. On the Left it is otherwise.'[21]

Philipp von Nathusius, editor of the Volksblatt für Stadt und Land after 1849, represented that section of Conservative opinion which was growing restless with the Camarilla. The search for a new dimension to Conservatism was perhaps best summarized in Nathusius's New Year's editorial for 1851, in which he gave his own interpretation of the significance of factionalism on the German Right.[22] Nathusius divided

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19 Schüddekopf, Innenpolitik, p. 42; Shanahan, Protestants, pp. 213f, 294, 361ff; Koszyk, Presse, pp. 133-35; and M. Behnen, Das Preußische Wochenblatt (1851-1861) (Göttingen, 1971).

20 O. v. Bismarck, Die Gesammelte Werke (Berlin, 1932), I, p. 62.

21 Stillich, Konservativen, p. 221; A. Hahn, Die Berliner Revue (Berlin, 1934), p. 34.

22 'Neujahrswort von 1851', in Reuß, Nathusius, pp. 408-414.

the Conservative community into three sections. On the extreme Right stood the 'pure Absolutists', who were 'wholly without principles' and stood for 'Order at any price!' The 'middle Right', a 'very respectable class of men', represented the largest group of Conservatives, but, Nathusius wrote, they were not the real leaders of the Right. These 'monarchists' wished only for quiet and obedience, and so '[made] public life thereby impossible.' They were also compromised in the political arena by their absolute loyalty to a king who himself no longer wished to rule absolutely.

The third group, the 'leftist' Conservatives, was numerically small, but it had 'principles' and 'dynamic ideas'. Nathusius reckoned the Volksblatt to be representative of this brand of Conservatism, although its leader was Stahl. Reaffirming his newspaper's commitment not to 'counter-revolution' but to the 'opposite of revolution', Nathusius claimed that Democrats and Radicals saw the leftist Conservatives as their most dangerous rivals, because their style of 'positive opposition' to the government undercut the liberals' campaign for popularity. As Nathusius challenged the liberals:

> You call yourselves radical, we are far more radical than you; you are lovers of constitutions, we are even greater ones; you proclaim yourselves friends of the people, we are even better friends; you want to be German, we are a hundred times more German than you.... You Democrats are the real enemies and destroyers of the people and of all that is popular.

Though the circulation of his Volksblatt hovered around 2500, Nathusius gathered around him reformist Conservatives like Huber and Leo, and he apparently also counselled Wichern in the art of popularizing his efforts in the social sphere.

The third major dissenting opinion from the Camarilla's line in the 1850s was centred on the Berliner Revue and its principal backer, Hermann Wagener. Founded in April 1855, the weekly Revue reflected a less religious viewpoint than most other Conservative organs: its

financial patron, Baron von Hertefeld, said that it wished to acknowledge Christianity without making religion an essential ingredient of Conservative politics. In a parallel way, Wagener's group wished the Revue to have a strong agrarian tone and yet believed that they could show that Conservatism meant 'something more than a restoration of hunting privileges.' Novels, short stories, and poetry were introduced into the Revue to make it popular, but its circulation remained small: by one estimate, subscriptions sank from approximately 750 in the mid-1850s to roughly one-half that figure in 1863. The agrarian line naturally compromised sales in Berlin which, by another estimate, never exceeded 500.[23]

What is of particular interest about the Berliner Revue is that, despite its avowed aim to show the social depth of Conservatism, it was a project which fell between two stools. Relatively uninterested in practical co-operation with Catholic social activists, Wagener was concerned that the rewards of a progressive social policy should accrue to the Conservative Party alone, and this made him an opportunist. Even in the mid-1850s, Wagener was not unwilling to construct patchwork Conservative 'programs' in an effort to exploit Conservative parliamentary strength and convert the Revue circle into a prop for the government, which was more openly steering a course independent of the Camarilla.[24] But the Kreuzzeitung and Nathusius's Volksblatt were both cool to these programmatic initiatives, and Bethmann's Wochenblatt accused the Revue of coquetting with socialism. In parliament, the Conser-

23 Details in Hahn, Revue, pp. 35ff; Shanahan, Protestants, pp. 272ff; Koszyk, Presse, pp. 135ff. On Wagener, cf. W. Saile, Hermann Wagener und sein Verhältnis zu Bismarck (Tübingen, 1958).

24 See [H. Wagener], Grundzüge conservativer Politik (Berlin, 1868), pp. 87-100; also Hahn, Revue, p. 45; and the agrarian 'Entwurf zu dem Programm der Rechten' [1855], printed in Deutscher Landbote, 15.11.84.

vative delegation remained as divided as ever, and Manteuffel's support could not be won.

On a larger scale, the Revue only imperfectly reconciled a defence of the landed economic interest with the sort of social policy that might have won new political elements to Conservatism. Wagener's circle realized that the former options of Protestant charity or narrow economic agrarianism were not adequate to the political challenges of the 1850s and 1860s. But if these reformist Conservatives thought they knew what paths would **not** lead to a victory - electorally or otherwise - over liberalism, they were less sure how to proceed in a positive way. Not interested in factory inspection or workers' insurance schemes - a leading Revue editor was a determined Malthusian - the social Conservatives still could not overcome their disinclination to see such benefits fall only to the urban working classes. In the same way, an inability to familiarize themselves with urban conditions made Conservative proposals in aid of the urban Mittelstand - itself uncertain and divided - appear hesitant and prove impractical. The debilitating effects of this restless but diffuse reforming ambition could only increase when the Conservatives were forced onto the defensive during the Regency period of 1858-61.

The period after 1858 brought a quantum leap in Conservative organizing activity in Prussia. In general, this development has been neglected by historians, probably due to the contemporaneous advances in liberal organization which, combined with other factors, produced stunning electoral defeats for Conservatives contesting Landtag elections.[25] Thus, new departures in political mobilization have

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25 J. Sheehan, German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago/London, 1978), pp. 102ff.

tended to be passed over as historians have documented the disparate nature of Conservatism in the 1850s and early 1870s and presumed that a similar lack of commitment and innovation characterized the party in the 1860s. The evidence suggests otherwise.

In 1855, Conservatives had won 181 mandates in the House of Deputies. By the next election in November 1858, however, the Manteuffel ministry had departed: suddenly the less reactionary government refused to sanction the notoriously explicit electoral malpractice of its corps of officials, which had delivered Conservative votes with no party machinery to speak of. The result was the immediate elimination of Conservative ascendancy in the Landtag: the party returned only 47 members.

Wagener set out immediately to expand the appeal of his party. By July 1859, he had founded a new newspaper, the cheap daily Preußische Volksblatt. Although many of the staff of the new enterprise were personnel from the Berliner Revue, the Volksblatt had a new, lower-middle-class accent: with little in the way of intellectual content, it defended the rights of artisans in the struggle over freedom of trade legislation. Wagener's effort and the high profile of Conservatives at the Berlin convention of regional artisans' groups in August/September 1860 paid off quickly as the Volksblatt was designated the official organ of artisans. Conservative Mittelstandpolitik had been born.[26]

Prompted by this success, the conviction grew among many Conservatives that a new popular appeal to artisans might salvage their electoral fortunes, particularly since ständisch rhetoric about preserving the integrity and material basis of traditional economic estates came easily to Conservative tongues. As the Prussian elections

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26 Hahn, Revue, p. 92; Koszyk, Presse, p. 136.

of late 1861 appeared on the horizon, however, it was recognised that rhetoric could not replace organization and leadership. Characteristically, Nathusius's Volksblatt für Stadt und Land had begun the campaign by presenting voters with the choice: 'Christ or Anti-Christ - Majority or Authority'. The first Conservative pamphlets were couched in uniformly negative, anti-democratic terms. But then Wagener, Hertefeld, and other Conservative leaders seized the initiative. The immediate result was the founding of the first Conservative Party central association, called the Preußischer Volksverein (PVV).[27]

The founding meeting of the Prussian Volksverein on 20 September 1861 was presided over by a 'Conservative Central Electoral Committee', and its first executive consisted almost exclusively of Conservative patrons associated with the Berliner Revue and the Preußische Volksblatt.[28] Within three days of its founding, it allegedly had over 1100 members; a year later this figure had risen to 26,000. Co-operation between the Volksverein leadership and artisan representatives was close during the Landtag election campaign. Of 17 candidates originally selected by the Electoral Committee in Berlin, seven were master artisans, and an effort was made to avoid the practice of bringing in Conservative candidates from outside the capital. Wagener himself paid special attention to the founding of yet another new Conservative newspaper, to represent artisan interests: the Deutsche Bürgerzeitung appeared in Berlin from 1 October 1861. He also wrote most of the Volksverein's first agitational publicity.

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27 KZ, 5.7/2.8.61; Vksbl. f. Stadt u. Land, 29.7.61; Cons. 'Aufruf' of 2.8.61; cited in H. Müller, Der Preußische Volksverein (Berlin, 1914), pp. 20-22, 121f. Except where noted, the following discussion relies on this work.

28 Cf. Eckert, 'Wandlungen', p. 22; KZ, 20.9.61, in Müller, Volksverein, p. 29.

The dominant theme in the PVV's new agitational plan was the necessity for personal contact to win Conservative votes: rank-and-file members were urged to influence housemates and neighbours, partners in trade or business, employees, relatives, and social acquaintances. House servants were even instructed to allow no liberal campaign literature into their households, and party men were entrusted with the task of checking electoral lists for errors and omissions. As many 'sturdy and fearless' Conservatives as possible were to appear outside the polling stations, and special care was to be taken that Conservative gatherings were not overwhelmed by Democrats. In this manner, it was hoped, new Mittelstand allies would supplement the activities of more traditional supporters of the Conservative cause.

After this effort, Conservatives were stunned by another electoral defeat. Their Landtag seats sank from 47 to just fourteen as they won a mere four per cent of the vote. Combined liberal forces, with about seventy per cent of the vote, held 243 of the House of Deputies' 352 seats.[29] When Conservatives set out to discover the reasons for this failure of their agitation, a number of critical deficiencies were highlighted. Even before the election, Bismarck had criticised the negative tone of the Prussian Volksverein's program, which contained the sort of vague anti-liberal terms needed to maintain the nominal allegiance of artisan groups. The Kreuzzeitung reflected this negativism when it referred to the Volksverein as an 'Anti-Nationalverein'. Despite Wagener's efforts, much of the Conservative press had shown itself unreformed in the 1861 campaign: newspapers continued to offer long and unclear programmatic articles, while pamphlets ignored crucial domestic issues in favour of passé or obscure topics. Generally, Con-

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29 Sheehan, Liberalism, p. 96.

servatives' efforts at popular propaganda offered only completely generalized statements, reflecting a persistent faith in the self-evident truth of their principles.

Among the most outspoken critics of PVV activity was Heinrich Leo, who led Conservative affairs in Halle.[30] Leo doubted whether the Volksverein's executive committee, of whose fourteen members thirteen were noble, could carry forward the initial moves to win the support of artisan leaders, some of whom had in fact refused to sign the PVV's founding program, in order to avoid being labelled instruments of a class party which was otherwise alien to them. Warning the Volksverein leadership against seeing its provincial members as 'party atoms', Leo offered Wagener an enlightening critique of tensions between local activists and an overly bureaucratic Berlin leadership.[31]

> We are not in the least impressed by the strict attention to reports from the treasurer, the correct dispatch of correspondence, etc., which the leadership applauds in its notices, for that is all bureaucratic nonsense which for the most part can be done away with completely when the association has a real grass-roots organization and if it is based on trust instead of on lists and electoral majorities.

Despite Leo's concern for the Volksverein's local apparatus, Wagener believed that stronger central leadership from Berlin, increased bureaucratic efficiency, and even greater publicity campaigns were required. In the reforms which followed in early 1862, 'constituency commissioners' were established to co-ordinate central and local activity. Reports of membership changes were now to be submitted to Berlin by local leaders twice a year. Local PVV branches were urged to set up 'reading circles' for members who found the price

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30 On Leo, see G. v. Below, 'Heinrich von Leo', Dt. Vierteljahrsschrift, II, 1924, pp. 533ff; Schoeps, Das andere Preußen, pp. 176-218.

31 Neumann, Stufen, p. 157; Shanahan, Protestants, p. 305; Wagener, Erlebtes, I, pp. 76-80; H. Wagener, Die kleine aber mächtige Partei (Berlin, 1885), pp. 42ff; Müller, Volksverein, p. 36.

of Conservative books or journals too high. From January 1862 a parliamentary correspondence, the Berliner Kammer-Korrespondenz, was lithographed for PVV members. From 1862 to 1872, annual editions of a Volksverein calendar were published, in two price ranges. Plans for a mortgage bank for landowners and artisans were set in motion, and a number of major petition campaigns were inaugurated. The PVV even founded a humorous weekly magazine, Der kleine Reaktionär, with a motto that satirized political parties and parliament. Finally, a new emphasis was placed on retaining the allegiance of Conservative voters in the last election, through the celebration of national events and the holding of summer outings in the countryside.

When the conflict between the king and the liberal majority in the Prussian Landtag occasioned new elections in 1862 and 1863, the Volksverein was able to move into action more quickly than in 1861. New regional leaders for party organizations failed to appear, however, so the style of the Conservative campaign suffered from many traditional liabilities. As well, the Volksverein did not press its own ascendancy over other Conservative organizations which had survived from 1848, so the PVV's campaign lost some of its agitational independence and decisiveness.[32] The 1862 election brought defeat once more, as the Conservative delegation shrank to eleven members. In 1863, however, the choice presented by Bismarck, between monarchism or parliamentary rule, was a more stark one; as previously passive supporters of the king voted their convictions, Conservatives found themselves with a representation of 35 members in the new House. By 1866 and 1867, when military conflicts had replaced the constitutional crisis as the overwhelming reason to 'vote Conservative', the party's House of Deputies' delegation had risen once more to around 120 members.

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32 Cf. Müller, Volksverein, pp. 71-74; Eckert, 'Wandlungen', Appendices.

Unfortunately, due partly to a paucity of detailed political studies for this period, there is no complete answer to the question of how the establishment of Conservative Party machinery related to other political factors also tending to influence the popularity of Conservatism. The Landtag defeat of 1862 showed that the Volksverein's organization and propaganda could not immediately alter voting patterns in Prussia. The equally precipitous decline of Conservative representation in both the Landtag and Reichstag in the early 1870s suggests that estrangement from the government and unpopular Conservative policies on certain national issues had more impact on election results than reforms in the Conservative style of politics introduced by Wagener. The traditions of Honoratiorenpolitik certainly could not be dismantled by a mavarick organizer and publicist who lacked a committed corps of reformers to support and carry on his work.

It would be wrong, however, to dismiss the significance of the Volksverein entirely, for two main reasons. First, there is a sense in which the new activities undertaken by the PVV consolidated the political lessons which had been learned in 1848 and subsequently forgotten during the Reaction. One of Wagener's achievements was that he succeeded through the Volksverein in keeping at least the image of political non-exclusivity before Conservative eyes. Through his strong propaganda campaigns and personal interest in advancing the Conservatives' social program, the leader of the Volksverein managed to use the inclination of Conservatives like Kleist-Retzow and the Gerlachs to rally around the Crown in order to press his view of the monarchy standing together with oppressed economic and social estates against the advance of the parliamentary system and laissez-faire economics. It is little wonder that these men should have welcomed Wagener's project for Conservative agitation without examining too closely its

underlying aims. The pessimism about Conservative Party politics in the 1850s was summed up when Ludwig von Gerlach wrote in February 1858: 'Our party can neither live nor die in this atmosphere.'[33]

Yet the fact that more stirring events captured the minds of political men in the period after 1862 is not to say that Wagener's initiative failed to suggest the need for new commitments and new avenues of activity on the Right. As William Shanahan has written, 'at least the Prussian Volksverein tried, and in this sense its program was realistic, to make political capital out of the craftsmen's resentment against factories and factory production. ... The guilds had been sanctioned during the reactionary fifties with a lofty disdain for their members' party loyalties. Now the craftmen were assiduously wooed....'[34] As before, many of the new policies advocated by Wagener and other social Conservatives were advanced too tentatively to convince Mittelstand elements still adrift in their political allegiance that they should declare for the Conservative cause. But in reaction to such new departures as Wagener's ambivalent advocacy of workers' rights of coalition, liberals and die-hard Conservatives alike attested to the new popular appeal of the Volksverein by charging that Conservatism had become demagogic.[35] As one liberal described a typical Conservative Verein evening: 'There the dignified gentleman delivers a political speech, crammed full of slogans and invectives

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33 Stillich, Konservativen, p. 224.

34 Shanahan, Protestants, p. 306.

35 Berl.VksZ., 20.10.64, 'Kons. Demagogie', in H.-G. Eckert, 'Die Wandlungen der Konservativen Partei durch Bismarcks Innenpolitik' (Diss., Kiel, 1953), p. 84f; '"Kons. Demagogie". Separat-Abdruck aus der Berliner Revue' (Berlin, 1864), discussed in Müller, Volksverein, p. 83; 'Angriffe gegen die Vereinsorganisation der cons. Partei', 27.4.67, in Grundzüge conservativer Politik, p. 61.

against the rival parties; he harangues, protected by the unity of the Verein....'

The Volksverein's second main accomplishment was that it provided for the first time an organizational focus for Conservative activity outside parliament. Even in the 1860s, the Prussian Conservative Party was nothing more than the name given to the delegation of Conservative deputies in the Prussian Landtag and the loose collection of electoral associations which arose during election campaigns to support right-wing candidates. The Volksverein attempted to move beyond this conception of 'party' by establishing regular activities designed to appeal to the social, patriotic, and material interests of Conservative voters. For example, it helped gather funds for veterans of the Danish war; it tried to foster active club life at the local level and greater participation in national celebrations; and it began to publish pamphlets during parliamentary sessions rather than just at election time. And from what is known of the scale of the propaganda and recruitment by the PVV at this time, it appears that an unprecedentedly large proportion of the right-wing community was in one way or another touched by the PVV's agitation. In the mid-1860s, when the Volksverein reached its high point, the PVV calendar was printed in editions of 21,000 and 30,000 copies. The Preußische Volksblatt allegedly had a circulation of close to 4,000. At the PVV general meeting in December 1865, it was announced that Verein members numbered roughly 50,000, organized in 534 local and regional associations.[36]

In the following year, divisive issues of national politics and the naming of Wagener as Privy Councillor and advisor to Bismarck began a decline in PVV activity, which ceased entirely in the summer of 1872. As will be shown below, more than one Conservative 'regenera-

36 KZ, 306, 1865, in Müller, Volksverein, pp. 85f.

tion' would follow. Yet the self-consciousness of Conservatives had been raised; the Prussian Volksverein and its success in inspiring commitment to the Conservative cause had enlightened at least some Rightist reformers to the possibilities of popular politics. In contrast to the despondency of Gerlach in 1858, the words of Moritz von Blanckenburg in the very first days of the Volksverein suggest how the Conservatives' political sense had matured. In a letter to Ludwig von Gerlach in 1861, Blanckenburg wrote:[37]

> The party must be elevated to a level of independence; nothing is more dangerous to us than abandoning ourselves now to the supporters of Auerswald, as formerly to Manteuffelism. Believe me, to do that our people are always **more** than willing. The dignified chamberlain and his servility is ruining our party!
> ... Now we are firmly organized throughout the entire monarchy, and I think this will be of use to us not only for the elections, but otherwise too, if the crown should completely ride rough-shod over us.

1.3 Crises and Compromises

Bismarck once said in conversation: 'If I had to go through life with principles, I would feel as though I had to walk a narrow path in the woods and carry a long pole in my mouth.'[38] As both old-guard and reformist Conservatives found in the decade after 1866, Bismarck's Realpolitik and the pace of changes on both the domestic and foreign political fronts demanded the abandonment of many of their most cherished principles. Past studies have illuminated some of the tensions between intransigent and reformist Conservatives on the issue of war with Austria in 1866; the advent of the new German Reich and its constitution in 1871; the ambivalent Conservative response to Bismarck's Kulturkampf against the Catholic Church in the 1870s; and

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37 In Diwald, Von der Revolution, II, pp. 1083f.

38 O. Vossler, 'Bismarcks Ethos', HZ, 171, 1951, p. 267.

the struggle over the bill to reform local government in the eastern provinces of Prussia in 1872. Similarly well-documented is the genesis of the Free Conservative Party in mid-1867.[39]

It is important to note, however, that the more 'progressive' of the mainstream Conservative leaders like Wagener and Blanckenburg came under the spell of Bismarck to such a degree that their plans to reform the Prussian Conservative Party paid little attention to grass-roots organization or agitation, and instead came to focus almost exclusively on the question of how to induce the warring parliamentary factions within the party to fall in behind the policies of the Chancellor. In other words, the story of reformist Conservatism becomes, for the decade after 1866, the story of how the party leaders attempted to exploit older methods of high-level influence, and their discovery that great events - like Bismarck - could not be bent to conform to either extreme reactionary or more radical social-conservative ideals. In this way, the failure of 'eccentric' forms of Conservatism naturally inclined the leaders of the new German Conservative Party after 1876 to favour stability and the advantages of high political manoeuvring in Berlin over internal party change, program reform, and the dubious rewards of an organizational effort at the local level.

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39 Cf. Berdahl, 'Transformation'; G. Ritter, 'Die preußische Konservativen in der Krisis von 1866', (Diss., Heidelberg, 1912); M. Hesse, 'Die politische Haltung Ludwig von Gerlachs unter Bismarcks Ministerium 1862 bis 1877' (Diss., Marburg, 1912); W. Schröder, 'Junkertum und preußisch-deutsches Reich', in H. Bartel and E. Engstenberg, eds., Die großpreußisch-militaristische Reichsgründung 1871 (Berlin, 1971), II, pp. 170-234; Hahn, Revue, pp. 165ff; E. Schulte, 'Die Stellung der Konservativen zum Kulturkampf 1870-1878' (Diss., Cologne, 1959); R. Berdahl, 'Conservative Politics and Aristocratic Landowners in Bismarckian Germany', JMH, 44 (1), 1972, esp. pp. 12ff. On Free Cons., see Aandahl, 'Free Conservatism'; A. Wolfstieg, 'Die Anfänge der freikonservativen Partei' in E. Daniels et al, eds., Hans Delbrück Festschrift (Berlin, 1908), pp. 313-336; K. Viebig, Die Entstehung und Entwicklung der Reichs- und Freikonservativen Partei (Weimar, 1920); and Nipperdey, Organisation, p. 241.

After Ludwig von Gerlach launched his famous protest in 1866 against the Bismarckian policy of estranging Prussia and Austria, the Kreuzzeitung continued politely to acknowledge Gerlach's stand. But the strong hand of Bismarck and the new dignity of Wagener after his government appointment can be discerned from a Kreuzzeitung article on national unity:[40]

> One of the chief dangers to Conservatism is its negative attitude toward the ideas which move through our age.... One of these ideas is the so-called principle of nationality.... Does not a German, Prussian, Conservative statesman thus have good reason to seek the solution to the problem of German unity on **his** terms?

The two most influential editors of the Orthodox Protestant press, Hengstenberg and Nathusius, joined the rush to Bismarck's camp in 1866. By the time most Conservative leaders came together in Berlin for a party convention in June 1866, the way had been well-prepared for Blanckenburg's declaration of support for the German Fatherland and for Bismarck's supra-party goals in general.

Bismarck, however, perceived the hollowness of the Conservative commitment to national unity. After the National Liberal Party was formed in June 1867, Bismarck boldly turned away from the Conservatives and began to build his new German Empire with National Liberal support. The Conservatives' chagrin over this move turned bitter with their poor showing in the 1867 elections to the parliament of the North German Confederation. Count Albrecht von Roon, the Prussian Minister of War and an intimate of the Conservative leadership circle, described the party at this time as lying 'on its back, with its numerous legs pointing upwards, without knowing what it wants, incapable of achieving what it should.' A year later, Roon wrote in his diary that the

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40 KZ, 10.5.66, in Schröder, 'Junkertum', p. 175.

Conservatives 'must be a party of conservative progress and discard the role of the dragging foot.' Roon doubted, however, whether the old party had the capacity for the 'organization - or reorganization - that has become necessary.' This he considered to be 'the affair of the Minister of the Interior.' Blanckenburg had a similar view of the necessity of close Conservative-government relations. As he wrote to Roon in October 1869: 'If Germany must be united by the liberal course, this can only happen with the help of the Conservatives. They must retain or reacquire the conviction that they are the real supporting party with which Germany will be won.' Evident in Roon's and Blanckenburg's comments was an uncertainty whether the party should actually be refounded or simply reformed. Wagener himself tended to the more pessimistic view; he felt 'the party had abdicated.'[41]

Taking in hand the task of charting a course for the regeneration of the party, Wagener was unsure which path lay ahead: social Conservatism or agrarian Conservatism. In effect, Wagener never chose decisively which course he would follow. But given the multiplicity of strains within Conservatism at the time, it would be hard to condemn him for believing that a certain dualism of purpose could be sustained. On the one hand, the Berliner Revue still provided a strong representation of social idealism. Rudolf Meyer took over management of the Revue in October 1870, combining conscientious social commentary with obvious skill as a popularizer. Karl Rodbertus's scholarship and romantic vocabulary, earning him the label of the Conservatives' 'agrarian social economist', may have helped the Revue keep a finger in

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41 Graf Albrecht von Roon, Denkwürdigkeiten (Breslau, 1892), II, pp. 375, 408f; Hahn, Revue, p. 159; Schröder, 'Junkertum', pp. 180f. Cf. Roon's comments cited in 'Bismarck und die Konservativen', Ms., n.d., BAK, Kl.Erw. 329, NL W. Abegg, 1, f. 28.

the agrarian pie. On the other hand, Wagener was aware that agrarian interest politics were entering a new phase in the early 1870s.[42]

This movement had begun with the founding of the Klub der Landwirte in mid-1867. When the Klub, now renamed the Kongress norddeutscher Landwirte, met in February 1868 for its convention, the ironic slogan was heard, 'all politics begins with the stomach.' Within two years, an expanding agrarian press was in a position to support the Congress's call for the election of more 'appropriate' representatives of agriculture to the Landtag. The Berliner Revue contributed to this development by citing the favourable circumstances for the founding of a 'united party of landowners' and noting that the myriad of agricultural associations at hand would provide a good organizational basis. By January 1870, the Niendorfsche Zeitung für Grundbesitzer und Landwirte had been founded. When the third agrarian Congress offered the slogan 'justice for landowners' for the upcoming election campaign, the Niendorfsche Zeitung introduced the new agrarian image as a 'free trade reform party.'[43]

The Berliner Revue was the first Conservative newspaper to declare for the general aims of the movement, but a real bond of sympathy between social and agrarian Conservatism never existed. Wagener spent too much energy trying to persuade Bismarck to consider the plight of rural labourers for agrarians to have given him their trust, and Rodbertus's view that the social question was entirely a problem of 'inadequate wages' could hardly have won agrarians' lasting allegiance. Finally, the Revue circle was simply too small to succeed

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42 Cf. R. Meyer, Hundert Jahre Conservativer Politik und Literatur (Vienna/Leipzig, n.d. [1895]) and his less well-known Was heißt conservativ sein? Reform oder Restauration? (Berlin, 1873); also Hahn, Revue, passim.

43 KZ, 14/15.1.71; cf. Hahn, Revue, pp. 165-170; Koszyk, Presse, pp. 136f.

in infusing Conservatism with a deep social conscience. As Meyer wrote to Rodbertus in November 1871 with underlying pessimism: '[Bismarck] is no longer in the dark on the social question. The only distressing thing is that the men are lacking who might make really practical proposals to Bismarck. It is always Wagener alone.'[44]

After repeated Conservative defeats in the years 1870-72, Meyer's pessimism came to infect virtually every sector of Conservative opinion, and internal party dissent grew proportionally.

Some Conservatives tried to shed a happy light on the national and constitutional events of 1870-71. One speaker at a meeting of Conservatives in Berlin suggested that 'the solution of the German question eliminates the rallying point for the revolutionary movement.' Others sought to come to terms with the Reich but not the Reichstag. In April 1872 the Kreuzzeitung editorialized that the Reich's 'creative and organizing principle' was to be contrasted with the Reichstag, which was a 'motley jumble of notabilities, the consequence of head-count polls.' The Reich constitution, cried Conservatives after the fact, was 'a product of existing relations, not of theoretical presuppositions and demands.'

Yet Blanckenburg was probably representative of most Conservatives when he despaired at seeing the influences of liberalism and democracy in the Reich's new political apparatus. From Versailles, he wrote to Roon in November 1870 that leading figures in both Conservative parties 'consider it an accomplished fact that the majority in the new Reichstag must be "Lasker-ised".' The same pessimism is found in a letter Roon wrote to Blanckenburg just a fortnight after the spectacular crowning of the German Kaiser in January 1871. Roon wrote: 'I am weary

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44 See Niendorf to R. Meyer, 26.7.71, in Meyer, Hundert Jahre, pp. 229f; Shanahan, Protestants, pp. 375ff; Hahn, Revue, pp. 183-219.

for the ground upon which a Conservative Party of the future could rest.' Blanckenburg concurred, writing: 'Now we are forced to drink the liberal cup to the dregs.'[45]

The second major factor which induced Conservatives to redefine their role within Bismarck's party alignments was the beginning of the Kulturkampf. Immediately it became clear that Bimarck intended to press his liberal and anti-clerical policies with the School Supervision Bill of January 1872, old-guard Conservatives began to fear for the institutions of their own Church, thereby inclining them once more to support German Catholics, now organized in the new Centre Party. It is important not to over-represent the identity of Conservative and Centre interests in the early Kulturkampf period. The Centre leader, Ludwig Windthorst, perceived that it was the Radicals rather than the Conservatives who argued an anti-Bismarck position as a defence of constitutional rights. The Conservatives' stand on religious principle was welcome but not sufficient, and latent fears of Rome prevented lasting Centre-Conservative co-operation, Bismarck's horror of such a 'Black-Blue' majority in the Landtag notwithstanding. But no matter how much Bismarck's Conservative opponents - by this time, commonly referred to as the Altkonservative - invoked worn principles to counter the liberal threat to their Church, they could not convince the Neukonservative around Wagener to break decisively with Bismarck, particularly after the Chancellor attacked Catholics, Poles, and Guelphs as common enemies of the Reich and thus as unworthy of support from a national standpoint. At last the Gerlachian and Wagenerian traditions had to follow separate paths: the vote on the

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45 Schröder, 'Junkertum', pp. 197-99; H. von Petersdorff, Kleist-Retzow (Stuttgart/Berlin, 1907), p. 412; Roon, Denkwürdigkeiten, II, pp. 504ff, 545; cf. E. Engelberg, ed., Im Widerstreit um die Reichsgründung (Berlin, 1970), p. 384.

School Supervision Bill found the Conservative Reichstag caucus hopelessly divided.[46]

The old-guard 'Conservatives on principle' did not rejoice that their anti-liberalism was shutting them from participation in Bismarck's work. By the end of 1871, their hopes for a positive Conservative influence on national politics had probably reached its nadir. In its retrospective look at 1871, the Kreuzzeitung wrote:[47]

> These days - we are speaking firstly from inside Prussia - still to remain Conservative, to act in the Conservative sense, to pursue Conservative goals, ... be it in the Reichstag or Landtag, be it through the press, be it in the political, religious, or social sphere - it is a **heavy** task, an unpromising and hopeless beginning and effort, an unthankful affair. ... The Conservative troops in the Vereine have had to disband....

Throughout the Prussian Landtag battle of 1872 between Bismarck and those Conservatives who refused to accept the bill to reform local government in Prussia (the Kreisordnung), the intransigent Altkonservative claimed they sought to protect the state's best interest by defending their ideal of the Ständestaat. One follower of the Gerlachian tradition lamented that 'the elimination of the Stände ... is a further step toward a republic', while a Herrenhaus committee, dominated by Conservatives unwilling to compromise, stated flatly in rejecting the legislation: 'The present struggle over the Kreisordnung is the last serious struggle which will be fought for conservative institutions.'[48]

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46 See Schulte, 'Kulturkampf', esp. pp. 64, 85; M. Anderson, Windthorst (Oxford, 1980), pp. 152ff; and J. Zeender, The German Centre Party 1890-1906 (Philadelphia, 1976), p. 9, noting that Windthorst once favoured the name 'Conservative People's Party' for the Centre.

47 KZ, 30.12.71, in Schröder, 'Junkertum', pp. 209f; the KZ also wrote: 'Conservativ ist jetzt ein Mann/ Der rechts und links vereinen kann.' Berdahl, 'Transformation', p. 130.

48 Berdahl, 'Transformation', pp. 161-184; Berdahl, 'Cons. Politics', pp. 7-12; Schröder, 'Junkertum', p. 231.

Defeat on the issue and subsequent electoral disasters in both Prussia and the Reich convinced many party men that intransigence was a luxury Conservatives could no longer afford. Ludwig von Gerlach's apocalyptic view of the Kreisordnung bill as a 'fundamental revolutionizing of the Fatherland' was not shared by one of his more forward-looking correspondents, Baron von Thadden, who wrote to Gerlach: 'The new Kreisordnung does not make my grey head any greyer. Everything depends upon its implementation. ... The talent of ruling is understanding how to capture the position of power.'[49]

Increasingly, Bismarck worked to exploit such sentiments by distinguishing between different groups within the Conservative Party. Wagener, frustrated with continuing altkonservativ stubbornness in the Prussian Landtag, supplemented Bismarck's tactic by appealing to the party at large through schemes to redraft the Conservatives' program and organization. When he had published an anonymous brochure entitled Die Zukunftspartei in early 1870, Wagener had tried to rally Conservatives around a program of support for the government, social reform, and a resolution of the nascent religious problem. This trial balloon achieved little result. Wagener tried again in early 1872, just when the Altkonservative had moved into solid opposition to Bismarck on the School Supervision Bill. Wagener's 'Program for the Monarchical-National (-Social?) Party'[50] elicited lively debate in the Conservative press, but again nothing resembling a consensus emerged. The Berliner Revue circle wanted a strong socialist message, but subsequent revisions reflected Bismarck's desire to have the 'social'

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49 Hesse, 'Gerlach', p. 94.

50 Title of Wagener's article in the Revue: Shanahan, Protestants, p. 377.

element dropped. As Blanckenburg wrote to Kleist-Retzow: 'The program! Bismarck has gone through correcting it sentence by sentence and spoken with Wagener about it en detail.' Ensuring that articles about the new 'party' would appear in the semi-official Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, Bismarck apparently hoped that some moderate liberals would join Wagener's group, which might then be moulded into a reliable and effective parliamentary majority. These early ambitions of the Chancellor for a durable 'Mittelpartei' reflected his goal of 'turning around the petulant Conservatives.'[51]

In April 1872, the Conservative Reichstag caucus, the group most under Wagener's influence, voted overwhelmingly to adopt the 'Program of the Monarchical-National Party' as the general party program. The two Landtag delegations, in which altkonservativ sentiments dominated, postponed a decision indefinitely. Other elements of the party could only acknowledge a fait accompli. The Kreuzzeitung, under its new editor, Philipp von Nathusius-Ludom, could not be persuaded to endorse this reform enterprise, preferring to remain in opposition to Bismarck and his Kulturkampf. The Kreuzzeitung's subsequent 'Era articles' only deepened the conflict between the Chancellor and the official Conservative organ.[52]

In early December 1872, four days after the creation of the new Herrenhaus peers who ensured final passage of the Kreisordnung bill, 45 of the 116 Conservatives in the Prussian House of Deputies broke away and constituted themselves as the Neukonservative in the House, in conscious recognition of their affinity to most Reichstag Conservatives who already went by this name. Six months later, this group had its

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51 Petersdorff, Kleist-Retzow, p. 461; Hahn, Revue, pp. 239f.

52 Cf. Schoeps, Das andere Preußen, pp. 262ff; H. Læuß, Wilhelm Freiherr von Hammerstein (Berlin, 1905), pp. 20-23; and F. Stern, Gold and Iron (London, 1977), pp. 187f and 502.

own political platform and a parliamentary leadership dominated by Neukonservative like Wilhelm von Rauchhaupt and Count Wilhelm von Limburg-Stirum.[53] Kleist-Retzow remained the recognised leader of the Altkonservative. The secession had disastrous electoral consequences for the whole party. In the Landtag elections of 1873, the combined Conservative strength sank to only thirty members, including just six Altkonservative. In the Reichstag elections of 1874, the Conservative caucus shrank from 57 to 22 members. The 'small but mighty' party was no longer mighty and seemingly well on its way to extinction. At last the party could not avoid new organizational challenges. As the Kreuzzeitung advised, it had to 'learn the first principles of the party struggle from [its] opponents.'[54]

After 1873, the agrarian movement once more took in hand the main reformist task necessitated by the splintering of the party. The agrarians worked to channel Conservative disaffection with liberalism into economic terms and, eventually, into legislative policies favourable to agriculture. By 1875, Wagener, now once again writing memoranda for Bismarck after his fall from grace in February 1873, was calling for other Conservatives to abandon their principled adherence to free trade and to judge protectionist policies from a 'statistical' and 'political' viewpoint. As well, Conservative-Centre solidarity had been substantially weakened by 1874, and the Neukonservative were aware that Bismarck's conflict with the National Liberals in that year over the Military Bill had alerted the Chancellor to the danger of over-great reliance on the NLP. After the Septennat passed, the Kaiser

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53 Cf. F. W. v. Rauchhaupt, 'Rauchhaupt', Aufstieg, pp. 251-256.

54 Caucus executives listed in KZ, 16.12,71; 28.11.72; 21.1.73. Cf. KZ, 9.1./10.10.73, in Schröder, 'Junkertum', p. 232; Hahn, Revue, pp. 242f.

was reported to have expressed the need for a political reversal with the words: 'Now it is necessary to become conservative, even Bismarck sees that.'[55]

To fill the organizational void left by the continuing internal party confusion, the agrarians in February 1876 founded their own special-interest group, the Association of Tax- and Economic Reformers (VdSWR). The statement of purpose issued by this association suggests how a shift in emphasis in the Conservative program was seen as a prerequisite for success in the popular sphere:[56]

> In the field of economic and personal relations, the absolute domination of liberalism is to be broken and such institutions are to be formed which would be inspired by the conservative spirit and offer solid support for the Conservative Party. ... 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 that move the people. We live in an age of material interests.

The majority of Conservatives, after the set-backs of the last decade, were willing to follow the lead of agrarians like Count Julius von Mirbach-Sorquitten, who wrote Kleist-Retzow that 'absolutely nothing can be done here with a conservative program and conservative agitation, but only by proceeding in the sense of the agrarians.' Under the slogan: 'The liberals have mismanaged', the Conservatives set about in the first half of 1876 arranging the founding of a new, national Conservative Party which would de-emphasise Prussian particu-

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55 Cf. I. Lambi, 'The Agrarian-Industrial Front in Bismarckian Politics, 1873-1879', JCEA, 20, 1961, p. 379; I. Lambi, Free Trade and Protection in Germany, 1868-1879 (Wiesbaden, 1963); Wagener's so-called 'Program of 1875' is printed in Meyer, Hundert Jahre, p. 258; cf. Berdahl, 'Transformation', p. 221.

56 On the VdSWR, cf. L. Wallraf, 'Vereinigung der Steuer- und Wirtschaftsreformer, 1876-1928' in Fricke, II, pp. 775-783; also Eckert, 'Wandlungen', p. 121, noting that in 1878 the VdSWR had 683 official members (including 22 Cons. M-PHH), of whom 420 were noble; Berdahl, 'Aristocratic Landowners', pp. 18f; Lambi, 'Agrarian-Industrial Front', p. 380; official protocol of the VdSWR founding meeting, in Lambi, Free Trade, p. 138.

larism, provide Bismarck with an alternative to continued parliamentary reliance on the National Liberal Party, and serve as a central organization for the management of future election campaigns. When the German Conservative Party was officially constituted in July 1876, Conservatives may have believed that they did, in fact, understand 'the trends that move the people.'[57]

Complete unity, however, did not reign within the DKP even as it was born. The preliminary declaration circulated in June by one of the leaders of the Neukonservative, Otto Heinrich von Helldorff-Bedra,[58] did not receive any applause from the Altkonservative, who found it too 'national' and 'unchurchly'. The Kreuzzeitung editor, Nathusius-Ludom, tried to rally old-guard Conservatives to remain true to their principles. In a publication of May 1876 entitled 'The Conservative Position', he argued for increased Conservative-Catholic co-operation and for ständisch representation in the Prussian Landtag. Nathusius was subsequently eased out of his command of the Kreuzzeitung. Other dissenters could not be silenced, however. Kleist-Retzow, for example, joined the new party but continued to issue uncomfortable statements. On 31 July 1876 he wrote to the new DKP executive, arguing that the Conservative Party must oppose plans to form a secure Mittelpartei for Bismarck: 'If the party does not wish to be untrue to its principles, it cannot swim with the government; rather, it must be an arrow in the flesh, an awakening of the conscience.'[59]

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57 Petersdorff, Kleist-Retzow, p. 464; KZ, 9.4.76, in Berdahl, 'Transformation', p. 241; the program of July 1876 had 27 signatories: 13 from Prussia, 5 from Bavaria, and 3 each from Saxony, Baden, and Hessen; cf. Stillich, Konservativen, p. 230.

58 Cf. P. Merbach, 'Helldorff-Bedra', Aufstieg, pp. 243-246; H. Diez, Biog. Jb. XIII, pp. 140ff.

59 P. v. Nathusius-Ludom, Conservative Position (Berlin, 1876), pp. 7ff, 21f; Petersdorff, Kleist-Retzow, pp. 463f; H. Heffter, Die Opposition der Kreuzzeitungspartei gegen die Bismarcksche Kartellpolitik (Leipzig, 1927), p. 4; E. Stock, Wirtschafts- und sozialpolitische Bestrebungen der deutschkonservativen Partei unter Bismarck 1876-1890 (Breslau, 1928), pp. 14f; Schüddekopf, Innenpolitik, pp. 72f.

For Kleist-Retzow and other Conservatives like him, then, the new realities of popular politics on a national scale could not be allowed to compromise older anti-liberal values which had sustained Conservatism for nearly a century. For these men, the appeal of Conservatism was nothing if it did not rest on traditional elitist values. Kleist-Retzow summed up the unwillingness of the Altkonservative to enter the new age when he declared: 'We demand of our people that they elect us; then we must care for their needs.'[60] Other Conservatives through the century, however, had shown that this view of politics was not sufficient to provide the independence from government influence which was necessary for the party to maintain its strength in parliament and its traditional impact on Prussian affairs. Neukonservative like Wagener, Rauchhaupt, Limburg, and Helldorff realised that the personal power of Bismarck and the avenues of power still open to men of wealth and position argued for a new approach.[61] As the next two chapters will show, a dialectical process transformed many of these 'reformist' Conservatives into defenders of the status quo in both party and state during the later 1870s and 1880s. Thus, though 1876 is a landmark in the history of German Conservatism, it marks no terminus in the history of factional strife or movements for reform on the German Right.

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60 Neumann, Stufen, p. 75.

61 New political strategies were being adopted by other right-wing groups at this time: cf. H. Böhme, 'Big-business pressure groups and Bismarck's turn to protectionism, 1873-79', HJ, X, 1967.

Chapter Two: The Young Party, 1876-1884

In the five years after 1876 the original Conservative concept of party politics on the national scale seemed to bear fruit, with a large number of regional Verein foundings, a rapid expansion in the provincial party press, and an upswing in votes cast for the DKP in western and southern Germany. (See Appendices.) By the early 1880s, however, Berlin leaders were having to react to centrifugal forces and pressures from below, which challenged their authority within the party.

2.1 The German Conservative Wahlverein and Reform from Above

Significantly, the Conservative Party was founded by proclamation. After an enunciation of general aims had been circulated among an allegedly 'large number' of Conservatives, a meeting of 7 June 1876 in Frankfurt/Main issued a 'Proclamation for the Formation of a German Conservative Party'. This proclamation of six main points then became the established party program, and the criterion for membership in the new party was accepted to be a declaration in favour of the program. At the same time, the Wahlverein (Electoral Association) of German Conservatives was established. The exact relationship between the Wahlverein and the 'party' is patently unclear: it appears that virtually all official aspects and functions of the party were set upon the Wahlverein, in order to comply with the laws of association in Prussia, while the party as such was taken to be the general body of parliamentary deputies and all other individuals who adhered, however formally, to the German Conservative cause.[1]

As opposed to the party at large, the Wahlverein alone had an eight-point list of statutes. These stated that it was the purpose of

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1 'Unsere Aufgabe', 'Aufruf zur Bildung einer deutschen cons. Partei' [with signatures], and statutes, in 'Flugblatt des Wahlvereins der deutschen Conservativen' [1876], copy in StA Aurich, NL Edzard Fürst zu Inn- und Knyphausen, Dep. IV, III q, 35.

the Wahlverein to rally all conservative forces in the Reich, 'independent not only of the particular position of the government to the Conservative Party' but also without regard to 'various party nuances and the momentary composition of parliamentary groups.' They also stipulated that Wahlverein members were obliged to contribute at least two marks per year, but that wealthier members were expected to contribute ten marks annually; that general assemblies of the Wahlvereine would not be held; and that periodically a newssheet would be distributed to members to inform them of the activities of the executive. The first Wahlverein executive comprised the 27 signatories of the original proclamation, and was to enlarge itself through co-optation. To facilitate the collection of dues and to distribute communiqués and propaganda material, an office was established in Berlin, apparently presided over by the Reichstag and Landtag deputy, Hermann von Busse-Neustettin.[2] With this bare minimum of formal organization, the Wahlverein of German Conservatives was designed by its founding members to bring a degree of coherence and party discipline to the Conservative cause.

In the next years, Conservative fortunes in both Prussian and Reich elections improved, as shown in Table 2.1.[3]

Table 2.1: Prussian and German Elections, 1873-1882

Landtag Election	1873	1876	1879	1882
% of vote won	7.0	9.4	25.4	31.0
Seats won	30	41	110	136

2 Nipperdey, Organisation, p. 252.

3 Figures from A. Plate, ed., Handbuch für das preußische Abgeordnetenhaus (Berlin, 1914), pp. 248f; 'Mitteilungen des Wahlvereins der Deutschen Cons. für seine Mitglieder' (Berlin, Feb. 1883); Ritter, passim; and Sheehan, Liberalism, pp. 146f, 190, 211; the latter, pp. 147ff, 226ff, documents Cons. fortunes in other state Landtage.

Reichstag Election	1874	1877	1878	1881
Number of votes	360,000	526,000	749,000	831,000
% of vote won	6.9	9.7	13.0	16.3
Seats won	22	40	59	50

The nascent Conservative organizations in southern and western Germany benefitted from this trend, making the strongest advances at the polls they were to achieve throughout the history of the empire.

Table 2.2: State Reichstag Elections, 1874-1878

Percentage of Vote won	1874	1877	1878
Bavaria	0.9	2.8	4.0
Württemberg	-	0.1	1.1
Baden	0.7	7.8	14.6
Hessen	-	4.6	5.8

Conservative gains were also registered in the more industrialized middle-German states, as in the Kingdom of Saxony, in the principalities of Waldeck, Lippe, Schaumburg-Lippe, and in the Thuringian states.

Table 2.3: Saxon and Middle-German Reichstag Elections, 1874-1881

Percentage of Vote won	1874	1877	1878	1881
Kingdom of Saxony	7.2 (1875)	17.4 (1877)	16.2 (1879)	24.3 (1881)
(Saxon Landtag)	(36.6)	(42.0)	(46.7)	(57.2)
Waldeck, Lippe, Sch.-Lippe	14.5	21.1	31.1	36.5
Thuringian States	1.3	2.8	8.9	9.6

Of course these election results must be interpreted in the light of other factors tending to increase the number of apparently Conservative voters, such as anti-socialist or nationalist excitement, or the notorious electioneering on behalf of the state-supporting parties by Prussian Landräte and other officials.[4] Taking account of these factors, however, one sees why the top Conservative parliamentarians around Helldorff might have felt satisfied with the organizational

4 On disputed elections, cf. for example: Wahlbeeinflußungen (Elbing-Marienburg) und Hetze der Kartellparteien gegen die Krone (Berlin, 1888). The NLP and FKP naturally benefitted from some of these influences as well.

scheme of 1876 and with the electoral advances which seemed to follow as a consequence of that initial effort.

As it happened there were a number of early signs that many instances of neglect within the structure and working of the Conservative Party could not be eliminated 'by proclamation'. Even in 1876 the leaders of the Wahlverein had had to acknowledge the particular difficulties of establishing the party in non-Prussian areas. Fearing economic or social boycott should their membership in the party of 'Prussian reaction' become known, south-western German Conservatives had expressed 'partly legal, partly practical reservations' about the extension of the Wahlverein organization into their territories. The Wahlverein's first official communiqué reported that non-Prussian Conservatives need not have their names printed in the membership lists. It also emphasised that all German states would be represented in the Wahlverein executive - as far as possible.

If the Wahlverein statutes themselves were meant to provide for some uniformity of party organization at the local level in that they suggested of what basic ingredients a Verein's structure and activity might consist, the amazing diversity of local Verein statutes indicates that Conservatives had widely differing views on how the 'principle of authority'[5] should be translated into practical organizational form. Some placed special emphasis on the official party program, others on organization. Some listed Verein executive- or ordinary members, others did not. Some local Vereine printed in their statutes the DKP program of 1876, others provided their own interpretation of it and defended their right to do so. Further variations included regulations regarding membership qualifications, composition and election of

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5 Needful of review is Nipperdey's statement, Organisation, p. 245, that at the local level 'the general political ideal of the party, authority, was also recognised by the followers as natural for the inner-party structure.'

executive bodies, summoning and procedural points of general assemblies, disciplinary measures, support of the local press, finances, fees, honorary memberships, action committees, and so on. Despite such radical departures from the plan of the original Wahlverein statutes - and very rarely were other statutes so concise - the Berlin party leadership almost never expressed disapproval of other statutes or, indeed, took any notice of them at all.[6]

The extent to which other elements of the 1876 plan for DKP organization and activity were and were not in place by the early 1880s is revealed by a meeting between Wahlverein leaders and a number of local party delegates in Berlin on 17 January 1882.[7]

Baron Wilhelm von Hammerstein - Kreuzzeitung editor, Reichstag and Landtag deputy, and at that point titular head of the Wahlverein due to Helldorff's failure to win election in the 1881 Reichstag campaign - opened the meeting of some 300 delegates. He advised them that they had been called together to examine the reasons for the gains registered by opponents in the last election, as well as to allow non-parliamentary Conservatives to express their views. The first main speaker was Helldorff. Helldorff acknowledged that the DKP's share of the popular vote - though not its number of seats - had risen in 1881.

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6 'Statuten des cons. Bezirks-Vereins innerhalb der St. Lucas-Parochie' (Berlin, 1865); 'Statut des Cons. Vereins für den I. und II. Berliner Reichstags-Wahlbezirk' [n.d.], in BAK, Kl.Erw. 319, Dr. R. Hepke, 19; 'Satzungen des deutsch-kons. Vereins für die Kreise Eschwege und Witzenhausen' (Feb. 1895), BAK, ZSg 1, 70/1 (4); 'Statut des cons. Wahlvereins für Ostfriesland und Papenburg' [c. 1877]; 'Statuten des christlich-cons. Wahlvereins für das nordöstliche Hannover' [1877]; 'Statut des cons. Vereins für Stadt und Amt Norden' [n.d.]; and 'Programm für den ostfr. cons. Verein' [n.d.], in NL Inn- u. Knyphausen, Dep. IV, III q, 35. Compare with: 'Statut des Wahlvereins der bayerischen Cons.' (Ansbach, 1881), 'Statut der Steuer- u. Wirtschaftsreformer', n.d. [1876]; 'Statut des Fränkischen Bauernvereins' [proposal], and 'Entwurf eines Statuts für die Constituirung und Organisation einer socialpolitischen und christlich-deutschen Vereinigung' [n.d.], in BAK, Sammlung Karl von Fechenbach (SgF), Box '1888'. Cf. Nipperdey, Organisation, p. 254.

7 NAZ, 19.1.82; Wahlverein 'Mitteilungen', 1883, p. 1.

He noted, however, that further organizational plans and the continuing activity of local Vereine would be needed. He declared that Conservatives could not move into action only at election time, 'because they may not employ demagogic means.' Furthermore, since the law prohibited formal relations between political organizations, a line of communication between local and provincial organizations and the central body needed to be established. The original articulation of party Vereine 'from above to below', Helldorff continued, had been necessary because 'the organizational basis from below was lacking;' thus, the Wahlverein executive had named original party delegates down to the level of the individual constituencies. Beside this organization imposed from above, a network of local Vereine had slowly developed, and the object now was to ensure contact between the local elements and the top leadership. Thus, every member of a local Verein was to become a formal member of the central Wahlverein, and the leaders at these lower levels were to become the delegates (Vertrauensmänner) for the Wahlverein.

To these remarks various objections were raised in the ensuing discussion. A delegate from East Prussia, noting the recent establishment of a provincial organization there, doubted whether all local members could be persuaded to join the Wahlverein. One of his provincial colleagues claimed that East Prussians had been able to build their organization 'from below to above' because the leaders 'knew every Conservative man' in the province. Two Silesian delegates noted that Conservatives in their region did not like the emphasis on German Conservative organizations (that is, excluding Free Conservatives or other nationalist parties.) Other provincial delegates expressed similar reservations about Helldorff's plan. In the end, no clearer definition of the relationship between party and Wahlverein emerged, and no mechanism was established for the election of delegates to the Wahlverein or its executive.

Hammerstein spoke next on the financial needs of the Wahlverein's central office. He proposed that a 'party tax' be levied, based roughly on the Prussian income tax system. This would ensure a steady flow of revenue and serve to provide a sense of 'solidarity' among party members. In the discussion a general lament was raised that Conservatives had less money than liberals. A Westphalian delegate raised strong objections to the idea of a party tax, saying that loyal and continuing support for the party in his area made possible relatively inexpensive election campaigns: Westphalians would never contribute to the cost of elections in other parts of the Reich. From Pomerania doubts were expressed over the need to change the statutes of local Vereine to introduce this tax. At this point Helldorff, impatient with the slow progress of the debate, declared that the Berlin leaders did not want to impose their ideas on the local Vereine, but that the principle of financial support for the party's central organ needed to be established. Referring to the cost of maintaining a party newssheet and press, he said the practice of living 'from hand to mouth' could not continue. Helldorff then proposed that a special class of 'honourable membership' in the Wahlverein be introduced, for which a yearly contribution of ten marks would be required. Eventually, Helldorff's proposal was passed in the form of a resolution 'recommending' to local Vereine that they establish a minimum membership fee and that they gather dues from more wealthy members according to income. A similar method of gathering revenues was recommended for the Wahlverein itself. But again, organizational details remained obscure.

On the final point of the agenda, Baron von Minnigerode outlined the duties of the Wahlverein's central office and defended its scope of activity in the face of criticisms from various quarters. A Württemberg delegate demanded the more rapid reporting of the party's position

on parliamentary issues in the party newssheet. Minnigerode replied that this was impossible since the party could not take a unified stand on all issues immediately. 'The Conservative Party is not a party like Richter's,' Minnigerode said, 'which is obedient to the commands of a single individual; therefore it cannot provide such a shopping list of demands.' The only other suggestions offered by the local delegates were for more contributions, especially from southern Germany, to the party newssheet, and the establishment of a general Korrespondenz for the smaller Conservative newspapers, which might appear twice rather than once weekly as had been the case so far.

Characteristically, more than a year elapsed before the Wahlverein executive issued its new 'Organizational Plan' based on - but by no means limited by - the discussions of January 1882.[8] On paper, these reforms would have introduced important changes in the workings of the party. The plan is especially interesting because it appeared simultaneously with the report on Wahlverein business in 1882. Undoubtedly these reforms were a reaction to major continuing deficiencies in party activity.

The new plan finally defined the Wahlverein's central body (Centralstelle) as comprising the Wahlverein's executive, which had by that point grown to 49 members, together with the delegates of the various German states. In fact this stipulation clarified nothing, because the number of state delegates was not established, no mention was made of Conservative delegates from the individual Prussian provinces, and in any case the previous executive itself had included both provincial and state leaders. Furthermore, a smaller committee, elected by the central body but of indeterminate size, would be entrusted with the 'business' and act in the name of the Wahlverein executive. This newly-defined executive would meet when necessary but

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8 Ibid., pp. 4-6.

at least once per year, to discuss directives and review the annual budget.

In direct contradiction to the original Wahlverein statutes, the 1883 plan stipulated that membership in the Wahlverein would not require payment of a specific fee. However, it was expected of all 'propertied or affluent party members,' including those who had no wish to join a local Verein, that they would become honourable members. It was expected further that, from certain states (like Saxony and Baden) which allegedly possessed well-organized Vereine at the regional level, appropriate sums would flow into central Wahlverein coffers, and that all regional leaders would become honourable members.

On the second level of party organization, provincial and state Vereine were to ensure that energetic and capable leaders were appointed to head local Vereine. In contrast to Helldorff's statement of January 1882, however, that the Wahlverein executive wished to appoint local leaders only while a substructure of local Vereine was emerging, the Wahlverein executive now claimed the right to name men to these local posts, while to the regional Vereine fell the duty of presenting suitable candidates for approval. Here more than anywhere else, the undemocratic premise of the party organization was revealed.

Otherwise, regional leaders were to be responsible for holding congresses, supplying these with speakers, ensuring the timely selection of candidates, and above all founding or expanding a regional Conservative press. For these purposes, the regional Vereine would receive money from the Wahlverein executive only if contributions from local Vereine were insufficient.

The longest section of the Organizational Plan dealt with constituency Vereine, 'in whose activity [lay] the focus of the whole organization.' At the head of each Verein stood the delegate named by the Wahlverein executive. It was the delegate's task, in association

with the 'most active and influencial party comrades of the district,' to establish in each city, village, or rural district of his constituency a local Conservative club; to support and win adherents for the local press; to lead party agitation at election time; and to provide for the collection of membership dues.

Local circumstances were to determine at what level such dues were to be set. It was to be presented as a point of honour to all well-to-do members that they pledge a certain amount for a three-year period. Of this revenue, one-half was to go to the regional delegate, who was in turn to send one-half to the Wahlverein executive for general party use. Perhaps to ensure that the Wahlverein - as opposed to the party at large - maximize the number of members obligated to abide by its statutes, it was declared with some tone of authority that every Conservative who joined a local Conservative club, whether or not he paid membership dues, automatically became a member of both the regional Verein and the Wahlverein. Under this plan, then, even though it made no reference to a formal revision of the original Wahlverein statutes, any distinction between the Wahlverein and the German Conservative Party would have disappeared. As will be shown, however, Conservative leaders clung to this very distinction, thereby causing much confusion and antagonism at times when they believed it to be in their interest to define membership in the Wahlverein as narrowly as possible.

The Wahlverein recommended that local Vereine be organized on the smallest geographical unit practicable. This stipulation was designed to eliminate disputed constituencies and double candidatures. Interestingly, the Wahlverein also advised that so-called test candidates campaign even in districts where the DKP had no hope for an election victory, to increase the number of over-all DKP votes in Germany. To this end, when no local man was suitable, the Wahlverein would provide information on Conservatives from outside the district who were willing

to accept candidacies there. Candidate selection difficulties were to be worked out by calling in the regional delegate or, in the second instance, the Wahlverein executive. But it was laid down in bold type in the plan that 'by principle no agreements may be reached with other parties without the involvement of the Wahlverein executive.' Here, then, the principle of decentralized authority was severely compromised.

A corollary to this was found in a reform regarding party propaganda, which had been initiated by a Wahlverein executive meeting of 5 September 1882. Previously, local Vereine had been encouraged to look to the central office to co-ordinate the distribution of party leaflets and other propaganda for Landtag elections. In the new system this responsiblity devolved onto regional and local Vereine. However, the Wahlverein leaders did not want to lose their influence over the content of party propaganda, and so wished to have all requests for the drafting of leaflets from local electoral committees directed through the central office. The aim, then, was to maintain the control but reduce the work of the executive.

The Organizational Plan recommended finally that in each constituency the party business should be placed in the hands of a specific person, who if necessary would be salaried. Thus the figure of the party bureaucrat was established, in principle, at the lowest level of DKP organization.

That the need for changes in the direction of these organizational reforms had grown imperative by 1883 is suggested by the scope of the Wahlverein's actual activity at this time. It is probably impossible to know accurately how many Germans were members of formal Conservative clubs or associations. In the Reichstag election of 1881, 831,000 Germans voted for the DKP; only the Centre Party won more votes in that

year. By contrast, only slightly over 1800 persons officially made financial contributions of any kind to the German Conservative Wahlverein in 1882. No matter what criteria are used for determining who was an official Wahlverein member, it is plausible that total membership in 1882 numbered somewhat less than 2000, taking account of donations made secretly and of non-contributary members.[9]

Official contributions in 1882 totalled 37,250 marks. Ninety persons contributed 100 marks or more, contributing together 11,985 marks, or almost one-third of the Wahlverein's income from personal contributions. Of these ninety persons, only four were non-noble. Fourteen Wahlverein supporters donated 200 marks or more, totalling 4,100 marks. The single largest contribution was 800 marks, exactly double the second largest figure.[10]

Since the 1882 report lists the total Wahlverein income as 59,369 marks, approximately 22,000 marks came either from secret donations or, more probably, from regional Vereine. Yet state, provincial, and local Vereine must have retained for their own activities significant proportions of the funds they collected, because the Wahlverein provided only a fraction of the financial support given to the Conservative Landtag candidates and the DKP provincial press in 1882.

The Wahlverein funded agitation in only 43 electoral districts, although 117 DKP candidates were elected in November 1882 and many more undertook campaigns. The Wahlverein also underwrote only seventeen

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9 These and following details calculated from 'Quittung über die im Jahre 1882 dem Verein zugegangenen Beiträge,' 'Geschäftliche Mitteilungen,' and 'Vereins-Tätigkeit' in ibid., pp. 1ff. The MAZ, 25.3.91, put the membership of the Wahlverein at roughly 1400, estimating that about one-half of all Cons. M-PAH did not belong to the Wahlverein.

10 The 800 marks came from the wealthy Cons. patron, Count von Hohenthal-Dölkau; see below, Ch. 9, p.322. This list shows that while some top Cons. were willing to accept a personal financial burden to support their party, many others were less generous.

newspapers in 1882, and, as of February 1883, had to suspend publication of its own Konservative Korrespondenz temporarily through lack of funds.[11] This, however, did not prevent the Wahlverein office continuing to try to find vacant editorial posts for Conservative editors whose papers had not survived. Information was also gathered on party speakers willing to address Conservative meetings. In his report of 1882, the retired Major, Baron von Seckendorff, official secretary and treasurer of the Wahlverein since 1881, issued a plea to local Vereine that they make their requests for such speakers more precise, including in their application information about themes of interest to the particular Verein, local circumstances, even the auditorium in which the rally was to be held.

This awareness of the need to tailor Conservative agitation to local peculiarities, an important element in the Wahlverein's willingness to accept a degree of party decentralization, was one reason why the delegates at the 5 September 1882 Wahlverein meeting recommended that regional Vereine take over the production of Conservative leaflets and flyers, 'since it is impossible to produce for all social groups and all provinces Conservative pamphlets which are equally appropriate and understandable.' As well, of course, this emphasis on regional inequalities, besides diminishing the impression of a dominating central leadership, made it easier for the Wahlverein executive to chide the more solvent provincial Vereine for expecting to receive in return as much as they contributed financially to the Wahlverein office. The Wahlverein could state that the amelioration of these discrepancies was the raison d'être of the Berlin office, while at the same time declaring that it wished neither to interfere with the

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11 The genesis and history of the CC remains obscure. Through the 1880s DKP factions vied for control of it, but it was never financially secure.

delicate balance of local party politics nor to dictate new and perhaps impractical organizational forms to the party at large.

As noted, however, the Wahlverein executive was not willing to compromise its own authority within the DKP. On the one hand, because the Wahlverein insisted on appointing local constituency delegates, it could determine which men performed the important function of liason between the party rank and file and the Wahlverein executive. Thus it could point to its own willingness to enter into debate with, and implement the proposals of, those functionaries allegedly most in touch with the practicalities of grass-roots agitation. On the other hand, despite assurances that local Vereine would continue to name their own candidates, the Wahlverein wished to have de facto control over the general direction of the Conservative campaign, by virtue of its exclusive right to conclude electoral alliances with other parties. Except in so far as particularly prominent candidates might offend National Liberal or Free Conservative partners, the Wahlverein leaders realized that local Vereine were actually better placed than they to select a suitable candidate for a specific electoral district and campaign. For the horse-trading of candidacies necessary to maintain an alliance with the NLP and FKP throughout the Reich, however, as with the drafting of the party's official election platform, the Wahlverein could claim with some justification that it alone possessed the larger view necessary to co-ordinate party strategy.

Whatever the authority with which the anonymous authors of this Organizational Plan issued their recommendations for reform, one thing is clear: throughout the 1880s, the DKP parliamentarians who might have come out firmly in favour of these proposals were either unwilling or unable to do so. There is no evidence that this plan was implemented in any concrete way. The casual manner in which parliamentary leaders later dismissed the inadequacies of DKP organization in their

memoirs attests to the negligible value they placed on basic party institutions, and this neglect was never more pronounced than in the 1880s.[12] But to explore further why DKP leaders did not act on the 1882/83 reforms, a look now at early reform attempts from outside the Berlin leadership circle is required.

2.2 Baron von Fechenbach and the Social-Conservative Alliance

In January 1882, when he read in the newspapers of the meeting between Wahlverein leaders and local delegates, a Bavarian aristocrat scribbled down his indignant reactions to the rhetoric emanating from that Berlin gathering:[13]

> As long as the **high** and **wise** executive of the "German" Conservative Party is not able to clarify the program of 1876, to make it precise, and to make it useful in **practical** terms on the burning social and economic issues, it must continue to allow each individual, according to his needs, to make his own free "interpretation" of this "program of fear".... "Deeds" and not "phrases" are what is needed. ... This meeting is in line with all that have come before it.

The man who penned these bitter lines of criticism was Reichsfreiherr Friedrich Karl von Fechenbach-Laudenbach.[14] In a survey history of German Conservatism the efforts of Baron von Fechenbach would perhaps merit a footnote. But Fechenbach's function as a catalyst

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12 Cf. Rauchhaupt's comments in KZ, 10.10.85, in Wallraf, 'Politik der DKP', p. 679; E. von Heydebrand, 'Beiträge zu einer Geschichte der konservativen Partei', KonsMon, 77, 1920, p. 499; and below, Ch. 9, p.332.

13 Undated notes, SgF, '1888'.

14 On Fechenbach, cf. NDB, V, pp. 36f; H.-J. Schoeps, 'CDU vor 75 Jahren', ZfRG, IX, 1957, pp. 266-77; S. Volkov, The Rise of Popular Antimodernism in Germany (Princeton, 1978), pp. 224-228; Anderson, Windthorst, pp. 252-259, 449-452. Also, works by him, listed in Bibliography below.

provides many insights into the workings of the party at a crucial stage in its existence.[15]

First, Fechenbach was a keen observer of party activities, both in Prussia and in the western German states. He and his colleagues were intimately involved in the early shaping of west-German Conservative movements as independent organizations. Second, in contrast to the Wahlverein of 1883, Fechenbach sought to take eminently practical steps in his attempt to adapt Conservative Party institutions and policy to 'the new politics.' The details of his social-political program are not vital to the present study. But Fechenbach's belief that organizational and programmatic reform had to proceed hand in hand, and his scheme to unite Catholic and Protestant conservatives on the basis of social reform in an anti-liberal direction, gained publicity at a time when the DKP parliamentary leadership was newly ensconced in the Bismarckian camp and eager to remain there; it could not dare to follow the lead of a radical organizer preaching the gospel of 'No Compromise' with capitalism and the National Liberal Party. Hence, Fechenbach elicited a definitive response from leading Conservatives which helps illuminate both the breakdown of Honoratiorenpolitik and the reverse side of Conservative policy, anti-liberalism.

Baron von Fechenbach began his effort to found a 'Social-Conservative Alliance' with the advantages of wealth, rank, family connections, and a myriad of political sympathies.[16] Despite the independence

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15 J. Zeender has written: '...It cannot be stressed too much that the viability of the Christian Democratic Union can only be understood if the causes of the earlier failures to bring Catholic [sic] and Protestants together in a single union are made clear ....' 'German Catholics and the Concept of an Interconfessional Party 1900-1922,' JCEA, XXIII (4), Jan. 1964, p. 424.

16 Cf. Anderson, Windthorst, p. 253; Schoeps, 'CDU', pp. 267f; NDB, V, p. 36.

afforded by these privileges, Fechenbach chose to initiate his campaign at a meeting of south-German Conservatives in Ansbach in May 1880. His program, however, was buried in discussion. The baron then drew up a 'Program for Christian Social Reform'; by early June 1880 he had convinced four other reformers to lend their names to it, including his brother-in-law and leading Tax- and Economic Reformer, Baron Karl von Thüngen-Roßbach; Dr. Franz Perrot, author of the 'Era articles' and now with the Conservative Deutsche Reichspost in Frankfurt; and Court Preacher Adolf Stöcker, head of the Berlin-based Christian Social Party. On 30 July 1880 Fechenbach chaired a meeting which revised this proposal and began preparations for a formal organizational meeting of his Alliance, which eventually took place in Frankfurt a. M. on 10 November 1880.[17]

Despite Fechenbach's devious ploys to attract leading Catholics to this assembly, Windthorst appears to have advised his Centre followers not to attend, so that of the 100 men at the meeting in Frankfurt, only sixteen were Catholics.[18] Conservative parliamentary leaders tried to arrange a similar boycott, but with less success. Dissatisfied Conservative grandées, restless publicists, and many south-German Conservatives were not willing to be kept from discussions which held the portent of new directions for the DKP, any proclamations from above notwithstanding. As these Conservatives sent in their replies to Fechenbach's appeal, and as they aligned themselves at the November meeting for or against each point of his far-reaching program for economic, social, cultural, and political reform, an outline of principal reformist aims emerged.

One of Fechenbach's earliest collaborators was Baron Eduard von Ungern-Sternberg, who in the 1880s was co-editor of the Konservative

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17 Copy of proposal in NL F, 38.

18 Anderson, Windthorst, pp. 253f.

Korrespondenz, and who later became Hammerstein's right-hand man on the Kreuzzeitung staff. Ungern's commitment to co-operation between the two Christian Churches inspired him to support the Alliance, as he wrote Fechenbach in May 1880:[19] 'I lay the highest value on the entry of the Catholic conservatives, since as things stand it is unfortunately impossible without them to overcome liberalism in state, church, and society.' Ungern-Sternberg had no illusions about the Alliance's prospects for success swimming against the Bismarckian stream. Nonetheless, acting as Fechenbach's mentor, he had many suggestions how to win press support and cultivate personal contacts. Fechenbach was encouraged to write, among others, to the Berlin Evangelical tribune, Rudolf Todt; to Martin von Nathusius, whose Konservative Monatsschrift, with total subscriptions over 5000 (Ungern claimed) and an avid readership in southern Germany, 'could be regarded even today as the organ for our efforts'; to Dr. Arnold von Frege-Abtnaundorf, the well-known Saxon Reichstag deputy and prominent Tax- and Economic Reformer; and to the Baden Conservative leader, Baron E.A. von Göler, who together with the other Baden leaders, Dr. Mühlhäuser and Baron Adolf Hermann von Marschall Bieberstein, might be dissuaded from their negative stand on Fechenbach's reform program. Allegedly these Baden men highly respected Perrot's socio-political ideas.[20]

By mid-July Perrot was at work, writing in the name of the Deutsche Reichspost to Berlin leaders, members of the Congress of German Farmers, and other Conservatives. Stöcker replied that he had no objections to the program proposal in principle. Hammerstein wrote

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19 May 2, 1880, NL F, 58.

20 Cf. correspondence with H. Engel, H. Lange, M. v. Nathusius, and Stöcker, NL F, 91, 123, 143, and 76; Todt, author of Der Radikale deutsche Sozialismus und die Christlich Gesellschaft (Wittenberg, 1877), was writing Fechenbach in 1879/80 on letterheads of the 'Comité des Central-Vereins für Social-Reform', NL F, 70; Ungern's claim for the KonsMon was anticipatory; cf. M. v. Nathusius to Fechenbach, 10.3.81, NL F, 143.

to Fechenbach thanking him for the program and saying he hoped to be able to participate in the baron's work.[21] Both men, however, pointed out that resistance from the majority of Prussian Conservative leaders and from the government would be substantial. Regarding one of the stronger anti-Semitic passages in Fechenbach's program, Stöcker wrote that 'for propaganda purposes this point must be omitted; in principle it is correct, but at present impossible. For statesmen and ministers, the point cannot be implemented.' Hammerstein remarked that the Conservatives in northern Germany would have little sympathy or understanding for the scope of the proposal. He wrote: 'The social question is still too unfamiliar to most; what they alone recognise is the smack of Social Democracy and there is no end to the frightening effect that has here.'

Immediately after the 30 July 1880 meeting, Fechenbach escalated his attempt to win over the leading Baden Conservatives and the nominal Bavarian leader, August Luthardt, all of whom had declined to participate.[22] But Mühlhäuser's doubts about Fechenbach's populist tone - not to mention his wish to retain south German Conservatism under his own leadership - could hardly have been dispelled by Fechenbach's defence of his proposal:

> Clearly the masses are coming more into play, and the aims of their movement are going to be decisive for coming events. Our policy, therefore, besides retaining Conservative forces which we now possess, must not fail to steer the presently and yet-to-be active masses as far as possible into our stream. ... We must not, through short-sightedness, ... close off access [to the masses] or overplay a self-sufficiency which is always the beginning of the end for any political party.

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21 Perrot to Fechenbach, 18.7.80; Stöcker to Perrot, n.d. (copy), NL F, 38; Hammerstein to Fechenbach, n.d., Sg F, 328; cf. Stöcker to Fechenbach, 20.8.80, NL F, 38.

22 Luthardt to Fechenbach, with marginal comments on the 3.6.80 program proposal, 24.10.80, NL F, 38; Fechenbach to Mühlhäuser, 1.8.80, SgF, XXII.

Luthardt's marginalia on Fechenbach's program reflected similar doubts, including comments like: 'This is far too indefinite, and sounds social democratic and enticing,' or: 'Unfortunately public opinion is so little prepared for this that the demand will serve to repel rather than attract the masses.'

If many of Fechenbach's correspondents were loathe to rush ahead with program reforms on issues of social policy or anti-Semitism, their appreciation of the relationship between the Conservative and Centre parties was more problematic.[23] Various Conservatives were attracted by the anti-liberal possibilities of an interconfessional alliance, but they tended to see practical difficulties or Popish dangers at every turn. Yet the post-1883 Saxon member of the DKP executive, Frege, made some enlightening comments on a possible alliance which were typical of the ambivalent Conservative view:

> We unfortunately have in our midst, due to the "might before right" policies of the last 20 years, such a large number of pseudo-conservative creatures, so many fearful souls who want never to incur the displeasure of the government or the so-called liberal Bürgertum, that - between us - I think we cannot have doubts about how weak our cause still is, about how many Conservatives, to the great detriment of our party, would subscribe immediately to a wide Bennigsen-Kardorff grouping, calling itself liberal-conservative but really only opportunist, if even a few of the decisive demands in Your Excellency's program - of which I personally approve fully - were to be publicized. I believe, therefore, that as long as a comprehensive agreement with the Centre has not been reached, we must refrain from appearing before the masses with promises and slogans, whose sad impossibility of fulfilment is all too clear, at least to those of us in the Reichstag.

Of Bismarck's liberal ministers, Frege lamented, 'We do not have the power or the nerve to oust these men; of 59 German Conservatives, hardly 15 would vote with me here. Therefore, before we have men like Your Excellency, Baron Thüngen et al in the Reichstag, I would like to learn more sober and exact details about any social-political hopes.' Frege's rejection of Fechenbach's scheme, however sympathetic, was

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23 Frege to Fechenbach, 24.10.80, and Engel to Fechenbach, 4.9.80, NL F, 38.

summed up in his observation that 'the Conservative Party must pursue practical politics.'

By the time Fechenbach's Frankfurt meeting was held, most Conservatives had decided to decline the baron's invitation, on the grounds that a Conservative-Centre alliance could only be forged on the anvil of ultramontanism. These rejections were partly due to the sanctions against participation which had been imposed by resolutions of the DKP parliamentary caucuses. The reluctance to abandon Fechenbach expressed in some of them, however, indicates that the authority of party leaders was not absolute. One such reluctant Conservative was Baron Hans Heinrich von Durant-Baranowitz, a recent Silesian entrant to the Prussian Herrenhaus and a man who figured prominently in other reform projects as a long-time member of the DKP's executive after 1892.[24] Another was Stöcker. On the eve of the Frankfurt assembly, Stöcker still referred to the 30 July program as 'our program', but he speculated negatively on the practicality of approaching the Conservative Party with such radical proposals: 'One only weakens one's own position thereby and achieves nothing except making various circles of people timid.'[25]

> The better way seems to me to found a Christian-social-reformist Volkspartei, namely out of propertyless groups under the leadership of conscientious, educated, independent social reformers.

As usual, Stöcker in this letter was covering all his bets, leaving the onus of antagonizing the DKP parliamentarians on Fechenbach but encouraging him to continue to press the cause of social reform. But despite the confessional antagonisms which prompted Stöcker to remain absent from Frankfurt, it is clear that there were very real affinities

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24 See Durant to Fechenbach, 21/31.10.80, and Fechenbach to Durant, n.d. (concept), NL F, 103.

25 Stöcker to Fechenbach, 9.11.80, NL F, 38, '1880', IV. Cf. Stöcker's NeueEvKirchenZ, 4.6.81, in Schoeps, 'CDU', p. 271.

between the two reformers' concepts of how the Conservative appeal was to be widened. The main difference was that - in 1880 at least - Stöcker had a clearer awareness of how necessary it was for Conservative social reformers not to make DKP notables fearful that new recruits to Conservatism might come under the leadership of an independent spirit or, most dangerous of all, a Catholic one.

The program agreed upon at Fechenbach's Frankfurt meeting of 10 November 1880, though based on the baron's proposals, reflected a curious hodge-podge of old demands first raised by other Catholic and Protestant social reformers like Ketteler, the Viennese Baron Karl von Vogelsang, Karl Rodbertus, and Hermann Wagener. The main sticking point was the wording of the anti-Kulturkampf resolution, prompting disagreement between Nathusius of the Konservative Monatsschrift and the central figure in the discussion, Hermann Wagener. Eventually a compromise resolution achieved a majority: it called for the earliest possible end to the Kulturkampf, but also for more independence for the Evangelical Church.[26]

This resolution then became the principal bond holding together this interconfessional Social-Conservative Alliance; before the group's first general assembly - originally set for February 1881 but postponed to 18/19 May 1881 - it was the one program point declared inviolable by Fechenbach. In the face of continuing opposition from the DKP and Centre leaders, however, even this dogma could not support the nascent Alliance forever. At the May 1881 meeting, almost all Catholic social reformers were conspicuously absent, and it was clear that little more could be accomplished with the project. Wagener was correct in identifying Evangelical mistrust of Windthorst as the central problem, while the Catholic Christlich-Sozial Blätter wrote that Fechenbach's ecumeni-

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26 'Protocoll der social-politischen Versammlung zur Beratung des Programms vom 30. Juli 1880 ... am 10. November 1880', NL F, 28.

cal dialogue had degenerated into a Protestant monologue in less than a year.[27]

An appreciation of the strength of the confessional suspicions which doomed Fechenbach's project only makes more persuasive the argument that is was the prospect of a new form of Conservative politics that many of Fechenbach's supporters valued most highly in his initiative. A Reichsbote article spoke of Fechenbach's 'untiring and self-sacrificing activity ... aimed at making the Conservative Party a Volkspartei in the best sense of the word.' Other Conservative newspapers, especially those edited by new-comers to the field of DKP affairs or representing non-Prussian Conservatives, expressed similar hopes.[28] Hermann Lange of the Schlesische Morgenblatt opened the columns of his paper to a full presentation of Fechenbach's formula for socio-economic reform. Reflecting the involvement of important members of the agrarian Association of Tax- and Economic Reformers in Fechenbach's enterprise, the Association's organ, the Deutsche Landes-Zeitung, was very laudatory of Fechenbach's effort 'to find the correct remedy for the present disorders and to make an end to half-measures.' Although the idea of rupturing former party groups was disavowed, the agrarian organ suggested prophetically: 'As soon as the time is ripe, the new forms [of our party life] will appear of their own accord, and anyone who remains behind will have only himself, not us, to blame.'

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27 Wagener to R. Meyer, 26.1.81, in Meyer, Hundert Jahre, p. 301; Volkov, Antimodernism, p. 226. Ungern's analysis of the failure in Schoeps, 'CDU', p. 271. Fechenbach's notes suggest a growing awareness of Conservative fears that he wished to found a new party; see 'Circular-Schreiben', 2.11.80, in NL F, 28, p. 1.

28 Rb, 26.11.80; SchlMbl, 4.-9.11.81; Deutsche-LandesZ, 7.12.80; Landwirtschaftliche Z, 26.5.81; Thüringer Volksfreund, 26.2.81; Nürnberger Volksfreund, 26.2.81; BayrLb, 3.3.81; SchlMbl, 25.2.81; DtRp, 17.11.80; cf. Fechenbach's short-lived artisan organ, Die Innung ('Organ der sozial-konservativen Vereinigung'), Probenummer, 1.9.81; and [H. Wagener], 'Ein sozialpolitisches Programm', 'Separat-Abdruck aus der Deutsche LandesZ, n.d., in Sg F, 327.

For these and other groups of fringe Conservatives, then, the difficulties of practical interconfessional politics were not to be allowed to impede the development of the Conservative Party toward an independently-based, anti-liberal Volkspartei.

2.3 Further Organizational Critiques; the Reformist Press

Fechenbach was not the only Conservative of the early 1880s imbued with a reforming zeal. In 1883, the Konservative Monatsschrift published an anonymous 'Letter from the West' on the organization of the Conservative Party.[29] Like the Wahlverein's Organizational Plan of the same year, the proposals in this article centred on outlining the proper functions of the three levels of party structure. The author suggested a party review after each election to determine whether local delegates were proving themselves capable or whether new ones should be appointed, and he argued for the representation of all districts in the provincial and state executives, since unrepresented groups often felt alienated from the regional leadership. The author implicitly criticised Berlin leaders by claiming to be ignorant of many of the activities of the central DKP executive. His critique then became explicit:

> We know that requests and reports emanating from the constituencies are not always dealt with in a satisfactory manner. It may often be declared that there exists among the rank and file no dissatifaction with the activities of the central executive. But we also doubt whether the comments to this effect which were made in self-justification and defence at the last Conservative convention in Berlin have had a very convincing effect.

Like Fechenbach, this observer believed that a successful reorganization of the DKP would bring in its wake a reorientation of the party's socio-economic policy. He wrote: 'The undeniably glorious task of the German Conservative Party is the establishment of a **new social order** and fulfilment of the legitimate demands of the working

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29 KonsMon, 40 (2), 1883, pp. 124-128.

people.' The distrust of governmentalism was reflected in the author's demand for 'completely independent' men within the party apparatus: 'Judges and officials, state or municipal, should be shut out as far as possible, since a **full** independence of their political activity from the government is **completely unthinkable.**'

> The truth of this will be conceded by anyone who knows how deeply the feeling has become rooted in the west and south of our Fatherland that the Conservative Party is merely a government party. As your journal [the Monatsschrift] has already so correctly pointed out, here one has even less understanding and sympathy for ministerial absolutism than anywhere else.

This 'Letter from the West' suggests how dissatisfaction with Berlin leaders' continuing Bismarckian subservience, their compromises with National Liberalism, and their organizational neglect was growing among some provincial Conservative groups in the early 1880s. The cultural theorist and anti-Semite, Paul de Lagarde, caught this mood when he offered his own 'Program for the Prussian Conservative Party' in 1884, in which he argued that 'opportunism and compromise are the death of any party.'[30] Lagarde wrote:

> The Conservative Party, like any other party, must be so conceived that it can stand in opposition in certain circumstances. ... If the people convince themselves that "Conservative" is not to be equated with "servile" or "privileged" but rather with loyalty ... in all cases, if necessary against the king, chancellor, and all of public opinion, ... then the people will very soon warm to the Conservative principle as to the liberal.

New ideas for Conservative political agitation also appeared in a work, first delivered as a speech to a Conservative Bürgerverein in Silesia, by a retired Prussian railway secretary, Otto Vater.[31] In an argument which itself displayed a certain lack of enlightenment, Honoratiorenpolitik came in for Vater's criticism. Conservatives,

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30 P. de Lagarde, Programm für die konservative Partei Preußens (Göttingen, 1884), pp. 6f.

31 O. Vater, Zur Organisation der konservativen Partei in Preußen (Hirschberg in Schlesien, 1887).

Vater wrote, brought with them into Conservative club life their status in state and society, through birth, education, or official rank. 'The Conservative from the lower estates respects and values highly these prerogatives, precisely **because** he is conservative and no revolutionary.' 'However,' Vater continued, 'he feels oppressed as soon as one lets him **feel** the intellectual and social superiority which these prerogatives give.' Hence, 'for the thus privileged, it is all a matter of condescension and an honest and open receptivity toward the person from the lower estate for whom friendliness means so much. Only in this way can the gap between the estates be bridged.' If the Conservative Party were to grow 'downward' and win adherents 'from the **good** elements of the people,' Verein leaders needed to be men of special qualities, capable of a 'love of the people.' The leaders of other parties sought to win adherents through a 'sham' popularity; Conservative leaders must do the same through **true** popularity.

Vater emphasised that the Conservative 'club evening' must not be too formalized and should seek to attract men wishing to enjoy a sociable gathering of like-minded colleagues. As he wrote, 'the word "Verein" has for many a negative effect, even though they are unable to explain why.' Above all, Conservatives must be helped to overcome their fear of making public their allegiance to the DKP, so that they would feel less isolated.

Despite the initial lack of leadership from Berlin, the establishment of Conservative newspapers in other parts of Germany in the half-decade after 1876 was pushed strongly by men concerned with the task of refining the party's popular appeal. Especially in western and middle Germany, but by no means only there, a corps of entrepreneurs and editors emerged who, often by association with different newspapers, were able to create a journalistic community which endorsed specific regional groups and outlooks. (See Appendix Two for details on editors and

newspaper foundings in these years.) By combining a regard for Berlin politics with a focus on local issues and activities, these enterprises performed a function of which the Wahlverein's irregular newssheets were incapable. Inevitably, the quicker pace of political life in these areas made Conservative editors less than willing to subordinate their efforts to the direction - or neglect - of Wahlverein notables and Prussian parliamentarians.

In Berlin, the Christian Conservative Reichsbote, though founded before 1876, rose in significance in these early years. Being more oriented to the Mittelstand and clerical supporters of the DKP, its rank of second place among Conservative newpapers was due to an especially large readership in western Germany. Indeed, the Kreuzzeitung itself, after shaking off the lethargic editorship of Niebelschütz in 1881, was revived by Hammerstein to become the most outspoken voice of those dissatisfied with the traditional party leaders. From 1883, the Deutsche Adelsblatt represented 'the interests of the German nobility of both confessions,' and managed to appeal both to Conservatives imbued with a heightened aristocratic class-consciousness and to those reformers most interested in convincing DKP nobles to break with dogmatic agrarian or Evangelical positions. The Konservative Monatsschrift carried forth a similary idiosyncratic Conservative line after 1879. Further west, the strong Minden-Ravensburg Christian-Conservative organization established the Neue Westfälische Volkszeitung under Pastor Dietz in 1877. In its first programmatic editorial, 'What do the German Conservatives want?', it proclaimed: 'We must work unceasingly for the strong organization of the Conservative Party, as for its tighter unity, its more solid structure, [and] its spiritual profund-

ity.' By the mid-1880s, most other western provinces and states of Germany had at least one major Conservative newspaper.[32]

Besides these major Conservative organs, the early 1880s also registered the appearance of many minor Conservative press enterprises. Attempting to move beyond the traditional Conservative reliance on Kreisblätter issued by government Landräte, these newpapers and journals could offer an even more radical view than the larger provincial organs. They often indulged in polemics in support of small Conservative Vereine but escaped censure from the Berlin leadership by virtue of their avowed affiliation to strictly local groups. Thus the Conservative Volksblatt, 'Organ of the Conservative Verein for Duisburg, Mülheim a.R. and Essen' could wage war on National Liberals at a time when the chairman of Rhineland Conservatives was intent on maintaining the alliance with the NLP; the Thüringer Volksfreund, 'Conservative Volksblatt for City and Country and Organ of the Conservative Verein in Halle and the Saal-District', could offer support for Fechenbach in 1880; and the monthly Wegweiser of the Christian-Conservative Wahlverein in Stubben, claiming to be the 'Organ for the United Conservative Parties in north-east Hanover', could call for the elimination of the Prussian three-class franchise, one of the shibboleths of DKP orthodoxy.[33]

Conservatives in the provinces often had little regard for the meagre efforts made by the Helldorff group in Berlin to expand the party press. As 'Association for the Dissemination of Conservative Journals' was apparently founded in 1883, but resistance to it grew quickly because its function was similar to that of Bismarck's famous

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32 NWVZ, 1, 31.3.77, in E. Hoener, 'Die Geschichte der christlich-konservativen Partei in Minden-Ravensburg von 1866 bis 1896' (Diss. Bielefeld, 1923), pp. 41f; cf. DAB, 10, 8.3.85, and 'An die Anhänger des deutsch-konservativen Programms in Süd- und Mittel-Deutschland' (Frankfurt/M., Aug. 1877), SgF, '1888'.

33 Der Mecklenburger, 17.1.85; Thüringer Volksfreund, 26.2.81; Wegweiser, 1.6.77.

'Reptile Fund'. Fechenbach charged that this association was 'a thoroughly middle-party agent' and used Conservative money to support National Liberal journals.[34] Helldorff's policy of maintaining a Kartell alliance of electoral co-operation with the NLP and the FKP increasingly coloured the pages of the Konservative Korrespondenz through the 1880s. Martin Griesemann, later editor of the semi-official Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, dominated his co-editor, Ungern-Sternberg, and distributed Helldorff's line to over 200 newspapers friendly to the DKP. In reaction, provincial Conservative organs became increasingly eager to assert their independence. When in July 1888 the Korrespondenz editorialized about the low level of Conservative political activity in the province of Hanover, the DKP Hannoversche Post offered a bitter rebuttal. When Helldorff complained later in the same year that no money flowed from the provinces to support the Korrespondenz, the Minden-Ravensburg Conservatives launched a campaign against Griesemann, demanding his removal to preserve 'the remnant of respect which the Berlin party leadership still enjoys in Westphalia.'[35]

In articles and brochures dealing with the DKP press, generally more restrained arguments were used. The 1883 'Letter from the West' noted that at the provincial level the Conservative press was especially weak. In suggesting why the Centre had secure regions of support, the author wrote: 'Whoever has the press has the people.' Otto Vater observed that Conservative newpapers were often too expensive, too boring, and appeared too infrequently. He suggested that entertainment and local affairs be emphasised, and that Conservative organs be distributed free of charge in public locales.[36]

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34 PfälzerZ, 2.7.84, 'Wie das Geld der Cons. verwendet wird.'

35 Koszyk, Presse, p. 138; Seckendorff to Fechenbach, 28.1.84, SgF, 328; Rb, 31.7.88; NWVZ, 22.11.88.

36 KonsMon, 'Organisation', p. 128; Vater, Organisation, p. 13.

The anonymous Conservative journalist who wrote the 1885 work, Die konservative Presse, estimated that for every reader of a Conservative newspaper, six read liberal and three read radical sheets.[37] In fact, 'Conservative' voters often read the liberal or Jewish press because of their 'trivia, sensation, and Klatsch.' The author had good words for the Konservative Monatsschrift and the Reichsbote, and offered special encouragement to Conservative editors who had to compete with Bismarckian or Free Conservative organs. The Conservative press suffered because it was not co-ordinated by the central office, this author felt; this made it vulnerable to the liberals' sense for concentration of capital, business efficiency, and appeal to advertisers. Neither recognised nor supported by parliamentary deputies, the Conservative press often lost what journalistic talent it had, the author observed, especially when the party - made shy by successive failures - was loathe to undertake the founding of new organs. To combat this, the author called finally for the training of journalists and administrators within the Conservative community, and made a special appeal to the Kreuzzeitung to do what it could to help the provincial press.

2.4 Provincial Reformism: the Bavarian Example

As a final note to this chapter on the growing pains of a young party, a brief look at the development of one independent regional Conservative organization in the early 1880s is in order. Bavaria seems to offer a good example of how the rise of Conservative party machinery in non-east-Elbian areas proceeded along paths which had strong affinities with the model of popular Conservative politics advocated by party reformers in general and Baron von Fechenbach in particular.

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37 Die konservative Presse, von einem konservativen Journalisten (Berlin, 1885), esp. pp. 12-16, 25, 39-43.

Although the Conservative Party never had tangible success in any Catholic areas of Bavaria, what one historian of Bavarian elections has termed the 'steady advance of Conservatives' in Protestant areas of Franconia began with the launching of a 'Bavarian Conservative Wahlverein' in 1881.[38] This provincial organization had extremely close ties with Fechenbach's Social-Conservative Alliance. This is clear from the correspondence between Fechenbach and his close associate and later secretary of the Bavarian Conservatives, Rudolf Meyer von Schauensee. In January 1881 Schauensee reported that discontent among Bavarian artisans had created favourable opportunities for Conservatives, if only the 'fear of reactionary intentions' among artisans, 'for which Conservatives here bear much of the blame themselves,' could be eliminated.[39]

Dissatisfaction with August Luthardt and other Bavarian Conservative notables had been brewing for some time. Just before Fechenbach's first meeting in Frankfurt, Schauensee wrote that the Conservative Verein in Nuremberg, of which he was chairman, was solidly in favour of the baron's Social-Conservative Program, considering the DKP's 1876 program to be 'too imprecise.' Schauensee had just attended a meeting of Conservative delegates in Stuttgart, where 'the lack of an organization and particularly a strong, energetic upper leadership was very evident.' The Nuremberg Conservatives were not keen to nominate Luthardt as a candidate there because of his lack of popular appeal. As Schauensee wrote:[40]

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38 D. Thränhardt, Wahlen und politische Strukturen in Bayern 1848-1953 (Düsseldorf, 1973), pp. 63-68, 90f; cf. K. Möckl, Die Prinzregentenzeit (Munich, 1972), pp. 213, 532.

39 Schauensee to Fechenbach, 12.1.81, NL F, 52 (following correspondence from this number.) August-Emil Luthardt, Mein Werden und Wirken im öffentlichen Leben (Munich, 1961), could not be consulted.

40 Schauensee to Fechenbach, 28.10.81.

> Nothing is served by us having a leader who will not or cannot put himself forward and does not even want to have the leadership in name; although I personally admire and esteem Herr Regierungsrat Luthardt, I cannot say I agree with the management of south-German Conservatives behind closed doors.

In June 1881, this impatience with party life in Bavaria was reflected in the new Wahlverein's founding proclamation.[41] Its appeal was directed squarely at artisans and farmers who wished 'above all to break with the false principle of unlimited freedom in the economic realm.' Significantly, Luthardt was not included in the Wahlverein's seventeen-member executive, a socially heterogeneous group which included, on the one hand, most other Bavarian representatives on the first Berlin Wahlverein executive and, on the other, a number of members of the Social-Conservative Alliance. These included Fechenbach himself, Schauensee, Thüngen-Roßbach, and the later Bavarian party chairman, Count Reinhard von Rechteren-Limpurg. As Schauensee wrote to Fechenbach urging him to accept his nomination to the executive, 'we have the majority in the Wahlverein, and although Professor [Dr. Friedrich] Pfaff is chairman, **your view** will be the determining one in all matters.' By spring 1882, the Bavarian organization had issued detailed instructions for the establishment of district party organizations, and by the summer of that year leading Fechenbachians had been appointed to head most of the eight Bavarian district groups.[42]

With the development of an organizational structure in their own land, some Bavarian Conservatives inherited Fechenbach's proselytizing zeal. In preparation for a general assembly of south-German Conservatives in Würzburg in July 1882, Schauensee had taken up negotiations with his Baden and Württemberg colleagues. In June he reported confi-

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41 Founded 13.6.81 in Nuremberg; 'Mitbürger! Bayrische Männer!' in SgF, '1888'.

42 Schauensee to Fechenbach, 6.81, 3.10.81, SgF, '1888'; Schauensee to Fechenbach, 29.12.83, NL F, 52; 'Wahlverein der bayerischen Cons., Direktiven für die Herren Bezirks-Vorstände', 25.3.82; Circular, 1.5.82; SgF, '1888'. Cf. 'Statut des Wahlvereins der bayr. Cons.' (Ansbach, 1881).

dentially to Fechenbach that he planned to propose at the July meeting that southern Conservatives unite more closely. His purpose was unmistakable: 'I believe that through a union of south-German elements we are capable of exerting a highly salutary pressure in social-political questions on the north-German Conservatives.' The direct link these reformers drew between organizational development and a revision of DKP social policy was also reflected in the proposals for resolutions to be discussed in Würzburg and in the text of the final communiqué.[43]

Fechenbach's own organizational plans were considerably streamlined since his original meetings in Frankfurt and Berlin, where he had found few Conservatives indulgent enough to discuss the details of his Alliance statutes.[44] In those statutes, for instance, Fechenbach had proposed that the central committee consist of exactly nine members: a chairman ('Me,' wrote Fechenbach in the margin), an Evangelical theologian ('Nathusius'), a Roman Catholic theologian, a jurist('Wagener'), and advisors for the press ('Dr. Perrot'), artisans, industrial workers ('See Hitze?'), landowners and rural workers together, and industry and trade. In July 1882, Fechenbach adopted a different tone. Now he tried to convince Conservatives that they must formulate a positive 'Action-Program' of Christian-social reform to win their independence from the government. Fechenbach was also concerned to see that determined social reformers sit for the DKP in parliament instead of restricting themselves to community or press activities in the wings. To this end, and in line with Schauensee's earlier plan to organize south-German Conservatism to influence party decisions in Berlin, Fechenbach had a number of organizational formulae.

His main point was the setting-up of an 'Action-Committee', with two or three delegates from each south-German state and supplemented by

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43 Schauensee to Fechenbach, 9.6.82, and documents in SgF, '1888'.

44 See above, note 6.

paid advisors. This committee was to arrange annual regional party congresses and co-ordinate Conservative activity within the whole south-western area of the Reich. Every party member was to be encouraged to subscribe to **both** the local and the central Conservative press organ, and it was expected of Conservative editors that they would enlarge their function as liason between the levels of the party hierarchy. It was also proposed that every south-German Conservative pay an amount equal to one-tenth his annual state taxes to support the Action-Committee and its activity. Finally, Fechenbach recommended the establishment of a network of 'party agents' to undertake the day-to-day work of party propaganda, including the delivery of public speeches, the expansion of the press, even the dispatch of the Committee's paperwork. The baron ended his draft by saying that south-German Conservatives must refute the charge that they were sowing discord or diverging from the official DKP line. Rather, wrote Fechenbach, the effort must be to root out dilatory treatment of the actual party program.

Little is known of the proceedings in Würzburg on 31 July 1882. The executive which was elected at that meeting and charged with carrying out its resolutions was at least as Fechenbachian as the Bavarian Wahlverein, but was now extended through the other south-German states.[45]

The Würzburg program reflected the reformers' basic argument that it was the duty of the DKP to undertake social reform in defence of the productive estates and their struggle with 'mobile capital' and Manchesterism. The means thereto, however, was no longer the founding of 'Conservative Vereine based on a community of ideal tendencies', but

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45 Listed in Schauensee to Fechenbach, 26.8.82, SgF, '1888'; and 'Beschlüße der kons. Versammlung in Würzburg', SgF, XXII, folder '1880/82'; printed in Fechenbach's Fürst Bismarck und die 'deutsch'-conservative Partei oder eine politische Abrechnung (Frankfurt/M, 1887), pp. 192f.

rather the establishment of artisans' and farmers' associations appealing directly to the material interests of these 'estates'. 'Only thus can the Conservative effort be expected to win for itself the vigour of a people's movement; only thus can the party achieve the strength to maintain itself, if necessary, in opposition to the government.' Not surprisingly, the main economic points of Fechenbach's earlier programs were emphasised, while any reference to the divisive issue of the Kulturkampf was omitted. Finally, with necessarily vague nomenclature, this 'social reform movement' called on Conservatives to nominate as many social reformers to parliament as possible. Of the Action-Program and Action-Committee, these resolutions made no mention.

At this point the story of Fechenbach and the illustrative example of regional Conservatism in Bavaria can be broken off. By late 1882 Fechenbach was actually more interested in working with the leading German anti-Semites and expanding his Verein zum Schutz der Handwerk (Association for the Protection of Artisans) than he was with the Conservative Party per se; the implicit break with the traditional foundation of Conservative Vereine announced at Würzburg began this drift from the DKP.

What these and other discussions of reformist impulses in the young Conservative Party have illustrated is that many Conservatives were considering the DKP as a possible Volkspartei in the early 1880s. Even Conservative parliamentary leaders were giving some thought to the question of how best to organize their party to achieve maximum agitational impact. Most high-ranking party men, however, could not sanction the breadth of Fechenbach's anti-liberal appeal or proceed with the concrete reforms suggested by other observers. As the letters of Frege, Durant, and others showed, this response was determined by a general belief that the DKP was 'too young' and 'too weak' in the 1880s

to mount such an effort. Again and again, one reads that Conservatives must overcome their fears, their shyness, and their lack of solidarity, or that the party - for the moment - must practice practical politics acceptable to Bismarck and his regime. To be sure, frondeurs and pamphleteers did not have all the answers to either organizational or more comprehensive political problems - the next chapter will suggest some of the inadequacies of their anti-liberal solutions. But these figures at least often **did** have the advantage of close contact with the men who actually took in hand the task of building the party at the grass-roots level after 1876, in contrast to the parliamentary notables who practised politics 'behind closed doors' and whose identification with 'the party' was so tenuous that they conceived of Conservative affairs in terms of the Fraktionskneipe. In this sense, the community of dissenters, reformers, activists, extremists - the nomenclature is secondary - which emerged in the early 1880s was not peripheral to DKP affairs at all.

Chapter Three: The Limits of Anti-Liberalism, 1881-1890

This chapter will analyse the relationship between movements for reform within the Conservative Party and the evolution of Kartellpolitik in the 1880s. Showing that reformist attacks on Helldorffian policies could operate in Conservative circles only within very narrow limits, it will suggest that the final phase of National Liberal dominance in Reich legislation and the practicalities of parliamentary life exposed the limits of radically anti-liberal social and economic policies, as well as the inherent contradictions within the reformers' ideal of Conservative 'Volkstümlichkeit'.

3.1 Stöcker, Hammerstein, and the 'Kreuzzeitung Party'[1]

Despite the historical obscurity which still shrouds many of the personalities and political currents within the 'Kreuzzeitung group'

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1 The two standard Stöcker biographies are: W. Frank, Hofprediger Adolf Stöcker und die christlichsoziale Bewegung (Hamburg, 1935[2]) and D. von Oertzen, Adolf Stöcker, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1910); the latter contains an expansive list of contemporary literature on Stöcker; cf. literature review in D. Fricke, 'Christlichsoziale Partei, 1878-1918', Fricke, I, p. 255. Otherwise, see: A. Stöcker, Christlich-Sozial. Reden und Aufsätze (Bielefeld/Leipzig, 1885); A. Stöcker, Dreizehn Jahre Hofprediger und Politiker (Berlin, 1895); P. Massing, Rehearsal for Destruction (New York, 1949); P. Pulzer, The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria (New York, 1964); M. Broszat, 'Die antisemitische Bewegung im wilhelminischen Deutschland' (Diss., Cologne, 1952); H.-C. Gerlach, 'Agitation und parlamentarische Wirksamkeit der deutschen Antisemitenparteien 1873-1895' (Diss., Kiel 1956); K. Kupisch, Adolf Stöcker - Hofprediger und Volkstribun (Berlin, 1970); R. Levy, The Downfall of the Anti-Semitic Political Parties in Imperial Germany (New Haven/London, 1975); U. Tal, Christians and Jews in Germany (Ithaca/London, 1975); and the collection of essays in W. Mosse, ed., Juden im Wilhelminischen Deutschland 1890-1914 (Tübingen, 1976). Helmuth v. Gerlach has written on his own early CSP days; cf. H. Wagener, Die Mangel der christlich-sozialen Bewegung (Berlin, 1885). Despite these works, Geoff Eley has noted: 'We still lack a social history of anti-Semitism.' Cf. his review of many of the works above, in SH, May 1977, pp. 691-695.
On Hammerstein, see KZ lead articles 1881-95; then Leuß, Hammerstein, containing impt. correspondence with leading DKP parliamentarians; NDB, VII, p. 597; the two sections to Heffter's work on the Kreuzzeitung party; references above; and the SgF press files on Hammerstein.

and the Christian Social Party (CSP), the barest outline of the early careers of Stöcker and Hammerstein suffices to suggest their impact as DKP reformers.

Born the son of a prison warder and blacksmith in 1835, Adolf Stöcker's childhood and education fostered in him both a faith in his own ability to overcome social antagonisms and a preference for contacts in the social classes above him. When he first came to Berlin after serving as tutor to a noble family and as army chaplain in the Franco-Prussian War, Stöcker was so appalled by the misery, irreligion, and corruption of the Gründerzeit capital that his social conscience was awakened to the mission of political involvement. In 1876 Stöcker was appointed Court Preacher by Wilhelm I, a post which he held until late 1890 and which provided him with a crucial means of entry into Conservative circles. Besides this forum for expressing his views on Evangelical Church interests and the alienation of the working classes from religion, his role as head of the Berlin City Mission provided him with direct experience of urban poverty and unrest. It also provided connections to social reformers which, as in the famous Waldersee meeting of November 1887, reached to the highest levels of Berlin society.

There are many striking similarities between Stöcker's earliest political action and that of his contemporary, Fechenbach. In January 1878 Stöcker played a leading role in founding the Christian Social Workers' Party, whose program demanded factory legislation, old-age and invalid insurance schemes, ständisch economic representation, progressive taxation, and regulation of stock-exchange dealings and usury malpractices. Stöcker's party in Berlin had as little electoral success with this independent effort to win workers' votes as did Fechenbach's various south-German candidacies based on the program of his Social-Conservative Alliance a few years later. After the

Christian Socials' failure in mid-1878 to break the monopoly of Berlin Reichstag seats held by Progressives and Socialists, Stöcker, like Fechenbach, changed the tone of party appeals and embraced the ideology of anti-Semitism and the demands of the old Mittelstand, emphasising legislation for artisans and small shopkeepers allegedly oppressed by Jewish money capital. Stöcker's argument was that, for the Berlin lower-middle classes, the Jewish question **was** the social question.[2] By late 1879, the overtly anti-Semitic party program of the Christian Socials had been introduced by Stöcker, and the 'Workers' dropped from the party name. This change of emphasis increased the attractiveness of the young CSP to the Conservatives.

In the wake of the November 1880 'Jewish debates' in parliament, and because Conservatives had no roots of their own in the Berlin electorate, Stöcker's group was incorporated into the generally right-wing Berlin Movement. Through the decade, the teeming political currents within this movement produced an ebb and flow of party sypathies among Stöcker's Berlin colleagues.[3] But generally, once the high tide of the early 1880s had been passed, the Bismarckian elements tending to favour a middle-party orientation in Berlin had usurped the leadership from the original nucleus of Christian Social faithful. Nonetheless, the CSP candidates elected to parliament continued to join the German Conservative caucus.

Although the so-called 'Kreuzzeitung group' around Baron Wilhelm von Hammerstein-Schwartow was a far more nebulous entity than Stöcker's CSP - indeed was considered by many contemporaries to include Stöcker's followers - it had stronger connections with the central affairs and leadership of the DKP, principally because of Hammerstein's position at

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2 Cf. R. Mumm, 'Adolf Stöcker', Aufstieg, pp. 297ff; Pulzer, Anti-Semitism, p. 93; Frank, Stöcker, p. 77; Heffter, Opposition, p. 20.

3 Cf. the important but neglected work by M. Schön, Die Geschichte der Berliner Bewegung (Leipzig, 1889).

the head of the party's most distinguished newspaper. Hammerstein, born in 1838, was the son of a Mecklenburg estate owner. His rise to prominence before 1881 included forestry service, management of his father's estate in Pomerania, and election to the Prussian House of Deputies and the Reichstag in 1876 and 1881 respectively.[4] The particular brand of high-church piety which Hammerstein acquired in the home of his forest master inclined him to ally with the remnants of the altkonservativ faction within the DKP after 1876. But by 1880 he enjoyed good relations with Bismarck, even consulting him before accepting the post as Kreuzzeitung chief editor in November 1881. Until 1884, Hammerstein remained on cordial terms with Bismarck socially, and so could communicate to the DKP impressions gathered at the dinner table in Varzin and Friedrichsruh. Hammerstein was described by Ernst von Heydebrand und der Lasa, a later party chairman, as 'the most important political mind the Conservatives had at that time.'[5]

Hammerstein's influence, though certainly not constant, can perhaps best be described in terms of concentric rings of sympathy centring on the Kreuzzeitung itself. As Hammerstein set out to reverse the decline of the paper, he realized that his predecessor's unwillingness to take a clear stand on issues like protective tariffs, the Kulturkampf, or the Stöcker movement had reduced the Kreuzzeitung to little more than a trade journal for government clerks, wishing only to offend as few people as possible. In his rebuilding project Hammerstein relied heavily on two leading members of his staff who had been involved in Fechenbach's 1880/81 project, Ungern-Sternberg and Hermann Kropatschek. By the middle of the 1880s, the Kreuzzeitung had

4 Cf. Leuß, Hammerstein, pp. 12-36.

5 Heydebrand, 'Beiträge', p. 500: 'Hammerstein had a conscious image of the nature of an independent Cons. Party;' cf. Leuß, Hammerstein, pp. 43f.

regained its unchallenged position as the dominant Conservative organ, which it never lost again. Through the next tortuous decade, Hammerstein's idiosyncratic, hochkonservativ editorials continued to be read by Conservatives who needed their 'Hofblatt'. As the Catholic Kölnische Volkszeitung wrote in 1891, 'However little tendency to opposition the Conservative nobility may have, it still loves to see in its press the turn for independence and a salty style.'[6]

The Kreuzzeitung's pre-eminent position did not cause Hammerstein to lose touch with the rapid expansion of the DKP provincial press. In fact, the phalanx of independent editors leading these enterprises, along with the corpus of social, religious, and political ideas they pressed, came to be regarded as very much an integral element of the Kreuzzeitung group itself.

The second main element of the group was the cadre of hochkonservativ deputies, mostly in the Prussian lower house, who regarded Hammerstein and Stöcker, and not their own nominal caucus chairmen, as their real leaders.[7] Here, too, the provincial spirit played a large role. As older dissidents like Gerlach himself, Philipp von Nathusius, and Hermann Wagener died or withdrew from public life, a new generation of deputies from areas of strong Evangelical piety or non-Prussian traditions came forward to press the advantages which Conservative 'Ultras', as they were called, enjoyed in the Landtag. Reichstag deputies, dealing more with economic, military, and social bills requiring a greater degree of flexibility, were more mindful of Kartell requirements due to the caucus's relative weakness.

The third element upon which both the parliamentary and press adherents of the Kreuzzeitung group rested, and which eventually gave

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6 In LeipZ, 5.1.91.

7 Through the 1880s, Rauchhaupt led the DKP PAH caucus. Both he and the PHH caucus chairman, Kleist-Retzow, moved in and out of sympathy with Hammerstein. Helldorffian M-PAH included Limburg and Liebermann.

the group its most tangible substance, was the network of party activists, scattered across Gemany, who for one reason or another wished to steer their regional party organizations in the same 'Christian' and 'social' directions in which Hammerstein and Stöcker were trying to impel the DKP as a whole. Fechenbach and his colleagues in the Bavarian Conservative Wahlverein might be considered paradigms of this sort of Conservative, that is, men who demanded their right to speak out in favour of party reform and who justified their action by pointing to their own individual efforts to move beyond the traditional limits of Conservative agitation. This south-German experience was not an isolated case. As the Wahlverein leadership in Berlin settled into the comfortable Kartell politics after 1884, Kreuzzeitung-oriented organizations in Berlin under Stöcker, in Pomerania and Westphalia under the leadership of Orthodox Evangelicals, in Saxony, Hessen, and Lower Saxony under anti-Semitic leaders, and elsewhere under other independent spirits kept alive the desire for the strengthening of the party at the grass-roots level. Over time, as Hammerstein and the editors who followed him grew more critical of the Helldorffian disregard for party machinery and Conservative ideals, these activists acquired a sense of belonging to what contemporaries called the 'Kreuzzeitung party'.

Finally, a line of nominal 'Kreuzzeitung' ministers and generals ran all the way from Albrecht von Roon at mid-century to Robert von Puttkamer (Prussian Minister of the Interior) and Count Alfred von Waldersee (Chief of the General Staff) in the 1880s.[8] Puttkamer, for instance, never fully endorsed Bismarck's Kartell ambitions, receiving in return the Kreuzzeitung's support when his system of electoral influence was attacked by the National Liberals. As the Prussian Minister of Justice once said of Puttkamer, 'he rules wholly in line with

8 See Heffter, Opposition, p. 33; Leuß, Hammerstein, pp. 36f.

the extreme Kreuzzeitung party.'[9] Robert's brother, Bernhard von Puttkamer-Plauth, was one of the few influential Ultras in the DKP Reichstag caucus. Both Puttkamers helped introduce Stöcker and Hammerstein in court circles.

Thus, through the Kreuzzeitung, the Reichsbote, and the affiliated provincial press; through the corps of right-wing Conservatives in the Prussian Landtag; through the agitation of new or established regional organizations; and through the influence of government figures who felt an affinity for their cause, Hammerstein and Stöcker in the 1880s found a number of important means for exerting their influence on the DKP. They wished to see the **scope** of Conservative politics enlarged into a popular movement which would transform the party into a decisive agent for the breaking of the political mould of the 'liberal era'. They wished to see the **direction** of Conservative politics realigned to provide for the re-acquisition of the full rights of their Church, as well as the re-incorporation of the middle and lower classes into a social and economic order of ständisch relationships and hierarchical authority. In both scope **and** direction, Conservative politics were to break decisively with liberal influences, no matter with what authority they were draped, and, through the DKP as Volkspartei, usher in a new conservative age. To the 'Conservative constituency' of Kreuzzeitung-group dreams, as well as to the role of Conservative ideals in determining Germany's future, there were few limits indeed.

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9 On a ministerial shuffle explicitly calculated to meet 'the danger of a development of internal politics in the Kreuzzeitung-Stöcker direction,' see Lucius v. Ballhausen to Bismarck, 12.6.88, Rkz. 1608, f. 56.

3.2 Conservative Social Policy

A study of the evolution of Conservative Sozial- and Mittelstandpolitik[10] is required at this point for two main reasons. First, it was a central tenet of the Kreuzzeitung group that the DKP could become a Volkspartei only through the espousal of a positive policy of socio-economic reform in line with the Kaiser's decree (Erlaß) of November 1881. Therefore, the party's willingness to follow the government's program of social legislation and the struggle between the Hammerstein and Helldorff wings within the party were related problems which in their reciprocity affected the metamorphosis and expansion of the party in its early years. A radical transformation of the social and economic order demanded by Conservative reformers became the ideological focus for those who saw the irreconcilability of allegiance both to Helldorff and to the expansion of the Conservative electorate.

Second, the reaction to Conservative policy by increasingly self-conscious Mittelstand elements reveals the importance of new social and economic pressures from below. In a state of flux in the 1880s and 1890s, these groups became as unpredictable as their dissatisfaction became vocal. Though the drifting allegiance of artisan and small businessman groups has been the subject of studies from many angles, historians agree that important Mittelstand groups were among those who raised the earliest cries against the Imperial party system and the old concepts of 'liberal' and 'conservative' economics. Taken together, these two points suggest why the evolution of Conservative social policy helped define the limits of the DKP's illiberalism, limits within

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10 Sozialpolitik meant to contemporaries something narrower than 'social policy', namely the response to the workers' question, involving legislation pertaining to the protection of wage-earners and the 'raising' of the working classes into the social and political order of the Kaiserreich: cf. K. E. Born, et al, Einführungsband [zur] Quellensammlung zur Geschichte der deutschen Sozialpolitik 1867 bis 1914 (Wiesbaden, 1966), pp. 11ff.

which Mittelstand groups, like other new political forces, soon refused to operate.[11]

Conservative interest in workers' protection probably reached its nadir at the end of the 1870s. As one historian has written, 'that the German Conservatives did not consider the question of workers' protection in its own right is shown by their irresolution, their extremism, and their resignation in this period.'[12] When the Kaiser's decree of November 1881 appeared, Conservatives had little choice but to profess enthusiasm for it. In a parallel way, they used long quotations from Bismarck's Reichstag speeches in their pro-worker leaflets for the 1881 election campaign. Conservatives hoped that aspects of the program of social legislation included in the royal decree might lead Bismarck away from the National Liberals and other representatives of large industry. In this sense, Conservatives saw the debates on Sozialpolitik in the 1880s to lie on the axis of state intervention or laissez-faire economics. In its two-front war against industry and against the workers' movement, the DKP pointed to the government's moral obligation to protect the sick, the poor, and the old, or to inaugurate factory inspection. At the same time it sought to appease the least dangerous of the workers' demands and thereby subvert socialism's revolutionary threat. Thus, Conservatives could

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11 Cf. G. Eley, 'The Wilhelmine Right: How It Changed', in Evans, Society and Politics, pp. 118ff; H. A. Winkler, Liberalismus und Antiliberalismus (Göttingen, 1979), esp. pp. 83ff; Volkov, Antimodernism, p. 325; Sheehan, Liberalism, Chs. 7 and 16; D. Blackbourn, 'The Mittelstand in German Society and Politics, 1871-1914,' SH, 4, Jan. 1977, p. 433; J. Hunt, 'The Bourgeois Middle in German Politics, 1871-1933: Recent Literature,' in CEH, XI (1), March 1978, pp. 83-106.

12 Stock, Bestrebungen, p. 76; cf. K. Femerling, 'Die Stellung der konservativen Partei zur gewerblichen Arbeiterfrage in der Zeit von 1848-1880' (Diss., Halle [1927]), pp. 288; D. Blasius, 'Konservative Sozialpolitik und Sozialreform im 19. Jahrhundert', in Kaltenbrunner, Rekonstruktion, pp. 469-488; E. Bock, 'Die Konservativen in der Provinz Sachsen und die soziale Frage 1848 bis 1870' (Diss., Halle, 1932), pp. 343, 367; E. Richthofen, 'Über die historischen Wandlungen in der Stellung der autoritären Parteien zur Arbeiterschutzgesetzgebung' (Diss., Heidelberg, 1901), pp. 15-32.

afford to give passive support to a system of state aid to the worker 'from above' - at substantial cost to the employer.[13]

Through the decade Conservatives offered their own positive social policy only on issues like Sunday rest or women's and children's work, which reflected the Conservative concern for family institutions.[14] The hard evidence of the DKP's advocacy of Bismarck's Socialist Laws and measures against freedom of coalition could not help but make the working masses see the stick and belittle the carrot offered by Conservatives. State and class interests clearly came before social or Christian ones, at least for those who represented the party in parliament, so that none of the benefits of nominal support for social insurance schemes accrued to the Conservative account. As Hermann Wagener wrote: 'It is a futile hope ... to win the sympathy of the masses for the government and for Conservative Sozialpolitik as long as one persists in treating them as second-class Germans and subjecting them to exceptional laws.'[15]

Considering the Conservative arguments used against the dismantling of the Ständestaat in debates on the Industrial Code and the Kreisordnung, it is not surprising to find the DKP showing increased sympathy for corporatist and anti-capitalist rhetoric which began to emanate from artisan circles later in the 1870s.[16] The steady rise of

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13 'Flugblätter des Wahlvereins der Deutsch-Kons.' IV, 'Die Sorge für die Arbeiter', [1881]. Cf. K.E. Born, Staat und Sozialpolitik Seit Bismarcks Sturz (Wiesbaden, 1957), pp. 63-65; Born, Quellensammlung, p. 73; DAB, 10 (1892), pp. 61f, 103; R. Meyer, Was heißt kons. sein?, p. 14.

14 See Stock, Bestrebungen, p. 82.

15 Wagener, Erlebtes, II, p. 82.

16 Cf. H. Lebovics, '"Agrarians" versus "Industrialists". Social Conservative Resistance to Industrialism and Capitalism in Late Nineteenth Century Germany', Int. Rev. of Soc. Hist., XII (1), 1967, pp. 31-65; H. Lebovics, 'A Socialism for the German Middle Classes. The Social Conservative Response to Industrialism, 1900-1933' (Diss., Yale, 1964).

Social Democracy also induced the party to espouse measures designed merely to shield the traditional Mittelstand from new economic institutions, such as house-to-house peddling or large department stores.

Artisans were among those groups who gathered in mid-February 1877 for the second general assembly of the Association of Tax- and Economic Reformers.[17] At that congress, the appeal was made for the protection of 'honest' work, particularly under the onslaught of 'big city trade capital.' As amendments to the 1869 Industrial Code were debated during the following years, the Saxon Conservative leader, Karl Ackermann, and others used the Reichstag as a forum for their pro-artisan appeals. In April 1877 Ackermann claimed that the Conservatives hoped that the estate of artisans 'should recover its Golden Age.' Before long, local Conservative Vereine and the Kreuzzeitung began to show more interest in the affairs of artisans. The Kreuzzeitung spoke of the need 'to organize the whole production of the Fatherland in a way which combines the relations and order of the Middle Ages, with their educative, moral, and political moments, with the modern modes of production and their economic benefits. This is the simple key to the solution of the social question.'[18]

Despite this common disaffection with the liberal economic order, however, artisans did not actually 'migrate' to the Conservative camp. In fact, by 1881 the divergence of the two groups was becoming evident. In line with their earlier reserve regarding the Prussian Volksverein and long-standing complaints about Conservative condescension, leading artisan groups were careful to avoid a strict party-political commitment. Some participants in the national masters' conferences demanded a clearer stand in favour of the DKP, but the leaders were

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17 See Richthofen, Arbeiterschutz, pp. 27f.

18 Ibid., p. 32; Volkov, Antimodernism, p. 20; Stock, Bestrebungen, p. 69; KZ, 27.2.84, 'Die Mangel der Handwerkerbewegung.'

unwilling to take that step. Meanwhile, Ackermann was finding himself in the cross-fire of criticism from the more radical artisans and from liberals complaining about the 'restless and incessant agitation of the Conservatives' on the guild question. When the government finally offered legislation on the issue in March 1881, which included some Conservative demands but did not concede the principle of obligatory guilds, Ackermann had to represent the Conservatives' pro-government stand. By 1883, when his proposal to restrict the instruction of trainees to guild masters was defeated by the Reichstag - with many Conservatives conspicuously absent - Ackermann was on the defensive. His argument that the masters should give the new guild laws of 1881 a proper chance was not well received.[19]

Practical parliamentary limitations did not confine either fringe Conservatives or artisan organizers. In fact, Fechenbach was advocating obligatory guilds even before that cry was loud among artisan groups. By the middle of the decade, Fechenbach and some other Conservative reformers were deprecating the DKP's will to win the allegiance of artisans. For Fechenbach this meant affiliation with the Centre Party, but for Protestant Conservatives, that route was not open.[20] As well, Mittelstand groups were launching attempts to create their own pressure groups, as with the founding of the Allgemeine Deutsche Handwerkerbund in 1882 and the Central Ausschuß der Vereinigten Innungsverbände Deutschlands in 1885. For although the guild movement activists

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19 KZ, 3.2.83; Stock, Bestrebungen, pp. 65ff; Volkov, Antimodernism, pp. 209ff.

20 This dilemma is reflected in Lange to Fechenbach, 6.1.85, NL F, 53: Reporting the unwillingness of Pomeranian Cons. to break with Bismarckian economic policy, Lange wrote: 'I conclude that the artisans are going to be estranged from us, and this is what I want to oppose, or rather preclude. ... However, I could be forced into open opposition to the Cons. association [in Pomerania.] But I want to avoid that, since it could lead to my economic ruin. As long as there does not exist alongside the Cons. Party an independent social-conservative [party] with its press, etc., I must remain with the former and in it swim against the stream.'

needed the voice of Conservatives like Ackermann in the Reichstag, by preserving their independence they could put more pressure on the DKP, as well as leave room for the more radical rhetoric needed to retain the support of increasingly desperate artisans. In this way, the Mittelstand groups enjoyed the same practical advantages of loose affiliation with the DKP which had prompted Stöcker to guard jealously the integrity of his Christian Social Party as a semi-independent political force.[21]

Around 1884-85, the bonds between Mittelstand malcontents and the Conservatives became somewhat tighter again. In that winter the Reichstag finally passed the DKP amendment to the Industrial Code which gave local authorities the right to restrict the training and employment of apprentices to guild members. By mid-1885 the Guilds Congress passed a resolution expressing its gratitude to Ackermann for his 'tireless efforts on behalf of the artisans.' Kreuzzeitung editorials began urging a firmer DKP commitment to Mittelstandpolitik. In October 1885, Ackermann submitted a proposal to the Reichstag, which he introduced repeatedly in the following years, putting Conservative support solidly behind the ultimate artisan demand, compulsory masters' examinations. Around the same time, the DKP expert on stock-exchange legislation was taking the initiative in another favourite anti-Semitic, Mittelstand project, a stock-exchange tax, while Stöcker and Ackermann were making proposals for a maximum working day. Before the end of the decade, Conservatives and anti-Semites were also supporting Mittelstand retailers in legislation to restrict consumer co-operatives. Finally, of course, Conservatives were becoming more eager for individual artisans and workers to repay the DKP for its support of their interests by declaring their allegiance to the party formally. Otto Vater wrote in 1887 that DKP members had a duty to

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21 Pulzer, Anti-Semitism, p. 99; Winkler, Liberalismus, p. 85; Volkov, Antimodernism, pp. 232, 248, 263.

patronize like-minded artisans as far as possible, since 'past and present practices show that many [artisans and labourers], as soon as they declare their allegiance to Conservatism openly, have their livlihoods taken away by their opponents, with very few exceptions.'[22]

If the Conservatives were willing to undertake Sozial- and Mittelstandpolitik on a number of fronts, this is not to suggest that National Liberals and the Centre Party were not seeking to expand their own electorates in similar ways. However, the representation of commercial and industrial capital, or the suspicion of over-weaning state intervention, prevented these other parties from embracing Mittelstand interests fully in the 1880s. As H. A. Winkler has written, 'while the Conservatives were prepared to take up those demands of artisans which made a radical break with freedom of competition, the National Liberals and the state bureaucracy drew a limit to their protectionism at the point where it threatened to come into conflict with the vital needs of an industrial state.'[23] Yet this statement by Winckler does not carry the question far enough. For if it is true that Conservatives were motivated to support artisans' and other Mittelstand groups' interests by a general antipathy to what they termed in their 1876 program 'limitless economic freedom,' it is also true that the party leaders around Helldorff would not sanction the sort of Mittelstand policy that could have seriously disrupted the emergent Kartell after 1884. The disunity and weakness of artisans' own political pressure groups, together with the dominant influence of Bismarck, meant that the Conservatives could make impractical demands

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22 Stock, Bestrebungen, pp. 67-70; KZ of 26.7.84, 20.6.85, 9.9.86, 18.8.87, cited in Volkov, Antimodernism, p. 252; Born, Quellensammlung, p. 78; Richthofen, Arbeiterschutz, pp. 52-55; R. Gellately, The Politics of Economic Despair (London/Beverly Hills, 1974), p. 153; Vater, Organisation, pp. 13f.

23 Winkler, Liberalismus, pp. 94ff.

on behalf of artisans for campaign purposes, knowing that there was little chance of achieving a Reichstag majority for specific bills. Moreover, Conservatives could be confident that the government would arrange to have the Bundesrat block any measures truly debilitating to industry which might pass the Reichstag.

This regard for Kartellpolitik in turn gave rise to dissent within the party and lack of DKP caucus unanimity on a large proportion of social legislation in the 1880s. Helldorff tried with only mixed success to put a brake on Conservatives who seriously questioned Bismarck's social policies or who argued an extreme anti-liberal position. In August 1888 Rauchhaupt wrote to Hammerstein about Bismarck's inaction on the issue of Sunday rest: 'I am so deeply outraged that my little bit of independence is not tolerated from above, that I would like to make a firm declaration and do away with the humbug of parliamentarism that remains.' Helldorff was eager to appease Kartell allies and the economic interests they represented, declaring in the Reichstag in January 1885: 'The interests of agriculture are no longer separable from those of industry and commerce.'[24]

At the same time, Stöcker, Hammerstein, and others were questioning the social, economic, and even anti-socialist premises of the liberal industrial system.[25] In November 1889 Stöcker declared:

> The question has arisen: how much child- and women labour does industry need to expand, to be strong productively and to be capable of export? That question is a false one; one should have asked from the start, and indeed asked the state

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24 Rauchhaupt to Hammerstein, 19.8.88, in Leuß, Hammerstein, p. 73; Stock, Bestrebungen, p. 105; Helldorff cited in P.R. Anderson, The Background of Anti-English Feeling in Germany 1890-1902 (Washington D.C., 1939), pp. 37f.

25 Wagener saw the steady extension of state socialism and the retention of the old capitalist system as 'the parallelogram of contradictory forces' within which the DKP was destroying itself. Erlebtes, II, p. 71; KZ, 20.1.88, 'Die Bedeutung der sozialen Frage.'

> as well as the circle of employers: how must industry be organized, in order to protect and further the family, the personality, and Christian life?

In January 1888 Hammerstein wrote: 'In many respects we stand much closer to the socialists than we do to heartless, mammonistic Manchesterism.' Quoting the book of the Austrian Professor Schäffle, Kapitalismus und Socialismus, Hammerstein agreed that 'the capitalist era is **necessarily** a liberal era,' and although Conservatives condemned revolutionary Social Democracy, 'we also want nothing to do with either liberalism or the abuses of capitalism.'[25a]

> Its whole Weltanschauung separates us from liberalism, as well as its view of Christianity. ... It wishes to clothe private property alone with a sacrosanct halo.... Therefore Stahl declared: "Against selfish and profane property, the war of socialism is not without justification."

Thus the Kreuzzeitung harkened back to Ludwig von Gerlach's 1848 dichotomy between 'material' and 'principled' Conservatism.

Not surprisingly, German artisans and other threatened Mittelstand groups later in the decade sympathized with Hammerstein when he opposed the electoral Kartell between the DKP, FKP, and NLP in the Reichstag elections of 1887 (except as an ad hoc and temporary anti-socialist tactic.) Artisan leaders were shocked at the willingness of Helldorff to ally with the National Liberals, and the public approval of this union of artisans' best friends and worst enemies brought home to Mittelstand organizers the extent of their own isolation, prompting a loss of faith in traditional party politics. The Allgemeine Handwerkerzeitung raised the lament in January 1887 that 'the two parties [DKP and Centre] which are friendly to the master artisans are standing today against each other in the election campaign, and allying themselves with parties hostile to the artisans - indeed a sad picture of the present [state] of our parliamentary system.'[26] Neither the Helldorff nor the Hammerstein wings of the DKP could have been ignorant of this disaffection with Conservatives; but the demands - and rewards

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26 25.1.87, in Volkov, Antimodernism, p. 268.

25a Stöcker in Stock, Bestrebungen, p. 83; KZ, 20.1.88.

- of Kartellpolitik offered little scope for either Kreuzzeitung anti-liberalism or the sort of practical steps which might have held the allegiance of the artisans. Thus the history of the DKP's pro-artisan policies in the 1870s and 1880s has been described with some justification as the 'most unhappy chapter in the history of the Conservative Party.'[27]

3.3 Christian Social Activism

It is difficult to over-stress the degree to which anti-Bismarckian, anti-socialist, anti-Semitic, corporatist, and religious ideas were integrated within the ideology of the reformist Conservative community. Stöcker expressed this complexity metaphorically when he wrote in January 1880:

> What we have hoped for years, that the ship of liberalism would suffer shipwreck on the social question and then be laid on the sand by the political ebb, and the debris swept away by the religious flood: that is beginning to happen. But ... it is not yet completed, for ... the great steersman of our time has used the weather to allow his old opponents to run out onto the beach....

Among reformist Conservatives there was a common belief that an independent, activist, and principled Conservative Party would be capable of ending the liberal era. As the Silesian party chairman, Baron von Durant, wrote in December 1884: 'To the Conservative Party, fully thrown upon itself (I mean thereby the decisive and independent Conservatives,) falls the difficult task of implementing social reform - as its only genuine supporter - and leaving aside everything else.' In May 1887, Hammerstein wrote disparagingly of Bismarck's attempt to balance liberal and conservative interests:[28]

> That one persists at all with such an impossible problem, impossible like the squaring of the circle, is only explained by the circumstances of our Caesarean-inspired age. ... When [Bismarck] hangs up his coat, ... government will have to be by principles and programs....

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27 Stock, Bestrebungen, p. 59.

28 Frank, Stöcker, p. 154; Durant to Fechenbach, 29.12.84, NL F, 103; [illegible]

In the 1880s, the confluence of political factors on a number of levels was tending to highlight the Christian Social Party as the centre of dissent within the DKP. In editorials of November 1885, Hammerstein called on the DKP to give greater support to the Christian Social groups in the Berlin Movement and, 'through continuing contact with the ... lowest streams within industrial and lower-middle-class life, win new strength and a widening of perspective.' This idea that the CSP could attract new social groups to the Conservative cause was echoed by Stöcker two months later, when he described DKP-CSP relations:

> We Christian Socials only emphasise the "social" element more sharply.... We conceive of political life in a somewhat more active way, and pursue the struggle more from the midst of the people. As an **urban** party we are an element which can travel beside the Conservatives.

Stöcker recognised that the development of new forms of agitation had to proceed along with the discovery of new and popular ideologies. As he told a Stuttgart rally:[29]

> There are Conservative circles which are so withdrawn and superior that they consider it bad taste to go into mass meetings and take up the fight there. ... We have left the strategic positions of public life to the enemies; now they hold the heights, equipped with all the heavy and small arms of the press and the mass meeting, while we have to reconquer one position after another.... What the Conservatives lack are big, exciting, stirring, all-embracing ideas.

Perhaps the biggest of Stöcker's ideas was his faith in the use of anti-Semitism as a focus for his anti-liberalism. Paul Massing has written of DKP anti-Semitism that 'it was a strategy deliberately thought out and accepted; it had nothing whatsoever to do with the Conservatives' like or dislike for Jews.' This over-states the point and deprecates the significance of the long-standing suspicion of Jews

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29 KZ, 22/25.11.85; Frank, Stöcker, p. 153; Massing, Rehearsal, pp. 27f.

among various social classes whose members adhered to Conservatism.[30] This being said, it is clear that Kreuzzeitung-group anti-Semitism must be integrated into the greater onslaught against liberal economics launched by Conservative reformers and dissidents from Hermann Wagener and Franz Perrot to Berthold von Ploetz and Diederich Hahn of the Farmers' League. There is little to choose between the style of the Era-articles in the 1870s, the Stöcker-Hammerstein appeals of the 1880s, and the later anti-capitalist, anti-industrial, and anti-Semitic arguments of the Farmers' League. As a BdL representative declared in 1904:[30a]

> We have failed in our economy; ... the errors of Jewish liberalism are still rife among us.... The industrialists, who are prisoners of the Jews, have succeeded in throwing off their burden of taxes, which has now fallen upon us. ... We have failed to preserve the conservative foundations of our society....

Yet the political style of Christian Socials was feared by establishment figures both inside and outside the DKP for reasons which often related only tangentially to the Jewish question. Bismarck, it is known, lost sympathy with Stöcker's agitation in the early 1880s largely because Stöcker attacked wealthy and influential Jews, like Bismarck's banker, Gerson Bleichröder, rather than exclusively Progressive or Radical Jews. As Herbert Bismarck wrote in November 1880: 'The dangerous thing ... is the communist-socialist tendency of Stöcker's agitation.'[31]

The degree to which Christian Socials injected Conservatism with a popular appeal is open to interpretation; but that Berlin society and political observers took note of a reformist spirit in the DKP in the 1880s and early 1890s is clear. In 1885, the Berlin correspondent of a

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30 Ibid., pp. 65, 52; the FkZ, 17.9.85, claimed that 'the Cons. in Berlin who is not an anti-Semite must be looked for with a lantern.' Tal, Christians and Jews, pp. 142, 149.

30a cited in →

31 H. Bismarck to C. v. Tiedemann, 21.11.80, in Frank, Stöcker, p. 305; cf. Stern, Gold and Iron, p. 516, and Stöcker's letter of 23.9.80 to the Kaiser, in Massing, Rehearsal, p. 30.

small provincial journal wrote about the new face of Conservative activism:[32]

> Only he who has not seen Berlin for ten years and has suddenly returned can measure the change that has taken place. When he enters a small modest restaurant he will be amazed to find the Reichsbote not only on display but also avidly read by the small artisan and working man. He would have to make sure that he was not dreaming when he remembered the times these circles would have thrown out the reactionary paper, and its reader on top of it. ...
>
> [He] arrives at a Conservative [note, not CSP] election meeting. All strata are represented, from the working man up to the officer in civilian attire and to the cabinet member who does not quite succeed in hiding behind a column high up in the balcony. ... Court Preacher Stöcker has entered the hall and a thundrous "Hail" from thousands of throats ... greets the most popular man in Berlin, a court chaplain! The stranger thinks of former times; the memory of that Conservative meeting which he attended ten years ago comes to mind. He has still retained the flavour of its sick-room atmosphere. That meeting was more dignified but it was small and arthritic. Who brought about this miracle?

The abiltiy of Stöcker's faction to appeal to a wide range of social groups and political leanings, as reflected in this article, was aided by the development and expansion of subsidiary, quasi-political organizations which nurtured the Conservative cause at the local level. In his retrospective account, 'How I became Conservative,'[33] Gustav Hüpeden recalled that he devoted his organizational talents to a variety of secondary projects with a 'Christian' and 'social' function. After 1886 he was secretary for the new Inner Mission in Kassel. He established close relations with the social reformer, Pastor Ludwig Weber of Mönchen-Gladbach, who figured prominently in the CSP after 1890. Hüpeden also founded a branch of the Evangelical

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32 In Frank, Stöcker, pp. 117, 223; cf. Broszat, 'Antisemitismus', p. 295, and H. v. Gerlach, Erinnerungen eines Junkers (Berlin, [1924]), pp. 79-81.

33 Following details from Hüpeden to Frank, Sedan Day 1928, in BAK, Kl.Erw. 227, G. Hüpeden. Such men were the reverse side of the social coin from the famous Christian Social of Junker origins, Helmuth v. Gerlach; see his Von rechts nach links (Zurich, [1937]).

League in Kassel in 1889, and subsequently tried to ensure that 'it was not steered by its leadership too much in the liberal direction.'

Hüpeden's greatest effort, however, was reserved for the Evangelical Workers' Association which he founded in Kassel in April 1890. The Inner Mission and the Evangelical League provided a secure cadre of adherents, and the association grew slowly from 300 to about 800 members. According to Hüpeden, the association was comprised of one-third officials, one-third small artisans and businessmen, and one-third factory workers. For many, 'the main attraction was the biblical sermon.'

In June 1893 Hüpeden was advanced as a joint candidate of the Evangelical League, the anti-Semites, and the Conservative Party. Due to their independent campaign of 1891, the anti-Semites in the Kassel area already possessed a good organization; they had delegates in all the rural towns and large villages.

> This the Conservative Party lacked. They did have financial patrons, but no speakers and agitators. In 1893 [the parties] did not oppose each other again, but went hand in hand. The Conservative Party bore the costs of the campaign, and the anti-Semitic party provided the speakers for working the localities; it was they who had the eager youth.

Hüpeden won the run-off election by 800 votes. Thus this enthusiast of Christian social reform, despite the opportunity to join a distinct anti-Semitic caucus in the Reichstag, took his place among Conservative parliamentarians.[34]

3.4 Christian Conservatism

As party antagonisms sharpened in the wake of left-liberal advances in the Reichstag elections of 1881, Hammerstein spoke more and more of the 'bond of positive Christianity' uniting Orthodox Protestants and Catholics in the face of a worldly, Jewish-liberal, anti-cultural Zeit-

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34 Hüpeden's anti-liberal and anti-Semitic platform reported in Kasseler Allg.Z, 1.6.93; on Hüpeden's RT experience, see below, Ch. 6, pp. 185, 188; Ch. 7, p. 218.

geist.[35] The banner of Christianity could be raised equally well in battles against left liberals who sanctioned the Jewish influence in Germany's economic life and against National Liberals as representatives of large-scale industry oppressing not only workers but also independent artisans and small businessmen. The Christian critique of liberalism on a broad front was thus used by the Kreuzzeitung-group leaders to attract the most diverse groups who had a reason to oppose the Bismarckian political order.

A generally pro-Centre orientation was reflected in Kreuzzeitung editorials on the social question through the 1880s. In his programmatic lead article after taking control of the Conservative organ in 1881, Hammerstein wrote that a 'true and conservative' solution to Germany's problems was possible only through co-operation between the two Christian parties.[36] In a lead article entitled 'The Significance of the Social Question' - from which Hammerstein's avowed preference for socialism over extreme capitalism was quoted earlier - the Kreuzzeitung emphasised the idea of a 'Christian-social alliance' without regard for party or confession: 'It is very probable that in 25 years we will only have two parties left: a Christian-social and a social-revolutionary party.' Hammerstein continued:

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35 Cf. Stöcker, Christlich-Sozial, p. 514; KZ, 1.3.83; Gerlach, Erinnerungen, pp. 81f; Leuß, Hammerstein, pp. 109, 118f; Heffter, Opposition, p. 60f; Nipperdey, Organisation, p. 244. Compare with the work written during a later period of DKP-NLP antagonism: Dr. J. Kunze, Die Stellung des Liberalismus zur Christentum und Königtum, ed. by the DKP Hauptverein Berlin [Berlin, 1911], esp. pp. 6ff. On Catholic-Protestant anti-Semitism, cf. E. Heinen, 'Antisemitische Strömungen im politischen Katholizismus während des Kulturkampfes,' in Geschichte in der Gegenwart (Paderborn, 1972), pp. 259-300; Massing, Rehearsal, pp. 14-17; and Anderson, Windthorst, pp. 255-260, all of which find a useful corrective in D. Blackbourn, 'Roman Catholics, the Centre Party and Anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany,' in Kennedy and Nicholls, Nationalist and Racialist Movements, pp. 106-129.

36 KZ, 3.12.81, 20.1.88; cf. Heffter, Opposition, pp. 14, 54.

> Whether such an interfractional alliance of all Christian-social elements will appear in the immediate future we do not know; we do know, however, **that it must come,** because it is a necessary consequence of the present disorder in social relations.

Hammerstein's rhetoric was reinforced when a noticeable upswing in corporatist theorizing occurred around 1880. Into this movement many party dissidents of both confessions integrated themselves easily. Fechenbach, for instance, wrote that 'the principle of a private capitalist mode of production and the absolute domination of mobile capital' must be abandoned, otherwise reform would count for nothing. In May 1880, Hammerstein wrote to Bismarck about the social question, expressing the hope that the Chancellor's reform policies - 'in their ultimate, that is, far beyond their purely financial significance' - would determine Germany's future. The radical corporatists' plans found perhaps their fullest (and most starkly anti-liberal) expression in Franz Hitze's book of 1880, Capital and Labour and the Reorganization of Society.[37] Before the debate on 'social Catholicism' ended, Windthorst and his successors had had to meet the reformist challenges of other corporatists, agrarians, and even a circle of Fechenbach's closest adherents.[38] These difficulties suggest why Hammerstein's anti-liberal reformist appeal had the potential to attract disaffected conservatives of both confessions.

It is true that many Christian Conservatives saw their party involved in a two-front battle, on the one hand against liberals and in defence of Church rights in general, on the other hand against ultramontanes and in defence of the Evangelical Church specifically. Any

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37 Cf. R. Bowen, German Theories of the Corporative State (New York/London, 1947); Stöcker, Dreizehn Jahre, p. viii; P. Jostock, Der Deutsche Katholizismus und die Überwindung des Kapitalismus (Regensburg, 1932), p. 124; Heffter, Opposition, p. 14; Hitze excerpted in E. Heiner, ed., Staatliche Macht in Deutschland, 2 vols. (Paderborn, 1979), II, pp. 142f.

38 Cf. Ibid., pp. 154-157; Anderson, Windthorst, pp. 312f; Bowen, Corporative State, p. 111; Jostock, Katholizismus, pp. 100ff, 109ff.

discussion of the anti-liberal premise of the joint Conservative-clerical defence of Christianity therefore cannot ignore the limits the narrow Protestant outlook imposed on such co-operation.

These objective barriers, however, did not prevent many Ultras from citing the common defence of Christian prerogatives as the foundation for their reform proposals. With the Kleist-Hammerstein proposals of 1886/87, for example, the Kreuzzeitung group wished to free the Orthodox Church hierarchy from the influence of parliament and bureaucrats. As Stöcker put it, the Staatskirchentum the Ultras were opposing was 'no longer cloaked in the purple mantle of the monarchy but in the toga of constitutionalism.' For Hammerstein, a Conservative Volkskirchentum was the corollary to a Conservative Volkspartei. Helmuth von Gerlach wrote that Hammerstein sought a greater separation of Church and State so that Protestant pastors, independent of government patronage and control, could - like their Catholic counterparts - agitate independently for their political party, if necessary in opposition to the government. The Kleist-Hammerstein proposals, then, were a partisan defence of Protestantism co-ordinated with - and even subordinated to - a general offensive against liberal influence in parliament and the state.[39]

This dualism emerged in a pamphlet entitled Lay Thoughts on the Kulturkampf, by the Westphalian Kreuzzeitung man and long-time member of the DKP executive, Baron Wilhelm von der Reck.[40] In this work, the Catholic Church was described as essential 'for the defence of Christianity against the challenges of a world divorced from God and worshipping Mammon.' Reck wrote:

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39 Discussed in Leuß, Hammerstein, pp. 51-53; Frank, Stöcker, p. 32.

40 Laien-Gedanken über den Culturkampf (Lübbecke, 1879), copy sent to ZStA II, Zivilkabinet 2.2.1, 22838.

> What sad assistance this unfortunate church discord [the Kulturkampf] has provided irreligion! But should there not lie a blessing in the Kulturkampf assaults which have been endured together [!], that the true Christians of both confessions find themselves more as one?

In the following pages, the 'liberal' constitutional apparatus and the Prussian 'Volkskammer' came in for special criticism: the May Laws 'were possible only with so faulty a legislative apparatus as ours.' Reck appealed to the Kaiser to recognise the dangers of increased parliamentary influence if the liberal course which spawned the Kulturkampf were maintained:

> For even if the king, minister, and Herrenhaus wanted to [abolish the May Laws], the anti-Church majority of the House of Deputies will not voluntarily relinquish "this wonderful and hard-won position." Indeed, it appears sadly that the former do not even desire this. If they **did** desire it, however, this wish would have to be an extemely energetic one. What is involved is a complete change of system.

Reck was not the only reformer to extrapolate from his reaction to the Kulturkampf a critique of Bismarck's government as a whole. Durant wrote that an end to the Kulturkampf must remain a central Conservative demand: to this end the 'identification of liberalism with disbelief' needed to be emphasised. In 1885, Hermann Lange, then editor of the Kasseler Journal, echoed the views of Reck, Hammerstein, and others, who sought to reverse the liberal tide of irreligion without yielding ground to the rival church. Lange wrote that Conservative Protestants feared the implications of having a Kaiser as summus episcopus of their Church, because the intermediary power of parliament and the Minister for Culture and Education reduced the ability and the will of the Kaiser to oppose Bismarck's liberal ministry: '**WE** fear that we will become "second-class Germans,"' Lange exclaimed.[41]

> What do Falk and his comrades understand of the Church and religious freedom! Shall I debate music with deaf men? These people respect **power** alone. If they could they would destroy Christianity entirely, indeed they are saying so already!

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41 Durant to Fechenbach, 14.3.81, NL F, 103; Lange to Fechenbach, 14.1.85, NL F, 53.

It is no coincidence that Reck, Durant, and Lange came from provinces where Conservative electoral fortunes depended to some extent on Catholic votes. Bismarck's Minister of Agriculture, Baron Robert Lucius von Ballhausen, estimated the number of steadfastly pro-Centre men in the DKP House of Deputies caucus in the early 1880s at 25, and a number of these, like Ungern-Sternberg and the Westphalian leader, Karl Strosser, were from constituencies where a Conservative-Centre alliance had been formed for elections. This allowed Kreuzzeitung-group deputies to pursue policies which diverged from those of their colleagues who depended on National Liberal electoral support.[42]

3.4 Reformist Conservatives and Kartell Elections

In April 1884, a month after the National Liberals had drawn up their Heidelberg program which gave Bismarck more reliable support, Helldorff proposed a firm electoral alliance with the National Liberals and Free Conservatives to his DKP colleagues. His strongest opponents on the DKP executive were Kleist-Retzow, Hammerstein, Reck, and Rauchhaupt. But as one observer remarked, before long the Kartell parties seemed to be 'sticking together like a burr.'[43]

The Reichstag elections of 1884 were not fought on a strict Kartell basis, but Kreuzzeitung men found themselves more on the defensive as Helldorff's strategy took hold. The new editor of the DKP organ in Pomerania, Dr. Heinrich Contzen - who in 1881 had defended Fechenbach - was attacking the Bavarian baron by 1885 for having changed his social-conservative standpoint and going over to the Centre. A leading Pomeranian Kreuzzeitung man saw little future for DKP-Centre co-operation because that would now mean 'an alliance not

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42 R. Lucius von Ballhausen, Bismarck-Erinnerungen (Stuttgart/Berlin, 1920), pp. 185, 242; cf. SchlMbl, 9.1.82; SüddLp, 23.10.84, 'Die Kons. und das Centrum'; Anderson, Windthorst, pp. 307f; Fechenbach, Fürst Bismarck (1887), p. 123.

43 See White, Splintered Party, Ch. 4; Anderson, Windthorst, p. 314.

with the Catholics but with **Windthorst.'** Rather more likely would be an 'understanding with the undependable National Liberals.' Pastor Dietz, editor of the Neue Westfälische Volkszeitung, wrote that he had 'grown weary of the struggle in which one finds fewer and fewer comrades in arms.'[44]

Again, the history of the struggling Conservative movement in Bavaria reflects the grave consequences which the pro-National Liberal policy pursued by the Helldorffian majority in Berlin held for the reforming community. In early October 1884, Schauensee wrote to Fechenbach that 'the Bavarian Conservatives have neither capable heads nor a **reliable** rank and file.' A week later he wrote: 'with the **Bavarian** Conservatives absolutely **nothing** can be done - and just as little is possible with the Prussian Conservatives as long as Bismarck lives.' Not only the DKP's Bismarckian alignment but also its continuing faith in Honoratiorenpolitik convinced Schauensee that the Centre would be more suitable both for him and his mentor. As he wrote, 'the Centre lacks resolute officers and far-sighted politicians - [but] with the Conservatives, they think they are "all" officers, and there is no rank and file.' By the end of the month, Schauensee had lost all faith in the Bavarian Wahlverein leaders. He reported: 'Pfaff is no longer steady - Beckh has enthused him for the National Liberals [and they] are drifting over to them....' By the end of the year, both Schauensee and Fechenbach, later joined by Thüngen-Roßbach, had resigned from the Bavarian Wahlverein, whose continued existence, the former claimed, was now in some doubt; as he wrote to Fechenbach, '[it] was after all

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44 KZ, 13/14.11.85; Thüringer Volksfreund, 26.2.81; Lange to Fechenbach, 6.1.85; Dietz to Fechenbach, 13.1.85, NL F, 53; and Fechenbach's Gouvernmental und conservativ oder die Partei Bismarck sans phrase (Osnabruck, 1885).

Contzen and the Kreuzzeitung man Andrae quoted in:

carried by us two alone.' In the period 1884-87, Kartellpolitik did in fact reduce the Bavarian Wahlverein to a confused collection of more-or-less Kartell-oriented individuals and Vereine.[45]

Looking together at Reichstag electons in the 1880s, one can understand why Bavarian Conservatives and other young DKP organizations in the western provinces and states of Germany were thoroughly frustrated with Helldorff's Kartell policy in 1884 and 1887. As Table 3.1 indicates, Conservative fortunes in the eastern provinces of Prussia and in the Kingdom of Saxony saw a dramatic increase in the number of seats won in alliance with the National Liberals and Free Conservatives, even though the DKP's share of the popular vote in the Reich as a whole fell in this period.[46] Not surprisingly, Conservatives in these areas tended to extoll the virtues of Kartellpolitik, either because they saw their vote increase substantially - as in East Prussia and Mecklenburg - as National Liberals left the way open for unopposed DKP candidates, or because a constant share of the vote resulted in an increase in seats won, as in the Kingdom of Saxony.

Table 3.1: Reichstag Elections: DKP and Kartell Allies, 1881-1887

Region	1881		1884		1887	
	%	seats	%	seats	%	seats
DKP						
Reich	16.3	50	15.2	78	15.2	80
Prussia	20.2	42	19.7	63	20.2	63
Saxony	24.3	5	22.7	8	24.9	8

45 Schauensee to Fechenbach, 29.12.83, 11/18.10.84, 7.11.84, and draft resignation, in NL F, 52; KJ, 13.11.84; Fechenbach's Noch einmal: 'Die Partei Bismarck sans Phrase' (Augsburg, 1885), p. 64; KJ, 29.3.85; Münchener Fremdenblatt, 18.1.87; SüddLp, 23/28.10.84, 24.5.87; and Fränkisches Volksblatt, 10.6.84.

46 Statistics taken or calculated from Ritter, passim.

Region	1881		1884		1887	
	%	seats	%	seats	%	seats
FKP						
Reich	7.4	28	6.9	28	9.8	41
Prussia	7.2	17	7.8	21	11.8	29
Saxony	10.7	4	11.8	3	10.4	4
NLP						
Reich	14.7	47	17.6	51	22.2	99
Prussia	9.4	16	12.1	16	14.9	35
Saxony	14.0	5	17.7	3	31.1	10

As Table 3.2 shows, however, Conservatives in Berlin and a number of middle- and west-German regions saw their own election fortunes decline precipitously after 1881, while those of Kartell partners rose swiftly. All but three of the thirty seats gained by the DKP between 1881 and 1887 were in Prussia, Saxony, or Mecklenburg.[47] Moreover, any claim of a roughly equitable trade-off of Kartell constituencies across Germany offered western Conservatives little comfort, especially when they could point to increases of thirty per cent and fifty per cent in the share of the vote won by Free Conservatives and National Liberals respectively, while the Conservative share shrank.[48]

Table 3.2: Reichstag Elections: DKP and Kartell Foes, 1881-1887

Region	1881		1884		1887	
% of vote won	DKP	FKP/ NLP	DKP	FKP/ NLP	DKP	FKP/ NLP
Berlin	27.7	0	28.5	0	17.4	13.4
Thuringian States	9.6	33.9	5.1	39.4	0.8	55.3
Waldeck, Lippe, Schaumburg-Lippe	36.5	29.9	39.2	15.1	24.0	45.2
Bavaria	3.2	14.8	1.3	27.1	0.5	38.8
(Middle Franconia)	14.4	10.2	7.8	29.0	-	44.9
Hessen	2.3	27.7	-	42.8	-	54.4
Württemberg	3.7	35.8	1.2	44.8	1.6	61.6
Hanover	4.5	37.6	1.1	39.5	-	52.1
Schleswig-Holstein	20.2	12.1	6.0	31.3	5.7	35.7

47 In Baden, where two of these seats were gained, the Conservative leadership continued the Kartell orientation which had inclined it not to support Fechenbach; Rhineland Cons., also generally pro-Kartell, registered moderate gains too.

48 Lange's KJ, 29.3.85, sympathized with Bavarian Cons., who had been influenced by 'Officiösen', duped by 'Heidelbergerei', and allowed themselves to be ruined politically.

For reform-minded activists, then, electoral defeat made more bitter the formula of organizational neglect and 'unprincipled' Bismarckian policies dispensed by Helldorff and other Berlin party leaders.

The failure of Kreuzzeitung-group leaders to win over the majority of Conservatives for their anti-liberal and anti-Bismarckian schemes disheartened provincial activists further. Stifled by the pressure to work with the other national parties, unwilling to draw the consequences of their illiberal economic policy or their pro-Centre Christian position, and fearful of jeopardizing their personal careers should their radicalism overstep the bounds of political convention, even Conservative dissidents and reformers were gradually compelled to recognise how strongly traditionalism lived on within party ranks. Hermann Lange, writing to Fechenbach to tell him why his type of radicalism could not succeed in the Conservative Party after 1885, summed up the situation for such would-be reformers:[49]

> In old Prussia, the people, always casting their eyes upwards, are not yet so far progressed that they can rally themselves around a party program or be led in **opposition** to a Bismarck.... We true Conservatives have only the choice, either withdraw completely from the political arena, in that we declare war on Bismarck, or we fall in with the man, for better or worse, and do as much good as possible in the hope either for a future **conservative** government or, if a decisively liberal one should follow, at least to have a truly conservative press. Do you think our policies would benefit if Kleist-Retzow and colleagues withdrew to their estates, and Hammerstein, Engel, Dietz ... and I gave up our newspapers to official influence...? We are not going to emasculate ourselves, but will do as much as circumstances permit.

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49 Lange to Fechenbach, 1.11.85, SgF, II, 327.

Chapter Four: The Threat to Honoratiorenpolitik, 1888-1892

The development of a basic Conservative antipathy to the policies of the New Course after 1890 was a necessary but not sufficient condition for the party revolt against Helldorff in 1892. In that year a campaign was launched for a thorough-going reform of the DKP's program, organization, and agitational style. The inclusion of anti-Semitism in the party's program was the focus of this break with traditionalism, but the rebels' assault on the prerogatives of the party leadership was very broad indeed.

4.1 A Loyal Opposition?

From the mid-1880s, the National Liberals and Free Conservatives increasingly differentiated between the 'moderate' and 'extreme' wings of the Conservative Party and its press establishment. At the same time, Stöcker's position in the Berlin Movement continued to be eroded. After Stöcker suffered personal scandal in 1885, the 'new middle-party humbug' gained ground so quickly that the Movement leadership decided in January 1887 that it would support the Kartell in Berlin. The National Liberals proved extremely reluctant to support Ultra candidates in any Reichstag election campaigns of 1887. For Hammerstein, this was 'the darkest stain' on the Kartell. Yet Hammerstein, feeling the weakness of his own position, did not dare to attack the electoral alliance as such; instead he pointed out the dangers of Reichstag legislation based on Kartell considerations. By 1887 a note of resignation had crept into Kreuzzeitung articles. As was to happen

repeatedly on the roller-coaster ride of Kreuzzeitung-group fortunes over the next few years, this discouragement spread to other Conservative reformers in Germany's western provinces.[1]

Not all clouds on the political horizon were dark. In the wake of the Kleist-Hammerstein proposals of 1887, inroads had been made in limiting the influence of Helldorff's press. The Konservative Korrespondenz had hurled bitter invectives at these proposals. This prompted the Westphalian Ultra, Reck, to propose in the DKP executive that the Korrespondenz be suspended for embracing 'opportunist Conservatism'. This motion was defeated, but Kleist-Retzow succeeded with another, stipulating that the Korrespondenz's lead articles should be subject to approval by the party executive, and that henceforth it should not discuss differences within the party.[2]

Kreuzzeitung prospects brightened further when it became known even before Kaiser Wilhelm I died that his son, Friedrich III, was terminally ill with cancer; Wilhelm II was therefore likely to ascend the throne within months. Stöcker and the Kreuzzeitung intimate, Waldersee, it was known, were able to appeal to two particular aspects of Wilhelm's politics: his interest in Christian social reform to win the allegiance of the lower orders, and his anti-Russian militarism. On 28 November 1887 Wilhelm and his wife appeared at the 'Waldersee meeting',[3] which brought together conservative friends of the Berlin City Mission. The meeting attracted considerable attention by virtue of a

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1 Cf. Schön, Bewegung, pp. 378ff and Ch. 19; Frank, Stöcker, pp. 124-128, 161ff; KZ, 25.11.85; Rauchhaupt to Hammerstein, 15.11.85, in Leuss, Hammerstein, pp. 47f; NWVZ, 3.3.87, in Hoener, Minden-Ravensburg, p. 65; KZ, 25.2.87; Vk, 25.10.89. Dietz, for example, resigned as ed. of the NWVZ in Oct. 1887, and was replaced by Lange.

2 Heffter, Kreuzzeitungspartei, pp. 94f.

3 Cf. A. Graf von Waldersee, Denkwürdigkeiten, ed. H. O. Meisner, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1922-23), I, pp. 339ff; Frank, Stöcker, pp. 166ff; Heffter, Kreuzzeitungspartei, pp. 105ff; L. Cecil, 'Wilhelm II und die Juden', in Mosse, Juden, pp. 326ff.

speech - immediately printed in the Kreuzzeitung - in which Wilhelm declared that 'the Christian-social idea must be stressed more than it has been heretofore.' Bismarck recognised that the Kreuzzeitung group's reputation and position within the Conservative Party would be enhanced by this endorsement. Through inspired articles in the official and Kartell press, and in an exchange of letters with Wilhelm in December and January 1887/88, Bismarck persuaded the future Kaiser not to identify himself too closely with the political parties. He also sowed the seeds of doubt in Wilhelm's mind that Stöcker could be both Court Preacher and a social reformist politician. But Bismarck also angered Wilhelm with this heavy-handed pressure, to the point that Hammerstein's editorials, defending the independence of the future monarch against Germany's elder statesman, reinforced Wilhelm's belief that he would eventually have to break with the Chancellor.[4]

It was in the wake of the failure of the Waldersee meeting that Hammerstein made his appeal to the Centre Party for another 'Christian social alliance.' The desperation of this call was not lost on the National Liberal leader, Rudolf von Bennigsen, who in January 1888 wrote to a friend: 'Unfortunately no peace is to be made with the Kreuzzeitung party, which now has in mind nothing but the most confused reaction in state and church affairs, and therefore tries to attach itself to the ultramontanes à tout prix.'[5] Hammerstein's campaign against Bismarck and the Kartell was interrupted in early 1888 during the 99-day reign of Kaiser Friedrich III. But as the November 1888 Prussian Landtag elections approached, Hammerstein and Helldorff waged a bitter duel for control of the DKP executive and its press, as well as for the sympathy of the new Kaiser. The Kreuzzeitung cause was

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4 KZ, 2.12.87; NAZ, 30.12.87, 3.1.88; Heffter, Kreuzzeitungspartei, p. 113; Waldersee, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, pp. 352f; the Kartell campaign was against 'Muckerei und Stöckerei.'

5 H. Oncken, Rudolf von Bennigsen 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1910), II, p. 539.

strengthened when the Conservative Landtag leader, Rauchhaupt, came around to Hammerstein's view, even though he tried to prevent a public break between the two wings of the party. In a letter of August 1888 to Hammerstein, Rauchhaupt noted that the Free Conservatives were recommending that Bismarck encourage Helldorff to seek a Landtag seat and replace him as caucus chairman: 'Helldorff and Bennigsen as leaders in the House of Deputies would certainly cause Bismarck no difficulties. It has been my bad luck that I have expressed an independent opinion here and there!'[6]

During the election campaign, Hammerstein realized that Bismarck had won Wilhelm completely for his Kartell. The Kaiser referred to the Kreuzzeitung group as 'half crazy and too obtuse,' and declared publicly, if with circumspection, that he rejected anti-Semitism. In September, the Kreuzzeitung editor changed his tactics, following the advice of Rauchhaupt and Stöcker: the latter's policy of indirect intrigue against the Chancellor was outlined in the famous 'Funeral Pyre' letter of 14 August 1888.[7] But even this strategy did not get the Kreuzzeitung group very far. The November elections brought moderate gains for the Kartell and real difficulties for the Ultras in Berlin and the west.

In early 1889, Hammerstein abandoned temperance once again, charging that the 'anti-Christian Kartell,' by favouring plutocracy over Christian social reform, was bringing true August Bebel's prophecy that 'in thirty years the Mittelstand will be ours.'[8] Still seeking

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6 KZ, 20/27.7.88; Heffter, Kreuzzeitungspartei, p. 135; CC article, 'Ein Wort an die kons. Presse', in DTbl, 31.1.88; Stöcker, Dreizehn Jahre, pp. 20ff; Rauchhaupt to Hammerstein, 19.8.88, in Leuss, Hammerstein, p. 73.

7 Oncken, Bennigsen, II, p. 545; Lucius, Bismarck-Erinnerungen, p. 465; Cecil, 'Wilhelm II', pp. 327f; Scheiterhaufenbrief printed in Frank, Stöcker, p. 318f; cf. below, Ch. 6, pp. 193-194.

8 KZ, 14/18.12.88: 'The experience of 1848 has made it clear enough that in the hour of danger only the "radical Conservatives" can be counted on....'

to separate Bismarck from Wilhelm, Hammerstein devoted more attention to foreign policy in early 1889. His attempt to play the 'Waldersee card', however, foundered, due to Waldersee's unwillingness to align himself too closely with Hammerstein.[9] Hammerstein's defence of the monarchy was undercut when he was touched by a minor scandal associating him with the oppositional Centre leaders.[10] Stöcker's use of the new CSP organ, Das Volk, to defend himself in his conflict with Pastor Witte induced Wilhelm to accept Bismarck's advice and demand the Court Preacher's withdrawal from politics. In April Stöcker agreed that he would do so 'for the time being.' The Konservative Korrespondenz tried to use this humbling of Stöcker to attack anti-Semitism within the party, while Hammerstein merely made his anti-Semitic articles sharper still, and made a point of welcoming the new anti-Semitic German Social Party on the scene. On the whole, however, it can be said that by mid-1889 the Kreuzzeitung group's reputation was at its nadir. It could only wait and, perhaps, plot in conspiratorial meetings like the one described by the Kreuzzeitung theatre critic, Rudolf Stratz:[11]

> In the smoke-filled room of one of these Kreuzzeitung evenings there would be proposed a list of the new, highly reactionary cabinet, half in jest, half in earnest: Waldersee, Chancellor. Puttkamer, Minister of the Interior again. Stöcker, Culture and Education. Hammerstein - to general amusement - Finance.

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9 Hammerstein to Waldersee, 8.2.89. Hammerstein wrote that Bismarck was already becoming desperate - 'He feels his prestige slipping' - and called on Waldersee to help block the Chancellor's plan to ensure his son Herbert as his successor. Cf. Stöcker to Waldersee, 16.3.89, and Stolberg-Wernigerode to Waldersee, 19.2.89; all in ZStA II, NL Waldersee, B I 50, f. 1; B II, 5, f. 7, 13.

10 KZ, 19.1.89, 'Das monarchische Gefühl', was 'regretted' by the CC and both the DKP RT and LT caucuses. Rkz. officials considered action against Hammerstein on charges of lèse-majesté; Rkz. 673, Notes of 24.1.89, f. 49ff; KZ, 9.2.89; Ger, 12.2.89.

11 Cited in Heffter, Kreuzzeitungspartei, p. 157; the irony here is retrospective: the 1895 Hammerstein scandal centred on the embezzlement of KZ funds.

Once again, that Kreuzzeitung-group fortunes were not uniformly dark is suggested by the growth of dissatisfaction with Helldorff's style of leadership in 1888/89. In March 1888 the Neue Westfälische Volkszeitung contrasted Conservatives' 'political awareness' in the east and west of Germany, seeking to explain the reasons for a recent DKP defeat in Pomerania.[12] The lack of organization and discipline in local Conservative politics in the east came in for criticism, as did those governmental Conservatives whose lethargy had contributed to the defeat. In Minden-Ravensburg, the Volkszeitung claimed, a man knew why he was Conservative, but not in the east: there, 'the voter, especially in the countryside, does not know **why** he votes this way or that. He mainly reads only the wash-water in the Kreisblätter, and Conservative men in general only offer him the brotherly hand at election time. How different things are in our province!' Honoratiorenpolitik was explicitly questioned. The Volkszeitung complained, for instance, that Silesian Conservative campaigns disregarded the political enlightenment of the voters:

> The "respectable gentlemen" have the election in hand, Conservative rallies have only a negative effect. ... But what happens when the influence of the "respectable gentlemen" breaks down due to unforeseen events? Then even the most secure constituency is lost in a trice.

Heinrich Engel of the Reichsbote was even more intent than Hermann Lange to draw the connection between independent Conservative agitation and social reform freed from the constraints of Kartellpolitik.[13] The Reichsbote editor argued that when Conservative organizations in the Rhineland, Westphalia, and Hanover deferred to National Liberal candidates, they denied their own Christian political principles and did the negative work of the Evangelical League. The Conservative Party in

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12 NWVZ, 8.3.88.

13 Rb, 16.11.88.

parliament, Engel continued, needed more deputies from Saxony, Hessen, and southern Germany, to avoid 'one-sidedness' and to win 'new strength and fresh blood.'

Helldorff's response conceded nothing to such dissenters. Helldorff admitted that the question of party organization was important, but he suggested that the issue had been so long neglected that the DKP was at the moment unable to do without the support of Kartell partners.[14] He said that party men were questioning the wrong assumptions - namely that Bismarck's influence had contributed to this neglect - and urged 'dissidents and obstinate ones' to take account of 'national considerations' requiring the Kartell. The Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung echoed Helldorff's call for party unity. It suggested that the DKP muzzle the radical Kreuzzeitung-group press if it expected to receive contributions from the NAZ for future Conservative election campaigns.[15] It asked pointedly 'whether the friends of the Reichsbote exceed their party comrades to the same degree in their willingness to sacrifice [financially] as they do in their instructive rhetoric?'

Besides the increase in criticism of Helldorff's Kartellpolitik, another internal party development helped compensate for Kreuzzeitung-group set-backs in the public sphere. In the executive meeting of the Berlin Wahlverein on 31 January/1 February 1889, dissidents demanded that Helldorff's control of the DKP be circumscribed by the establishment of a 'Managing Committee' to co-ordinate the party's parliamentary activity and shaping of policy more effectively. Of this new body's nine members, Helldorff wanted five - a majority - to be chosen from the DKP's Reichstag caucus. Hammerstein, however, appealed against

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14 DTbl, 26.8.88, 'Die Zukunft der kons. Partei.' Cf. DtWochenbl, 4.4.89, 'Die Selbständigkeit der cons. Parteien.'

15 NAZ in Ger, 21.10.88, 'Belehrungen an die Cons.' The NAZ reported contributing 3500 marks to the DKP Central-Wahlcomité and 1800 marks to the Berlin Movement in 1887.

this plan, and had enough weight to help institute a 'Committee of Eleven', with four members from the Reichstag, three each from the Prussian Herrenhaus and House of Deputies, and one from the Kingdom of Saxony. Thus the less governmental representatives in the Prussian Landtag denied the Reichstag caucus a dominating influence in the party's top decision-making body.[16]

This reorganization prompted Baron von der Reck to follow up his initiative of 1887 by introducing an executive motion to stop the Konservative Korrespondenz editor, Griesemann, from continuing his polemics against Kreuzzeitung dissidents. When this proposal passed, the Korrespondenz was effectivly reduced to a parliamentary reporter. Nevertheless, Griesemann and Helldorff still controlled the Konservative Wochenblatt. When the press campaign against Hammerstein did not stop in this organ, Reck wrote Helldorff in July, demanding greater freedom for the Ultras and warning of the dangers of a Mittelpartei. Conservatives, he wrote, were now in the throes of 'a struggle between a spirit from above and a spririt from below,' in which the opportunist middle represented 'a spiritual zero.' Helldorff's reply to this letter was characteristically cool. But as the prospect of new Reichstag elections began to loom, other party voices seconded Reck's call. For example, the Schlesische Morgenblatt noted in mid-year that the 31 January meeting of the Wahlverein executive had not yet been acted on: the Reichstag caucus had postponed election of its four members on the Committee of Eleven, apparently because Helldorff was not happy with the new arrangement. The Morgenblatt concluded that it was difficult to counter the argument that an effective party leadership was lacking at the moment.[17]

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16 Nipperdey, Organisation, pp. 252; the party's leadership structure and its evolution are discussed in Ch. 9.7, pp. 326ff.

17 Reck to Helldorff, 3.7.89, in Heffter, Kreuzzeitungspartei, p. 164; SchlMbl article in NWVZ, 17.5.89.

In the six months leading to the February 1890 Reichstag elections which wrecked the Kartell and precipitated Bismarck's fall from power, this lack of a coherent DKP leadership had a number of important consequences on both the party and national level. Space does not permit a discussion of the ways Hammerstein in these months helped focus the dissatisfaction with Bismarck which was growing among various political groups and in the Kaiser's mind. One could mention the influence of Russian policy, the fear of a Conservative-Centre alliance, the question of social reform and the extension of the Socialist Laws, and the antagonism between Conservative Ultras and National Liberals.[18] Bismarck sought to maintain his ascendance by contributing to the disintegration of the Kartell and its electoral defeat, and he wished to create such confusion after the election with his radical legislative program that his experience and personal authority would make him indispensible to the Kaiser.[19] Thus, Hammerstein's anti-Kartell campaign, launched in September 1889 with two Kreuzzeitung articles entitled 'The Monarchy and the "Kartell"', served to accentuate, not reconcile, the contradictory aims pursued by the Kaiser and Bismarck. It compelled Wilhelm to come out explicitly in favour of the

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18 Cf. Waldersee, Denkwürdigkeiten, II, p. 48; Stern, Gold and Iron, pp. 440-447; J.C.G. Röhl, Philipp Eulenburgs Politische Korrespondenz, 2 vols. (Boppard am Rhein, 1976-79), I, pp. 375-397; Helldorff's retrospective self-justification in 'Der Fall des Sozialistengesetzes', Deutsche Revue, March 1900, pp. 273-284, April 1900, pp. 41-43; E. Zechlin, Staatsstreichpläne Bismarcks und Wilhelms II 1890-1894 (Stuttgart/Berlin, 1929), pp. 3-27 and Appendices; O. Gradenwitz, Bismarcks letzter Kampf, 1888-1898 (Berlin, 1924), esp. pp. 79-84.

19 Cf. J.C.G. Röhl, 'The Disintegration of the Kartell and the Politics of Bismarck's Fall from Power, 1887-90,' HJ, 9, 1966, pp. 60-89; J.C.G. Röhl, 'Staatsstreichplan oder Staatsstreichbereitschaft? Bismarcks Politik in der Entlassungskrise,' HZ, 203, 1966, pp. 610-624; and G. Seeber et al, Bismarcks Sturz (E. Berlin, 1977), esp. pp. 330-386.

Kartell, while at the same time providing the Chancellor with the instrument he needed to upset relations between the DKP and NLP.[20] The crisis was deepened by three other internal DKP developments: 1) the Kreuzzeitung-group revolt led by Bernhard von Puttkamer-Plauth, who insisted - despite Helldorff's frenzied attempts at compromise - on such an extreme new Socialist Bill that no agreement with Kartell partners was possible; 2) the controversy over Hammerstein's Reichstag candidacy in Bielefeld, which further sharpened conflicts within the Kartell and between Wilhelm and Bismarck; and 3) the long history of proposals for a Conservative-Centre alliance against the middle parties, which gave such force to rumours surrounding the Chancellor's planned course after the 20 February elections. Without these direct consequences of the struggle for leadership within the Conservative Party, Berlin politics in early 1890 might have taken a very different course.

During the 1890 Reichstag campaign, the reformist Conservative press chafed under the Kartell yoke. The Christian Social Volk did its best to transform dissent into open rebellion. In November 1889 it wrote:[21]

> ... We must expect that the caucus leadership will have the proper respect for the press, which it has entirely lacked until now: ... repeated petitions signed by a large number of Conservative editors have not even been acknowledged. These sorts of things indicate a deficiency in leadership which it has been necessary to denounce publicly, because other remonstrances produce no answer. Should no changes occur here, we would regard ourselves as relieved of the responsibility to respect the party leadership.

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20 On breakdowns in the Kartell, see Ger, 29.12.89; Rb, 5/6.12.89; Vk, 5.12.89; NAZ, 1.1.90; FkZ, 4.1.90; BT, 3.1.90. Cf. Frank, Stöcker, p. 210; Leuss, Hammerstein, pp. 78-83; Röhl, 'Disintegration', pp. 81ff; Heffter, Kreuzzeitungspartei, pp. 198-200; Waldersee, Denkwürdigkeiten, II, p. 88; Röhl, 'Staatsstreichplan', pp. 616f.

21 Vk, 2.11.89.

Resignations from Conservative Vereine and protests against Kartellpolitik were given special attention in the Volk, the Reichsbote, and the Kreuzzeitung. The Neue Westfälische Volkszeitung wrote that Westphalian Conservatives, defending Christian principles against the liberal onslaught, would 'never lay down their weapons.' Similar sentiments were expressed in Bavaria, Hanover, Silesia, and East Prussia. There was talk in Mecklenburg of founding a 'Deutsch-Mecklenburgische Rechtspartei' which would secede - 'to the right' - from the Conservative Party.[22]

Just as the Kartell was breaking down and as Conservative-Centre affinities were being publicly reviewed, the publication of the Kaiser's two decrees in favour of social reform in early February 1890 gave a strong impetus to the Kreuzzeitung group's claim for leadership in the DKP.[23] The Ultras cited their own past reform proposals as evidence that they best understood the Kaiser's thoughts. In their view, king and Conservatives together could by-pass parliament, Bismarck, and the Kartell, to inaugurate a new form of 'social royalism.'[24] On 9 February Hammerstein wrote: 'With more justification than any other party we Conservatives, who want to be both Christian and social, may claim that the contents of these two decrees are in complete accordance with

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22 Resignations from Berlin Bürgervereine in Vk, 6.10.89; Rb, 9.10.89; other details in NWVZ, 13.10.89; KZ, 9.1.90; NWVZ, 10.1.90; BT, 11.1.90; Rb, 18.1.90; NAZ, 21.1./15.2.90; KnZ, 14.2.90.

23 Decrees discussed in Born, Staat und Sozialpolitik; cf. Dr. R. Rosemund, Die Kaiserliche Erlasse, die Parteien und die Reichstagswahl (Berlin, 1890); K. von Fechenbach, Die Kaiserliche Erlasse vom 4 Februar 1890 (Frankfurk/M., 1890); Heffter, Kreuzzeitungspartei, p. 200; Röhl, 'Staatsstreichplan', p. 613; W. Pöls, Sozialistenfrage und Revolutionsfurcht in ihrem Zusammenhang mit den angeblichen Staatsstreichplänen Bismarcks (Lübeck/Hamburg, 1960); J. A. Nichols, Germany after Bismarck (Cambridge Mass., 1958), pp. 12-26; H. Öhlmann, 'Studien zur Innenpolitik des Reichkanzlers Leo von Caprivi' (Diss., Freiburg i. Br., 1953), p. 55; and KZ, 26.2.90; Ger, 9.2.90.

24 Cf. W. Eisenhart's Königtum und politische Freiheit (Halle, 1888), esp. Ch. 3, 'Königsherrschaft und Parlamentsherrschaft,' pp. 23ff; also Frank, Stöcker, p. 212.

our efforts of many years.' Immediately after the Reichstag elections, Hammerstein pressed the anti-Kartell line: 'Dividing us from National Liberalism is nothing more and nothing less than **a complete Weltanschauung.**' Stöcker used post-election circumstances as an excuse to re-enter public life, while the Berlin Bürgervereine sent addresses to the Kaiser expressing enthusiasm for his social policy. When Bismarck fell from power on 20 March, the Christian Socials proclaimed 'the dawn of a new era.' In mid-April Stöcker rejoiced that 'the world has become Christian Social overnight!'[25]

These developments widened the split in the Conservative Party. Helldorff, through the Konservative Korrespondenz, repeatedly warned of too much enthusiasm or overdue haste in carrying out the Kaiser's plans on the workers' question:[26]

> Millions of workers who feel wholly satisfied with their personal circumstances learn for the first time from our celebrated promises and public pronouncements that they have cause to be dissatisfied.... The workers' question offers tasks which demand a cautious and sensible treatment, in which, however, one position after another cannot be taken in headlong advance with a few slogans and cheers.

The Kreuzzeitung group, on the other hand, kept pressing ahead. Fechenbach's book on the Kaiser's decrees was praised in the Kreuzzeitung, Volk, and Neue Westfälische Volkszeitung.[27] In his review, Lange wrote that 'we may hope that the social-conservative program in its full scope - not only in the question of industrial workers - will now find a free path, and that ... the future will show that the work of 10 November 1880 and 18/19 May 1881 was not in vain.' Renewing his correspondence with Fechenbach, Lange's tone was rueful for having abandoned the baron in the mid-1880s, and he hoped they could once again

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25 KZ, 26.2.90; Vk, 2/7.3.90; Heffter, Kreuzzeitungspartei, p. 213; Frank, Stöcker, pp. 212-216.

26 CC cited in Fechenbach, Erlasse, pp. 64f.

27 NWVZ, 22.6.90, quoting KZ review; Vk, 22.6.90.

take up their reformist cry. The co-editor of the Volk, Heinrich Oberwinder, wrote Fechenbach in late June, suggesting how the decrees had rejuvenated Christian Social reformism and helped the opposition to Helldorff within the DKP:[28]

> Our cause proceeds forwards. Since 1 April our paper has won 1000 subscribers, so that we now have reached 8000, which is indeed noteworthy after the experiments of last year and the **great deficiency** of money for agitation. If we survive until next year, the paper's position will be assured and, as well, we will have a social-monarchical party organization which will astound Herr v. Helldorff and colleagues.

In line with Oberwinder's talk of an independent reformist party organization, Christian Social initiatives in 1890 included the founding of the Evangelical Social Congress on 28 April, the founding of an overall union of Evangelical Workers' Associations on 6 August, the founding of a 'Social Monarchical Union' on 22 November, and an attempt by Pastor Dietz to establish a network of 'German Volksvereine' to advance social reform. The Konservative Korrespondenz called on Conservatives to oppose Dietz's project, which in turn prompted Lange to write that Helldoff and Griesemann appeared to fear the competition of this independent movement. These Christian Social reformers were also heartened that the Evangelical Oberkirchenrat seemed to look favourably upon such activity by Conservative pastors.[29]

4.2 The Brewing Storm

Through much of 1890 there existed a kind of truce between Hammerstein and Helldorff. That few intiatives from either side sought to undermine the other's position indicated the new legitimacy won by

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28 Lange to Fechenbach, 21.4.90, NL Fechenbach, 122; Oberwinder to Fechenbach, 21.6.90, and reply, 22.6.90, in SgF, XVII (333).

29 Frank, Stöcker, p. 216f; the fate of the Sozialmonarchische Vereinigung is unknown; NWVZ, 24.6.90; KWbl, 9, 21.6.90, pp. 101; NAZ, 21.6.90; D. Fricke, 'Zum Bündnis des preußisch-deutschen Militarismus mit dem Klerus gegen die sozialistische Arbeiterbewegung am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts,' ZfGW, VIII, 1960, 6, pp. 1384ff.

the Kreuzzeitung group. But the Christian Socials suffered a set-back when the Kaiser decided in November 1890 that Stöcker's political activity was no longer compatible with his pastoral responsibilities and asked for his resignation as Court Preacher.[30] By New Year 1891 the Conservative opposition to the Rural Government Act (Landgemeindeordnung), which at first united both wings of the party, was at the centre of the political stage.[31] Moving quickly to weaken the bill's threat to Junker dominance over local government in eastern Prussia, Conservatives had relatively little trouble, with Centre help, rendering it harmless in committee. Because the legislation was first debated in the Prussian House of Deputies, Helldorff was unable to participate. This, however, did not prevent him from criticising Kreuzzeitung polemics against the Minister of the Interior, Herrfurth, or seconding National Liberal fears of a new DKP-Centre alliance. Between January and April 1891 the Conservatives worked out a compromise on the bill with the other two Kartell parties, to the exclusion of the Centre. Yet a minor revolt left 23 hard-line Conservative deputies in opposition to the bill that passed the lower house in April 1891. The wealthy party patron and Herrenhaus member, Count von Hohenthal, published a letter in the Kreuzzeitung which suggested how impatient oppositional elements in the party were growing with the governmental tendencies among the established party leaders.[32] When the commission had first begun its meetings, Hohenthal wrote,

> ... it would certainly have been desirable ... if wider circles [of the party] had been allowed to take part, and if, in an expanded party executive or in a carefully directed party congress, the limits had been agreed upon ... beyond which a Conservative could not go. That no move was made in this direction, that no declaration was offered, was painful in

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30 KZ, 15.10.90; Frank, Stöcker, pp. 217-224.

32 Letter of 17.4.91, in KZ, 19.4.91.

> the highest degree.... We were neither informed nor given leadership; never more than here has the total cleavage, the gaping division within the Conservative Party done such damage.

After extensive political manoeuvring, a compromise bill finally passed the Prussian Herrenhaus in June 1891, with the Conservative caucus split down the middle. The Conservative leader there, Kleist-Retzow, later complained that Helldorff, a recent appointee to the Herrenhaus, acted like a 'volunteer government commission.'[33] Hammerstein tried to play down the defeat the intransigent right-wing Conservatives had experienced, but the Kreuzzeitung group was considered to have suffered a decisive set-back. Rauchhaupt, leader of the DKP caucus in the House of Deputies, had also been stung by the failure of his oppositional strategy. He told Helldorff that he would no longer work with him, and wrote Hammerstein in October: 'Bismarck is right, we are heading for a catastrophe.'[34]

One important reason why the perception of a Kreuzzeitung-group defeat on the Rural Government Bill did not vault Helldorff back into his position of unchallenged authority in the party was that, concurrent with this legislation, a press war was raging within the DKP, which by April 1891 had been effectively won by Hammerstein. After its founding as an organ of the Conservative Berlin Movement in 1881, the Deutsche Tageblatt had drifted toward the Kartell-oriented DKP camp until, by late 1890, it had surpassed the Konservative Korrespondenz as Helldorff's main press asset. Lacking the independence and 'salty style' of the Kreuzzeitung-group editors, however, and no longer supported by Bismarck, Helldorff and Griesemann had to enlist one of their like-minded, governmental colleagues, Baron

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33 Petersdorff, Kleist-Retzow, p. 525.

34 Ger, 18/20.6.91, 'Ein gänzlich mißglückte Feldzug' and 'Der Zorn der Kreuzzeitungs-Cons. gegen die Landgemeindeordnung'; KZ, 15/29.6.91; Rauchhaupt to Hammerstein, 7.10.91, in Leuss, Hammerstein, p. 103.

Otto von Manteuffel-Crossen, to defend them in February 1891, and they even had the DKP's Reichstag caucus add its endorsement to their articles. This in turn led Hammerstein to persuade the DKP's House of Deputies caucus to issue its own resolution condemning Helldorff's Tageblatt. Then, just as the first Rural Government Bill compromise was being worked out, the Kreuzzeitung suddenly bought out the Deutsche Tageblatt in March 1891 and announced immediately that it would cease publication on 1 April. Conservative readers of the Tageblatt were urged to switch their subscriptions to the Kreuzzeitung. The Konservative Korrespondenz disavowed this notice; Manteuffel protested against Hammerstein's coup; and even the Kaiser felt the need to deliver a speech on the 'spirit of disobediance' in the 'extremist' press. He decorated Manteuffel in reward for his solidarity with Helldorff. Bismarck, on the other hand, declared that 'the Kreuzzeitung [was] the only independent and trustworthy paper one could read.'[35]

Through 1891 Helldorff's isolation became more apparent as he came into conflict with Hammerstein over colonial policy, Conservative by-election campaigns, and relations with Caprivi's administration in general. Speculation appeared in other parties' press about whether the DKP would split, with governmental moderates moving to join the Free Conservatives. Such talk was increased when the Conservatives could not agree on a united policy for or against Caprivi's first large trade treaty, with Austria-Hungary, which passed the Reichstag in December 1891. Because grain prices at the time were still high, many Conservatives had no objection to the reduced tariffs included in the legislation. But when the Konservative Korrespondenz published an article in

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35 LeipZ, 5.1.91; Rb, 20.2.91; Vk, 20.2.91; Heffter, Kreuzzeitungspartei, p. 226; KZ, 21.3.91; FkZ, 4.4.91; Ger, 2.4.91, 'Die Cons. unter sich'; on the KZ's finances, J. Hoffmann to Fechenbach, 7.4.92, NL F, 204; Leuss, Hammerstein, p. 102; Rb, 10.4.91.

favour of the treaty, Kreuzzeitung protests forced the editors to admit that this was not an official party statement, and that a majority of the DKP Reichstag caucus had, in fact, come out against the treaty. Hammerstein replied that this retraction was not sufficient, and he demanded changes in the press committee which oversaw the Korrespondenz, to ensure that similarly damaging confusion in official DKP policy would not occur again at such a crucial juncture.[36]

Unfortunately for Helldorff, the crisis which Hammerstein professed he wanted to avoid, and which Rauchhaupt had predicted in late 1891, came very quickly on the heels of the Austrian trade treaty. The Prussian School Bill was introduced in the Landtag in late January 1892 by the Minister of Culture and Education, Count Zedlitz.[37] The issue upon which the School Bill controvery centred was the general influence of religious instructors and administrators on the Prussian primary school system, and therefore did not cast Conservatives and Centre Party men on opposite sides of the confessional line; the bill was debated in the Landtag, where Kreuzzeitung influence was strongest. Zedlitz's proposal therefore seemed to offer both Protestant and Catholic conservatives the opportunity, after years of struggle, to bring the Christian outlook to bear on politics directly. For the Orthodox Ultras around Hammerstein and Stöcker, the School Bill would strike a blow at both the liberal Staatskirchentum and Helldorff's Kartellpolitik.

The initial solidarity of the Conservative-Centre bloc contributed to the impassioned liberal outburst against clerical reaction and neo-feudal anti-intellectualism, as well as to the reappearance of old Kulturkampf polemics from both sides. It also helped forge a brief

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36 FkZ, 20.2.91; Die Nation, 30.6.91; Ger, 19.2.91; BT, 7.4.91; Reck to Caprivi (concept), 13.12.91, NL Reck, f. 43; Rb, 15/18.12.91; KVZ, 18.12.91.

37 Details in Nichols, Germany after Bismarck, pp. 160ff.

37a Cited in Hank, Kanzler ohne Amt, p. 480.

37b Reck to Caprivi (concept), 20.3.92, NL Reck, f. 40f.

37c Helldorff to P. Eulenburg, 4.2.92, BAK NL Eulenburg, 17, p. 49.

unity between National Liberals and left liberals, even including some Free Conservatives, which in the end induced Wilhelm to have the bill withdrawn because no support for it was to be found among the 'middle parties.'

The way in which the School Bill fell had far-reaching consequences for the leadership struggle within the Conservative Party. The Ultras were certainly outraged that the government had deserted them: Kleist-Retzow called it the 'capitulation of the crown in the face of atheistic democracy, a new 1848.'[37a] There is little likelihood that the Ultras would have backed down themselves. Just as the Chancellor was fighting for his own position in March 1892, Reck wrote Caprivi that 'a solution to the conflict is still possible without a change of course.' He argued that the liberal press would swing around once the bill emerged from the committee stage, 'if the Conservatives continue their work for the bill in alliance with all classes who are still Christian-thinking.'[37b] As well, a wave of letters and resolutions from Ultra leaders and Vereine, though no match for the liberal propaganda, sought to dissuade Caprivi from compromise or surrender. Clearly, Helldorff's hope that Zedlitz would 'tame the Ultras in the Conservative Party and steer them correctly, not arouse them still further,' was in vain.[37c] By early March, Helldorff knew no compromise on the bill would be possible, and therefore he warned the Kaiser, with whom he had remained in close touch, not to try to push through the legislation without the support of the NLP. This warning went far beyond the misgivings other moderate Conservatives like Manteuffel had expressed privately about the bill. Seized on by Hammerstein in order to attribute full responsibility for the bill's withdrawal to Helldorff, this advice - in conjunction with the Socialist Law debacle in January 1890 and the disruptive governmentalism on the Rural Government and Austrian trade treaty bills of 1891 - was used by the Kreuzzeitung group to suggest

that Helldorff had finally lost touch with majority opinion within the Conservative Party. Helldorff, however, must have thought he still had a majority of the party behind him, because in his Konservative Wochenblatt of 4 April 1892, he called for a 'clean break' between the warring factions in the DKP. At last the decisive battle for control of the top Conservative leadership had begun.[38]

4.3 The Provincial Rebellion

As well as being an indicator of Kreuzzeitung-group disillusionment with Helldorff's leadership, the revolt against Helldorff in April and May 1892 also represented the culmination of years of effort for revision of the Conservative Party's organization and program. Particularly after March 1890, the Reichsbote took the lead in keeping party members in touch with the movement for reform, especially since Volk and Kreuzzeitung editors tended to be more radical and polemical than Heinrich Engel. The Reichsbote emphasised the need to keep life in the Vereine active between elections and devoted much attention to the founding of new Vereine in the provinces. It often printed full letters from regional groups who wished to publicize local initiatives.[39]

In mid-1891 Engel wrote that party life at the grass-roots level was being threatened from two sides: from renewed efforts to establish the Kartell in the form of an 'Ordnungspartei' in provinces like Silesia, Saxony, and Hanover; and from the increasingly radical

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38 KWbl, 14.5.92, 'Das "übersinnliche" Band zwischen den Kons. und dem Centrum'; Rb, 28.7.92; DAB, 7.8.92, 'Der Adel und die "schwarze Internationale"'; Hank, Kanzler ohne Amt, p. 480; Reck to Caprivi (concept), 20.3.92, NL Reck, f. 40f; correspondence and resolutions in Rkz., 2215, f. 1, 85, 101, 103; O. Perthes, Die deutsch-konservative Partei und das höhere Schulwesen. Eine Bitte an den Vorstand der DKP (Bielefeld, 1892); Helldorff to P. Eulenburg, 4.2.92, BAK, NL P. Eulenburg, 17, p. 49; BT, 24.5.92.

39 For example, Rb, 14.6.90, 'Kons. Organisation!'

anti-Semites, who were winning from Conservatives the allegiance of voters in the Kingdom of Saxony, Hessen, and elsewhere.[40] The only way to meet this danger, Engel argued, was with a co-ordinated reform of the party's agitational apparatus and a revision of its social policy toward Mittelstand and workers' interests. Engel admitted that allies might be necessary against the Social Democratic threat, but that in order to pursue a positive social policy, the DKP needed to become independent and self-reliant. The populist tone in such Reichsbote editorials suggested that Engel was not averse to rousing the party's rank and file to greater effort in a way which also increased their disaffection with Helldorff and the Kartell. In April 1891 Engel wrote:[41]

> However important the action of its caucus in parliament is for any party, this parliamentary activity is surely not at all sufficient; the connection with the social life of the people (Volksleben) and with the pulse of the people's soul is of greater importance - even for deputies. ... If the Conservative Party had been allowed to take root among the people and grow as a strong Volkspartei, ... things would stand differently now.

Meanwhile, other party reformers were escalating their campaign for a revision of the DKP's 1876 program. At their first provincial party congress for many years, Silesian Conservatives, now under the leadership of Durant's successor, Count Leopold Harrach, resolved to expand their own program to include a clause calling for 'legal measures in the struggle against overwhelming Judaism.' The Volk immediately took up this cry, including with it a critique of the upper classes and large estate owners who paid only lip-service to anti-Semitism. The Kreuzzeitung wrote that the 'socio-political moment' of the 1876 program most needed revision, especially on the Jewish and stock-exchange issues; it also said the new program would

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40 Rb, 24.6.91, 'Eine Mahnung an die Kons.' Cf. 'Die deutsch-soziale Bewegung und die kons. Partei', Grenzboten, 1891, 2, pp. 337-341.

41 Rb, 10.4.91. Cf. Rb, 1.12.91, 'Kons. Bewegung'.

have to emphasise corporatist principles. On 9 December 1891 the leader of Saxon Conservatives, Baron Heinrich von Friesen-Rötha, gave a two-hour speech on program revision to a meeting of the Dresden Conservative Verein. This speech was later printed and much discussed in the political press. Friesen's main proposals dealt with the Jewish question - he regarded the Jews as the 'guests' of Germany - but he also spoke against universal suffrage, and argued that Conservative fortunes depended especially on the work of Germany's youth. His printed program proposal included a full range of Conservative Party policies in political, social, cultural, and economic matters. Before the new year, Hammerstein had written on the subject of program reform a number of times in the Kreuzzeitung, and the Konservative Monatsschrift in its December 1891 issue offered a sympathetic review of these reformist efforts, going so far as to praise the SPD's new Erfurt program for its radicalism.[42]

In early January 1892, Helldorff struck back at this wave of reformist propaganda, charging with some justification that Hammerstein had progressed in a single month from a consideration of the Jewish question to advocating, as the principal feature of a program revision, a 'complete reordering of society.' Helldorff also attempted to associate Hammerstein with the radical Monatsschrift article. Finally, he called on the DKP executive to issue a clear directive to dispel the present confusion about the DKP program and the party's press, and he said that lack of unanimity and moderation among would-be reformers argued against a program revision at the moment. The National-Zeitung and other Kartell or official organs concurred. A fortnight later, Helldorff expanded his defence of his own leadership by questioning the monarchist principles of the Kreuzzeitung and the Volk; the latter

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42 Vk, 3.12.91; KZ, 23.11/25.12.91; DresN, 11.12.91; Friesen's 'Gesichtspunkte für ein revidiertes kons. Programm' (Leipzig, 1891) in SgF, XIX; there was speculation that Rudolf Meyer was the author of the 'socialist' KonsMon article: KVZ, 7.1.92.

had lately written that 'the meaning of the word "conservative" needed to be fundamentally revised' because patriotism could no longer be equated with 'a slavish submission to the government and ministers in power.'[43]

As the School Bill moved to the centre of the political stage in late January 1892, attention was diverted from these campaigns for and against reform. However, when Helldorff threw down the gauntlet to his critics on 4 April, he suddenly found that advocates of the School Bill, critics of Kartellpolitik, anti-governmental figures, agrarians, local party activists, and protagonists of program reform were virtually united in their unwillingness to brook any more obstruction from him. After his call for a clean break, events moved swiftly against Helldorff. On 5 April Pomeranian Conservatives debated possible moves against Helldorff, whom his supporters could only defend by noting that 'he has the ear of the king, without ever having sought it, however.' The meeting of Pomeranians was quickly reported in the pro-reform Pommersche Reichspost, and within a week resolutions declaring a loss of faith in Helldorff's leadership had been issued by Conservative Vereine and press organs in Hanover, Magdeburg, Bielefeld, Berlin, and elsewhere.[43a]

In the meantime, Kleist-Retzow had written Helldorff on 6 April, reporting that the DKP Herrenhaus caucus felt he should resign from its ranks: with many members absent, the caucus had voted for this, 35:2. Helldorff's closest colleagues then began to abandon him. The two other members of the DKP's 'Committee of Three', Rauchhaupt and Albert von Levetzow, who had stayed aloof from the School Bill debates, withdrew their support; on 9 April Manteuffel sent a letter to the Konservative Korrespondenz denying he had seconded Helldorff's advice to the

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43 KWbl, 2.1.92; NZ, 5.1.92; press review in KVZ, 7.1.92; Vk, 10.1.92, 'Was heißt heutzutage konservativ?'

43a Pomeranian meeting in BT, 8.4.92, KVZ, 8.4.92; press reviews in Rb, 10.4.92; Ger, 10.4.92; Pez, 8.4.92.

Kaiser to withdraw the School Bill; and the Kartell parties' attempts to pressure other governmental Conservatives to declare in favour of the threatened party chairman were quickly proved futile. On 28 April the Conservative House of Deputies caucus passed a resolution calling for Helldorff's resignation from the DKP's Committee of Three: the vote this time was reported as 95:1:1. Finally, one month later, the Committee of Eleven met and the triumvirate Helldorff-Levetzow-Rauchhaupt was replaced by the group Manteuffel-Mirbach-Rauchhaupt. By early autumn, Manteuffel had taken over formal chairmanship of the Conservative Party itself.[44]

In any brief outline of the final defeat of Helldorff, there is a danger that the influence of the Kreuzzeitung group and the magnitude of the power shift within the top echelons of the party will be exaggerated. It would be wrong to imagine that Helldorff was immediately, completely, or irrevocably stripped of influence among moderate Conservatives. Throughout 1892 Helldorff continued to polemicize in the Konservative Wochenblatt against his opponents. In one Wochenblatt issue he offered no fewer than five anti-Kreuzzeitung articles:[45] he printed an 'honourable declaration' by the Landtag Conservatives in reply to charges that they had 'brutally' dispatched of him; provided evidence of his own correct handling of the School Bill; denounced the Kreuzzeitung group as 'revolutionary' and 'demagogic'; and charged that Conservatives were blind not to recognise the implications of their involvement with the radical German Socials. Since his own base of support was in the Reichstag, Helldorff also questioned the competence of the Prussian Landtag caucuses to move against him. Noting that some

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44 BT, 7/8.4.92; KVZ, 8.4.92; Rb, 10/21.4.92; Westpr.Vksbl, 13.4.92; DtWochenbl, 14.4.92; KWbl, 16.4.92, p. 184; NAZ, 12.4.92; FsZ, 12.4.92; DtReichsZ, 13.4.92; KWbl, 21.5.92; Helldorff to P. Eulenburg, 24.3.92, in Röhl, Eulenburg, II, pp. 824-827; Rb, 1.6.92.

45 KWbl, 19, 7.5.92.

representatives from these groups on the Committee of Eleven were not even members of the Conservative Wahlverein, and criticising the heterogeneous make-up of the Committee, Helldorff speculated whether the House of Deputies caucus intended, as he put it, to press its particularist demands or even refound a specifically Prussian Conservative Party. Helldorff's cause was also aided when his loyal follower in the Reichstag caucus, Count Konrad von Kleist-Schmenzin - also a member of the Committee and of the Landtag - withdrew from the DKP House of Deputies caucus in protest against its 'dishonourable' treatment of Helldorff. At least one neutral observer wrote that Kleist-Schmenzin's sudden move upset Hammerstein's attempt to make it appear that the Helldorff crisis was over.[46]

In addition, the governmental Conservatives continued to be well-represented in the Committee of Eleven. Helldorff, Kleist-Schmenzin, and Levetzow remained as Reichstag representatives. While Limburg, a convinced Bismarckian, was the strong anti-governmental figure among the House of Deputies representatives, Baron Hermann von Erffa-Wernberg and Rauchhaupt were more moderate. Of the Herrenhaus representatives, Manteuffel was considered the most governmental and Helldorffian; both he and Mirbach, the agrarian, were welcome guests at the Kaiser's court. The other Herrenhaus members were Count von Schlieben-Sanditten (who later led the anti-Stöcker campaign in 1895/96) and Count von Klinkowström, who replaced Kleist-Retzow after his death in May 1892. Finally, Friesen, who had offered his own prescription for program reform in December 1891 but was not really a Kreuzzeitung man, represented Saxon Conservatives.

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46 The RWZ, 26.5.92, referred to the 'terrorist assault' on Helldorff; the MAZ said he had been 'morally lynched'; Kleist-Schmenzin's adjective was 'unritterlich'; KZ, 14.4.92; Rb, 1.6.92. Helldorff actually claimed that the RT caucus alone was the DKP's 'parliamentary representation in the strict sense of the word.'

Even the Kreuzzeitung group's efforts for program reform and a move away from the Kartell were not uniformly successful. To be sure, there were early signs that the anti-Kartell line might be more vigorously pursued. After Friesen had vented complaints about National Liberal obstruction in Saxony in October 1891, the School Bill conflict had prompted the Saxon Conservative Party formally to announce the end of the 1887 Kartell with the National Liberals in early February 1892. When the Free Conservatives convened in Halle in late April for their first independent Saxon party congress, the Reichsbote announced this as proof that the German- and the Free Conservatives were going their separate ways. The situation was further complicated in May when the Centre press, still smarting from the School Bill defeat, entered the fray with strong pro-Kreuzzeitung and anti-Helldorff editorials. Helldorff's faith was belittled as being of the most 'common' type, and he was labelled 'police-conservative.' The Kreuzzeitung began to speak again of a 'transcendental bond' between the DKP and the Centre, and in late July the Berliner Tageblatt considered Kreuzzeitung-group dominance to be based on both its stand on the anti-Semitic issue and its relationship with the Centre. Meanwhile, Helldorff escalated his critique of Hammerstein's overemphasis on Church affairs in discussions of program revision.[47]

Once again, however, the spectre of a realignment of German political parties produced a reaction among some groups within the DKP, even as the reform movement seemed to reach its peak. There appeared news of a 'Declaration in Favour of the Continuation of the Kartell', signed by 103 members of the Saxon Landtag; Conservative signatories appeared to want to re-establish the 'prematurely terminated' Kartell. In Hano-

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47 NAZ, 8.2.92; Rb, 27.4.92 on FKP congress; KWbl, 20, 14.5.92 and 24, 11.6.92; DAB, 32, 7.8.92; Rb, 28.7.92; DAB, 45/51, 6.11./18. 12.92, 'Die DKP und das schwarze Kartell' and 'Das cons. Parteiprogramm in ultramontaner Beleuchtung'; KZ, 18.9.92; BT, 11.8.92, 'Zur Taktik der Orthodoxen und Extrem-Kons.'

ver, moderate Conservatives moved to found a new 'Allgemeiner Konservativer Verein' to unite Free Conservatives and Kartell-oriented DKP members.[48]

Similar shifts occurred during May in Conservative opinion regarding program revision. On 4 May the Silesian reformer, Durant, published his own proposal for a new DKP program. Like those of the Kreuzzeitung and Friesen from December 1891, this proposal included strong anti-Semitic paragraphs and called for a corporatist franchise and measures for the protection of the Mittelstand. In the following months this program was given much attention in the Deutsche Adelsblatt, with which Durant had close ties. Hammerstein at this time also had printed in pamphlet form a speech on the Jewish question he had delivered over a decade before, in 1881. The purpose of this was twofold: to illustrate 1) that the Kreuzzeitung group had long regarded the anti-Semitic issue as its own; and 2) that advocates of program reform in the DKP were not merely responding to the new wave of anti-Semitic agitation and excitement around this time drummed up by Hermann Ahlwardt, Otto Böckel, and others.[49]

In fact, the breaking of Ahlwardt's 'Jewish rifle' scandal[50] was used by Stöcker - just when the Landtag Conservatives were censuring Helldorff - to push them to make a statement on the controvery. (Certain DKP deputies were implicated.) The House of Deputies caucus subsequently voted overwhelmingly - though with many absentees - in favour of incorporating an anti-Semitic plank into the party program. Through May, however, the scandal grew. On 29 May the Minister of War officially denied Ahlwardt's allegations, and four days later the anti-Semite

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48 BT, 12.5.92; Rb, 13.5.92.

49 Freiherr von Durant, 'Entwurf für das Programm der deutschen Conservativen vom Jahre 1892', 4.5.92, copy in SgF, XX, 5; DAB, 32, 7.8.92; W. Freiherr von Hammerstein, Zur Judenfrage (Berlin, 1892), copy in Rkz. 680, f. 433; Levy, Downfall, pp. 78ff.

50 Cf. ibid., p. 79.

was in jail on a libel charge. These developments made many Conservatives, even in the Landtag, dubious of the popularity of the anti-Semitic issue. Thus, in the last week of May, the House of Deputies caucus reversed itself: with over two-thirds of the members absent, a motion from the agrarian, Count Hans von Kanitz-Podangen, passed 21:20, postponing a revision of the program due to the current uncertainties. On 27 May, in the meeting which saw Helldorff dropped from the Committee of Three, the Committee of Eleven opposed the call for program reform and postponed a final decision until the Reichstag caucus was convened. The only concession the moderates offered was the striking of a committee, on which they held a majority, to draft a proposal for minor program revisions (even Helldorff was willing to admit that some clauses of the 1876 program were now out of date.)[51]

Faced with what they regarded as overdue caution in top party ranks, Stöcker and other Kreuzzeitung men called on provincial Conservative Vereine to escalate their agitation for program revision. Since by this point it was considered an essential forum for discussions of such reform, the calling of a general party congress was also demanded. The reformers' argument was that the DKP's brush with scandal did not necessitate a turning-away from the anti-Semitic cause: a firm alliance with the radical anti-Semites was not the only way the party might profit from the popularity of the issue. They believed this to be especially true if a party congress with a stamp of Volkstümlichkeit sanctioned the sort of anti-Semitic program that could move the DKP a step closer to being all things to all men, including aristocratic agrarians, desperate Mittelständler, and those most talented of agitators, the anti-Semites.

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51 Heffter, Kreuzzeitungspartei, p. 230; Frank, Stöcker, p. 232; NAZ, 28.5.92; Rb, 1.6.92; KWbl, 23, 4.6.92.

Apparently in response to this call, the Saxon Conservatives met for a party congress on 13 June 1892; but the vague anti-Semitic rhetoric employed by Friesen hardly satisfied Kreuzzeitung men. Helldorff claimed, correctly, that Friesen in fact helped define the limits of possible Conservative co-operation with the extreme anti-Semites. Friesen's speech was supported by other moderate Saxon leaders, including the regional vice-chairman and DKP Mittelstand advocate of the 1880s, Karl Ackermann, and his son-in-law and chairman of the large Dresden Conservative Verein, Dr. Karl Mehnert. Saxon anti-Semites, on the other hand, proclaimed their disappointment with the congress, and the Reichsbote followed suit.

Engel printed a letter from Saxony, bitterly critical of the congress program: limited to four hours due to a planned excursion in the countryside, the 'debate' had included a two-and-a-half hour speech by Friesen. In his own comments condemning the Saxon leaders' disregard for rank-and-file opinion and emphasising the need for practical organizing activity instead of (in Fechenbach's words) 'empty phrases', Engel launched one of his strongest assaults on Honoratiorenpolitik:[52]

> To give generalized program speeches, to reach general conclusions, and then to honour the people later with toasts at dinner - that leads to nothing. The party congresses must create life, otherwise they have no purpose.
> The ways to reach the people are ... the press, the people's meeting, and the Vereine ... - that is more than all the long discussions and resolutions about party programs which are forgotten as soon as they are printed. The main thing is activity, work, action.
>
> ... Therefore one must allow freedom to prevail. When the party executives believe they must direct things everywhere and keep the persons who do the work on leading strings - then nothing happens. Persons of action do not put up with that, and those who do are not good for anything. When the executives work and take part in things personally ... then the leadership occurs of its own accord; as soon as the executives set themselves up as party directors and leaders, however, and want to be respected as such, then the thing is ruined, and so the party leaders often become the party corrupters.

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52 Levy, Downfall, p. 80; KWbl, 25, 18.6.92, pp. 289ff; Rb, 17.6.92.

Despite the insight and force of Engel's outcry, Helldorff's reaction to this argument was, as usual, uncompromising. He wrote: 'The result of the sort of "party work" which would emerge from the ideal picture drawn here by the Reichsbote is chaos, lack of discipline, and thereby the frustration of any success.' A similar reception greeted the Neue Westfälische Volkszeitung's demand for a party congress independent of any decision of the Reichstag caucus. The Volkszeitung had asked rhetorically: 'The Conservative Party executive is composed only of parliamentarians. Is that not, with all due personal respect to the gentlemen, the Achilles heel of the Conservative Party?' Helldorff, clearly reflecting the fears of moderates on the Committee of Eleven, rejoined that a party congress was not the suitable instrument for a program revision. Instead of being based on a half-dozen speeches, he wrote, such a revision would require private work by a suitable commission; a party congress would then have authority only to sanction or reject this proposal. Helldorff concluded: 'For us it is simply inconceivable how one can fail to see that any party possesses in its parliamentary representation a continuing "party congress" perfectly suitable for expert opinions and resolutions.' Between Engel and Helldorff, the two sides of the basic argument within the DKP in 1892 could hardly have been more clearly set out.[53]

4.4 Toward Tivoli

In August 1892 the controversy about Conservative Party organization came to a head. The Kreuzzeitung editors sought to use their adherents' long-standing antagonism toward leading parliamentarians to ensure that the party congress for program reform had a suitable result, or indeed took place at all. In this conflict, Manteuffel - through the Konservative Korrespondenz - gradually replaced Helldorff

53 KWbl, 25, pp. 288-290.

as the most influential advocate of a go-slow policy, although he was not acting alone. As the Korrespondenz articles of early August indicated, the question of DKP organization was crucial for two main reasons: first, because the moderates' argument that the Conservative Party already possessed an effective operational structure was used to suggest that parliamentarians did not have undue influence in the party's top decision-making bodies; and second, because the question of 'party democracy' would determine the format and the mandate of the crucial party congress itself.[54] Implicit in the leaders' argument was the proposition that the Conservative cause would benefit more from 'good discipline', 'party unity', and 'local initiative' than from dissent, negativism, and the pinning of all hopes on the chimera of program revision in an anti-Semitic direction. Reform was all the more odious because it involved association with demagogic opponents of the Wilhelmine establishment and alienation from Kartell allies.

One reason the leaders around Manteuffel succeeded so long with their delaying tactics was that elements of the Kreuzzeitung group found only an elusive unity in their expectations for the party congress. The Kreuzzeitung directed its main effort toward program reform, offering in early August a list of proposals even more lengthy than its December 1891 effort. The Neue Westfälische Volkszeitung seemed more eager to press for the widest possible interpretation of party affiliation in determining criteria for the selection of dele-

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54 NAZ, 3.8.92. See the CC review of the DKP organizational structure, in Rb, 21.8.92. In 1892 the C. of 50 (actually 51) consisted of 18 M-RT, 9 M-PAH, and 7 M-PHH, with 12 members of both RT and LT (the CC, arguing that the latter could be counted among M-LT, claimed the RT had only one-quarter the representation of the LT caucuses in the executive.) The confusion about congress delegate selection was never resolved: the CC said that only official members of the Wahlverein could attend, then later noted that all members of local Cons. Vereine were automatically Wahlverein members. The Rb, 6.8.92, reviewed formulae for selecting delegates.

gates to the congress. Fiercely jealous of Minden-Ravensburg independence, Lange wrote:

> Who is a member of the Wahlverein? ... Here only a few Conservatives pay dues, indeed least of all the leading personalities. The reasons for this aloofness need not be explained, in the interest of the Conservative cause. With good organization that could certainly change in the future.

Lange also demanded the inclusion of non-parliamentarians in the Committee of Eleven. The Manteuffel group, however, claimed adamantly - and perhaps correctly - that this would destroy the Committee's capacity to act quickly and decisively.[55]

Engel of the Reichsbote offered the most complete discussion of the issues connected with the party congress. In his lead article of 19 August, for example, Engel dealt with six main points. He argued 1) that program revision was not a cure-all for DKP difficulties; 2) that the upcoming congress should establish both a 'general program' and an 'action program' to serve for each legislative period; 3) that the influence of parliamentarians in the DKP executive needed to be reduced and that of provincial Vereine increased; 4) that representation at the congress must be by Vereine, with the exclusion of the German Socials but not the Christian Socials; 5) that the Conservative press (except for the Konservative Korrespondenz) must remain independent of the top party leadership, with Conservative editors remaining aloof from membership in the party executive and from parliament; and 6) that the DKP must stop seeking protection and support from the government. Once again, the confluence of reformist ideas about organization and policy is unmistakable here.

In late August the debate was fuelled when Manteuffel announced the names of the committee members - mostly moderates and agrarians - selected to draft the new program, and when work began to select delegates to the congress. Manteuffel, however reluctantly, encouraged

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55 See DAB, 32, 7.8.92.

regional party Vereine to hold their own assemblies and issue resolutions on program points which might guide the work of the program committee. Baron von Durant contributed a long article on program revision, preparations for the congress, and organizational reform.[56] Durant disagreed with Engel's plan for a 'general' and an 'action program'. He wrote that if the small man were to be won by a party program at all, he must be offered something tangible in the party's permanent policy statement. Agreement on the substance of the action program would also be very difficult to achieve, and would lead to a repetition of the disruptions of 1892 with the advent of each new legislative period. As Durant argued, if all **popular** Conservative appeals were included in the action program, 'then in the end there would remain for the general program nothing but generalized phrases, whose substance could be summed up in three words: Christianity, Germanism, Monarchy.' Therefore what was needed was 'a program as precise and unambiguous as possible, which would at the same time provide a dam against opportunism.' Once again, this reformer of 1892 was echoing Fechenbach's ideas about a party program almost verbatim. For Durant and other dissenters, permanent program revision was to be both the cement of their victory over Helldorffian governmentalism and the foundation for their Conservative Volkspartei of the future.

Meanwhile, the Pommersche Reichspost complained that Helldorff's policies had reduced the DKP's membership substantially. The Reichsbote warned of growing German Social agitation, especially in Silesia and Westphalia, while the Volk issued a call for younger, more practical Conservative Verein leaders. The Konservative Monatsschrift reintroduced the idea of a Consevative-clerical alliance in its October

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56 Rb, 22.10.92. Cf. Reck to Levetzow, 17.8.92; Rauchhaupt to Reck, 19.8.92; reply, 23.8.92; in Hoener, Minden-Ravensburg, pp. 85ff.

issue, and Stöcker wrote in his Deutsche Evangelische Kirchenzeitung that the DKP must become something closer to an 'independent Volkspartei', which would 'support the government as far as possible but also, where necessary, be more royalist than the monarch and more constitutional than parliament.'[57]

Despite these nuances to the reformist argument, it should be repeated that almost all Conservative proponents of program revision were agreed **before** the congress that major reforms in the party's top leadership **structure** were vitally necessary if the full benefits of a new program were to accrue to the party at large. Once again, the arguments advanced by Engel and Durant offer the most interesting picture of how the reformers imagined this co-ordinated change in policy and organization would renew the party.[58]

> It is absolutely necessary that the party not be identified with the caucus. ... The caucus must, in accordance with parliament, where compromise is unavoidable, adhere very often to different tactics and methods than the party may. The caucus is thereby very liable to transfer these methods to the party - to pursue Kartellpolitik.
> ... The party must and can only be protected against that when the parliamentarians do not dominate the leadership. Therefore the legitimate demand has been raised, that the party executive be elected from and comprised of the party at large and not the caucuses alone. The caucuses, after all, have their individual executives for their parliamentary affairs.

A last-minute protest against the agitation of the Kreuzzeitung group was launched by the Kartell-oriented Rhineland Conservative Verein under Baron von Plettenberg-Mehrum, which declared it would send no delegates to the party congress - and thereby united the reformers in their denunciation of this move.[59] But finally the Manteuffel group could delay no longer. On 1 December it published its program

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Cons. organs cited in press reviews in:

57 DtReichsZ, 17.8.92; NZ, 15.8.92; KWbl, 49, 5.12.92, pp. 577ff; BT, 27.10.92; Vk, 4.11.92; KWbl, 45, 7.11.92, pp. 523f.

58 See Rb, 19.8./22.10.92.

59 KWbl, 46, 14.11.92, p. 535; Rb, 11/17.11.92; DAB, 49, 4.12.92.

draft and announced that the DKP general congress would be held in the Tivoli brewery in Berlin on 8 December 1892. As the political press discussed this program proposal in the first week of December, two main clauses of the draft were highlighted.[60] First of all, the reformers were not satisfied with the preamble, which reaffirmed DKP allegiance to the program of 1876 but wished, 'in accordance with these tried and true principles, to take a stand with the following program on the important tasks of the present.' In response to this effort by the program committee to undercut the reformist movement, even the Reichsbote concluded that two programs for the party were no longer possible. Second, the reformers, led by the Volk, objected to a clause in the proposal's leading paragraph: this called for Christian authorities and Christian teachers in Germany, but also declared that the Conservatives 'condemn the excesses of anti-Semitism.' The Volk editors, once again concerned that the moderates were seeking to disavow the anti-Semitic premise of the congress, issued a call for the deletion of this clause:

> What may not be forgotten ... is that the worst "excess" in political life is looking-on, sitting still, indolence. At this juncture ... the decisive initiative achieves recognition and success. In our day of the universal franchise and fanatic, revolutionary socialism, the decisive initiative is the prime virtue of a party.

For his part, Fechenbach was jubilant. Feeling his struggle against opportunism in the DKP had finally been vindicated, Fechenbach wrote: 'At last I am satisfied with the stand of the German Conservatives; only now everything depends on this being carried out **in practice ....**'[61]

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60 DKP Wahlverein exec. proposal, 26.11.92, printed in Rb, 2.12.92; press review in KWbl, 49a, 7.12.92.

61 Fechenbach notes, SgF, XXI, 26, 7/3, 1892.

These press observations and the final preparations for the Tivoli congress were made under the shadow of a Reichstag by-election in the Brandenburg district of Arnswalde-Friedberg. On the first ballot, the anti-Semite, Ahlwardt, outpolled his left liberal opponent, who finished slightly ahead of a DKP candidate. Immediately it became known that a run-off ballot would be necessary, the local Conservatives supported the 'rowdy demagogue', Ahlwardt. In the second poll of 5 December, Ahlwardt won with an 8000 vote plurality.[62] Thus even greater importance was attached to the DKP congress just three days hence, as political observers held their breath waiting to see how the Conservatives would react to this latest surge of the anti-Semitic tide.

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62 Cf. the Wahlprufungskommission Bericht, No. 113, 12.2.93, in GStA Dahlem, Rep. 90, 306, esp. pp. 2, 9; Levy, Downfall, pp. 81f.

Chapter Five: Conservatives and Demagogues, 1892-1893

From the view of a Conservative Party history, past analyses of the Tivoli congress have not discussed the way in which the congress and its much-heralded Volkstümlichkeit - or more pejoratively, its demagogy - did or did not fit into the general process whereby Honoratiorenpolitik broke down after Bismarck. More particularly, there is a wish to know precisely which institutions of party authority were challenged in the 'popular' onslaught of 8 December 1892. If one considers the way pressures from below were exerted at Tivoli - against Helldorff, against Berlin parliamentarians, against Caprivi and the Kartell, and against political traditionalism in its wider sense - the congress becomes even more important and enlightening as a threat to an older style of politics than it has been as a milestone in the development of German anti-Semitism.[1]

5.1 The Tivoli Congress

The Kreuzzeitung-group Conservatives were able to steer events at Tivoli in their direction for a number of reasons. The holding of the congress in Berlin allowed Christian Social Bürgervereine in the capital to figure prominently among groups sending delegates. As well, the sheer numbers in attendance - somewhere between 1000 and 1500 - meant that party notables were not favourably placed to deal with rowdy German Socials and other anti-Semites who entered the congress as 'party comrades' with only the most cursory examination of credentials.[2]

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1 Following from Stenographischer Bericht über den allgemeinen konservativen Parteitag gehalten am 8. Dezember 1892 zu Berlin (Berlin, 1893).

2 Cf. Rb, 12.1.93; KWbl, 1, 7.1.93, 'Die Zusammensetzung des "Parteitages"', pp. 1f; Nipperdey, Organisation, p. 255.

More importantly, the reformers made certain that the moderates around Manteuffel would not be able to exploit their differences, by agreeing on tactics the night before the congress. Based on a 2 December meeting of over 500 Berlin Conservatives, and organized largely by Durant and the influential leader of the Berlin 'Bürgerverein vor dem Halleschen Tor', Herr Rappo, about 100 Conservative delegates met on the evening of 7 December.[3] After hours of debate, these men agreed on a common strategy for the next day. To avoid the appearance that the Berliners were dominating the congress, the two amendments to the draft program - on the introduction and the clause about 'anti-Semitic excesses' - would be proposed by Dr. August Klasing, a Bielefeld lawyer, staunch Stöcker supporter, and leader of Minden-Ravensburg Christian Conservatives. As a Mecklenburg delegate at this meeting later described, unity among the reformers required 'the renunciation of all separate demands' to combat the moderate leaders' machinations.[4] Thus, at a stroke, all organizational reform proposals advanced earlier in the year by Hammerstein, Engel, Durant, and others were dropped to meet the obstructionist challenge.

From the moment the presiding officers of the Tivoli congress were selected the next day, with Manteuffel in the chair, it was clear that the Kreuzzeitung reformers were not going to defer to the leading Conservative names in attendance. After excuses had been made for the commission's dilatory handling of the program revision, the opening rounds of criticism were fired by the anti-Semites Otto von Diest-Daber and Eduard Ulrich-Chemnitz. Diest-Daber declared that the DKP 'must be respected from above (applause) as a party that can also offer opposition (Bravo!) and not always, with a certain - I would say - courtesy, take into account what is - yes, I will use the word - opportune.' As

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3 Rb, 6.12.92; Vk, 6.1.93; KWbl, 1, 7.1.93, 'Das "Dreigespann" Rappo-Klasing-Ulrich,' pp. 3ff.

4 KZ, 6.4.94; Zeit, 9.12.96.

'a man of the people', Ulrich then issued his famous call for the Conservative Party to become 'a little more demagogic.' Since this phrase was subsequently so often quoted out of context, Ulrich's critique of Honoratiorenpolitik deserves to be cited in full:

> Gentlemen, it must be said today to our honourable leaders: the Conservative Party wishes to be a Volkspartei; it therefore does not want to see itself all the more insulted with talk of "demagogy". It is common practice today among the leading circles of the Conservative Party, that everything which comes from the heart, which comes from the heart with clear words onto the tongue, everything which moves the people, is very easily dismissed with the stock phrase "demagogic". (Quite right!)
> I must ask our honourable deputies to become a little more "demagogic" - but not in the bad sense, rather in the good sense. (Bravo!)
> It is necessary that the leaders of our party become more accustomed to striking the tone of the people.

According to plan, Klasing delivered the major speech for the reformers, ending with an appeal that the congress accept his amendments en bloc. Klasing addressed himself first to the introduction of the program draft. He explicitly pointed out the danger of continued Helldorffian influence if the draft introduction's 'certain unclarity' allowed the 'opportunists' to escape commitment to the new program by acknowledging it only as a 'statement of opinion.' The speaker argued that here was an attempt to inject the disease of compromise at the very birth of the new program. Quoting a Kreuzzeitung article, Klasing declared: 'Two programs, one for the summer and one for the winter, we surely cannot have.' Klasing would have preferred to drop the introduction completely, but since continuity had to be maintained, he offered a revised paragraph. Though with only slightly reworked wording, this presented the new program as the DKP program, 'in accordance with the valid principles which are expressed in its program of 1876.' The change in nuance was enough to win the approval of the assembly, and Klasing's revision was accepted overwhelmingly.

As his second point, Klasing spoke on the anti-Semitic paragraph. Working - with success - to rouse the passions of his audience, Klasing spoke against the clause condemning the excesses of the anti-Semites with a number of arguments. He referred to the clause as another 'back door' whereby the moderate leaders would take the edge off the new program. His most forceful point was that the DKP had the mission and the responsibility to become a party of the people and to lead the anti-Semitic movement.

> The more clear it becomes ... that this clause is illogical and superfluous, the sharper will be its point against those whom we do not want to drive away but rather attract to us and educate. The Conservative Party and the Conservative program must be able to have influence with the masses of anti-Semitic people; they must be mollified; the great energy which lives in them must be steered into the correct channels. ... By necessity the abuses of anti-Semitism must disappear as soon as the leadership is a correct one.

As Klasing left the podium, the Tivoli brewery erupted into stormy and lengthy applause.

Now is was the moderates' turn. After he tabled an amendment claiming Conservatives had a Christian duty to ensure the rights and protection of the Jews, Manteuffel read aloud a declaration from Helldorff and 23 other members of the DKP Reichstag caucus who had refused to attend the congress. Among the leading names were Helldorff, Ackermann, Kleist-Schmenzin, Count August von Dönhoff-Friedrichstein (East Prussia), Carl Bock (Minden), Count Wilhelm von Douglas (Baden), Wilhelm von Flügge (Pomerania) and Count Conrad von Holstein (Schleswig Holstein). This declaration claimed that the caucus had resolved 'without objection' to stand by the 1876 program and regard the new program as nothing more than a statement of party policy on contemporary issues.

Immediately following this declaration, Kammerherr Werner von Blumenthal of Saxony presented a courageous and well-reasoned speech

countering Klasing's argument. Warning of the dangers of demagogic anti-Semitism (Radauantisemitismus), he declared:

> The attitude of the radical anti-Semitic parties proves that they are our opponents and that they want to be. There can be absolutely no question of their voluntarily recognising the leadership of the Conservatives. Between us and them there can be only a contest for popularity with the people .... Surely no one among you thinks we can, with our demands, match or trump the anti-Semites?

During his speech, Blumenthal was shouted down many times; when he pointed out that one could not at the same time be a Conservative and elect a man like Ahlwardt, the defeated DKP candidate in Arnswalde rose and declared, to thunderous applause, that even he had voted for Ahlwardt in the run-off election, adding: 'Better ten Ahlwardts than one left liberal!'

Eventually Stöcker appeared on the podium, and demanded that the debated clause be deleted from the new program. A vote (by show of hands) was taken, and against only seven dissenting votes the clause fell. At this point in the congress the leaders around Manteuffel were at their most ineffective. The chair was incapable of providing a fair forum for Blumenthal and other moderates. Many Conservatives in attendance clearly opposed the abandonment of this cavil against the radical anti-Semites, but they did not dare to raise their hands, or voices, in protest. Here, the old guard really did have confirmed their 'hellish fear' of such tumultuous proceedings.[5]

As the debate on the anti-Semitic paragraph was drawing to a close, a third major conflict arose. At this juncture, the Kreuzzeitung group was unable to maintain the semblance of unity which had proven so successful in carrying the first two amendments, due to long-standing differences between Christian Socials and more reactionary reformers on the means for combatting Social Democracy. During

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5 Cf. Gerlach, Erinnerungen, p. 84.

1892, Hammerstein, Friesen, Durant, Reck, and others had included in their proposals for program revision various changes to the Reichstag's universal franchise, often in a corporatist direction.[6] Hammerstein called for strong police measures against the SPD; Reck wrote in the Neue Westfälische Volkszeitung and in letters to Caprivi that 'the modern legislative apparatus is really too wretched!'; and Friesen asked: 'Monarchy or rule by parliament - that is the question at hand. Does the Reichstag in its present form still provide a guarantee for the preservation of the monarchy?'

Opposition to these reactionary plans arose not only from Helldorff, who charged that such fantasies of a ständisch ordering of society or of representational bodies were impossible, but also from the editors of the Reichsbote and the Volk, who warned against tampering with the franchise.[7] The Reichsbote saw in these calls an appeal for a break with the constitution, while both Engel and the Volk editor, Helmuth von Gerlach, saw such ambitions to be incompatible with the effort to transform the DKP into a Volkspartei.

Perhaps in a conscious attempt to 'divide and rule,' more probably due to a deep anti-socialist impulse within their own ranks, the Manteuffel group had included as Point 14 of their draft program a clause which stated:

> The adherents of Social Democracy and anarchism, whose unpatriotic efforts toward revolution endanger wide circles of our populus, are to be designated by law as enemies of the political order and combatted accordingly with the power of the state's authority.

This clause was all the more painful to the Christian Socials because Stöcker's social ideas received short shrift in the new program: significantly, the party's commitment to the old Kaiser's decree of Novem-

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6 DAB, 32, 7.8.92, p. 641; H. v. Friesen-Rötha, 'Konservativ! Ein Mahnruf in letzter Stunde' [1892], in Rb, 28.7.92; KWbl, 21, 21.5.92; Reck to Caprivi, 4.8.92, NL Reck, f. 50.

7 Cf. FkZ, 18.8.92; Rb, 19.8.92.

ber 1881 was reaffirmed, while no mention was made of Wilhelm's own decrees of February 1890. Stöcker, Gerlach, Hüpeden, and other Christian Social leaders knew that if the anti-SPD resolution passed unamended, they would have difficulty continuing their activities in the Inner Mission, the Evangelical Workers' Associations, and other working-class institutions in which they saw their only real hope of winning the lower orders from the socialist doctrine.

Pastor Burckhardt of the Evangelical Workers' movement opened the discussion on this point at Tivoli, reminding the congress that Christian Conservatives must work for social peace, not social antagonism; he noted: 'The doctrine of Social Democracy and anarchism must be quashed, yes, but not the followers themselves.' Burckhardt's plea was echoed by Friedrich Beckh, the former colleague of Fechenbach and representative of the Bavarian Conservatives at the congress.[8] Beckh argued that the DKP must speak directly to the material needs of the lower orders, for while most workers saw in the SPD a vehicle for the protection of their interests, many were essentially conservative and wanted no part of socialist attacks on the family, religion, and the state. Expanding his plea into a call for a stronger Conservative Mittelstandpolitik and urging the party not to shy away from opposition to the government, Beckh also reminded his audience that compromise with the Helldorff wing would always incline the party to abandon social legislation and welcome new repressive measures against Social Democracy. Beckh declared: 'None of us wants to hear of co-operation with the National Liberals. (Bravo!)'

It was just as agitation for the amendment of Point 14 was mounting in the congress hall that Hammerstein made his subsequently famous

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8 Beckh prefaced his remarks be noting that Bavarian Cons. would be able to give up their mistrust of Prussian Conservatism if the DKP became a Volkspartei.

remark to his later biographer and German Social leader, Hans Leuß, that the only way to deal with Social Democrats was 'to provoke the workers and have them shot.' Leuß immediately appealed to Stöcker and Gerlach, who then descended on Manteuffel and threatened to disrupt the congress completely and inaugurate a public discussion of the clause in the CSP press.[9] Furious, Manteuffel could only relent and allow Stöcker and Gerlach to speak in favour of an amendment, which read that only 'those Social Democrats whose disloyalty and revolutionary activities threaten large circles of the populus are to be opposed as enemies of the political order.' The phrase about the use of repressive legislation and state force was dropped. When this amendment was finally passed, Hammerstein and many of the Wahlverein leaders could only look on in silence.

After this issue was settled, the assembly had little patience for later speakers or debates. The resolutions on party organization - of which no mention at all was made in the official transcript of the congress debates - were treated as of very secondary importance.[10] The Berlin Bürgerverein leader, Rappo, introduced and carried a motion which called for the greater representation of middle-class and farming circles in the make-up of DKP executive organs and the parliamentary caucuses. Mehnert carried a related motion which charged the present Wahlverein executive (Committee of Fifty) with the task of constituting 'a committee of about 48 members enjoying the trust of the party and representing all occupational groups.' Though no details were provided as to how the balance would fall, this new executive was to be 'chosen'

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9 Frank, Stöcker, p. 234; Heffter, Kreuzzeitungspartei, p. 232.

10 Even the reformist Cons. press neglected these organizational reforms; resolutions cited (differently) in NAZ, 9.12.92; KWbl, 12, 27.3.93, p. 125.

in part from members of the parliamentary caucuses and in part from the 'party comrades' in the provinces.[11]

Finally, Diest-Daber rose to thank the party leaders for their organization of the congress, pointedly addressing his remarks not only to Manteuffel but also to one of the leading Kreuzzeitung men, Durant. The usual 'Hail' to the Kaiser closed the congress.

5.2 New Departures, Old Reservations

Although applause or condemnation for the Tivoli reformers began to appear immediately in Conservative circles, in the press of other parties, in the correspondence of leading court and government figures, and in parliament, the battle of 8 December 1892 was only one victory, however heralded, in a war which lasted another three years. Initially, the jubilant Kreuzzeitung press claimed that party unity after Tivoli was absolute. The Deutsche Adelsblatt expressed relief that its pre-congress fears had proved unfounded, and downplayed Blumenthal's dissent. The Reichsbote and the Volk both regretted that other issues like workers' protection, agrarian tariffs, and limitation of free competition had not been debated at the congress, but they agreed that the unity achieved in the struggle against Helldorff, together with the DKP's new anti-Semitic image, was adequate compensation. This line was taken by the other major Kreuzzeitung organs too, including the south-German Deutsche Reichspost and the Süddeutsche Landpost.[12]

On 12 December, however, the agrarian leaders Mirbach and Frege both expressed in the Reichstag a distinct lack of enthusiasm for radical anti-Semitism. Before the end of the month, Blumenthal had published a declaration emphasising his objection to the anti-Semitic paragraph in the program, and he was followed by the Helldorffians Dönhoff

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11 From press reports on the congress, there is no evidence of debate on these motions or information on the votes which carried them.

12 DAB, 50, 11.12.92, pp. 997-1000; Vk, 10.12.92; DtRp, 14.12.92.

and Holstein, as well as by various Conservative groups in East Prussia, Saxony, Westphalia, and Berlin. Even Ulrich-Chemnitz wrote Caprivi after the Chancellor had attacked the Conservatives' action at Tivoli, explaining to him just what he had meant by 'demagogic in the good sense.'[13]

To combat this back-sliding and resurgent governmentalism in the party, the Volk took the lead in pressing the dual campaign against the Helldorffians and for the anti-Semitic Conservatives. Proclaiming repeatedly that 'the party congress is the birth of the independent Conservative Volkspartei,' the Volk editors threatened the 23 Reichstag dissenters that they stood little chance of re-election. On 24 December it wrote: 'The constituencies represented by the "23" are now all the more defencelessly sacrificed to the anti-Semites. After the deputies have refused to recognise the legitimacy of the Jewish question, they can expect no more help from us.' The most conservative of the anti-Semitic leaders, Max Liebermann von Sonnenberg, wrote to Manteuffel around this time, complaining of past DKP opposition to the anti-Semites and warning him not to allow the revival of such sentiments within the party. The Pommersche Reichspost even called on the DKP executive and Reichstag caucus to expel Helldorff from the party altogether, claiming that for these leaders, it was 'a point of honour ... that they deal summarily with **turncoats**.'[14]

Helldorff had a number of arrows for the bow he used in his ongoing defence of traditional Conservatism. To discredit Hammerstein, Helldorff claimed in his Konservatives Wochenblatt that the Volk had become the leading DKP organ, knowing that such a prospect would out-

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13 DAB, 51/52, 18/25.12.92; KZ, 1.1.93; FkZ, 20.12.92; HE, 21.12.92; Vk, 24.12.92; BT, 17/21.1.93; NAZ, 17.12.92; KWbl, 3, 21.1.93, p. 32; Ulrich to Caprivi, 14.12.92, Rkz. 673, f. 93ff.

14 Vk, 10/24.12.92; Liebermann to Manteuffel, 25.1.93, ZStA I, NL Liebermann v. Sonnenberg, 2, 16; KWbl, 7.1.93, 'Wie der Sieg vom 8. Dezember weiter ausgebeutet und befestigt werden soll', pp. 5-7.

rage many moderates. He made sure that Wochenblatt columns were open to any Conservative Vereine or individuals wishing to protest against the Tivoli congress or program. He also printed Konservative Korrespondenz articles and excerpts from parliamentary debates which suggested either that Conservative leaders were uncomfortable with the revision of the anti-Social Democratic Point 14 or that they sided with Baron Karl von Stumm in his nascent conflict with the Christian Socials.[15]

In March 1893 Helldorff struck at the proposed reform of the DKP executive.[16] Claiming that true Volkstümlichkeit was only to be identified with a party leadership which represented the 'larger interests of the people' - and here Helldorff was echoing the classic Conservative conception of parliamentary representation - Helldorff argued that the proposed rebuilding of the Committee of Fifty was so much 'construction on abstract theories.'

> ... To seek Volkstümlichkeit by exploiting the momentary mood for momentary successes; by seeking, with the building of the party leadership, not guarantees for capable performance and political judgement, but rather the representation of all occupational estates; by calling on large assemblies - which can certainly do exemplary service in awakening interest or providing for the exchange of views between like-minded men - to make resolutions and decisions on political questions of the greatest gravity: that is ... an undertaking far removed from the true Conservative view.

Helldorff emphasised that the party executive should still be conceived as an **electoral** association and a vehicle for the co-ordination of parliamentary activity, in contrast to a 'large, volkstümlich executive ... which is not a moment of unity but of decomposition.'

Admitting that the Conservatives' tendency to individualism in party life had led to a neglect of party organization, Helldorff made a bitter remark about how the agrarians, recently organized in the new Farmers' League, had abandoned the party to seek their independence,

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15 For example, KWbl, 3, 21.1.93, pp. 28ff, quoting CC of 16.1.93.

16 KWbl, 12, 27.3.93, pp. 125ff.

and thereby lost the moderating influence of older Conservative leaders. Finally, Helldorff tried to win the remaining uncommitted onto his side by drawing parallels between the challenge of the Kreuzzeitung group and that raised by other demagogues who had changed parliamentary life in ways which shocked all true Conservatives:

> [The DKP leadership] should lead, not allow itself to be led.... Now, unfortunately, much is reversed, and not with us Conservatives alone. There is no doubt that in the present form of the franchise and in the way electoral activity is pursued ... lie the causes of spectacles which must be painful to any patriot. We see them in the state of parliamentary representation as a whole, which leads less than it is led, which dominates less the voice of the people than is dominated by it, or is incapable of dominating it. The most recent events - the sharp contrasts between the mood inside the chamber and outside on the streets - offer a shocking example.

Helldorff's conclusion - almost literally, for this article appeared in the penultimate number of the Konservatives Wochenblatt before it ceased publication in early April 1893 - was that the DKP could not neglect the need to co-operate with other parties supporting the state and society if this demagogic danger, within and without, were to be conquered.

In the six months between Tivoli and the Reichstag elections of June 1893, the Kreuzzeitung group began to lose ground on a number of fronts. The radical anti-Semites were neither convinced of the Conservatives' change of heart at Tivoli nor fearful of its practical effect. Many of them would have agreed with Böckel's contemptuous appraisal of the realigned DKP's ability to compete with the anti-Semites for radical peasant and Mittelstand votes: 'A party of the nobility and great landowners is still a long way from being a Volkspartei, even though its program is patched up with a piece of the Jewish question.'[17] These doubts were only fuelled by the Konservative Korrespondenz, which warned of the affinity between Social Demo-

17 Levy, Downfall, pp. 83f.

cratic and anti-Semitic ideas: 'How could a truly Conservative man associate himself with the aims of the anti-Semites!' At a meeting of the Conservative Verein in Dresden, Mirbach claimed that the agrarian movement had been the impetus for the Tivoli congress and had constituted one of its focal points. He declared:[18]

> Our position deviates somewhat on the Jewish question from the view of many of our political friends. We would have rather seen the word "Jew" omitted and instead marked our position much more sharply and with a wider scope with the word "Christian". We are by no means blind to the good kernel within anti-Semitism; ... however we regard it as a very difficult task to keep the anti-Semitic stream within the proper bounds. **The participation in this movement of many propertyless persons holds the danger that the movement will align itself against property as such and that anti-Semitism will sink to a species of Social Democracy.**

By the end of March, Ahlwardt had declared to a meeting of the German Anti-Semitic League that all Conservative seats were now 'free game.' The Volk, realizing that **any** Conservative could now be denounced by the radical anti-Semites as 'Helldorffian', reversed its earlier stance. It declared that 'even the constituencies which are presently still represented by the "Helldorffians" belong to the Conservative Party,' and warned that the DKP would nominate for the next election only candidates who stood unreservedly on the Conservative Tivoli program: 'The warning call has been sounded: Hands off!' Around the same time the Reichsbote wrote that 'the anti-Semitic parties already appear to have passed the high point of their agitation and success.' By late May, with the Reichstag election campaign already underway, Hammerstein, too, concluded that the anti-Semites around Böckel and Ahlwardt - and even some of the German Socials who went beyond Liebermann von Sonnenberg's 'reasonable' anti-Semitism - were not worthy of Conservative help.[19]

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18 KWbl, 10, 13.3.93; KZ, 13.3.93.

19 Vk, 9.3.93; KWbl, 10, 13.3.93, 'Der "Krach" der Freundschaft mit den Antisemiten,' pp. 104ff; Rb, 12.3.93; KZ, 30.5.93.

When election day came, Conservatives could not fail to see what a two-edged sword the anti-Semitic issue had become. In some cases, as with Gustav Hũpeden's campaign, Conservatives found anti-Semitic agitators either had prepared the ground for them or were willing to assist with emphatically anti-Semitic campaigns, as in certain constituencies in Saxony, Brandenburg, Silesia, and Pomerania.[20] In seven cases, joint candidates received substantial help from anti-Semitic groups - again, principally the German Socials - and then 'defected' to the Conservative caucus in the Reichstag after the election; they preferred, as Helmuth von Gerlach put it, 'to find an abode in the larger Conservative mansion they regarded as more solid after all.'[21]

Far more frequently, however, Conservatives were found directly opposing anti-Semitic candidates or abandoning the anti-Semitic appeal entirely. In the same Erfurt constituency in which Johannes Jacobskõtter ran as a DKP-BdL-German Social candidate, the 'moderate Conservatives' joined with the left liberals and National Liberals to nominate their own man. Elsewhere, Conservatives were eager to differentiate between German Socials and German Reform Party followers of Ahlwardt. According to one Conservative flyer entitled 'What is the Reform Party All About?', the German Reformers were far less 'circumspect' and 'serious' than the German Socials. Reacting to Reformers who ridiculed the DKP's anti-Semitic policy, the flyer asked: 'Who would be so ridiculous to believe that a young, small, not especially respectable party, which hopes for at most fifteen Reichstag seats,

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20 Publicity material from the Conservatives' 1893 RT election campaign in GStA Dahlem, XII Hauptabteilung IV, 171; facsimile of joint DKP/BdL/DSP poster supporting Hũpeden in Kassel, in Tal, Christians and Jews, p. 320; cf. Levy, Downfall, p. 85; Frank, Stõcker, pp. 237-240.

21 Cf. 'Gegen die Brot-Verteurer!', BAK, ZSg 1, E2, 'Deutsch-Soziale Partei'; Massing, Rehearsal, p. 229; Pulzer, Anti-Semitism, p. 122.

will be able to achieve what a large and respected party could not?'[22]

When it was seen that, of 16 seats won by the anti-Semites in 1893, ten had been held formerly by Conservatives, the die was cast. Helldorff found a favourable hearing when in late July he published a swingeing attack on the Kreuzzeitung's disastrous flirtation with the anti-Semitic parties.[23] He declared:

> The former Kreuzzeitung policy toward the anti-Semitic parties may no longer prevail for the party, the propagandizing for the anti-Semitic parties must cease. Not in league with anti-Semitic extremism but in opposition to it can the Conservative Party prosper and pursue Conservative goals. Once again: this can go on no longer!

Even Hammerstein could not neglect the new climate of opinion in the party which greeted Helldorff's assertions. With the rapid rise of the agrarian movement, Hammerstein was aware that the winds of change might sweep from influence any leader of Conservatives who relied solely on a radical anti-Semitic policy. On the other hand, Hammerstein genuinely felt that the 'wrong' anti-Semities had made off with the bulk of the spoils in June 1893, and he made it clear that Conservative Party support for the sixteen anti-Semitic deputies in the Reichstag would not be forthcoming on any regular basis. At the end of July 1893 the Kreuzzeitung lamented: 'The development of the anti-Semitic movement has an unmistakable similarity to that of Social Democracy.' By December, the Saxon Conservatives Friesen, Mehnert, and Blumenthal were condemning German Reformers in bitter terms, decrying their 'selfish ambition,' their 'immoderate and impossible demands,' their appeals to 'popular passions,' and their predisposition for 'noise and scandal.' In a Saxon Conservative publication from 1894, Friesen declared that 'rabble-rousing anti-Semitism ... is opposed to monarchist rule and to

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22 GStA Dahlem, 'Wahlen 1893', f. 85-96, 'Provinz Sachsen', f. 131, 'Conservative: Westfalen, Lippe, Hannover', f. 83ff; Tal, Christians and Jews, p. 321.

23 NAZ, 27.7.93.

the highest Conservative principle - authority.' This swing in the Conservatives' attitude prompted the German Reformer, Ludwig Werner, to complain in late 1893 that the 'Conservatives treat us worse than the Jews.' Stöcker, too, complained about renewed Conservative timidity, but he could not complain in the Reichstag: due partly to opposition from Böckel, the CSP leader had been defeated in June 1893 by a National Liberal.[24]

5.3 Helldorff, Hammerstein, and the Reactions to Tivoli

The wider significance of the inner-party crisis between 1890 and 1893 was evident in the way official government circles closely monitored the struggle between Helldorff and Hammerstein. The Kaiser and his closest advisors began to take steps even before the fall of Bismarck to support Helldorff's cause, since they feared the implications of a Conservative-Centre alliance, a radical realignment of Conservative social policy, an integration of the DKP into the Bismarck fronde, and an explicit endorsement of anti-Semitism - all policies seen to be pursued by Hammerstein.[25] As a corollary to this, the reactions to the growth of dissent, insubordination, radicalism, and demagogy in the DKP tended to draw a direct connection between the breakdown of Honoratiorenpolitik within the DKP and a larger threat to the stability of party alignments in Germany, to domestic peace, and to

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24 For evidence of DKP 'preferences' between the DRP and DSP, cf. the article in the Konservatives Handbuch (Berlin, 1894²), 'Antisemitismus'; KZ, 22.7.93; NAZ, 27.7.93, 4.8.93; BT, 7.12.93; NAZ, 19.12.93; Die Konservative Landesverein in Sachsen (Dresden/Leipzig, 1894), cited in Tal, Christians and Jews, pp. 134f: compare with Der Konservativen im Kampfe gegen die Übermacht des Judentums und für die Erhaltung des Mittelstandes (Leipzig, 1892); cf. Levy, Downfall, p. 100.

25 Unless otherwise noted, all references below are to Röhl, Eulenburg. Limits of space preclude a full discussion of the official response to DKP 'demagogy' here, but it is hoped that a more complete treatment will be included in a future study.

the monarchy itself. The disapproval with which the Kaiser, the government, and other influential individuals regarded the victories of the Kreuzzeitung group and the Tivoli rebels in 1892 was a strong contributing factor in encouraging moderate Conservative leaders to reassert themselves after 1892 and eventually break with the Christian Socials.

Friedrich von Holstein of the German Foreign Office had the closest relations to Helldorff, but he reflected the general concern of the 'Eulenburg circle' over DKP developments in May 1891 when he wrote to Philipp Eulenburg: 'Helldorff is being pursued with the most extreme bitterness ... because of his relation to the Kaiser. The Kaiser, if he wants to have support, must advance his friends and push back his opponents. Therefore I strongly advise that Helldorff be made Oberpräsident in Saxony....'[26] Caprivi, too, regarded Helldorff's role as a crucial one: at the time of the Austrian trade treaty bill and the School Bill, the Chancellor hoped that the DKP would return to 'its old position' and that 'the Hammerstein tyranny [was] coming to an end.'[27] By April 1892, the imminent fall of Helldorff had increased Holstein's fears. As he wrote: 'It is of the utmost importance for the Kaiser that the Conservative Party not come under the influence of [Hammerstein's] leadership. Even if Helldorff were to win for himself only a small group, that would be enough for a beginning.'[28] Helldorff's own appeals to Holstein, Eulenburg, and the Kaiser for support of his leadership in the DKP significantly reinforced Holstein's desperate

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26 Letter of 23.5.91, I, p. 683.

27 Caprivi to P. Eulenburg, 21.12.91, I, p. 739.

28 Holstein to P. Eulenburg, 8.4.92; see also Bülow to P. Eulenburg, 6.4.92, II, pp. 844ff.

view of the situation.[29] After trying to arrange for the Kaiser to inform moderate Conservatives that he supported Helldorff against the Kreuzzeitung challenge, Holstein presented the danger in stark terms: 'If His Majesty does nothing, Helldorff is out, and in future, after this warning example, it will not be easy to find people who will go **against** party discipline **for** the Kaiser.'[30]

A number of other contemporary observers recognised the importance of the official response to new departures in DKP politics. During the Rural Government Bill conflict in 1891, Hans Delbrück wrote: 'It is not liberalism and conservatism that are in conflict here, but enlightened and unyielding conservatism.' By 1892, this dichotomy had been redrawn, to include the Kaiser:[31]

> What the Kaiser wants and what really constitutes the core of the present government one may perhaps designate as enlightened conservatism. What the people mistrust and against which they are in the act of placing themselves one may call ... enlightened despotism. Which of the two concepts wins the upper hand, on this will depend fundamentally the fate of Germany in the immediate future.

After Hammerstein had bought up Helldorff's Deutsche Tageblatt, Theodor Schiemann of the Kreuzzeitung staff wrote:[32]

> The fact is that Helldorff is now silenced and Hammerstein stands as the stronger one. Now I have reason to assume that Caprivi will make an attempt to find a modus vivendi with him, and that would mean a change in the position of the Conservatives. Since Miquel is working toward the same goal, we will see the results very soon.

In April 1892, Botho Eulenburg, now Minister President in Prussia, wrote to his cousin Philipp that 'Helldorff was the sacrifice which the bellowing sea wanted; ... there was not much that could be done to help

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29 Including: Helldorff to P. Eulenburg, 5/23.5.92, II, pp. 862, 874ff; Helldorff to P. Eulenburg, 28.5.92, BAK, NL P. Eulenburg, 19, pp. 365ff.

30 Holstein to P. Eulenburg, 24.5.92, II, pp. 878; cf. Helldorff in CC, 10.5.92, cited in Broszat, 'Antisemitismus', p. 82.

31 PrJbb, 67, 1891, pp. 902ff, cited in Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, p. 97.

32 GStA Dahlem, NL T. Schiemann, 155, f. 67.

him within the party.'[33] Finally, Limburg-Stirum offered yet another analysis of the relationship between internal Conservative affairs and the party's relationship with the government. As he later wrote to his sister:[34]

> Helldorff believed he could lead the Conservative Party against the wishes of its overwhelming majority. He had a certain idée fixe that a political struggle was in sway between the Kaiser and Bismarck, in which one would naturally have to stand on the side of His Majesty: that was completely false, however.

Both Philipp Eulenburg and the Kaiser believed that only moderate and governmental Conservatives had a clear view of how to cope with the demands of modern politics. Eulenburg regarded it as a disgrace 'that men, who claim to belong to a party loyal to the king, do not meet the wishes of their monarch, who through the invigoration of the **moderate** elements only seeks to strengthen the party on an up-to-date basis.'[35] For his part, Wilhelm was most indignant that Conservatives still professed ignorance of his support for the middle parties:

> This is the sense in which I have **always** spoken to ... the Conservatives, and made the greatest effort in doing so. Each individual Conservative **knows** that, and it is **malevolence** if one claims otherwise. In any case I look gloomily into the future of the party. The subjugation of the moderate elements under the yoke of the extreme wing will destroy the whole party. It has **itself** to blame. It is a mystery to me how reasonable, orderly people can stand under the influence of a Hammerstein press. They are rushing to their ruin with their eyes open.

After the register of Kreuzzeitung-group victories had filled through 1892, the Tivoli congress was regarded by many advisors to Wilhelm as the final step on the descent of the Conservative Party to

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33 Letter of 26.4.92; II, p. 853.

34 Cited in Fr. Wm. Graf von Limburg-Stirum, Aus der konservativen Politik der Jahre 1890/1905 (Berlin, 1921), p. 6.

35 P. Eulenburg to A. v. Kiderlen-Wächter, 25.5.92, NL Eulenburg, 19, pp. 356ff, and for the following.

demagogy.[36] Helldorff wrote that the Conservatives had 'capitulated ... to the mob' on 8 December. Holstein wrote: 'The Conservative parliamentarians have the feeling that they have surrendered the leadership to "the clubs". Many to whom I spoke are hanging their heads.' Franz Fischer, Berlin correspondent of the Kölnische Zeitung, claimed that the striking of the clause against anti-Semitic excesses signified 'the acceptance of demagogy into Conservatism, the mixing of fire and water.' In almost all these critiques, the main contention was that the Conservatives' willingness to 'stir up the people's worst passions' and their endorsement of 'race enmity' would lead to a profound disruption of social and political life.[37] Helldorff was certainly not alone in documenting this reaction among anti-Kreuzzeitung observers, but he expressed it most emphatically:

> We are faced with a frightful brutalization of public opinion. - An assembly of counts and barons is called and led which - without objection - glorifies a man [Ahlwardt] who the following day is convicted of slanderous libel. ...
> Outrages without parallel are now being perpetrated by this anti-Semitic group, which release passions of the lowest type - and all true foundations of social order, the crown, [and] the Reich are in the greatest danger. ...
> From Stahl to Stöcker, and from Stöcker's shadow Ahlwardt has already emerged! - The danger is greater than one imagines; ... this movement in the end is the certain seed of Social Democracy....

Fischer to P. Eulenburg, 12.12.92;

For the following:

36 See Helldorff to P. Eulenburg, 11.12.92; Holstein to P. Eulenburg, 12.12.92, and other letters in II, pp. 988-998; Otto Tippel, ed. of the independent but strongly conservative Tägliche Rundschau, wrote to Caprivi on 14 December to protest against his RT speech of two days earlier against the Conservatives. Tippel wrote that the DKP would deal with the anti-Semitic question only with 'honour' and 'loyalty'; he felt that the Conservatives' passivity up until Tivoli had benefitted the anti-Semitic - 'and also perhaps the democratic' - groups in Germany, and concluded: 'The Conservative Party must therefore transcend the day-to-day political battle and bring great aims within the people's comprehension. For this very reason I believe that the charge of demagogy, which has deeply offended wide circles of Conservatives, has been unjustly levelled.' Rkz. 680, f. 443ff; cf. PrJbb, 81, 28.1.93, pp. 385-387.

37 Cf. Broszat, 'Antisemitismus', pp. 82ff.

Excerpts from Fischer to Eulenburg, 12.12.92;

The Kaiser's closest advisor and confidant , Philipp Eulenburg, often regarded it as his special task to pass along to Wilhelm opinions and warnings from his correspondents in very diluted form. Yet Eulenburg gave no sign of believing that these other observers were indulging in hyperbole.[38] To his mother, Eulenburg wrote:

> If anti-Semitism is raised to a **power,** then the alliance is made with Social Democracy.... What frightful short-sightedness! ... With the **force** that the Conservatives have accepted into their program, the party is putting itself at the disposal of a Bebel and Liebknecht. If the Kreuzzeitung blows this horn **systematically,** it will not be long before all rural pastors are inciting the peasants against the estate owners.

Eulenburg did not greatly moderate his tone in writing to the Kaiser, though he spoke of the Tivoli Conservatives in childish terms: 'They are sticking their tongues out at all of us - even Your Majesty!' Otherwise, Eulenburg was deadly serious about the danger presented by an anti-Semitic Conservative Party and 'the character which the anti-Semitic movement has **now** assumed.'

> The Social Democrats are making way for the anti-Semites, because they are clever enough to recognise in them the pioneers of their interests. ... When in the press ... the ideal of authority is taken from the rural population, the clergy, the minor official - by the anti-Semites in a singing match with the Social Democrats - then the consequences of seeing all property-owners as corrupt will soon arrive....'

If Wilhelm failed to make a decisive move to reduce the anti-Semitic wave which reached its crest at Tivoli, Eulenburg concluded, 'the monarchical principle would be shaken to its foundations.' The Kaiser would become a 'roi des geux.'

Carefully orchestrated to lead toward a general party congress dominated by regional party bosses and local agitators who wished to claim credit for the party work done in the provinces, the Kreuzzeitung-group reformist wave of 1892 had created a spectre of such pro-

38 P. Eulenburg to Alexandrine Eulenburg, 15.12.92, and 9.1.93, II, p. 1181.

portions that leading political observers feared for the survival of monarchical rule in Germany. Whether regarded as the inauguration of a true Conservative Volkspartei or as the descent of Conservatism to a level of demagogic radicalism, Tivoli became a potent symbol and sign-post, suggesting to contemporaries that Conservatives were finally becoming aware - for better or worse - of the possible victories to be won with a new and independent appeal to the masses and the sentiments which moved them.

Chapter Six: New Reformist Challenges, 1893-1895

At Tivoli and afterward, moderate Conservative leaders successfully resisted the 1892 demands for more democracy and a greater representation of non-aristocrats in the party's authoritative bodies. By the end of 1893, Conservative notables were more interested in the specific agrarian appeal than with the anti-Semitic and social-reformist demands of Stöcker's Christian Socials. When the Kaiser sought in September 1894 to 'rehabilitate' the DKP as a support for his government, the increasingly leftist orientation of Christian Socials around Friedrich Naumann grew to be regarded as a danger to the capacity of the DKP to function as an anti-revolutionary ally of the state. By mid-1895, a resurgence of the traditional style and direction of leadership within the party - though circumscribed by continued agrarian intransigence - was well underway. Nonetheless, important reformist proposals continued to be advanced, and clearly many provincial Conservative groups sympathized more with the reformist cause than with the movement back to traditions of social and political exclusivity.

6.1 The Problem of Machtpolitik

In the eighteen months after Tivoli, the possibilities for strengthening the Kreuzzeitung group's influence within the DKP leadership were very limited, despite the frequency with which the political press tended to report Hammerstein's 'complete ascendancy.' The disintegration of the 'alliance' with the anti-Semites and the election losses suffered at their hands became even more apparent when con-

trasted with the success of agrarian agitation and the revival of ad hoc Kartell partnerships in both the Reichstag and Prussian Landtag elections of 1893.[1] As well, the association of Hammerstein with opposition to the Army Bill and with the Bismarck fronde hurt the Kreuzzeitung cause when the Kaiser threatened in 1893 to crush all opposition to his plans. Wilhelm continued to show his favour for Helldorffians like Kleist-Schmenzin, whom he nominated to the Prussian Herrenhaus, and Dönhoff-Friedrichstein, who refused to abide by his commitment to the Farmers' League program and voted for the Russian trade treaty in 1894.[2]

Certainly Hammerstein's policies were not without their impact on the Conservative Party. To a certain extent - and much more than Stöcker - Hammerstein successfully steered a course in line with the new agrarian movement after February 1893. On balance, however, Hammerstein and Stöcker achieved no great success in their search for an issue capable of rallying their followers or maintaining their reforming zeal as had the anti-Helldorff and program reform campaigns of 1892. A formal restructuring of the top DKP leadership did not occur, and the re-establishment of barriers against Kreuzzeitung-group reformism proceeded apace. On 1 April 1893 Durant wrote Lange, complaining bitterly that there was no evidence of a move to act upon the Tivoli resolution calling for greater representation from different occupational groups in the executive. Suggesting that the resurgent old guard would like to abandon Stöcker if possible, Durant concluded: 'In certain leading circles of our party there is unfortunately ...

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1 Cf. 'Um was handelt es sich bei den Reichstagswahlen? Aufklärung über die Militär-Vorlage' (Berlin, 1893); program of 'Das Central-Wahl-Comité der vereinigten Ordnungsparteien im XVII. Sächsischen Reichstagswahlkreise'; 'Wenn die Russen kommen' and other Flugblätter des Wahlvereins der Deutschen Konservativen; in GStA Dahlem, XII Hauptabteilung IV, 171 (1893); the DKP's Vademecum zur Landtagswahl (Berlin, 1893) discussed in FsZ, 22.10.93;

2 Cf. P. Eulenburg to Wilhelm, 9.1.94, Röhl, Eulenburg, II, pp. 1181.

a very strong inclination against a healthy social policy, and interest politics seems once again to be attaining dominance.' Even Hammerstein was not immune to the liabilities of back-room politics: when the new DKP House of Deputies caucus was chosen after the November 1893 elections, Hammerstein's name was not among the list of ten members.[3]

The Kreuzzeitung-group Conservatives did not succeed in eliminating important Kartell sympathies and contacts in various sections of the party.[4] Helldorff worked on tirelessly to report signs of growing intimacy between Conservative spokesmen and Kartell leaders, while the Volk, the Reichsbote, and the Pommersche Reichspost drew little response with their criticisms of increasingly reactionary Conservative social policy. After a short, critical phase of antagonism on the Russian treaty issue, the Manteuffel group was able to regain contact with right-wing National Liberals, Free Conservatives, and certain elements of the government. By late May 1894, August Eulenburg could write to his cousin Philipp that although the Conservatives were 'acting like the biggest fools under Hammerstein's leadership,' there was 'undoubtedly a rehabilitation process in train, which one would only upset with forceful measures.' Eulenburg then added: 'In the Wilhelmstraße one forgets completely that a sensational break with the Conservatives by the government necessarily means a sharp lurch to the left for the whole machine, and that one thereby drives His Majesty into the arms of the liberals. Botho would never go along with that!'[5]

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3 Frank, Stöcker, p. 239; Heffter, Kreuzzeitungspartei, p. 233; KZ, 19.1.94.

4 Cf. D. Stegmann, 'Wirtschaft und Politik nach Bismarcks Sturz: Zur Genesis der Miquelschen Sammlungspolitik 1890-1897', in Geiss and Wendt, Deutschland in der Weltpolitik, pp. 161-184.

5 Rb, 11.3.93, 'Eine Wendung in unserer Partei?'; KZ, 5/17.5.93; Eulenburg correspondence of 28.5.94 in Röhl, Eulenburg, II, p. 1313.

This process of rehabilitation was especially problematic because from 1893 to 1895 there were so many different streams and cross-currents flowing with inconstant strength within the Conservative community. The Helldorff-Hammerstein dichotomy which had arisen in the period 1890-92 no longer existed: moderates were no longer ipso facto government-oriented; agrarians could be either pro- or anti-Kartell; reformers might regard party policy very differently depending on whether they adhered to Hammerstein's, Stöcker's, or even Naumann's wing; and Conservatives of almost any hue could call upon certain regional press organs or Vereine to demand a fair hearing for their cause from the party's central leadership.

DKP-government relations during this period will be discussed further in Chapter Eight. It is nevertheless possible to identify in the fluid situation of these years the gradual emergence of one issue which tended to redivide Conservatives into two distinct groups: those who advocated 'enlightened' or 'repressive' policy on the problem of social reform. The centrality of this issue was an almost necessary consequence of the trend in the Christian Social Party away from anti-Semitic policy toward an increasingly radical stance in support of the social, economic, and - eventually - political rights of workers. Attention on this issue was focussed by the perceived revolutionary threat of European assassinations in the summer of 1894 and by the government's Anti-Revolution Bill of 1894/95. There were, however, other threads within the broad development of the Conservative Party's policy and orientation - such as debates on a revision of the Reichstag franchise or the Conservatives' relationship to the Kaiser - which were important in determining the scope and timing of this crisis between the DKP and CSP.

In the post-Tivoli period, many Conservatives were unsure exactly what the government expected of their party. These uncertainties prevented leading German Conservatives from supporting Caprivi in the manner, say, of Baron von Stumm. Stumm was no particular admirer of Caprivi personally, but the strain within Free Conservatism which inclined its adherents toward governmentalism led him to the belief that Conservatives had a duty to abide by the constitution and support the government of the day. As Stumm wrote to Caprivi in 1892:[6]

> ... Since we have universal suffrage with its consequences, ... I think that those parties which believe in the monarchy should stand together not only for the monarch but also for those who are called to lead the government in his name. According to my understanding of Conservative thought every indication of personal animus against such men and all personal differences of opinion must be avoided.

It was exactly this sort of unproblematic allegiance to the Kaiser and to the political status quo which, however paradoxical, was missing from much of German Conservative thought in these years.[7]

Nevertheless, by mid-1894 the Kaiser was cognizant of the resurgent forces within the DKP which were, however vaguely, pro-government, pro-Kartell, and strongly against the continuation of social reform for the benefit of workers.[8] He had also come to the conclusion that he was doing more harm than good by maintaining the illusion of a 'social monarchy.' The persistence of agrarian opposition to the government after the Russian treaty was another major factor inducing the Kaiser to step in to restore ties with the Conservatives. The Kaiser's September 1894 Königsberg speech widened the gap between the Christian Socials and the main body of Conservatives. The Westphalian Ultra,

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6 Cited in Anderson, Anti-English Feeling, p. 47.

7 See, for example, the confused reactionary tendencies in G. Oertel, Der Konservatismus als Weltanschauung (Leipzig, 1893), pp. 6-11, 18-25, 49, 55ff; and correspondence in NL Reck, f. 57ff.

8 See CC article, 'Die Sehnsucht nach dem Kartell', in KZ, 19.5.94; Born, Staat und Sozialpolitik, pp. 90f; Hank, Kanzler ohne Amt, p. 501f.

Reck, may be taken as typical of the latter group. Reck applauded the Kaiser's celebrated call for a campaign for 'Religion, Morality, and Order'; he also noted that the army might soon be incapable of decisive action against social disturbances, and argued for a parliamentary reform whereby the Reichstag and Prussian Landtag would alternate their legislative activity annually. Reck's own conception of the Conservatives' battle cry was: 'Ma vie au Roi. Mon coeur aux Dames. L'Honneur pour moi!'[9]

Reformist Conservatives reacted rather differently.[10] In response to an article in the Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, which claimed the only chance to pass anti-socialist legislation was to establish a 'broad Kartell', Hammerstein rejected 'any Kartell, no matter how broadly or narrowly conceived.' The attempt to reconcile reformist Conservative demands with the Kõnigsberg program was taken up even more energetically by Engel of the Reichsbote. In a lead article entitled 'The Meaning of the Kaiser's Speech', Engel sought to make the fight against revolution into a program for positive social and economic reform, asking the liberals: 'Do you really believe that Social Democracy can be overcome while at the same time maintaining the liberal economic system?' On another occasion, Engel expressed his satisfaction that Wilhelm had in mind a campaign in accordance with the program of social reform announced by his grandfather in 1881 - that is, 'no one-sided battle with police measures,' but rather the sort of 'legal reform' which is 'capable of driving back the dominance of capital, which has been uniquely favoured by liberal legislation, and once again to revive small industry, retail business, and agriculture.'

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9 Notes on Kõnigsberg speech, 6.9.94; Reck to B. Eulenburg, 4.10.94 (concept); Reck to Wilhelm, 15.9.94 (concept), in NL Reck, f. 83-100.

10 Press review in NWVZ, 9.9.94; Rb, 8/12.9.94.

Other Kreuzzeitung-group editors echoed Engel's plea. Hermann Lange added to it the warning that Conservatives must not allow former Kartell partners to sow disunity among the DKP. Quoting the National Liberal Kölnische Zeitung - which had written that Conservatives must overthrow Hammerstein if the DKP were once again to join an alliance of all state-supporting parties - Lange declared that 'a firmly united and resolute Conservative Party is more necessary today than ever.' The difficulty faced by the reformers was clear: as Engel wrote to Reck on 12 September:[11]

> It appears important to me that as much capital as possible be made for our cause out of the campaign, ... just as we did once with the decree of the old Kaiser. Then it was a matter of giving a positive substance to very unfortunate words, and thereby creating public opinion for them. That is also the task now.

Those Conservatives who most feared the implications of the Kaiser's speech, seeing in it a call for a Staatsstreich, were Stöcker's two deputies with the Volk, Gerlach and Oberwinder.[12] Stöcker himself wrote on Sedan Day, 1894:

> After having possessed and exercised the [universal Reichstag] franchise for so long, its removal would weld together the little men into one man and make him the enemy of the Reich indefinitely; such measures would put an irresistible torch for agitation into the hands of political and Social Democracy.

Stöcker was not necessarily opposed to proposals to inaugurate representation based on ständisch principles; but Gerlach and Oberwinder kept pressure on him to oppose any tinkering with the franchise, and they launched a vigorous attack on such plans in the columns of the Volk throughout September 1894.

There remains the question of how much influence the Volk editors had within the DKP in late 1894. In giving a preliminary answer, one

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11 NL Reck, f. 80.

12 Cf. J.A. Schmitz, 'Die christlich-soziale Bewegung und der Kampf gegen den Umsturz 1894-95' (Diss., Cologne, 1938) for the background to these events; also Massing, Rehearsal, p. 116f.

need not chronicle the events of those autumn days, for they are already familiar in outline.[13] There seems little doubt that the fears of the Volk editors - who saw exceptional laws compromising not only Social Democratic but also Christian Social agitation - played a crucial role in dissuading the government from a leap in the dark at this time. It may have been the Volk editorials which caused Caprivi to observe in the State Ministry meeting of 12 October 1894 that he was 'dubious whether the Conservative Party in its entirety would be won for an anti-revolutionary bill. This party has recently stepped up its agitational appearances and will want to avoid alienating the broad masses of voters.' Before the next meeting of the State Ministry a week later, the Prussian Minister President, Botho Eulenburg, had approached Hammerstein and Stöcker to ask how the Conservatives would react to a government 'change of course.' According to Gerlach's retrospective account, most Conservatives, including Stöcker, were willing to proceed with Eulenburg in what would amount to a Staatsstreich. Gerlach and Oberwinder, however, objected immediately and violently: they threatened to carry their opposition to the Berlin Bürgervereine, over which they had strong influence. Stöcker sought a compromise, but the Volk editors would not back down. Hammerstein had to report to Eulenburg that the DKP could not follow his reactionary course. Eulenburg subsequently wrote Reck that, 'as regards the franchise, I am at an impasse for the time being.' In the State Ministry meeting of 19 October, Eulenburg withdrew his extreme proposals and Caprivi's milder legislation carried the day.[14]

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13 See among others: Frank, Stöcker, p. 242; Kröger, 'Konservativen', pp. 73ff; Nichols, Germany after Bismarck, pp. 331-366; Zechlin, Staatsstreichpläne, pp. 87ff;

14 Details in Zechlin, Staatsstreichpläne, p. 127 and Appendix 10; B. Eulenburg to Reck, 20.9.94, NL Reck, f. 98; Gerlach, Erinnerungen, p. 85ff; Leuss, Hammerstein, pp. 116f; Frank, Stöcker, pp. 242-244; H. Oberwinder, 'Was ist konservativ und staatserhaltend?', DtWochenbl, 9, 4.3.99, esp. pp. 343f; Vk, 25.8.95; R. Geis, Der Sturz des Reichskanzlers Caprivi (Berlin, 1930), pp. 110-112.

In these October weeks of crisis, Hammerstein's and Stöcker's motives remain obscure. Yet one is prompted to ask: why was the influence of the social reformers Gerlach and Oberwinder so great that their threat to mobilize their Christian Social followers foiled Eulenburg and the government in their aim to follow a course of reaction which very closely resembled the anti-democratic line advanced by many Conservatives who opposed the Tivoli appeal to the 'masses'? After 1894, the Christian Socials were never again to have such influence on Conservative policy; and when they attempted to force the issue in late 1895, they were turned out of the party. In both crises, however, the Conservative leaders were confronted with the implications of their claim to be 'a party of the people.' To understand why the 1894 crisis resulted in a victory for the advocates of social reform and reformist Conservatism, and why the 1895/96 crisis produced a very different result, it is necessary to review the post-Tivoli development of an increasingly independent and leftist Christian Social Party.

6.2 Christian Social Reformism

In 1893-94, the immediate post-Tivoli antagonism between the Volk and Helldorff became a distinct conflict between the Christian Social and Conservative parties themselves. Mirbach's speech of early 1893 eschewing radical anti-Semitism, and the clause from the Farmers' League's founding program which hinted at the abandonment of workers protection legislation, were among the factors that compelled Stöcker to issue an independent Christian Social manifest in May 1893. This announced that Christian Socials would for the first time be offering independent candidates in the upcoming Reichstag elections. To this end, a Berlin meeting of CSP delegates on 1 June resolved that independent CSP Vereine should be founded throughout the Reich, in order either 'to infuse the Christian Social spirit into the

"half-hearted" or else to encourage their separation and make them harmless.' This strong talk did not lead the Christian Socials who were elected in June 1893 to establish their independence in the Reichstag. Most of them showed themselves to be, in Gerlach's words, 'stock-conservative'. Gustav Hüpeden later recalled that although he had felt close to deputies like Pastor Martin Schall, Otto Pöhlmann, and Jacobskötter, he had never understood what Stöcker meant when he spoke of a 'Christian Social group' within the Conservative caucus. 'No kind of consultation ever took place; the [Christian Social] deputies were very reserved.... Only with poetic licence could one speak of a "group"; there was of course no question of any sort of influence upon the Conservative caucus.'[15]

Signs of CSP decline multiplied. The Conservative Party leaders offered Stöcker no safe constituency in which to regain his parliamentary seat. In a June 1893 rally, the Christian Social leader found himself shouted down by Ahlwardt rowdies. By 1894 a Berlin police report noted a stong decline in the membership of the Christian Social Youth League: many of the rank and file seemed to have crossed over to other anti-Semitic groups.[16]

Despite these weaknesses, and despite their willingness to support the radical agrarians in opposition to the Russian trade treaty, the Christian Socials around the Volk became increasingly impatient with DKP leaders over the winter of 1893/94. Repeatedly the Volk editors were forced to redefine their position between Friedrich Naumann and the bulk of the DKP (as when Naumann declared in October 1893 that he wished to see a CSP 'which is not conservative.') To the applause of

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15 Hüpeden to Frank, Sedan Day 1926, NL Hüpeden, f. 68; Frank, Stöcker, pp. 236, 240.

16 Cf. press files on CSP and Stöcker, ZStA II, Rep. 77: CB S, 165, I and II; CB P, 42.

the official and Kartell press, Manteuffel and the Konservative Korrespondenz disavowed the Volk as an official Conservative newspaper, referring to it as a German Social organ and censuring its preference for scandalizing. The response of the Volk to such charges tended to mix denials with explanations, counter-charges with self-effacement, and harsh warnings with a new tone of pessimism. In November 1893, for instance, editors of the Volk believed that the old opposition between governmental and extreme Conservatives had changed since the fall of Helldorff into one between the reformist Naumannite 'Jungkonservative' and the reactionary Altkonservative around Manteuffel. In reply to the Konservative Korrespondenz attacks, the Volk claimed that it was indeed not an 'organ of the "Conservatives" who suffer from chronic defection [and] who awake from their slumber and remember their electors only at election time.' The Volk objected, however, when the Korrespondenz implied that Christian Socials could not be Conservatives.[17]

As Gerlach and Oberwinder gradually fell under the spell of Naumann, the Naumannites increased their influence among the Evangelical Workers' Associations under Pastor Ludwig Weber and in the Evangelical Social Congress led by Pastor Paul Göhre. Stöcker's task of keeping his party aligned with the DKP became increasingly difficult, even though few of the leftist Christian Socials sought to usurp his leadership. As early as April 1894, for example, Stöcker was ironically counselling moderation and patience when a restless group of Naumannites called, among other things, for a revision of the CSP program, for the greater organization of rural labourers, and for a sharper definition between the DKP and CSP. He could not prevent a public debate of

17 NAZ, 8.3.94; KnZ, 2.10.93; Vk, 4.1./4.3.94. Cf. D. von Oertzen's Konservativ oder christlich-sozial? Oder beides? (Siegen, 1900), and the later CSP leader Wilhelm Philipps's 'Konservativ und christlich-soziale', Die Reformation, 9, Dec. 1910, pp. 810-812.

the rural workers' issue at the fifth Evangelical Social Congress in 1894, which attracted much unfavourable Conservative attention.[18]

The separation of spirits between Stöcker and Naumann was accelerated by the events of September/October 1894 and by the debate on the Anti-Revolution Bill which raged during the following winter and spring. Conservatives and Christian Socials wrote a number of pamphlets on the general theme, 'Reform or Revolution', which suggested how the path of the Naumannite social reformers was diverging from the mainstream of Conservative thought.[19] Though an essential anti-Social Democratic impulse could be found in both groups, the Naumannites tended to argue that progressive social reform was the best way to insulate the lower orders against revolutionary agitation. Most Conservatives, on the other hand, would have agreed with the Tivoli dissenter, Blumenthal, who wrote in a pamphlet entitled Against the Revolution! that Conservatives needed to guard against 'the fatal mistake - which must circumscribe our power to act in other directions - of believing that one can disarm Social Democracy through reforms for the workers. ... Social reform which could even in part satisfy the spirits under the Social Democratic banner is impossible, it does not exist.'[20]

These differences of outlook produced disagreement even within the Christian Social-Kreuzzeitung camp. In January 1895, Heinrich Engel was engaged in a petty squabble with Volk editors over the source of reports on Christian Social meetings, since he tended to give more

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18 KZ, 15.4.94.

19 Cf. W. von Blumenthal, Wer geht mit? Wider den Umsturz! Für den Mittelstand! (Dresden, 1894); C. v. Massow, Reform oder Revolution! (Berlin, 1895²); C. v. Massow, Die Reform unseres politischen Parteilebens (Berlin, 1895); K. Freiherr v. Fechenbach, Die Bedeutung der heutigen Sozialdemokratie für Staat und Gesellschaft (Frankfurt/M., 1895); Fechenbach, Der Kaiser ruft! (Berlin/Leipzig, 1896³); Julius Werner, Soziales Christentum (Dessau, 1894, 1897²).

20 Blumenthal, Wer geht mit?, pp. 8f.

attention to Stöcker's remarks and neglect Naumann's. Going further than previous words of warning to Gerlach and Oberwinder - that Stöcker would be held responsible for their immoderate tone - Engel now warned his readers from the path the Volk was treading.

The deepening conflict between Stumm and Naumann merely aggravated the situation. Hüpeden recalled that most Conservatives did not object when Manteuffel deferred to Stumm as the 'Conservative' spokesman on the question of occupational associations.

> The Conservative deputies instinctively stood more or less behind Baron von Stumm on the workers' issue. In any case they were never faced with the question: do you want to solve the social question through reform or "sheer force"? They wanted both: first to fight the Social Democrats decisively and break their influence, and then support moderate reforms.

When Stöcker spoke out against Stumm in the Prussian Landtag in March 1895, he was greeted with icy silence from the Conservative benches. As well, the final stages of the Anti-Revolution Bill debate convinced many in the DKP that the Christian Socials were far too sensitive on the question of possible reform to the universal franchise.[21]

After this long incubation period, the Naumann-DKP conflict broke out in full form in late April 1895. In early May, declarations were printed giving the relative positions of Naumann, Gerlach, Stöcker, Hammerstein, Manteuffel, and others.[22] Naumann's article, entitled 'Conservative or Christian Social?', was intended both as a farewell to the DKP and as an attempt to draw the bulk of Christian Socials away from Stöcker. Naumann's main point was that, by turning away from

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21 Rb, 25.1.95; Vk, 20.1.95; Fischer, 'Protestantismus', pp. 507-511; NL Hüpeden, f. 68; Frank, Stöcker, p. 250; Vk, 3.3.95; Rb, 23.3.95; KZ, 22.3.95; DAB, 15, 14.4.95; KonsMon, 52, June 95, pp. 645-648.

22 Rb, 5.5.95; KonsMon, June 95, pp. 645ff; cf. Naumann to L. Weber, n.d. [Feb. 95], printed in Oertzen, Stöcker, II, p. 372f; Naumann to Stöcker, 22.6.95, and Liebermann to Stöcker, 8.4.95, in Eckert, 'Wandlungen', pp. 328ff; Vk, 2/4/8/11/15/17.5.95.

social reform, the Conservatives had failed to give any positive sign that they valued their bond with the CSP. This did not mean for Naumann that a change was impossible, just that it was unlikely. Elsewhere he wrote:[22a]

> Who knows what the future will bring? If it should happen that the Conservative Party comes to support free workers' organizations, free speech, a new mortgage law and an improved situation for the rural labourer, full Sunday rest and a strong progressive income tax, if that should happen, then we might once again consider whether we may expect something from it. Before then, however, we have in common the Christian faith and loyalty to the state, but we are divided on social policy....

Gerlach's declaration in the Volk, replying to charges that his opposition to the Anti-Revolution Bill was 'unconservative', drew attention to the Conservative groups in Berlin and the provinces which had also dissented on this issue.[23] In his Deutsche Evangelische Kirchenzeitung, Stöcker maintained that the war was merely between the Kreuzzeitung and Naumann's organ, Die Hilfe, not between the DKP and CSP as such. He declared that the Christian Socials would continue their association with both the Evangelical Social Congress and the Conservative Party. He concluded with a quotation from the Kreuzzeitung, which regarded the CSP as 'an extremely valuable element of the Conservative Party ... because ... it is the most competent bearer of the social reformist line of policy.'

The Reichsbote held much the same view. Engel argued that most Christian Socials or members of Berlin Bürgervereine could not conceive of a sharp distinction between the CSP and DKP. Challenging Naumann's right to speak for the whole CSP, Engel admitted that the group of 'unconservative' Naumannites might have to split off from the party, for the sake of 'clarity' and 'truth', but he warned of forming new 'sects': if the Naumannites left the DKP, Engel prophesized, they

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23 See below, pp. 204-206.

22a Cited in Konsmon, 59, June 95, p. 646.

would be only a small minority of Christian Socials, and would plummet, like a meteor - to the left.

The Konservative Monatsschrift, under Dietrich von Oertzen and Martin von Nathusius, wished to achieve a reconciliation by emphasising Stöcker's essential role as a mediator between the followers of Naumann and the DKP. Indeed, the analysis of the conflict printed in the June 1895 issue of the Monatsschrift probably represented the majority Christian Social opinion. The Monatsschrift did not approve of the DKP's swing away from social reform, and it criticised the Konservative Korrespondenz sharply for implying that Naumann was too concerned with the welfare of the fourth estate. But it argued that the Christian Socials, with only very weak representation in parliament, could not afford to leave the Conservative Party:

> The Jungen ... want to proceed faster than circumstances permit. ...
> We, too, belong to those who criticise the lack of initiative on the Right, and we are fully sympathetic to the energy of those who ... wish to help the oppressed and impoverished estates of our people to better conditions of existence.
> However, when we consider the **political** question in practical terms, it is surely the better way, even from the Christian Social standpoint, to **win over** the Conservatives rather than separate from them.
> ... And if one finds with the Conservatives great reserve and tentative uncertainty in moving forward, the party that is pressing ahead cannot wholly escape the criticism that it has not formulated practical proposals clearly enough. Government and parties capable of governing can never be won through agitation, but rather always through plans which are advanced in legislatively comprehensible form.

As Stöcker's following in the CSP hovered between the Naumannites and the DKP, the atmosphere was further poisoned by two conflicts in Pomerania.[24] The first was between large estate owners, who were mainly sympathetic to the DKP, and the local pastors, who adhered more to Naumann's line. At a meeting of the Conservative Verein in Greiffenburg, a Pastor Kock had delivered a speech on the theme: 'What can

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24 Details in KVZ, 9.6.95; NAZ, 3.7.95; DAB, 27, 7.7.95, 'Eine lehrreiche Reichstagswahl'.

be done to keep the danger of Social Democracy from our rural population?' After Kock spoke very critically of the situation of labourers on a local agrarian estate, he was shouted down by another estate owner at the meeting and asked to resign from the Verein. Kock protested to the Royal Consistory in Pomerania, while the provincial Pastors' Association protested to the Conservative Landtag deputy from the area, Hugo Prätorius. Nonetheless, Kock was eventually transferred to Tempelburg.

This affair drew attention to the willingness of some of the more politicized clergy to follow Naumann and raise the cry of social reform in rural areas. The Reichsbote and the Volk took the side of Pastor Kock; Engel wrote that the precedent set by the silencing of Kock was a dangerous one, while the Volk decried the affair as 'Cabinet-justice'. The Kreuzzeitung and the Konservative Korrespondenz both regretted the publicity Kock had drawn, first of all because talk of the 'gulf' between peasants and large estate owners would provide welcome agitational material for the SPD, and second, because antagonism between clergy and agrarians would lead to Conservative disunity.

These worries were compounded by the second conflict, which arose over a Conservative defeat in a by-election for the Pomeranian district of Kolberg-Köslin. Here, the aged August von Gerlach-Parsow - one of the Helldorffians in 1892 and a member of the Herrenhaus since 1890 - lost his campaign to retain what had previously been one of the DKP's safest seats. Many Conservative press organs agreed that the Conservatives had been far too complacent during the Kolberg-Köslin campaign. But the Volk developed this critique into a broadside against Honoratiorenpolitik in general. Gerlach-Parsow was reviled as the typical Conservative who, refusing to acknowledge Tivoli, managed to alienate all elements who supported anti-Semitic policies or opposed the Kartell. He was also said to be no friend of the universal franchise and to have a preference for exceptional laws. He allegedly

did not participate in his own election campaign, which in any case was limited to a half-dozen Conservative meetings. The Kolberg-Kōslin disaster, the Volk concluded, could be repeated in other Pomeranian constituencies, or elsewhere:

> The only thing which can eliminate this danger is a complete break with the hitherto-accepted principle of political laissez-aller and -passer. The question of organization and the press must be given precedence. Agitation in the intervening period between elections should not be left to the other parties alone. The deputies should try, at least through the regular rendering of accounts, to establish closer contact with their electors. What above all is needed, however, is a little more popular Christian Social spirit!

Just at this juncture, the Hammerstein scandal broke.[25] Many of the details of this affair are obscure, trivial, or both, but the outline of events is clear. Rumours of the financial wrong-doing of the Kreuzzeitung editor had been brewing for some time, but only in April 1895 did Hammerstein's opponents begin to disclose the evidence they had of his personal insolvency. The charges eventually laid involved the misuse of Kreuzzeitung funds, the misappropriation of a pension fund, and a deal with suppliers of newsprint at vastly inflated prices. Between April and July the affair remained cloaked in mystery; but even in the early summer it became apparent that some old-guard Conservatives hoped to bring down Hammerstein by leaking revelations to the SPD press. Finally, the DKP's Committee of Eleven had to demand a thorough investigation, to avoid being completely identified with the crime. Hammerstein's name disappeared from the Kreuzzeitung's front page in early July. By the time the state authorities became involved in the proceedings in September, Hammerstein had fled to Switzerland. In late 1895 the authorities apprehended him in Athens, and returned

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25 Besides the standard works on the KZ group, cf. A. Hall, Scandal, Sensation and Social Democracy (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 149-154; Die Nation, 18, 1.2.96, 'Hammerstein vor den Toren', pp. 281f, by 'Ignotus'; on stolen letters, H. v. Gerlach to Fechenbach, 7.10.95, SgF, XXXVI; Stōcker to Waldersee, 12.10.95, NL Waldersee, B I, 50, f. 4.

him to stand trial in Germany. In April 1896 Hammerstein, a broken man politically and morally, was sentenced to three years in prison.

Quite apart from the sudden and total disappearance from politics of the Kreuzzeitung group's most hard-headed and independent editor, this 1895 affair tarnished the image of the DKP in general and the Conservative reformist community in particular.[26] The Konservative Korrespondenz argued unconvincingly that Hammerstein had never influenced party policy decisively, and much of the DKP press followed suit. This, however, could not prevent a backlash of opinion against the party. The DKP lost the by-election for Hammerstein's seat to a National Liberal in November. As well, the reputation of the Kreuzzeitung, under its new chief editor, Hermann Kropatschek, was substantially diminished by its colourless editorial style and by a series of satirical attacks against it in the humorous journals of the time.

Probably the most significant effect of Hammerstein's downfall was that the original affair evolved into a wider attack on Stöcker. On the personal level, Stöcker was compromised by his defence of Hammerstein before there was firm evidence of wrong-doing. In time Stöcker, too, realized the party must act. But by September, the National Liberal press was suggesting that Stöcker had been less than candid with the Conservative leadership. Aware that suspicion of Stöcker was high, the Social Democrats chose this moment - September 1895 - to publish the notorious 'Funeral Pyre' letter which Stöcker had written to Hammerstein during their anti-Bismarck campaign of August

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26 See KnZ, 8.7.95; Rb, 21.9.95; and P. Eulenburg to A. Eulenburg, 26.9.95, Röhl, Eulenburg, III (forthcoming), pp. 1545f.

1888.[27] In 1895 this letter was particularly damning: apart from revealing the general profanity of Conservative political ethics, it insulted Bismarck and recalled the painful break between Kaiser and Chancellor. The Konservative Korrespondenz gave expression to the party leadership's doubts about Stöcker and his embarrassing heritage of intrigue, although it eventually accepted his explanation of the letter, 'officially'. The die was cast, however, and through the autumn, all those elements of the DKP who felt they had suffered long enough at the hands of the Kreuzzeitung and Christian Social groups pressed the point. By late October, the real issue at hand had been revealed, when the Korrespondenz declared an official break with the Naumannite wing of the Christian Social Party.

6.3 Organizational Reform: Fact and Fiction

To understand the significance of this rapidly deepening crisis - and sense of crisis - within the DKP in late 1895, it is necessary to review the efforts of Conservative publicists who in the period after Tivoli were considering on-going organizational and agitational reforms to revive the image of the DKP as a Volkspartei.

Engel's efforts of 1890-92 to report in the Reichsbote on reformism within the DKP were continued after Tivoli, if with rather less regularity. Late in the summer of 1893, the Reichsbote printed a detailed analysis of the deficiencies in DKP organization.[28] The Reichsbote article offered five main proposals. First, it argued that

27 Dated 14.8.88, this letter advised Hammerstein to break off his direct criticism of the Kaiser and instead sow discord between Wilhelm and Bismarck by concentrating public attention and private intrigue on a number of secondary issues. Stöcker's Dreizehn Jahre was a defence of his earlier action; first published in Vorwärts, 5.9.95.

28 Rb, 9.8.93; cf. CC article, 'Zur selbständigen Organisationen der Dt.-Kons.', in Rb, 26.7.93.

the German Conservative Wahlverein had to be re-established and expanded as the central organ of the party. Second, the Konservative Korrespondenz had to begin to function as a proper party press organ. The need was apparent for two separate editions, so that the small, provincial DKP press could easily take over articles directly from it and use them to counter local left-liberal or Social Democratic press reports, as well as provide interesting reports on Berlin affairs. With proper care, the author noted, the Korrespondenz could soon be made into a profitable and self-supporting enterprise. Third, the article argued that a general secretary and a corps of travelling speakers were indispensible to the party. In the previous year, the National Liberal general secretary had embarked on an agitational campaign in middle Germany, and allegedly 'almost everywhere the result of his appearances was a strengthening of the party.' As a corollary to this idea, the author's fourth point was that the DKP's central office needed to do more to encourage the leaders of local Vereine to communicate with and take part in the decisions of the regional or provincial Vereine, so that knowledge about local needs would filter up to the party leaders. Finally, it was noted that the regularity of Conservative rallies and the success of Verein activity would always depend to a large extent of the Verein chairman: as the author concluded his article: '... He must not only lend his name [to the Verein,] as often happens now; he must also lend his hand, his head, and his heart.' Here, as in other points, however, the author was merely repeating calls for organizational cohesion which went back to 1882 and beyond. That the same pleas were being raised over a decade later shows how little effect the 1882 discussions had had.

Despite such calls for reform in 1893, DKP leaders proceeded very slowly with the minimal organizational changes which had been promised at Tivoli. At a Wahlverein executive meeting of 20 March 1893, a committee had been struck to prepare the way for a reorganization of the Committee of Fifty; its members were Manteuffel, Limburg, and Mehnert.[29] Almost a year later, on 17 February 1894, the new plan for the Committee of Fifty was presented to and approved by the Wahlverein executive. According to this scheme, the new party executive was to consist of 53 members, of whom 29 would be chosen by party Vereine at large and 24 would be selected from the party's parliamentary caucuses. As the Konservative Korrespondenz announcement read, it was expected that the various occupational classes would be represented in the group of regional delegates.

Unaware at this point how long it would be before the new Committee of Fifty was actually selected and formally constituted, Engel expressed reserved agreement with the plan on one point, and strong disagreement with it on another. He agreed with the decision not to place Conservative editors on the new executive, to maintain an independent - that is, critically self-conscious - Conservative press. This omission, Engel wrote, would disappoint large sections of the dissenting DKP press, since the hope had been raised in 1892 that some provision would be made in the selection of the Committee of Fifty for representation of leading DKP editors. The real disappointment for Engel was the balance that had been struck between parliamentary and regional delegates. For as he rightly pointed out, the 24:29 ratio would not be reflected in the actual attendance of delegates at any given executive meeting. Due to the difficulties of travel and other commitments, there was a likelihood that perhaps only one-third of the provincial delegates would be able to attend each executive meeting in

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29 These and following details from CC article in Rb, 21.2.94.

Berlin. Therefore, the parliamentary representatives were in practice still assured a healthy - or unhealthy - majority in the party's top decision-making body. In Engel's view, then, the protest launched at Tivoli against parliamentarians and their dominance had come to nought, and the relationship between party and people, to which the Tivoli congress had tried to give expression, remained as tenuous as before.

Engel could hardly have been heartened when, in the first week of April 1895, the new DKP executive organs were finally established, almost two and a half years after Tivoli.[30] In the Committee of Three, Manteuffel, Limburg, and Mirbach retained their position. In the Committee of Eleven, the reformers were represented by Durant, Klasing, and Stöcker. As later events were to prove, however, they still faced strong opposition from governmental moderates and agrarians. On the Committee of Fifty itself, the few unfamiliar names selected by provincial Vereine lacked the social backgrounds and experience to allow them to match the influence of the leading parliamentary representatives. Drs. Klasing and Burckhardt represented Westphalia and the Rhineland, and Stöcker was a Brandenburg appointee, but otherwise most regional delegates were either non-entitites or closely tied to the traditional leadership. (Bavaria remained without representation altogether.) Moreover, the 'Organizational Committee' which was struck at the 3 April 1895 meeting of the executive, to oversee the expansion of the DKP's apparatus in the provinces, included almost no men who were not also Committee of Fifty delegates. Hence, this potentially influential committee was infused with neither new blood nor new ideas. Not surprisingly, there is no evidence that it contributed in any way to the development of the party's organization after it was constituted.

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30 CC article in Rb, 7.4.95; see also below, Ch. 9, pp. 326ff.

If Engel and the provincial party activists had reason to be pessimistic about the sincerity of the Berlin leadership's commitment to organizational reform after 1892, Conrad von Massow might be counted among the few remaining party men who believed that a thorough-going reform of the DKP was still worth striving for.[31]

The son of Friedrich Wilhelm IV's Minister of the Royal House, Massow had spent fourteen years as a Prussian Landrat. Apparently he was also a long-time co-worker on the staff of the Konservative Monatsschrift, and active with the Inner Mission. In 1894-95, Massow became known as an observer and defender of the Conservative Party and its reformist group, publishing two major works, entitled Reform or Revolution! and The Reform of Our Political Party Life.[32] The first of these books, offering the thesis that only substantial social reform, and not Machtpolitik, could stem the tide of Social Democracy, received favourable reviews from the Deutsche Adelsblatt, the Reichsbote, and the Kreuzzeitung; the Grenzbote immediately labelled Massow a 'social aristocrat.' Massow's second book was more directly concerned with the practicalities of party life, and a three-part article which Massow published in the Adelsblatt, entitled 'The Reform of the Conservative Party!', showed clearly that he was most concerned with reviving the popular capability of the DKP.[33]

Two main threads can be drawn out of Massow's argument. Massow had decided to write his second book because he was incensed by the disruptive tactics of the SPD in the Reichstag in December 1894, during debate on the Anti-Revolution Bill. What appalled him most were the empty benches on the right of the House during this 'crisis', which indicated a complete failure of responsiblity of party leadership.

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31 Obit. for Massow in KonsMon, 1910/11, 1, p. 530.

32 See note 22.

33 DAB, 28.7. and 4/11.8.95, pp. 481ff, 497ff, 514ff.

This thought led Massow to advise that Conservative parliamentarians be obliged to offer some sort of accounting for their actions in parliament. Massow believed there ought to exist some sort of higher party organ to which Conservative deputies should be made - and should **feel** - responsible. Non-parliamentarians should be represented on this body in sufficient numbers to give meaning to whatever censure they might invoke against irresponsible party deputies. Thus, parliamentarians' reports should be made not just to their voters and to their caucus colleagues, but to the party as a whole.

Massow's argument drew an unmistakable connection between the need to reform the upper structure of the Conservative Party and the need to establish contact with the interests and political view of the people. This was in turn a significant step beyond older Conservative theories which defended the social exclusivity and aloofness of party notables in parliament by arguing that they thereby maintained a capacity to stand above the common political struggle and represent the 'entire people' and all interests. Massow thought such a view was out of touch with modern necessities. His emphasis on the 'impulse for consultation' between local party activists and the people sought to introduce the concept of a DKP parliamentary representation as an **extension** and a **tool** of the party as a whole:

> We must once again aim to have the people's outlook, and an interest in the affairs of the people....
> The parliamentary deputy, according to the constitution, is the representative of the whole people. If that is to say that he represents all voters, even those belonging to other parties, that is in practical terms ... nonsense. The term has a completely different meaning, however, when it is interpreted to mean that the deputy - and thus, too, the caucus - represents the party from the whole country, and not just those constituencies whence the individual members come.

In his Adelsblatt article, Massow repeated the point:

> It is amazing that we Conservatives are theoretically opponents of parliamentarism, in practice, however, ie. in terms of our own party, we make it into more of a false god than all other parties. By and large, if everything that the

> Conservative Party is becomes embodied in the parliamentary caucuses, the party is ruled with almost absolute force by these caucuses; that, for a whole host of reasons, is an unhealthy situation.

Massow's more novel point sought to probe further into the reasons for inadequate Conservative leadership. Massow believed that present Conservative leaders were incapable of implementing reform because most of them had not learned politics 'from the bottom up.' Most contemporaries were too young to have learned the hard lessons of the 1860s: 'Most of our politicians of today ... have not finished their political schooling from first form to sixth.' Honoratiorenpolitik was to blame:

> These days we take our parliamentary deputies where we find them without demanding of them such schooling, such preliminary work; we assume that when they sit in parliament wisdom will come to them - but we are mistaken in that.

To illustrate his argument, Massow contrasted DKP leaders with their SPD counterparts, asking why the latter played such an important - and successful - role in Wilhelmine politics. He answered his own question:

> Because they have been brought up in political life, because behind them stands a party in which there is a pulse of real political life. Whether they disagree among themselves, whether they do battle at their party congresses, is all much less important than that they communicate with their voters, and that these voters are organized into an active party at large. They have won the leadership for themselves by having to struggle....

Conservatives, Massow felt, had to discard the notion that it was the theory of socialist revolution itself which was achieving practical agitational results for the SPD. As he wrote:

> Social Democrats inveigh against the bourgeoisie and capitalism along the way, that is part of agitation; but at the party congresses, usually practical questions are discussed, and above all ones concerning organization, party tactics, collection of financial resources, management and expansion of the press, welfare institutions for party comrades, etc. Which of our state-supporting parties can come close to measuring up against the Social Democrats in terms of organization and party activity? ... We are a militarily-educated people and can therefore understand ... what powerful tools organization and discipline are. Occasionally-mustered militia can achieve nothing against regularly-drilled troops ....

If the military analogy did not prick Conservative pride, Massow might have thought, nothing would.

6.4 In the Provinces

Considering the critiques of DKP affairs offered by Engel, Massow, and others, it is not surprising that organizational reform in the provinces took on a great variety of forms. (See Appendix One.) As well, Conservative activists in these areas offered widely divergent solutions to the growing problem of Conservative-Christian Social relations, and achieved very uneven success.

In Berlin, leaders of the Conservative Bürgervereine wished to halt the steady decline of DKP fortunes in the face of Kartell, anti-Semitic, and leftist advances, which had set in during the 1880s. They also generally wished to support the CSP against its critics and to ensure that moderate, governmental notables did not take away from them the agitational advantages they thought they had won at Tivoli. Thus, twenty Bürgervereine responded quickly when Gerlach and Oberwinder called for support in defying the Eulenburg-Hammerstein Staatsstreich plans in October 1894, just as two Conservative Landtag deputies from the Berlin suburb of Teltow recognised that the fixing of grain prices under the Kanitz plan, by making bread dearer, would endanger their own popularity.[34]

As soon as the organization scheme for the new Committee of Fifty was announced in February 1894, the Berliners elected Stöcker as their representative. Around the same time, the Bürgervereine leaders set out to create a new central body to co-ordinate what was left of the Berlin Conservative movement. The 'Conservatve Gesamtvertretung' was replaced by the 'Wahlverein of German Conservatives in Berlin.' As the

34 See KZ, 3.11.88, 'Die Kons. Bürgervereine'; Schön, Bewegung, pp. 378ff; Vk, 24.4.94.

Volk reported, the creation of a permanent central authority among the Bürgervereine and a unitary program were the necessary consequences of the 'clean break' of 1892: as it wrote, 'deviations, whether to the side of the middle parties or to the "pure" anti-Semites, are henceforth impossible.'

The main innovation of the new organization was the proposal for a 'Party-Council' of about eighty members. Paragraph 18 of the new statutes stipulated that a meeting of the Wahlverein had to be called at any time if fifty members petitioned for one; the intention here was to avoid a repetition of the battles of 1892. Nonetheless, the executive clearly would make the day-to-day decisions in the Berlin Wahlverein; and in any case, it was to be the executive members who, at the beginning of each business year, chose which leaders and delegates from the many Bürgervereine would sit in the Party-Council.[35]

Predictably, the young Berlin Wahlverein threw its support behind Stöcker in the autumn of 1895. On 19 September the Party-Council issued a resolution which indicated no dismay at the 'Funeral Pyre' letter and had a strong anti-Kartell tone. Perhaps aware that the party leadership would be less than happy to publish this resolution, the Party-Council took the unusual step of explicitly requesting Manteuffel to print it in the Konservative Korrespondenz. By early October, the Berlin Christian Socials[36] were reaffirming their resolution, made at the CSP Eisenach congress, to remain with the Conservatives. However, they also used strong language to warn the DKP against the influences of large capital, governmentalism, and 'Klassenpol-

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35 Vk, 7.1.94; Rb, 9.1.94; BT, 7.1.94; KZ, 3.3.94.

36 It is virtually impossible to distinguish between DKP and CSP organizations in Berlin, but many meetings were held under one banner or the other.

itik'. At this stage, there seemed little doubt where the allegiance of Berlin Conservatives lay.[37]

There is scant evidence in the eastern provinces of Prussia of the sort of reforming organizational activity which might have accrued to the fund of sympathy for Stöcker in 1895/96. In addition, the Christian Social line was only weakly represented in the DKP press organs there.[38] The East Prussians showed no particular enthusiasm for the Kreuzzeitung group or the CSP. The Conservative organizations in West Prussia and Posen, integrated as they were with Free Conservative forces, were similarly loathe to abandon the alliances with Kartell partners necessary to meet the Polish threat. The Brandenburgers did not establish an independent provincial Verein or hold their first provincial party congress until after 1896; while the province sent eleven Conservatives to the Reichstag in 1893, few of these were interested in radical causes. In Silesia, Mecklenburg, and the Kingdom of Saxony, isolated instances of Christian Social sentiment emerged as the various regional groups reacted to the new pressures in the party in the 1890s; but on the whole, the old-guard Conservative leadership remained strong here too. The founding of a Christian Social Union for Silesia in Liegnitz on 16 December 1895 alienated many Conservatives, since it seemed to signal the actual implementation of long-standing calls for CSP organizational independence. But as a member of the new Union explained at a January meeting of the Conservative Verein in Breslau, the CSP in Silesia was meant to be thoroughly conservative: pro-Stöcker and anti-Naumann, the speaker outlined his position as essentially that of the Deutsche Adelsblatt.[39]

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37 Rb, 21.9.95; KVZ, 7.10.95.

38 The political character and circulation of the Prussian provincial press was outlined in detail in a government study of 7.12.92, in ZStA I, Reichsamt des Innern, 6088 (1893).

39 Sozialreform, 18, 2.11.95; Rb, 23.11.95; KZ, 24.11.95; Vk, 1.2.96.

In western Germany, the Christian Socials could draw on much more support from regional Conservative organizations, though again this statement must be qualified. The traditional Conservative style of politics in Baden, which had frustrated Fechenbach's reform attempts in the early 1880s, was still more or less in place in the mid-1890s. The Württemberg Conservatives, who entered Landtag elections for the first time in 1895, owed much of their support to the Farmers' League. Yet even Adam Röder, the Badische Landpost editor who published a polemical series against the Naumannites and the Volk in the summer of 1895, recognised the south-German appeal of a 'healthy' Christian Socialism. In the Landpost he wrote:

> If in certain parts of Württemberg and Bavaria Christian Social has a good ring to it, this is because Christian Social in Stöcker's sense is considered to the the same as decisively Christian Conservative, and in this sense we ... have always been emphatically "Christian Social".

In Württemberg, the Volk's stand against the Konservative Korrespondenz on the Anti-Revolution Bill in the late spring of 1895 was emphatically endorsed. When Stöcker came under attack that autumn, the Deutsche Reichspost supported his policy, past and present. In a letter to his wife, Stöcker expressed his gratitude for this, writing that the articles 'hit the nail on the head. I could not have made it more Christian Social or "stöckerisch".'[40]

If the Christian Social impulse among Conservatives in Baden and Württemberg must be recognised as substantial, in Bavaria it can be said to have been dominant. Anti-Semitism per se was not the main sentiment here. In fact, the Bavarian leaders were not more Christian Social than they were agrarian. Rather, their willingness to support Stöcker and the Farmers' League together derived from the same sources of independent particularism and oppositional radicalism. Bavarians

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40 Cons. Württemberg LT election propaganda (1895) in BAK, NL Friedrich Payer, 18, f. 165-170; Rb, 10.5.95; KZ, 18.4.95; Vk, 14.9.95; Stöcker letter of 14.9.95, in Oertzen, Stöcker, II, p. 371.

rediscovered their anti-Kartell sentiment of the early 1880s by crying for an 'independent and self-reliant' policy in the elections of 1893, and they were not happy about the costs of the Army Bill, which of course was made the centre of the DKP campaign in Prussia.[41]

These differences of opinion with the Manteuffel group erupted into virtual warfare in the spring of 1894, when Mantueffel was levelling his criticism of the Volk and its relationship to the DKP. The bitterness of this conflict was reflected in a letter to Fechenbach, who had tried to moderate Bavarian dissent, from the editor of the Conservative Süddeutsche Landpost, C.F. Gebert. This letter illustrates how closely the various elements of the Berlin-Munich tension within the party were intertwined. As Gebert wrote:[42]

> At the Conservative party congress set for Easter Tuesday, it is indeed intended to let the Conservative leadership in Berlin know that we in southern Germany neither understand nor endorse the nature or the style of its proceeding against the Volk. After all, one cannot declare that a newspaper is not Conservative and at the same time accept into the caucus as bona fide Conservative deputies the "Christian Social" Reichstag members Stöcker, Schall, Roon, Jacobskötter, et al, who stand behind this paper. That is, politely put, nonsense. It is certainly true that here and there the Volk has overshot the mark, but that does no harm. To forget the service which the Volk has rendered the Conservative cause in Germany is to be unthankful.

Opposition to the government - and thus also to the governmental Conservatives who were seeking to soften the conflict with the Kaiser in 1894 - emerged in radical tones, indicating that Bavarians were imbued with the same sense of 'mission' which inspired the recalcitrant Farmers' League. Contrary to Philipp Eulenburg's belief that Conservative demagogy would mobilize the rural masses against the monarchy, Gebert argued that Conservative radicalism was the only way of **preventing** a revolt in the countryside:

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41 See NAZ, 23.4.92; LeipZ, 22.4.92; KZ, 1.4.94; MAZ, 16.2.94; NAZ, 7.4.93.

42 Fechenbach-Gebert-Manteuffel correspondence in SgF, XXXIV.

> Our four Bavarian Landtag deputies of the Conservative Party all belong, as far as I know, to this League. ... Our people know already what they want, they are fighting for their existence!
> The situation is so serious, passions so aroused, that the Reichstag deputy Hilpert was correct when he prophecized a peasants' democracy if the government continues this economic policy. But once the estate of peasants is no longer loyal to the king, who then will defend throne and altar? Perhaps coddled industry, with its factory workers who are in part starved into submission and in part senselessly embittered?

Above all, this letter showed how disenchanted the Bavarian Conservatives were with the unvolkstümlich party leaders around Manteuffel. Gebert told Fechenbach:

> We in Bavaria, who are happy that Helldorffianism has been eliminated, have become very mistrustful, in that from northern Germany absolutely nothing in the way of assistance with agitation, etc., has occurred. We Bavarian Conservatives have been thrown upon ourselves and have **no** obligation **whatsoever** to be silent party to the errors of the Berlin party leadership....
> [The resolution] is meant to warn the DKP leadership - to warn it in a most **friendly** way - not to precipitate any division in the Conservative Party - which will gratify and assist the common enemy - through its declarations, which are rather **too much handed down from above.** [43]

When Gerlach later came into conflict with the Konservative Korrespondenz, the Bavarians placed an official stamp of approval on his stand, and once more the Süddeutsche Landpost did not try to soften the effect of this blow to the authority of Berlin leaders.[44] With reference to the Korrespondenz's 'high-handed' campaign, it wrote: 'If the party leadership in Berlin intends to sever the threads which tie us in southern Germany to the north-German Conservatives, such high decrees are perfectly suited to this.'

It is not surprising that the Volk and Stöcker recieved substantial support from the Landpost when the CSP-DKP crisis dawned in late 1895. What is more enlightening, perhaps, is that even Naumann believed he might draw the Bavarian Conservatives onto his side, that is, away from the DKP altogether. In early November 1895 Naumann wrote

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43 Emphasis added in final line.

44 MAZ, 28.3.94; Vk, 3.5.95; KZ, 18.4.95; Vk, 14.9.95.

a flattering letter to Fechenbach, saying that he had often heard of the baron's lonely struggle within the DKP, and asking for the loan of some of Fechenbach's publications (which were quickly dispatched.) Naumann's estimate of Conservative Party relations in southern Germany suggested how fragile party unity was:

> As far as I can see, the south-German Conservatives are connected to the leaders of the party by only loose ties. Many south-German Conservatives are at root national-Christian-social. Of these many will probably in the future shake the hand of us bad "Jungen" and support our beloved Volk in all its adversity and with all its patience. That you see our work in certain ways running parallel with your own is a new and hopeful sign of that.

When he thanked Fechenbach for the books he had loaned him, Naumann reflected: 'It is remarkable how many questions lay fifteen years ago just as they do now.'[45]

In both Hessen and Hessen-Nassau, pockets of Christian Social influence remained, but reformers like Hüpeden in Kassel or the young CSP activist in Frankfurt, Pastor Julius Werner, were fighting a losing battle against anti-Semites, Naumannites, and Kartell-oriented Conservatives.[46]

Tension between Kartell Conservatives and reformist groups had also coloured Hanoverian politics for some years prior to 1895. During the Helldorff crisis of April 1892, the Hannoversche Post criticised the Kaiser for his practice of gift-giving or promotion to show favour to Conservative governmentals. Through 1892 the Hannoversche Post came increasingly under the influence of the German Socials around Hans Leuß. The paper's editor, Christoph Moritz de Jonge, tried to steer a Christian Social course, but soon had to admit defeat, while the 'moderate' Conservatives he was trying to serve sought to launch their own

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45 Naumann to Fechenbach, 10/28.11.95, NL F, 43.

46 Cf. the struggle for control of a 27.11.95 meeting of the Cons. Verein in Frankfurt, between Naumann, Werner, and the leader of the local Cons. 'Union', Wilhelmi; Vk, 1.12.95; also Hüpeden to Naumann, in Vk, 6.11.95.

provincial Verein to restore Kartell ties. Nonetheless, when debate arose in September 1895 on a Conservative candidate to run for Hammerstein's old seat in Herford-Halle, the Hannoversche Post agitated loudly for Stöcker. It was generally perceived that the Conservative cause in Hanover would lose many friends if Stöcker were alienated from the DKP entirely.[47]

Although the Rhineland Conservative Verein under Plettenberg-Mehrum had held three successful provincial congresses even before the 1890s, lack of an organizational substructure or a reformist impulse characterized this group. The Verein's executive was made up of thoroughly 'establishment' figures: very close alliance with the Free Conservatives and (to a lesser extent) the National Liberals - in order to oppose the strong Catholic and Socialist threats in the area - had led to the Verein's decision to boycott the Tivoli congress.

The reaction to this decision had been swift. In early January 1893 reformist Conservatives made plans to found a new Rhineland German Conservative Verein. Claiming to act on the mandate of Tivoli's call for greater independent organization in the west, these Rhinelanders enlisted the help of the prominent Westphalian at Tivoli, Dr. Klasing. After strong opposition to the dissenters' appeal from Plettenberg and the Westdeutsche Zeitung, the first German Conservative congress for the Rhine Province was held in Mühlheim in October 1893. Although Pastor Ludwig Weber was eventually chosen as chairman of the new Verein, the leading figure and main speaker at the first congress was a chemist from Barmen, Dr. Burckhardt.[48]

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47 Cf. B. Ehrenfeuchter, 'Politische Willensbildung in Niedersachsen zur Zeit des Kaiserreiches' (Diss., Göttingen, 1951), passim; Rb, 13.5.92; KWbl, 16, 16.4.92; HannP, 6.4.92, 'Abstimmungsprämien'; de Jonge to Inn- u. Knyphausen, 1.5.92; Knobelsdorff to Hanoverian Landesdirektor, 9.5.92, in NL Inn- u. Knyphausen, Dep. IV, III q, 30; Rb, 13.5.92; KVZ, 22.9.95.

48 RWZ, 16.8.82; KVZ, 2.8.88; KWbl, 1, 7.1.93; KVZ, 7.10.93; Rb, 8.10.93.

Saying that the Conservatives wished to be a 'Christian Volkspartei, a reform party in the best sense of the word,' Burckhardt severely criticised Plettenberg's Verein for its socially exclusive leadership, its inactivity between elections, and its failure to realize that the DKP could make inroads among the province's Catholic population. To charges that the new German Conservative Verein would divide the right-wing forces in the Rhineland, Burckhardt replied that the previous 'Conservative' organization had accepted unity only on NLP or FKP terms. This situation could not continue:

> The patriarchal times are gone in which the voting masses simply followed the candidates nominated by the men of education and property. The previous so-called Verein existed for over ten years; but what of any consequence did it accomplish? I have never heard word of a popular rally from this Verein, only of a few executive meetings. ... It is not enough to found "Vereine" and then go back to sleep....

Burckhardt's final words concerned the need to increase the appeal of the DKP to both industrialists and workers. He said the Conservative brochures had to be specially written to convince industrialists that the DKP represented interests other than east-Elbian agriculture, while the masses of factory workers, many of whom were already joining the Evangelical Workers' Associations, must be shown that Christianity, Conservatism, and the monarchy were not obstacles to the improvement of their lot. In illuminating this side of their political creed, Burckhardt believed, the Rhineland Conservatives had a unique role to play: 'The Conservative Volkspartei is the cliff upon which the sea of revolution will crash. It is our task to assist in its creation.'[49] In the following two years, little was heard of the Rhineland conflict, but when the DKP-CSP crisis arose, the influential German Conservative Verein in Elberfeld sent a strong resolution to Berlin in support of Stöcker.

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49 This recalls Bismarck's words: 'The peasantry is the cliff upon which the spook-ship of Social Democracy will be smashed.'

There was arguably no area in Germany where Conservative factionalism was more pronounced than in the Minden-Ravensburg district of Westphalia. Although Klasing, Lange, Reck, and other reformers had translated the strong reformist current in Minden-Ravensburg Christian Conservatism into a potent force in 1892, anti-Semites and agrarians soon challenged the Klasing group, as in the question of candidacies for the 1893 Landtag elections. After some hesitation, the regional Conservative leaders advised their members to join the BdL, but this alienated many local pastors, who were needed to help counter SPD advances in the countryside. The disintegration of Conservative unity was accelerated by the conflict over a right-wing candidate for the Herford-Halle by-election in November 1895. To combat agrarian dominance, leftist Christian Socials had founded a number of independent 'Volksvereine' in the area, such as the one led by the Naumannite, Pastor Iskraut. Although Klasing, Lange, and Engel sided with right-wing Christian Socials and supported Stöcker's candidacy, Naumannite and BdL intransigence hopelessly split the Conservative vote, permitting the victory of a left liberal in one of the most renowned 'Kreuzzeitung-group' constituencies.[50]

The last of the provincial tales which remains to be told at this point concerns the Pomeranian Conservatives. During the Helldorff crisis of 1892, the Pommersche Reichspost called not only for a program revision but also for a 'party revision'; it was among those Conservative-Christian Social organs which lamented the DKP's turn away from Sozialpolitik in 1893-94; and it generally supported the dissident Pomerania pastors - like Pastor Kock - who criticised reactionary Junkers in the province. When this pressure from below was directed in

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50 See Hoener, Minden-Ravensburg, esp. Leuß to Klasing, 20.10.93 and Roon to Reck, 8.3.95, pp. 93-95; also press clippings in NL Hüpeden; Burckhardt to Stöcker, n.d., in Frank, Stöcker, p. 261; Specht and Schwabe, Reichstagswahlen, p. 137.

the autumn of 1893 against nobles and large estate owners in Pomerania who were including no members of other social or occupational groups in the list of Conservative Landtag deputies, the Reichspost called to mind the Tivoli resolution about a more socially diverse DKP caucus, writing:

> ... The method, recently become popular again, of selecting the old candidates as new ones, despite the opposition of experienced party members, only because they have so far had the honour of representing the constituency, must inevitably create bad blood, and lead to the splintering of forces or at least to the dissatisfaction of many Conservative comrades ....

Although the Pommersche Reichspost was not the only Conservative organ in Pomerania, its prominent position in party affairs was due largely to its independence from government influence and the willingness of its editor since 1885, Gustav Malkewitz, to fight for changes in the DKP. In October 1895, Malkewitz was incensed by the lukewarm support the Konservative Korrespondenz gave Stöcker. He labelled the Korrespondenz 'ungrateful' for all the work Stöcker had done in the interest of Conservative Volkstümlichkeit, and he warned the DKP's central leadership that it dare not 'underestimate or test the strength of Stöcker's following, especially in Pomerania.'[51] Such a test of strength, however, was exactly the course upon which the Conservative Party leadership had finally resolved.

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51 BT, 23.10.93; KVZ, 7.10.95.

Chapter Seven: The Abandonment of Christian Socialism, 1895-1896

By the autumn of 1895, factional strife within the Conservative community seemed more explosive than ever before. Between August and December 1895, however, so many long-standing disputes converged that there arose a feeling in virtually every part of the DKP that the confusion on the Right could not be allowed to continue. When Stöcker's tactical manoeuvring to keep a foot in both the DKP and CSP camps failed, his departure from the Conservative Party signalled, for many, the death of reformism within the DKP. In response, Conservative reformers inaugurated an embarrassingly public debate on the 'popular mission' of the Conservative Volkspartei.

7.1 The Stöcker Crisis Dawns

A brief review of the political press in late 1895 illustrates the scope of the crisis and the depth of Conservatives' fears that their opponents would be able to watch the party destroy itself from within.

There was little agreement on the character or significance of the internal Conservative struggle. Some observers kept track of which Conservative press organs followed the lead of the Volk and which toed the line of the Konservative Korrespondenz. Others reported that Conservatives of all ilks were unhappy primarily because the Kreuzzeitung, the Reichsbote, the Deutsche Tageszeitung, and the Volk represented such divergent views. The Kreuzzeitung was seen to have suffered badly from the Hammerstein affair; the Reichsbote was losing supporters because it could at times be both anti-agrarian and anti-Naumann; the BdL organ continued to dissipate Conservative energy on hopeless demands for agriculture; and the Volk aligned itself ever more with 'pastoral

socialism'. Still others noted that Conservatives in the south and west of Germany believed that the confluence of agrarian and anti-Semitic politics had created the real DKP opportunities there, and that the Christian Social element could not be sacrificed. This view was opposed by the Conservatives who believed the argument - as outlined in a much-discussed brochure on 'The Decline of the Anti-Semitic Parties' which appeared at this time - that anti-Semites were no longer justified in rejecting the leadership of the Conservatives. As the Reichsbote wrote in its review of this brochure, the history of the anti-Semitic parties showed that the raising of impossible demands led to demagogy, anti-governmentalism, and democracy, and that the work of Naumann, Göhre, and Iskraut 'must proletarianize the people.' This was also essentially the view of Adam Röder, whose long series of anti-Volk articles centred on the theme: 'What is the Significance of Socialism for the Conservative Party?' The ambiguity of the DKP's response to this question was typified by the Adelsblatt's contradictory call for 'a little more popular, Christian Social spirit' in the DKP and for a revision of the Reichstag franchise. It wrote: 'Never reach into a wasps' nest, but if you do, grasp firmly!'[1]

In late October and November 1895 the crisis of the Naumannite pastors peaked, and this contributed to the resolution of the Stöcker crisis as well (since the dispute arose over the Herford-Halle candidacy simultaneously.) At first, the provincial Conservative executive in Pomerania tried to side with neither Naumann nor the anti-Stöckerites in the DKP, but this stance soon became untenable. On 9 November, Naumann published an article entitled 'The Maligned Pastors' in Die

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1 KZ, 25.11.95; DAB, 39, 29.9.95; KVZ, 7.10.95; Rb, 20.8.95; Der Untergang der antisemiten Parteien (Leipzig, 1895) discussed in H.-C. Gerlach, 'Agitation und parlamentarische Wirksamkeit der deutschen Antisemitenparteien 1873-1895' (Diss., Kiel, 1956), p. 105; Röder-Volk conflict in KZ, 8-12.7.95; Vk, 19-23.7.95; discussed in KonsMon, Sept/Oct. 95, pp. 969-980, 1065-1082; DAB, 7.7.95.

Zukunft, which asserted that, 'with the Conservatives, he who speaks for the rural workers is lost.' On 12 November the Pomeranian Pastors' Association published a long declaration which defended the province's pastors against the attacks of the Konservative Korrespondenz and against the DKP leadership's attempt 'to dictate to us the nature and limits of our Christian social activity.'[2] Its most important section read:

> We protest in every way against [the Korrespondenz's] intended restriction....
> We deny in the strongest possible terms that the clergyman who actively embraces the working classes only manages - "and with reprehensible intent" - to "flatter the worker, in order to create for himself - as do the Social Democrats - as numerically large a following of dissatisfied people as possible."
> On the contrary, we believe that if our estate of rural workers is not approached with all honesty and personal selflessness, in order to set it once again on firm ground religiously, nationally, and socially, it will sooner or later fall to revolution. We regard as a dangerous misjudgement of the actual situation the view that our rural workers will remain untouched by the movements of the age if only the "spiritual Socialists" keep their hands off.

By this point, many Conservatives were seeking to moderate the extreme Konservative Korrespondenz polemics against the pastors, but the crisis deepened. The Pomeranian DKP executive published a brochure, Für unsere Landarbeiter, which attracted considerable attention at this juncture.[3] This brochure sought to identify the reasons for recent Conservative losses in hitherto secure constituencies, and recommended the holding of workers' assemblies at which Conservatives would outline their social and economic policies in an objective way.

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2 KVZ, 25.10.95; Rb, 9.11.95; Zukunft, 6, 1895, pp. 249-256; cf. M. Harden's 'Die kons. Partei', Zukunft, 9, 30.11.95, pp. 385-392; Ger, 15.11.95; Vk, 16.11.95.

3 Sozialreform, 2.11.95, pp. 545-549; Rb, 30.10.95; DTZ, 29.10./16.11.95; Vk, 16.11.95. Pomeranian brochure subtitled Eine freundliche Bitte an Besitzer und Geistliche (Stettin, 1895). Many works in this genre, particularly by the 'maligned pastors', are listed in Puhle, Interessenpolitik, pp. 344-347; discussed in H-pBl, 116, Dec. 96, p. 895ff; and available in ZStA II, Rep. 77, CB S, 97, I: 'Antisozialdemokratische Druckschriften.'

> Until now our party has not sufficiently avoided the appearance that it regards the **workers** generally as politically not of age. If we expect them to vote Conservative, it is only fair that we do not leave them in ignorance as to where Conservative policy is leading and what consequences it will have for the position of the worker. It is only right that we treat them **as men and not as children.**

Just as this brochure appeared in mid-November, the Conservative Verein in Elberfeld (Rhineland) added to the controversy by demanding that the Berlin DKP leadership call a general party congress. The Elberfelders sent an open letter to their sympathetic representative on the Committee of Eleven, Dr. Klasing, and to Dr. Burckhardt-Barmen.[4] In this letter, the Rhinelanders cited the many choices presently facing the Conservative leadership as reason for a meeting between regional and Berlin party authorities; the occasion would also allow the party executive to report what progress had been made on organizational reform since Tivoli. Almost in one breath, the questions of governmentalism and popular Conservative agitation were juxtaposed in the Elberfelder resolution. The authors were eager to dispel the notion

> ... that the Conservative Party is essentially only an agrarian party of nobles, which always bares its neck before the ruling power when its particular economic interests are not involved. This idea occasionally manifests itself so strongly ... that it is already being asked in some regions whether the founding of an independent Conservative Volkspartei might not be more appropriate to the interests of the Conservative cause.

The reactions to this resolution and to the question of the Pomeranians' pastoral Sozialpolitik indicated that DKP-CSP differences, though hardening, were not yet considered irreconcilable by some important Conservative observers. (Of course Kartell organs kept trying to precipitate a formal split.)

Gustav Malkewitz was ostentatious in his sympathy for Conservative clerics who believed that the Conservative Party was no longer serious about social reform. In two Pommersche Reichspost lead articles, Mal-

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4 Rb, 15.11.95

kewitz struck at Conservatives who believed that the new social awareness and activity among Evangelical pastors was just 'humanitarian fanaticism.' He declared that the Conservatives' failure to tackle the rural workers' issue at Tivoli was a heavy sin of omission, which gave ammunition to those critics who charged that the DKP supported social reform only so long as the costs of it were borne exclusively by industry. As he wrote:

> ... In the same instant that it were revealed that the Conservative Party repudiated the pursuance of social reform in the countryside, the hour would also have struck when the old alliance of partners would be dissolved, the Evangelical clergy would first inwardly and then outwardly separate itself ... from the Conservative Party, and would sever its allegiance to it. That this moment has arrived, we do not believe.

Most eager of all to avoid a decisive DKP-CSP split at this time was Heinrich Engel of the Reichsbote. On 15 November, Engel strongly criticised those seeking the 'amputation' of certain groups within the party or advising the 'so-called "clean break".' Engel acknowledged the conflict between the agrarian and the social elements in the DKP, but he argued that the party was a living organism: thus, no one was capable of choosing exactly where the cut should be made, unless both sides were to die on their own.

> The agrarian side would very soon become torpid, all the more if it were to appear as merely a group of large estate owners, and the social party would very soon suffer the fate of all separatists - endless divisions.
> Both sides need each other: agrarianism, if it is not to sink to the level of egoistic interest politics, needs the Christian and social elements, and Christian Socialism needs agrarian common sense which does not lose sight of actual conditions and at the same time precludes a one-sided class policy for workers. The task of the Conservative Party, therefore, is not division, but an inner overcoming of these differences, which have always been within it.

7.2 The Final Break

At root, the various groups and individuals involved in the Stöcker crisis sought to manoeuvre Stöcker into a position where they could settle CSP-DKP relations each on their own terms, that is, where a line could be drawn, to best advantage for each, to the left or right of Naumann, the Volk, the CSP as a whole, or Stöcker himself. The agonies of the Conservative Party leadership in this matter - trying to prevent what eventually occurred, the full secession of the CSP and Stöcker from the DKP - illuminated the degree to which Stöcker had become a vital symbol of Conservative Volkstümlichkeit.

The outline of events which led to Stöcker's withdrawal from the Conservative Party on 1 February 1896 is fairly clear from contemporary and historical literature on the crisis, and need not be repeated here.[5] Sifting through the Conservative and Christian Social responses to the break, one finds that some observers saw the verdict as having an inevitable nature to it, while for others it could have been better likened to an earthquake or, to use Engel's analogy, to the loss of a vital limb from the Conservative organism. One thing, however, was clear to almost every observer immediately: in the contest to establish or break down the fiction of a continuing Conservative commitment to 'popular' politics, the DKP leaders were going to have a very difficult time convincing rank-and-file reformers that the break with the Christian Socials had been merely a conflict over Stöcker's relation to the Volk.

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5 Oberst z.D. von Krause, Zum Austritt Stöckers aus der konservativen Partei (Berlin, 1896); A. Röder, Der Austritt Adolf Stöckers aus der konservativen Partei (Karlsruhe, 1896); L. Kynades, Herkules am Scheideweg, oder Stöcker und die konservative Fraktion (Leipzig, 1896). Cf. Kann Hofprediger Stöcker Parteiführer sein? Von einem Eingeweihten (Berlin, 1896) and 'Ignotus', Die Kreuzzeitungs-Politik und die Ära Hammerstein-Stöcker (Berlin, 1895[3]); Frank, Stöcker, pp. 265ff; Oertzen, Stöcker, II, pp. 378ff.

Some Conservatives had not needed to await the final verdict on Stöcker. Gustav Hüpeden withdrew from the Conservative Reichstag caucus on 11 December 1895, because he realized the DKP was demanding that its members renounce the Christian-Social pastors.[6] As Hüpeden later wrote:

> I could not bring myself to judge these people as half social-revolutionary; and so I promptly severed the ties which "bound" me to the caucus insofar as I felt myself responsible for everything that the party leadership officially - or officiously - proclaimed in the Konservative Korrespondenz.

Hüpeden's perception of the conflict was not inaccurate, for on 16 December, the Evangelical Oberkirchenrat had handed down its own pronouncement on the issue of politically active Protestant clergy.[7] Its decree reminded the clergy that it was their task 'to convince the classes who endure the burdens of life that their welfare and contentment are dependent upon their trusting submission to God's world order and government....' As the reformist camp responded to this declaration in December and January 1895/96, the larger issue of social reform was kept at the forefront of the Stöcker-Volk crisis.[8] The Konservative Korrespondenz only exacerbated the situation when it seconded the Oberkirchenrat's view by writing that social reform was 'under present circumstances less a means for battling Social Democracy than an abetment of it.'

Once again, not all observers were convinced even at this point that DKP-CSP tensions were irreconcilable. In December 1895, for example, Hermann Kropatschek believed that the DKP leadership would accept another Christian Social representative in the Committee of

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6 NL Hüpeden, f. 68f.

7 Cited in Frank, Stöcker, p. 267; on the EOK's inconsistencies on social policy, see Born, Staat und Sozialpolitik, p. 55, and K. Pollmann, Landesherrliches Kirchenregiment und Soziale Frage (Berlin/New York, 1973), esp. pp. 123-156.

8 Useful review in H-pBl, 116, Dec. 96, pp. 895-914.

Eleven, as long as Stöcker left. Stöcker's biographer, Walter Frank, concluded that the Conservatives wanted a 'Christian Social straw man' to remain in the executive, to prevent a CSP secession. But others were not so optimistic.[9]

In January, the Deutsche Adelsblatt, the Volk, the Konservative Monatsschrift, and Fechenbach all cited recent Konservative Korrespondenz articles directed against social reform to point out the increasingly divergent Conservative and Christian Social paths. Recalling Fechenbach's social-aristocratic program of 1880 sympathetically, the Adelsblatt wrote that it recognised the dangers of organization of the workers' estate, but did not over-estimate them; it argued that such economic organization could free workers from the hold of the SPD. The Reichsbote wrote that the DKP would be blind to believe, 'in the age of the universal franchise and the widest publicity,' that it could be an 'agrarian Junkerpartei' ignorant of 'the **strong social trends of the age.**' Even Die Gegenwart agreed with the Reichsbote's conclusion, writing in a strongly pro-Stöcker article:

> The Conservative Volkspartei will come, but today it is only possible if the disparate and divided groups of national reformers unite. ...
> It is up to the Conservative Volkspartei to conquer the rural constituencies, to itself bring enlightenment to the land before the Socialist does. The inheritance of the feudal, so-called Conservatives ... must be taken up.

On 21 January 1896, Gerlach of the Volk sharpened his anti-DKP tone in response to the Committee of Eleven's pressure on Stöcker to disavow the Volk. On the same day, however, Limburg made one of his most famous speeches in the Prussian Landtag, in which he called on the government to treat the social question as a pure question of power (glatte Machtfrage.) Thus, when Stöcker's decision fell on 1 February,

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9 Conversation between Kropatschek and L. Weber, Weber notes, in Oertzen, Stöcker, II, p. 375f; Frank, Stöcker, pp. 266f; KonsMon, Jan. 96, p. 84; KZ, 7.1.96; DAB, 1, 5.1.96; Vk, 7.1./2.2.96; DAB, 6, 9.2.96; Die Gegenwart, 10, 1896, pp. 155-157: 'Die cons. Volkspartei' by 'Caliban'.

there were few men in either the CSP or the DKP who could prevaricate any longer on the issue of party affiliation. In fact, Stöcker went to some length to ensure that the CSP should reap the greatest possible benefit from his 'clean break' with the DKP.

To this end, and aware that the meeting might end with his resignation from DKP ranks, Stöcker had prepared a 'social motion' for the Committee of Eleven's 1 February agenda. Although the Conservative leadership did not include the text of this motion in the official protocol of the meeting, its subsequent publication indicated that Stöcker had been willing to force the DKP executive's hand on the broad issue of social reform, that is, to dispel the notion that the central conflict was over who edited the Volk. The declaration which Stöcker set before the Committee illuminated the fundamental CSP-DKP conflict, precisely because the Conservatives could never have endorsed any of its points officially. The declaration stated that it was 1) an **historical** necessity for Conservatives to recognise the legitimate demands of the workers' movement; 2) a **political** necessity to proceed with social reform, irrespective of how the Social Democrats responded to such legislation; and 3) a **Conservative** necessity, in accordance with the Kaiser's decree of 1881, to proceed with the corporatist representation of German social and economic interests.[10] Stöcker reinforced the effect of this 'non-declaration' with his own explanation of his withdrawal from the DKP, presented to his CSP followers at a Berlin rally on 8 February.[11] Here, the social moment of the conflict was emphasised. Stöcker took pains to draw a clear line between 'his' Christian Socials and the Naumannites; yet the net effect suggested how reluctantly he had abandoned the traditional Right:

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10 Cf. Krause, Austritt, pp. 18f.

11 Vk, 8.2.96; Massing, Rehearsal, p. 123f.

> I have read in the newspapers that the Conservatives will now move toward the Right, Stöcker toward the Left. No, gentlemen, that will never happen. We will move even further toward the Right.

7.3 The Reformist Response

Press reaction to Stöcker's break with the DKP naturally varied considerably, although most observers recognised the central issues in the conflict: social policy and Kartellpolitik. The Deutsche Zeitung was typical of the Kartell press when it headed its article on Stöcker: 'Enough Social-Political Legislation for Now!' The Free Conservative Post left no doubt about where it thought the 'cleansing act' of Stöcker's dismissal would lead. The National Liberal Kölnische Zeitung hoped that the abandonment of Stöcker would lead to the expulsion of other 'demagogues', and it explicitly named the BdL leader, Ploetz, as the next man to go. By contrast, the left liberal press spoke of the Conservatives' surrender to Stumm and of their new-found 'Hoffähigkeit'. The Centre's Kölnische Volkszeitung lamented the victory over Stöcker by the 'Helldorff redivivus', Limburg. Naumann, for his part, wrote in the Hilfe on 2 February that the Christian Socials must proceed with their plans for social reform, no matter what Stöcker's stand might be.[12]

There was also considerable diversity among press organs nominally associated with the DKP. The Reichsbote came down on the side of the Committee of Eleven by claiming that Stöcker had in no way been forced out of the executive or the party. At one point the Reichsbote even suggested that the time had come for Stöcker to withdraw from politics altogether and devote his energies once again to the Inner Mission. Nevertheless, Engel opened his columns in the first half of February

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12 Press review in DAB, 6, 9.2.96; Oertzen, Stöcker, II, p. 386; Frank, Stöcker, p. 272.

1896 to a number of Stöcker supporters who wished to protest against the Conservatives' action.[13]

On 21 February, the Reichsbote published a long letter from Conrad von Massow, on 'The Present Crisis in the Conservative Party.' In line with his previous critiques of the DKP leadership, Massow called for a 'Christian-Conservative meeting' of party groups throughout the Reich, since, he wrote, 'we expect nothing more from a German Conservative party congress.'[13a] Massow also wanted to see the establishment of 'guarantees' for the correct leadership of the Conservative Party in the future. These guarantees included:

> Strict discipline among the leaders and members of the parliamentary caucuses, as among the party officials; true fulfilment of parliamentary obligations; more lively action in the sphere of initiating legislation; co-operation with the socially-reformist members of the party at large, and advancement of their work within the limits of properly-defined Conservatism.

Massow's plea was for the DKP leadership to give a sign that it valued the 'Christian troops' as well as the agrarians in the party. He wrote that there remained a large body of Christian Conservatives who wished to subordinate themselves to neither Stöcker nor Naumann, and who still believed the social-reformist aspects of the Tivoli program need not remain forever on paper. All that was required, Massow wrote, was for the DKP parliamentarians to admit 'that deputies in the last resort are nothing other than the representatives of the party at large, and that when they place themselves in opposition to the deeply Christian part of the Conservative Party, they take from the latter the character of a Volkspartei.'

The Kreuzzeitung was firmly on the side of the Committee of Eleven. Kropatschek claimed that the DKP-Stöcker split had a 'wholly accidental character' and that the policy of 'marching apart, striking together' illustrated that the separation need not lead the two parties

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13 Cf. Rb, 15.2.96.

13a Massow in Rb, 21.2.96.

to war on each other. He was also very critical of Massow's proposal for greater Christian influence in the party, writing that the Conservative leadership certainly could not be expected to give Christian Social reformers a larger say in the affairs of the DKP. By April 1896, the Kreuzzeitung was arguing that Christian Socials should be muffled at DKP meetings. Few observers failed to note the magnitude of the shift in Kreuzzeitung sympathies since the departure of Hammerstein.[14]

In the smaller Kreuzzeitung-group journals, however, dissatisfaction with the DKP leaders reached a new peak in the winter of 1896. Even in January, the Deutsche Adelsblatt was uncharacteristically willing to back the Volk solidly in its attacks on DKP social policy.[15] The Adelsblatt wrote: 'It is certainly not a question here of a battle-front between the Volk and "Conservatism", but rather between the Volk and the "Conservative Party leadership or the Konservative Korrespondenz".' Like Massow, the Adelsblatt believed that some party gathering should be arranged to sanctify or censure the party leadership's decision on the Stöcker-Volk issue and on the fate of the CSP. Defending the independence of the Conservative press, the Adelsblatt wrote:

> It must be declared as **wholly unacceptable** that all those independent newspapers which do not blindly swear by the word of the official party organ are labelled as being of an unconservative character. Those sorts of weighty judgements, if necessary, can fall to a party congress, and it is much to be regretted that the whole "Christian Social" question has not been submitted to one long ago.

The Pommersche Reichspost was another Conservative organ which embarked on opposition to the party leadership before the 1 February caesura had been reached. Even though the Committee of Eleven had decided in December 1895 against holding a general party congress, the

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14 KZ, 11/23.2.96; 11.4.96.

15 DAB, 4, 26.1.96.

Reichspost was still calling for one in late January 1896. It also continued to defend the Pomeranian pastors, printing letters like the one from the Pomeranian Conservative, Pastor Sternberg, who said that the Committee of Eleven's policy was steering the DKP in the direction of 'a party of large estate owners and magnates.'[16]

Once it became known that Stöcker had actually left the Committee of Eleven, press reactions among the smaller DKP organs multiplied. Once again, the Deutsche Adelsblatt summed up many of the arguments used. In its issue of 9 February, besides printing an exhaustive chronicle of antagonistic press comments on the Stöcker 'expulsion', the Adelsblatt expressed five main criticisms of the party leaders' action. First, it was convinced that the Committee of Eleven had resolved to force Stöcker to resign from it by demanding of him 'humiliating' concessions, to which, as the Adelsblatt put it, 'no Conservative could have subscribed.' Second, it was outraged that many Conservatives were now choosing to ignore the decision of the Tivoli congress against the use of forceful measures against Social Democracy. It felt it was just another indication of the bankruptcy of the leaders' claim to authority that, just three years after the last party congress, the DKP House of Deputies caucus leader, Limburg, could speak out in direct contradiction to the official party program. Here, the Adelsblatt cited an equally indignant rebuttal to Limburg's words from Heinrich Engel (who was otherwise doing his best to make palatable the Committee of Eleven's latest action.) Third, the Adelsblatt believed that the expulsion of Stöcker was going to **force** the right wing of the CSP toward a reconciliation and then an alliance with the Naumannites. Fourth, the abandonment of Stöcker was criticised as a conditio sine qua non and a cynical last step on the way to making the DKP once more worthy of being a Kartell partner and support of the government.

16 Vk, 12/30.1.96; Kynades, Hercules am Scheideweg, pp. 9f.

Finally, the Adelsblatt decried the move against Stöcker as the final campaign in a war against the forces of 'social conservatism' within the party, writing that SPD propaganda would be far less successful today if the DKP had followed the social-conservative banner which Fechenbach had raised sixteen years earlier. Noting that Fechenbach's one-time associate, Count von der Schulenberg-Beetzendorf, was presently chairman of the Deutsche Adelsgenossenschaft, the Adelsblatt pledged to keep alive the 'social aristocratic idea':

> The time will come when **His Majesty the German Kaiser** will remember the high-minded decrees through which his unforgettable grandfather and he himself have shown that they, too, recognise the social aristocratic idea in its great and holy significance, **that they themselves were social aristocrats on the throne!**
> Then will at last occur the so earnestly desired clarification of our political life. Then finally will pass away that furtive opportunism and that foolish idea of the Kartell.... As if the social question could be solved with political alliances or through police and the state prosecutor!

Many of the Adelsblatt's arguments were seconded by regional DKP organizations. When Thuringian Conservatives met in Erfurt on 19 February, they heard an impassioned appeal for support of Stöcker from Oberpfarrer von Gerlach-Ziegenrück.[17] Gerlach claimed that the Committee of Eleven was seeking to eliminate both the diversity of interests and the bonds of unity which had given the DKP such strength since Tivoli:

> Stöcker was intentionally co-opted into the Committee of Eleven so the Christian Social line would be represented in it. To expel him means to shift the balance. May we in the country allow that to happen from Berlin? No! If in certain areas it appears desirable for both parts - the Christian Social group on the one hand, the agrarian-artisan etc. group on the other - to march separately, that would be a gross mistake in the Rhineland, Westphalia, southern Germany, Thuringia, and many other districts.

Levelling his criticism directly at the leading DKP parliamentarians, Gerlach claimed that they had exceeded their mandate by 'expelling' Stöcker, and demanded a general party congress to decide

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17 Vk, 23.2.96.

on the matter. Gerlach then extended his argument into a plea for DKP independence from the government:

> ... The seeking of favour from above is much more dangerous than the quest for favour from the people. (Agreement.) Both are destructive of character, Byzantinism and demagogy, but the former is worse. And it is becoming indisputable that [Byzantinism] is a great danger today.

Gerlach proposed to the meeting a stongly-worded resolution against the Committee and the way it had moved against Stöcker. It quickly became apparent, however, that the resolution was too radical for the assembly: Jacobskötter and others argued for a much milder text. Eventually a resolution was agreed upon, regretting Stöcker's withdrawal from the DKP but stating that the formation of an independent CSP was disadvantageous to the Conservative cause. Thuringian Conservatives would remain with the DKP.

In Westphalia and Berlin, similar pressures for and against the DKP leadership were expressed as in Thuringia, and many of the same conclusions were reached. The executive of the Conservative Verein in Siegen published a resolution which read: 'If we are presented with the choice: Conservative Adelspartei or Conservative Volks- or Christian Social Party, then we are not in doubt for a moment on which side our place is.' Other Westphalian groups and individuals declared in these weeks that they were following Stöcker out of the Conservative Party.[18]

Such declarations put Hermann Lange and other regional leaders in a delicate position. Renewing an old correspondence, Lange wrote to Fechenbach, explaining the way a storm broke in the province when it became apparent that the Neue Westfälische Volkszeitung stood by the action of the Committee of Eleven. Lange reported that Stöcker's position, on a 'Du' footing with the leading pastors and regarded by 'the little man' as the 'real bearer of the social-reformist idea,'

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18 Cf. Stöcker to Klasing, 14.2.96, in Hoener, Minden-Ravensburg, p. 101; Rb, 26.2.96.

meant that he (Lange) had to maintain a defensive position vis à vis Stöcker, and could only attack the Volk and Naumann directly. Lange was enraged by Stöcker's 8 February speech in Berlin, writing: 'The man can never have been really Conservative.' After surviving his own crisis, Lange felt that all the people who had slowly come over to his side - without, however, sacrificing their personal friendship with Stöcker - would only be driven back over to the Christian Social leaders if he published an anti-Stöcker article which Fechenbach offered him.[19]

At a meeting of about 600 Conservatives in early March, Klasing and the Minden-Ravensburg leader, Superintendent Schmalenbach, successfully persuaded the meeting to pass a resolution calling for the region's Christian Conservatives to remain formally within the DKP, not the CSP. Klasing was hard-pressed to defend his eventual abandonment of Stöcker in the Committee meeting of 1 February; a local pastor drew a parallel between the present situation for the Conservatives and the fate Germany would have faced if Moltke had been removed from the General Staff in 1870 before the French war ('Very good, bravo!') Before the meeting was concluded, the Stöcker supporters had pushed through a resolution calling on the Minden-Ravensburg executive to invite Stöcker to speak to them. When this meeting took place in early October, Stöcker attempted to persuade the region's leaders that there might be room for a Christian Social Verein locally, but once again Schmalenbach and Klasing disagreed. During the next year, Stöcker and the Schmalenbach group continued to vie for the support of the Minden-Ravensburgers. Although the CSP attempted to found new Vereine, the regional DKP leaders successfully boycotted these, without, however, being able to launch any significant initiative of their own.[20]

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19 Letter of 9.4.96, NL F, 'Interna 1896'.

20 See NWVZ, 10.3.96; Rb, 8.10.96; Hoener, Minden-Ravensburg, pp. 102ff.

As in Westphalia, no secessionist movement among dissident Conservatives in Berlin accompanied the Stöcker crisis, either because this was only the final defeat in a long line of Christian Social failures in the capital, or because the DKP leaders took steps to ensure that there would be no rebellion. At the 31 January 1896 annual meeting of the Berlin Conservative Wahlverein, leading Conservatives from outside Berlin were conspicuously over-represented. The Berlin Wahlverein chairman and future anti-Stöcker pamphleteer, Oberst von Krause, led the proceedings. Even in the Volk's report of the meeting, there was little evidence of the Stöcker-DKP tension which peaked the very next day. Indeed, the keynote speech quite explicitly called for a halt [!] to social reform, while Jacobskötter's standard Mittelstand speech only reinforced the now equally orthodox Conservative argument that enough had been done for German workers. The meeting ended with a resolution stating that Berlin Conservatives would not waver in their allegiance to the DKP.

After Stöcker announced his resignation from the DKP, the Berlin Conservative Party-Council issued a resolution regretting this move but declaring continued allegiance to the Conservative Party. The reaction to this was divided. Some Bürgervereine withdrew from the Conservative Wahlverein in protest. In other Bürgervereine, heated conflicts erupted at March meetings. Generally, such meetings ended with critics of the Committee of Eleven finally submitting to majority resolutions to remain by the DKP flag. At some meetings, like that of the Bürgerverein 'Moabit', Krause and the Verein chairman, Heydebreck, were able to launch forceful attacks against the Volk editors or against social reform. At other assemblies, the proceedings approached chaos. When the Conservative Verein in the sixth Berlin Reichstag constituency met on 30 March, a former CSP member defended the DKP leadership, charging that the Christian Socials' demand for the organization of

occupational estates would lead to a 'caste-spirit', as in China. The subsequent discussion, however, erupted into a shouting match. One speaker charged that Krause, who was allegedly seeking a Conservative parliamentary seat, had been air-lifted in to write the brochure attacking Stöcker, without being familiar with either the facts of the affair or the Berlin Movement itself. But in this forum, too, the pro-DKP resolution finally achieved a majority.[21]

Predictably, the Pommersche Reichspost reacted to the Committee of Eleven's decision with outrage, writing that it had 'by far underestimated the lack of social-political understanding in the present party leadership.' Far from seeking to moderate the crisis, the Reichspost called on all pro-Stöcker Conservatives to raise 'the sharpest protests' in public meetings against the DKP leadership: 'Then at least the Conservative Party ... cannot be identified with the folly of the current leadership.' Malkewitz concluded his article:

> A party leadership which has no more place for a man like Stöcker, for its best political speaker, for its most popular man, to whom the Conservative Party most owes the measure of popularity which it still possesses - [such] a party leadership ... **has condemned itself!**

Malkewitz's strong tone was supported by leading Pomeranian pastors and even the provincial DKP executive. By mid-April 1896, however, most Pomeranian Conservatives seemed to have accepted the view that Stöcker had actually wanted to leave the DKP: both Martin von Nathusius and Malkewitz had wearied of their battle against the Konservative Korrespondenz.[22]

The Hannoversche Post, by this point a German Social organ but also representing dissident Conservatism in the province, wrote that the spirit of Helldorff now threatened to replace that of the Tivoli

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21 Vk, 2.2.96; DtReichsZ, 28.3.96; Vk, 15.3.96; Rb, 1.4.96.

22 Vk, 4.3.96; KZ, 11.4.96.

program. The Badische Landpost described the CSP-DKP situation even more starkly:

> Now the loose bond is severed, and it is not impossible that the position of the Conservative Party will thereby be decimated. ... The beginning of the end ... is here. Now it is: 'Here Conservative Aristokratenpartei, - there Conservative Volkspartei!'

The Bavarian Conservatives agreed with this picture. The Süddeutsche Landpost lamented: 'What shall we do in Bavaria? If the Conservative Party continues on the path it has taken, we will have to answer whether we are a conservative court party or a conservative people's party.' Elsewhere the Landpost expanded its critique of the affair into a direct challenge to the DKP executive:

> Stöcker has now **happily** been **forced out** of the "illustrious" Committee of Eleven and the Conservative Party. With Stöcker departed the most energetic opponent of a Kartell with mish-mash liberals, the ideal of many Auch-Konservative. The way to the Kartell is open.... Beforehand, however, we declare: this path leads the Conservative Party to its death, and **therefore we in Bavaria will not follow it under any circumstances.** May this be recognised by the men in Berlin who yearn for the Kartell.

The leader of the Rhineland Conservatives, Burckhardt, issued a strong statement in support of Stöcker, writing that 'differences of opinion, which are also prevalent in other parties, cannot justify [Stöcker's expulsion.] The program alone can be binding.' Fechenbach, still the keen observer of DKP affairs, saw the move against Stöcker as an important step on the way to a reinstatement of the Kartell and even of Bismarck, in order to launch a new anti-Socialist campaign. Though he remained entirely sceptical of Stöcker's personal motives, as shown by his offer of anti-Stöcker articles to Lange, Manteuffel, and others, Fechenbach's old anti-Kartell sentiments remained dominant. As he wrote in the Deutsche Reichszeitung in February 1896:

> Stöcker ... had to leave the Conservative Party so that the demand of the Hamburger Nachrichten - "to provoke the Social Democrats to acute revolution through the introduction of appropriate special legislation" - could also be supported by the Conservatives.

To reinforce his point, Fechenbach subsequently published a book on the subject of 'forcing German revolutionaries to acute revolution and street battles.' In his review of this book in the Neue Zeit, August Bebel described Fechenbach as the 'most complete antipode of Herr von Stumm.'[23]

In the March 1896 issue of the Konservative Monatsschrift, the two editors, Nathusius and Oertzen, offered distinct views of the CSP-DKP relationship which typified the uncertain Conservative reaction to the crisis. Nathusius was probably the one who more closely represented the views of the DKP. He conceded that Stöcker had done more to make the Conservative Party 'popular' than any other man since 1848, and that his departure was therefore most unfortunate. However, Nathusius was in essential agreement with the Committee of Eleven's need to force the issue with the Volk, with Naumann, and with all who disregarded the agrarians' struggle for existence. Oertzen came much closer to typifying the Christian Social view. He stated his full support of Stöcker, his belief that the DKP executive had had neither cause nor right to move against Stöcker, and his view of the Volk as an essential ingredient of Conservative publicity. Oertzen asked - and answered - the central question in the minds of observers of the crisis:

> Has the ill-feeling of the party toward its executive been illegitimate, or did the Committee actually commit an error when it added to the anti-social articles of its party organ the removal ... of that personality in whom for many Conservatives the social reformist tendency was embodied?
> The Konservative Korrespondenz has not been able to convince us that the action of the Committee was in the interest of the party or that ... Stöcker withdrew voluntarily. Even if one regards the separation of the Christian Socials from the Conservatives objectively as a necessity, there must have been available a formula which need not have been either so injurious to Stöcker or so galling to his followers....
> A criticism of the Committee therefore seems to us very much justified.

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23 Cf. H-pBl, 117, 96, p. 838f; DtReichsZ, 7.2.96; Fechenbach's Soll man die Sozialdemokratie zur akuten Revolution, zu Straßenkämpfen zwingen? reviewed in DAB, 16/18, 19.4./3.5.96, pp. 310ff, 350ff; Neue Zeit, XIV, 1896, 35, cited in DAB, 23, 7.6.96, p. 445.

Oertzen concluded his article by saying that one would have to wait and see what benefits and liabilities accrued to each side in the DKP-CSP conflict as they went their separate ways.

Just as Oertzen - who later replaced Gerlach and Oberwinder as editor of the Volk - was writing these words in the last week of February, Stöcker was making his first move to create a truly independent Christian Social Party in his own image, as it were. To chronicle the subsequent history of the CSP, or of Naumann's 'National Social Union', would be beyond the scope of this study.[24] Before the end of 1896, however, it seemed the Naumannites had drawn most remaining Christian Social reformist enthusiasm onto their side. As Stöcker wrote in the late summer of 1896:[25]

> There is no authority any more in the Berlin Movement. If monarchic movements are suppressed, democratic ones inevitably come to the fore. This is what happened with the anti-Semites and it is happening now with the Christian Socials. Those who govern do not mind it at all!

Stöcker's last observation had already been substantiated when the Kaiser had congratulated the DKP upon the withdrawal of Stöcker: 'Be glad that you are rid of him!' On another occasion, Wilhelm offered the ironic comment: 'Stöcker has ended just as I predicted years ago.

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24 On the later CSP history, cf. literature review in Fricke, 'CSP', p. 255, including works by later CSP chairmen Franz Behrens (1909-12), Wilhelm Phillips (1912-16), and Reinhard Mumm. Otherwise, cf. Levy, Downfall, pp. 246-255; the Stöcker and Mumm Nachlässe in ZStA II and I were inaccessible. On Naumann et al, cf. D. Fricke, 'Nationalsozialer Verein 1896-1903,' Fricke, II, p. 376ff. Cons. anti-social arguments are exemplified in Altkonservativ! Versuch einer Zusammenstellung und Begründung altkonservativer Forderungen, 2 parts (Berlin, 1897/98).

25 Stöcker to Pastor Braun, 29.8.96, in Oertzen, Stöcker, II, p. 397. On 8.6.95 Stöcker had written Naumann: 'I believe that both groups here can go their own Christian Social ways, we toward the Conservative, you toward the democratic side - in the best sense of the word!' ZStA I, NL Naumann, 132, f. 8.

Political pastors are an impossiblity. One who is Christian is also "social"; Christian Social is an absurdity....'[26]

To use the metaphor most commonly cited by contemporaries, Stöcker had fallen between two stools. After 1890, the rise of the radical anti-Semitic movement had rendered Stöcker's own 'demagogy' - in traditional Conservative minds - inexcusable, inadequate, or both. In the autumn of 1894, Stöcker's influence had really amounted to a null point between Hammerstein/Eulenburg and Gerlach/Oberwinder: more the apprentice than the sorcerer, Stöcker had done little more than look on as the battle for social peace was fought. Finally, as the end to his hope for a 'social monarchy', Stöcker had found that effective co-operation between such different political forces as the CSP and DKP was impossible in the later 1890s. The rapid decline of Stöcker after 1896 illustrated how tenuous his authority as a symbolic leader of reformist Conservatives really was. The Stöcker-Hammerstein group's failure to maintain the reforming zeal of 1892 was a crucial factor in finally convincing Conservative leaders that their party could survive the secession of the CSP, even though the Volkspartei/Adelspartei dichotomy had appreared a fearsome prospect to Engel, Massow, and many provincial Conservatives. For by 1896, the **symbolic** effect of the Christian Social appeal to Volkstümlichkeit was no longer indispensable.

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26 Cited in PrJbb, 84, 15.5.96, pp. 565-570; 'Die geächteten Pastoren aus der preußisch-cons. Partei,' H-pBl, 117, 24.5.96, pp. 837-849; Massing, Rehearsal, p. 125. Cf. SchlZ, 26.7.96, 'Die cons. Partei und ihre sozialen Kostgänger.'

Chapter Eight: Agrarian Radicals and Conservative Dissenters, 1893-1909

In the last fifteen years, the structure, ideology, and agitational activity of the Farmers' League have been adequately dealt with.[1] This does not mean that an investigation of the reformist impulse within the Conservative Party can deny the new departures in political technique and doctrine which were introduced by the BdL in the period 1893-1914: the direction and scope of the BdL's political innovations were with some justification regarded by contemporaries as radical in nature. Nor is concentration upon the DKP itself meant to suggest that a firm line can or should be drawn between parties and interest groups in Imperial Germany.

Rather, this chapter is intended to extend the work of past historians of the Farmers' League. Building upon their documentation of the quantum leaps in organizational sophistication and popular mobilization which the BdL introduced,[2] this chapter will examine the views of those Conservatives who continued to feel that their first allegiance was to the Conservative Party, not its agrarian interest group. Like most 'reformist' Conservatives studied in the preceding

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1 Puhle, Interessenpolitik, and his other works listed in the bibliography; U. Lindig, 'Der Einfluß des Bundes der Landwirte auf die Politik des Wilhelminischen Zeitalters 1893-1914' (Diss., Hamburg, 1953); E. David, 'Der Bund der Landwirte als Machtinstrument des ostelbischen Junkertums 1893-1920' (Diss., Halle, 1967); D. Fricke, 'Bund der Landwirte (BdL) 1893-1920' in Fricke, I, pp. 129-149; also S. Tirrell, German Agrarian Politics after Bismarck's Fall (New York, 1951); H. Gabler, 'Die Entwicklung der deutschen Parteien auf landwirtschaftlicher Grundlage von 1871-1912' (Diss., Berlin, 1934); see also Note 5. J. Hunt's 'Peasants, Grain Tariffs, and Meat Quotas: Imperial German Protectionism Re-examined', CEH, 7 (4), 1974, pp. 311-331 is a useful corrective to the earlier, 'manipulative' interpretations of BdL protectionism by Tirrell, Anderson, Anti-English Feeling, and A. Gerschenkron, Bread and Democracy in Germany (New York, 1946).

2 O. v. Kiesenwetter's Fünfundzwanzig Jahre wirtschaftspolitischen Kampfes (Berlin, 1918) provides most essential details of the BdL's leading personnel, organization, press, and important programmatic declarations; see esp. pp. 27-29, 41ff, 287-332, 376-383, and Appendix, pp. 335ff.

chapters, this type of Conservative wished to see their party win popular appeal. Yet because for them the party/interest group distinction remained important, they opposed the new radicalism of the agrarian movement, which they saw driving away important groups from the Conservative Party through chauvinistic interest politics and radical anti-government propaganda.

Following the tradition of Gerlach and other Conservatives who had rebelled against the agrarian Junkerparlament in 1848, these Conservatives were 'dissenters' rather than 'reformers'. Thus, taking a half-turn away from themes developed in previous chapters, this one will be in essence a study of factionalism rather than reformism within the DKP.

These Conservatives who dissented from the increasingly dominant agrarian leaders of the Farmers' League wished to bring their party back into a close relationship with the government, as it had been - or so they believed - before the disruptions of the Caprivi era. For these dissenters, the DKP and not the BdL was to be the centre of a Sammlung of anti-Socialist forces, for they believed the party had a crucial role to play as an intermediary between pure interest politics and blind support for the government. Unwilling to concede fully the principle of the imperative mandate, this group's wish to set limits to agrarian radicalism and populist rhetoric was a corollary to their claim that the party, not the auxiliary organization, was responsible for attracting the broadest possible range of electoral support, winning tactical advantages in parliament, and providing the fullest defence of the established order.

The influence and action of this group of Conservative dissenters, besides carrying on the factional heritage of the German Right, was important as a factor affecting government policy on some highly significant issues in the Wilhelmine era. It encouraged powerful figures in government circles or in other social and economic elites to

believe that the more 'reasonable' or 'moderate' Conservatives might win ascendance over the agrarian radicals, either to permit passage of particular pieces of legislation opposed by the Farmers' League or to bring the Conservative Party in a more permanent way back onto its 'natural' political path as an ally of the state. Hence, in believing that the Conservative Party had an important role to play between the government and the radical agrarians - in one sense between the demands of high-level and popular politics - the moderate Conservatives were not mistaken.

8.1 The Russian Trade Treaty and BdL-DKP Relations, 1893-98

Without doubt, the cumulative effect of Caprivi's political, economic, and cultural policies had left the fund of sympathy for him among members of the Conservative Party at an absolute nadir around the New Year 1894. Helldorff had fallen from influence in the DKP eighteen months before, the victim not only of Kreuzzeitung-group reformist ambitions but also of agrarian dissatisfaction with his willingness to treat the grain tariff issue as a 'question of opportunity, not of principle.'[3] At first the confluence of these anti-Helldorff forces, and even the successes they achieved at Tivoli, were in one sense unproblematic, for they were directed at rooting out leading pro-government sympathies within the party, rather than launching a determined campaign against Caprivi himself. After February 1893, however, the lines of distinction between anti-Semitic, agrarian, and governmental Conservatism became confused, as shown in Chapter Six: the same men became moderates on one front, radicals on another. Only against Caprivi could virtually all groups unite.

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3 Cf. E. Bauer, Graf Caprivi und die Konservativen (Leipzig, 1894²); Herrfurth to Caprivi, 12/15.2.92, reply, 13.2.92, Rkz. 673, f. 82ff; and Helldorff's extreme argument against agrarian radicalism, Helldorff to P. Eulenburg, 1.3.94, Röhl, Eulenburg, II, pp. 1233-1237.

The channeling of Conservative antagonisms against the Chancellor personally, as well as against the final trade treaty upon which he staked his position, had the consequence that it permitted the preservation of some measure of trust between the Conservatives and the Kaiser, even while efforts proceeded to poison relations between Wilhelm and Caprivi. Arguing that they must deal from strength vis à vis Caprivi's efforts to reduce grain tariffs, BdL radicals tried to convince other Conservatives that the new face of Conservative-agrarian activism they wished to present to the Kaiser would improve Conservative-government relations, which DKP weakness, not strength, had ruptured during Caprivi's chancellorship.

Even the famous declarations of Alfred Ruprecht-Ransern and Baron Conrad von Wangenheim which directly preceded the founding of the BdL in February 1893 suggested that Caprivi was seen as a disruptive agent cutting the Kaiser off from the true voice of the rural population.[4] Although Ruprecht wrote that the agrarians must ape Social Democratic methods, and must unite to oppose the government, he was really seeking to convince Conservatives that they must cry for redress 'to the land' and 'to the steps of the throne,' that is, to the people and to the Kaiser. On the other hand, the radical agrarians could include the Conservative Party itself among the agents between the Kaiser and the popular will: Wangenheim's oft-quoted observations from late 1893 on the 'incapacity of political parties' were a prime example of this.[5]

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4 Cf. K. Mehnert to Fechenbach, 24.2.93, NL F, 'Correspondenz 1890s'; and Öhlmann, 'Caprivis Innenpolitik', pp. 228-233. Ruprecht and Wangenheim originally in Landwirtschaftliche Tierzucht, 21.12.92, 28.1.93, printed in Kiesenwetter, 25 Jahre, pp. 335.

5 Letter of 24.12.93, in H. Freiherr v. Wangenheim, ed., Conrad Freiherr von Wangenheim-Klein-Spiegel (Berlin, 1934), pp. 20-22. Cf. J. Flemming, Landwirtschaftliche Interessen und Demokratie (Bonn, 1978), p. 35.

Moderate Conservatives like Manteuffel, meanwhile, were willing to exploit BdL assistance as they focussed on one goal, the toppling of Caprivi; but they had no desire to break off contacts at the royal court or among Kartell allies completely.

To exacerbate any disagreements between League agitators and governmental Conservative parliamentarians, Caprivi had a number of weapons at his disposal. The use of Count Udo zu Stolberg-Wernigerode to report on and encourage DKP dissent from the BdL in East Prussia was one way the government intervened in internal Conservative affairs. Stolberg was a founding member of both the DKP and the VdSWR in 1876, and retained great influence in wide Conservative circles throughout the Kaiserreich. Yet in 1893/94, Stolberg was the most notable among a number of moderate East Prussian Conservatives who were more interested in winning particular economic concessions for their province from Caprivi than in maintaining BdL solidarity in opposition to what they regarded as an 'inevitable' reduction of grain tariffs. Although neither Caprivi nor Philipp Eulenburg suffered any illusions as to Stolberg's motives or the extremely delicate position in which he placed himself by helping the government, they knew that Stolberg, as Oberpräsident of East Prussia, was ideally placed to undermine BdL agitation and provide information on non-steadfast Conservatives in the province. The extensive reports which Stolberg regularly sent to the Reich Chancellery between August 1893 and January 1894 indicated that these expectations were not mistaken.[6] Stolberg's reports of possible defections from such prominent agrarians as Kanitz and Mirbach were over-optimistic, it is true; but they were often substantiated by other sources, as when the State Secretary of the Interior, K. H. von Bötticher, reported from a council of agrarian experts he had convened

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6 P. Eulenburg to Holstein, 7.10.93, NL Eulenburg, 25, pp. 411f; Stolberg to Caprivi, 6.12.93, Rkz. 418, f. 55ff; correspondence in Rkz. 416-418, passim, 'Handelsverträge'.

that many agrarians believed the Russian treaty could not be avoided. Such reports substantially undercut the efforts of the BdL to convince the Chancellor that Conservative-agrarian solidarity was absolute.[7]

Although Caprivi and Stolberg ultimately failed in their attempt to orchestrate a mass defection from East Prussian Conservatives, the tone of Stolberg's reports and his willingness to take practical steps against BdL radicalism offer a picture of governmental Conservatism at work. Stolberg counselled the government not to back down before the 'miserable' Farmers' League, because Caprivi's victory on the 1893 Army Bill had strengthened his hand. The government, claimed Stolberg, had never before 'struck sail before such an opposition, which is not based upon real foundations but rather upon the egoism of the leaders and the stupidity of the followers.'

Stolberg was most upset of all by the efforts of the BdL to overwhelm moderate Conservative voices in his province. Having convinced himself by late December 1893 that East Prussian voters were willing to release their Conservative Reichstag deputies from their BdL pledge to oppose the treaty, Stolberg reported that the radical agrarians had abandoned plans to come to the province over the Christmas holiday in order to stage a mass rally which would pass a resolution against the treaty, 'because the gentlemen have become convinced that the vote of such an assembly could possibly fall in the opposite direction.' Nonetheless, Stolberg described a 'scarcely believable agitation' by the Farmers' League, designed to ensure 'that this pro-treaty sentiment not be expressed.'[8]

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7 See Stolberg to Caprivi, 30.8.93, 9.10.93; Stolberg to B. Eulenburg, 29.10.93; Bötticher to Caprivi, 28/30.9.93, 9.10.93, with minutes of the 27.9.93 council; in Rkz. 416, f. 170-233ff.

8 Stolberg to P. Eulenburg, 4.10.93, NL Eulenburg, 25, p. 432-434; Stolberg to Caprivi, 20/29.12.93, Rkz. 418, f. 93ff, 133ff.

Although Stolberg's information and influence produced some tangible results - such as his success in rendering the East Prussian Conservatives' Landtag election platform in November 1893 'colourless' and devoid of references to trade matters - Caprivi was also working to encourage provincial particularism through direct (and secret) contacts with the chairmen of East Prussian Conservative and agricultural Vereine. He had enough success by January 1894 that the question of an East Prussian defection on the final treaty vote drew the attention of the national press.[9] Unfortunately for both Stolberg and Caprivi, such intrigues did not substantially reinforce the position of either when they became public: by late 1894 the Kreuzzeitung had tried to write Stolberg out of the DKP, and in February 1895, the minor 'Stolberg scandal' indicated the lengths to which the BdL would go to break Stolberg's influence in East Prussia.[10] By that point, of course, Caprivi had departed from the Reich Chancellery.

In the Russian trade treaty crisis, Caprivi had not had to rely exclusively on manœuvres like the ones he tried to pursue with Stolberg. Against the most outspoken agrarians, he considered or actually began proceedings on the charge of lèse majesté (as against the radical Bavarian and former Fechenbachian, Thüngen-Roßbach.)[11] To strike at Prussian officials who agitated on behalf of the BdL, he

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9 Stolberg to Caprivi, 16.11.93; Justizrat Reich (chairman of the E. Prussian Agr. Central Assoc.) to Caprivi, 16.11.93; Dohna-Lauck to Caprivi, 21.12.93; Caprivi to Stolberg, 22.11.93; in Rkz. 417, f. 308ff; 418, f. 125. Also: Caprivi to the exec. of the E. Prussian Cons. Verein, 5.1.94, Rkz. 418, f. 269. Rb, 9.1.94; BT, 9.1.94; KZ, 10.1.94; CC declaration in KZ, 3.1.94.

10 KZ, 23.9.94; Vk, 13.2.95; Ger, 14.2.95; Wilhelm to P. Eulenburg, 21.2.95, NL Eulenburg, 34, p. 147. In an E. Prussian by-election, Stolberg had ousted the BdL candidate and set the official apparatus behind his own candidacy; the agrarians v. d. Groeben and Ploetz wanted Manteuffel to appeal to the Pr. Interior Minister, Köller, to act on behalf of the BdL and against his own Oberpräsident!

11 Thüngen-Roßbach, Thüngen contra Caprivi (Würzburg, 1894[6]); Hank, Kanzler ohne Amt, p. 502; Ger, 23.12.93; NAZ, 23.12.93.

pressured Botho Eulenburg to issue a decree in late December 1893, 'recalling' Bismarck's own decree of 1882 which forbade Prussian officials from acting contrary to the wishes of the crown. The Kreuzzeitung offered a sophistic defence of pro-agrarian officials, but the Reichsbote represented the more governmental Conservatives when it wrote that the DKP had to respect Eulenburg's decree as it had Bismarck's.[12]

By exploiting the symbol of the monarchy to his own advantage, Caprivi was employing very astute tactics to sow discord among Conservative-agrarian ranks. He was acting in line with the beliefs of the Kaiser and his closest advisors, that Conservatives had to be reminded of their 'obligation' to support the king's wishes and the ministers he appointed to carry them out. The Kaiser himself made his sentiments known with a number of notable utterances. At a parliamentary dinner, Wilhelm declared that he had no wish to go to war with Russia simply because of a hundred stupid Junkers. This gave the East Prussian Conservative deputy and intimate of the Kaiser's court, Dönhoff-Friedrichstein, an excuse to engineer a local assembly of his voters to release him from his BdL pledge, and then to break with his caucus and vote for Caprivi's treaty. The Kaiser also reinforced Caprivi's literal interpretation of the monarchical obligations of servants of the state, as when he remarked that anyone who wore a uniform and was known at court was committed to vote for the government or at least abstain from the House division. The various correspondents of Philipp Eulenburg believed that the policy of differentiating between Conservative monarchists and Farmers' League demagogues, and encouraging the former to defect, would be ultimately successful.

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12 Caprivi to B. Eulenburg, 23.12.93, Rkz. 418, f. 95; Öhlmann, 'Caprivis Innenpolitik', p. 276; KZ, 23.12.93; Caprivi to B. Eulenburg, 22.5.94, reply, 23.5.94, in Rkz. 673, f. 108ff.

Eulenburg himself was typical of this group in writing to Caprivi shortly after the founding of the BdL that interest politics broke with Conservative - and Prussian - traditions:[13]

> Just like Your Excellency I am rooted in the Conservative Party and [suffer] myself from the distress which afflicts agriculture.... [But] I need no Farmers' League.... The League is probably more a new symptom of the confusion which ... has taken on such pernicious forms through the error made at the birth of the Reich - the universal franchise....

The question of Conservative dissent from agrarian radicalism, then, was complicating right-wing politics before the BdL was a year old.[14]

When the Russian treaty was passed in March 1894, the Kreuzzeitung declared a 'war of annihilation' against capitalist liberalism.[15] In fact, however, the months and years ahead presented moderate Conservatives with more and more opportunities to disavow such radicalism. Many DKP doubts about the aims and methods of the BdL had their genesis in mid-1894, when it became clear that the League leadership, like Hammerstein, intended to continue to oppose the government on major agrarian issues, such as the Kanitz proposal. In contrast to the Kreuzzeitung and the BdL, Engel's Reichsbote called as early as 20 March

13 Reference can only be made to the most extreme anti-BdL arguments in this correspondence. Cf. F. Fischer to P. Eulenburg (PE), 16.1.94; PE to Holstein, 5.12.94; Kiderlen to PE, 20.11.93; in Röhl, Eulenburg, II, pp. 1192, 1419, 1144f. PE to his mother, 28.11.93; PE to Caprivi, 31.12.93; A. Eulenburg to PE, 25.1.94; PE to B. Eulenburg, 9.2.94; F. Fischer to PE, 17.2.94; PE to the Kaiser, 20.2.95, with Anlage, A. v. Hohenlohe to PE, 17.2.95; C. v. Hohenlohe to PE, 21.2.95; Marschall to PE, 25.2.95; in NL Eulenburg, 26, pp. 533, 622f; 27, p. 82f; 28, pp. 151f; 34, pp. 111f, 138, 140f, 158. P. Eulenburg to Caprivi, 24.2.93, Röhl, Eulenburg, II, p. 1029.

14 Cf. Rb, 4.3.94; KZ, 4.3.94; Vk, 13.3.94; the Kaiser telegraphed Dönhoff after his vote for the treaty, 'Bravo! Well done like a nobleman!' BT, 8.3.94; H. Bismarck to his father, 10.2.94, in Hank, Kanzler ohne Amt, p. 503; Waldersee, Denkwürdigkeiten, II, p. 306; Öhlmann, 'Caprivis Innenpolitik', p. 278; Kröger, 'Konservativen', p. 76.

15 The KdBdL called for a 'complete change of system'; NAZ press review, 21.3.94; KZ, 19.3.94; cf. Graf Hans v. Kanitz-Podangen, Die neuen Handelsverträge (Pr. Holland, 1894).

1894 for an end to radical opposition to the government, writing that dissatisfaction among farmers and artisans must be channelled back within proper limits. Engel wrote that 'opposition in principle' and the 'tactic of arousing and exploiting dissatisfaction and mistrust among the masses' were dangerous new features of agrarian radicalism which did the work of democrats, anti-Semites, and socialists. After the first Kanitz proposal was defeated in April 1894, more Conservative voices advising moderation were raised. The Neue Westfälische Volkszeitung doubted whether the Kanitz proposal was a life-and-death necessity for German agriculture; the Badische Landpost saw socialist tendencies in the scheme; and the Reichsbote noted how few DKP deputies actually voted for the proposal. This contrasted sharply with continuing polemics from the Korrespondenz des BdL, which claimed in April that the German farmer was 'now inclined ... to see the Kaiser as his political enemy.'[16]

By the early summer of 1894, Conservatives were wondering whether agrarian ambitions threatened their party itself, and this concern persisted. Seeing the DKP as threatened by the radicalism of both the anti-Semitic and agrarian movements, and unenthused by the advent of the BdL's popular organ, the Deutsche Tageszeitung, Engel deprecated 'special foundings' which 'always have the character of sects' and lead to the 'one-sided radicalization of affairs.' The Konservative Korrespondenz wrote that it was not the task of the DKP to help with the organizational work of the BdL and noted that in the last election the League had supported opponents of the DKP: 'Our party members ... will do well, despite all sympathy for the Farmers' League, not to lose

16 Rb, 20.3.94; press review in KVZ, 22.4.94; in the RT on 14.4.94, only 37 Cons. voted for the proposal; in the PAH, only 46 of 159 Cons. voted for an amended proposal; Puhle, Interessenpolitik, p. 232; NAZ, 18.4.94; Vk, 3.3.95.

sight of this fact, and to concentrate their whole energy on the building of our own Conservative organizations....'[17]

A year later, the Korrespondenz and the Reichsbote were still calling on Conservatives to preserve the political independence of their party. The Deutsche Tageszeitung, on the other hand, believed

> ... that Prince Bismarck's conception of the necessity of economic interest politics is more far-sighted than the view [of the Korrespondenz] that one "cannot guard and preserve the independence of a **political** party too jealously." Does the Konservative Korrespondenz thus consider, or even hope, that the Conservative Party will be able to win a majority in the Reichstag in the foreseeable future? Hardly.

When the Stöcker crisis dawned, Christian Social reformers who wondered aloud whether the Conservative Party was going to become nothing but an 'agrarian party of nobles' added to the tension.[18]

Between late 1896 and early 1898, the growth of BdL-DKP dissention was focussed by three Conservative Party congresses. In November 1896, Conservatives held a delegates' convention in Berlin. Even before the convention, the Kreuzzeitung and the Reichsbote had reawakened earlier DKP fears about BdL politics.[19] The Kreuzzeitung wrote that at present no one could be certain whether the close co-operation of the two groups could continue, due mainly to the inherent distinctions between their political aims.

> The direction of the League is a purely agrarian one.... Only the Conservatives follow other goals in their program. ... This representation [of Conservative views] can only fall into the political balance when the party that emerges from the elections is a power; with its size grows the influence that it exerts on the life of the state.

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17 Rb, 23.6.94; FkZ, 13.7.94.

18 BNN, 9.7.95; DTZ, 9.7.95, 'Kartellträume'; Rb, 23.3.95; DAB, 4, 26.1.96; KVZ, 7.10.95; DTZ, 16.11.95; the DTZ, 23.1.96 said in effect that the Rb no longer had the right to call itself a DKP organ; cf. Rb, 6/8.10.95; KZ, 6.10.95; 'Die kons. Partei' by M. Harden, Zukunft, 9, 30.11.95, pp. 385-92.

19 Full convention report in Rb, 22/24/25.11.96; press review in Ger, 25.10.96; Rb, 15.10.96.

> ... In the long run, a party can only achieve its wishes and demands along legislative paths, if it has a strong force behind it in the representative bodies of the Reich and federal states. The others allow themselves to fall all too easily under the suspicion that they would not eschew revolutionary means....
> The various groups could very easily work and act under the common roof of the Conservative Party if only ... the intoxication of self-love, the quest for domination, arrogance and impatience, and disrespect for all authority did not drive so many away....

At the delegates' convention, Conservatives and agrarians found themselves united on most issues. However, subsequent editorials in the Konservative Korrespondenz suggested that BdL agitation was becoming uncomfortable for many Conservatives, especially since DKP-government relations might be crucial to Conservative fortunes in Reichstag elections scheduled only eighteen months hence.[20] While the Korrespondenz pointedly undercut affirmations of BdL-DKP solidarity made by Mirbach and others at the convention, and denied that the Deutsche Tageszeitung had any part to play in deciding whether the Reichstag Conservatives would resurrect the Kanitz proposal, the agrarian organ gave vent to the BdL's frustration with the DKP caucus:

> When the **individual** wants to do something in the Reichstag, the **caucus** enters, fearful that it could lose control over this individual, that he could embarrass it or disturb it too much from its inactivity.... The Farmers' League will in any case ... let the public and the government know its wishes and views, in the appropriate way.

As a rationale for radical extra-parliamentary agitation to outflank moderate or governmental Conservatism, no BdL pronouncement could have better substantiated Conservatives' pre-convention observations about the different BdL and DKP political styles.

The tone of the 1896 delegates' convention was continued when Saxon Conservatives met for their own congress in early March 1897. Considering the venue, it is not surprising that agrarian politics took

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20 KVZ, 27.11./24.12.96; Gerlach's critique of the congress in Die Zeit, 59, 9.12.96, noted the contrast with Tivoli.

a back seat at Dresden to the demands of Mehnert et al for a renewed anti-socialist initiative. Limburg and Herbert Bismarck united the assembly behind cries for measures ranging from a halt to social reform to the exclusion of SPD deputies from Reichstag committees. By contrast, Manteuffel and the BdL leader, Ploetz, who were recognised as the leading antagonists in the Conservative-agrarian difficulties, gave relatively colourless speeches. These did little to balance the impression that this congress was merely a meeting of Saxon reactionaries celebrating neo-Bismarckian Kartell- and Machtpolitik.[21]

One reason for Manteuffel's low profile was his resignation as chairman of the DKP Reichstag caucus on 4 February 1897. Able to offer only implausible excuses for his withdrawal, Manteuffel stepped aside to let Levetzow assume the burden of parliamentary leadership. Although Manteuffel's motives remain obscure, most contemporary explanations centred on BdL-DKP tensions.[22]

Through 1897 these tensions simmered beneath the surface of party affairs. Once again, the Reichsbote took the lead in expressing the moderate Conservative argument which outlined the liabilities of leaving Conservative agitation and organization to radical auxiliaries. Engel identified Christian Social and anti-Semitic forces as the principal 'villains' who had abandoned the DKP, but he clearly conceived of BdL agitators as among those who were threatening Conservative prerogatives. As he wrote of Conservatives' past support for agriculture:[23]

> Here the Conservative Party has allowed itself to be misdirected by the pressure of circumstances, to abandon ... the view for the whole and for what is practically possible, and to take a stand on behalf of one-sided, unfeasible demands... That has brought the present crisis upon [the DKP]; ... precisely those who have pushed it to this now leave it in the lurch.... The idea is already being entertained of erecting a middle-class interest party over its grave.

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21 Reports in Rb, 9.3.97; Zeit, 57, 9.3.97; the DAB, 12, 21.3.97, was extremely critical of the congress.

22 Mainzer Journal, 9.2.97; Hamb. Fremdenbl., 6.2.97; DTZ, 6.2.97.

23 Rb, 12.9.97.

> The enemy agitators travel around the country, hold rallies and found Vereine - but the organization of the Conservative Party, through its own fault, lies almost completely prostrate.

By the end of 1897, Conservatives of all hues were looking toward another general party congress to resolve the internal party confusion. But no matter how much the spokesmen at the February 1898 congress tried to herd them back into Pandora's Box, the evil spirits that were released in January 1898 made clear the depth of the crisis in BdL-DKP relations which Engel had identified. The controversy on the eve of the congress revolved around an article by Edmund Klapper in his new journal, the Deutsche Agrarzeitung, entitled 'League or Manteuffel?'[24] In this article, Klapper offered Manteuffel and other governmental Conservatives a virtual ultimatum: outlining the history of DKP parliamentary back-peddling from the time of Ruprecht's and Wangenheim's call for an 'agrarian party' up to the Conservatives' most recent abandonment of the Kanitz proposal, Klapper presented the DKP with the prospect of the Farmers' League reconstituting itself as a parliamentary party. Manteuffel, Klapper claimed, had 'gone with his following of courtiers over to the side of the government.' Manteuffel eventually succeeded in pressuring Ploetz to disavow Klapper's personal attack on him, but the dichotomy between 'true' and 'governmental' Conservatives could not be so easily dismantled.

With a Reichstag election less than six months away, the Conservatives naturally were intent to put on a mask of unity at their congress. Recalling Tivoli, they made careful preparations: delegates required accreditation, for example, and the resolutions to be presented to the congress were drawn up by the DKP's Committee of Eleven on the first day of non-public discussions. The Conservative speakers made vehement protestations about the party's independence, but when the shouting was over, it was clear that a classic - and

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24 Nr. 2, 9.1.98, pp. 32-40; press reviews in Vk, 28.1.98; DtAgrarZ, 16.1.98, pp. 66-68; official BdL view in DTZ, 6.1.98.

fragile - compromise had been worked out between Ploetz and Manteuffel. The former had probably conceded less. The Farmers' League, it was announced, would take note of the incumbent party's wishes in deciding on support of local candidates; but Ploetz did not go as far as Manteuffel wished on declaring the League's preference for Conservative over anti-Semitic agrarians. Manteuffel had to declare that the DKP would offer no candidates of its own who could be described as 'soft' on BdL demands. But stretch as they might, Conservatives and radical agrarians could not bridge the gulf in their conceptions of 'party' politics or in their ideas of legitimate opposition to the government; instead, they declared loudly that they had done so.[25]

8.2 The Mittelland Canal, 1899-1905

The history of the opposition of the BdL and DKP to the government's Mittelland Canal Bills of 1899, 1901 and 1904/05, as well as of the subsequent disciplinary measures taken against Prussian officials who voted against the canal, is already known in outline.[26] Yet analyses of the conflict as 'a **joint** victory of the agrarians and the Conservatives' fail to appreciate the tortuous route travelled by more than one-third of DKP deputies who broke with the BdL to vote for the

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25 Different impressions of the congress in: Rb, 4.2.98; DTZ, 3.2.98; Vk, 4.2.98; Hilfe, 7, 13.2.98, pp. 3ff; DAB, 7, 13.2.98; the Rb reports, 26.1./4.2.98 can profitably be contrasted: before the fact, Engel emphasised the DKP's need to highlight its Christian view, to revive social reform, and to launch new organizational initiatives and recruitment campaigns. Engel later expressed great satisfaction with the debates that addressed none of these issues.

26 E. v. Eynern, Zwanzig Jahre Kanalkämpfe (Berlin, 1901); 'Rechenschaftsbericht der kons. Partei betr. das Projekt des Rhein-Elbe-Kanals' in CC, 14/16/18/21.9.99; W. Bialke, 'Die Kanalvorlage des Jahres 1899 und die konservative Partei Preußens (Diss., Berlin, 1944); H. Horn, Der Kampf um den Bau des Mittellandkanals (Cologne/Opladen, 1964); W. Neumann, 'Die Innenpolitik des Fürsten Bülow von 1900-1906' (Diss., Kiel, 1949), esp. pp. 39ff, 147ff.

final (limited) version of the canal project in February 1905.[27] Besides prompting the resignation of the Conservatives' new general party secretary, August Strosser, BdL-DKP differences on the substantive and tactical issues involved carried forward the tension which had developed between the groups in the period 1893-98. More importantly, it can be argued that the canal crisis - especially in August 1899 - represented the occasion on which the government most seriously considered abandoning the Conservative Party as an essential prop of the political status quo. These two aspects of the canal issue were closely connected. The willingness of the Kaiser, the Chancellor, or the Prussian ministry of state to move decisively against the oppositional agrarians depended upon their subjective impressions of the possibility of separating 'state-supporting' Conservatives from radical agrarians. That the more draconian steps against the Conservatives were undercut from the beginning or abandoned altogether does not detract from the significance of the fact that such ideas were entertained seriously. Indeed, the inability of the Kaiser and his government to reconcile paradoxical views of the DKP's essential role in the Kaiserreich's semi-parliamentary constitutional system becomes all the clearer when such non-events are reviewed.

Through the parliamentary debates leading up to the Prussian House of Deptuties vote on the first Canal Bill on 18 August 1899, the DKP and the BdL maintained a relatively united front. It was mainly the escalation of the conflict with the Kaiser in the last days before the vote, and the prospect of mass dismissals of oppositional officials, which inclined seven Conservatives to vote for the bill and another eight to withhold their votes or remain absent. Nevertheless, the Konservative Korrespondenz declared that Conservatives had not simply

27 Puhle, Interessenpolitik, p. 243.

fallen under the sway of the BdL, while the Korrespondenz des BdL warned the DKP that its aims as a 'popular' party and on behalf of the Mittelstand demanded that it not 'degrade' itself as a 'tool of the government.' The Kaiser's strong pro-canal speech in Dortmund on 11 August 1899 and the possibility of concessions to regions adversely affected by canal construction - principally Silesia - prompted other rumours of defections. Both Adam Röder in the Badische Landpost and Heinrich Engel in the Reichsbote advised Conservatives to make a 'royal sacrifice' and submit to the will of their king, and it became known subsequently that Rhineland and Berlin Conservatives had expressed similar sentiments. In response, the Deutsche Tageszeitung labelled such dissenters 'Auch-Konservative'.[28]

Although the Conservatives and Farmers' League forced the government to withdraw a second Canal bill in May 1901, by late 1904 a much less comprehensive canal project and an altered political situation provided many Conservatives with strong motives for breaking with the BdL on this issue. The Reichstag elections of 1903, besides bringing many new Social Democrats into parliament, had produced a set-back in the League's plan to elect its own independent candidates. Thus, as early as June 1904, the Konservative Korrespondenz defended moderate Conservative policies (including willingness to compromise on the canal) by claiming that the DKP was better tuned to the voice of the people than was the Deutsche Tageszeitung.[29] Moderate Conservatives could also point to the need to circumscribe SPD, Centre, and even left-liberal ambitions for domination in the Reichstag, by co-operating with the government on the canal. Finally, the bitterness of the BdL-DKP conflict over the tariff vote in late 1902 had not completely disappeared even two years later.

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28 KZ, 18.8.99; DTZ, 18.8.99; CC, 19.9.99; Puhle, Interessenpolitik, p. 223; H-pBl, 124 (6), 1899, p. 455; KZ, 15.8.99; BadLp, 10/24. 8.99; KZ, 7.10./6.12.99; DTZ, 15.8.99; on compensations, Horn, Kampf, pp. 51-58; Bialke, 'Kanalvorlage', pp. 41-47.

The impatience of radical agrarians with moderate and governmental Conservatives who gave up their opposition to the canal was displayed in the correspondence of Wilhelm von der Reck, the former Kreuzzeitung man from Westphalia, and Baron Franz von Bodelschwingh-Schwarzenhasel, a BdL activist in Hessen.[30] In early 1905, Bodelschwingh was speaking out against the Conservatives' abandonment of the BdL platform: the function of the Farmers' League, he declared, was not simply to place its organizational and agitational apparatus at the disposal of the DKP, but rather required a lasting commitment to its election manifesto and thus also to its anti-canal stand. In a letter to the Conservative leadership, Bodelschwingh claimed that DKP deputies were voting for the government's bill only due to 'ignorance or weakness of character,' and added that he was fed up with the 'notorious' practice whereby the government used its influence behind the scenes to prompt defections from the Conservatives. The time had come, Bodelschwingh believed, when the agrarians had to expose the backstairs peddling of government favour. Otherwise, the BdL's opponents would be able to say: 'See here, the agrarian demands are extreme; the agrarians cannot even manage to win enough ground with their arguments among the parties of the Right.' Bodelschwingh felt that the Conservatives would endanger their whole political position if they failed to recognise that the good will and loyalty of their popular agrarian auxiliaries had to be actively sought and maintained. The DKP, he argued, could not afford to dispense with its radical vanguard:

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30 For the following: Sielermann (M-C. of 11) to Reck, 9.12.04; Reck to Lange, 13.12.04; Lange to Reck, 16.12.04; Reck to Möller, 22.12.04; reply, 24.12.04; Reck notes for meeting with Pappenheim, 15/18.12.04; Reck to Engel, 24.11.04; Reck to the Kaiser, 20.12.04; Reck to Roon, 30.1.05, 8.2.05; reply, 6.2.05; Reck to Sielermann, 6.2.05; notes for article sent to KZ, 26.1.05, returned 29.1.05; Reck to Bodelschwingh, 7.1.05; reply, 6.2.05; Bodelschwingh to Pappenheim, copy, 3.1.05; and DTZ, 29.1.05, all in NL Reck, f. 115-162. On Bodelschwingh's more social side, see his Konservative und Sozial (Berlin, 1903). Cf. Limburg, Konservative Politik, p. 51.

> As long as the Conservative Party cannot or does not wish to draw the consequences of its obvious opposition to the existing franchise, ... it must welcome a more active level of participation in elections by the good elements of the country, even to the smallest man. And therefore I believe I have the right to say that the Conservative Party must make more effort than previously to be popular in the good sense. In this sense, popular and Conservative are inclusive, not exclusive. ...
> More and more voices are talking of a separation from the Conservatives. ... These days ... I must ask myself whether the separation can be avoided in the long run. ... If the court- and government Conservatives are finally called by their proper name after the clean break, then they would indeed find a comfortable place after the next election in a [single] carriage.
> The situation up to now - where the Kreuzzeitung people happily make use of the agrarian movement at elections but afterwards go their own way ... - must come to an end.

Reck's now-familiar anti-liberalism induced him to condemn governmental Conservatives who advocated the abandonment of Conservative principles in order to permit passage of the canal. As he wrote to Engel:

> Have we totally forgotten how to hold our old black-and-white banner aloft, both in the majority and also, above all, in the minority? ... Can the Christian Conservative Party agree to such robbery of estate owners to the advantage of "the men of wealth and intelligence?" ... Is it not ten times better for us that a government, which now finds Mammon and the Centre to its taste, throws us angrily aside and for once helps itself without us, than that we, due only to its friendly visage, sacrifice our whole future and make many - for example, the farmers - disconcerted with us?

Reck suffered few illusions about the way Conservative-government relations were shaped. He wrote to Lange that the defection to the government's side by the DKP general secretary, Strosser, was 'a symptom that Bülow has negotiated with us.' He continued: 'Have some sort of offers been made to Manteuffel? Otherwise, the genial wind currently blowing remains a mystery to us.' Reck was not particularly sympathetic toward the Kaiser, who, he felt, had manoeuvred himself into the 'frightful' dilemma of having either to break his royal pledge that he would have the canal built, or to break the constitution by

compelling parliamentary deputies to vote for the canal legislation against their free wishes. It was this dilemma, Reck observed, which had sent the Conservative Party into disarray.

Despite such admonishments from radical agrarians, in February 1905 one-third of the Conservatives in the Prussian Landtag bowed to the will of the Kaiser and voted for the canal. As Lange wrote to Reck, the prospect of a 'liberal era' if the Conservatives were totally excluded from the Canal Bill majority left the DKP with little choice in the matter. For Count von Roon, another Westphalian correspondent of Reck's, the canal was entirely a question of economics and practicalities, 'over which I will not allow myself to be worked up and which in my view has nothing to do with Christian-Conservative principles!' The Westphalian leader, Pastor Möller-Gütersloh, was equally critical of agrarians' tactics in the conflict:

> Even if one can say that it would be better if things got worse, that is, if a liberal government should take the place of one that is conservative only in appearance, surely we cannot contribute to making that actually happen.... Therefore we cannot agitate against the canal with democratic means, as the League under Hahn and colleagues is doing. ... We have certainly had to accept worse things than the canal.

Mutual recrimination did not end with the February 1905 passage of the bill. When the Posen BdL chairman, Ernst August Endell, had suggested to Hahn in November 1904 that a circular be sent to all Conservative deputies who 'want to be agrarian,' he made it clear that any loss of favour among the rural population suffered by pro-canal deputies would be attributed to the DKP, not the BdL. Although Endell tried to restrain Hahn by advising that this circular not threaten Conservatives explicitly with the withdrawal of BdL support at the next election, he added: 'We must be able to say afterwards that we have made things clear and warned everyone. ... Then it is not [the BdL] but the Conservatives and other feeble ones who have betrayed

agriculture.' In March 1905, the Korrespondenz des BdL publicized the names of the 23 DKP deputies (and thirteen Free Conservatives) who had voted against the canal in 1899 and then for it in 1905. Its wish to provide farmers with a 'lasting reminder' of DKP governmentalism was recognised as an open invitation to local BdL members to drop pro-canal Conservatives as future candidates. Later in 1905, this BdL-DKP tension was identified as a major reason for the resignation of Limburg as the DKP's House of Deputies leader. The Deutsche Tageszeitung noted that Limburg's successor would have to be able to resist government influence, and it reported that a number of candidates for the post had declined, due to the bad feelings which lingered from the Conservatives' canal vote.[31]

As mentioned above, an appreciation for the different threads of pro- and anti-government feeling on the Right helps explain the government's strategy in the disputes of 1899 and 1904/05. In the first place, Conservatives who criticised the radical policy of the Farmers' League gave government ministers the wrong impression of how DKP deputies would line up for the final vote.[32] More important than this lack of insight into the mood of the Conservative caucus was the scope of the effort which the government made to distinguish between potentially governmental Conservatives and totally intransigent agrarians. The different tactics used here by Hohenlohe in 1899 and by Bülow in 1905 can be profitably contrasted, for they illuminate how the Kaiser and his state ministry reacted to the challenge of 'demagogic agrarianism' when it was and then was not perceived to be united with traditional Conservatism.

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31 Endell to Hahn, 12.11.04, ZStA I, NL G. Roesicke, 34, f. 32; KVZ, 18.3.05; DTZ, 9.7.05; BreslauerZ, 19.11.05.

32 See, for example, Thielen's remarks in St.Min. meeting of 25.5.99, Rkz. 2003, f. 24ff; Hohenlohe notes, 14.6.99, 2.7.99; notes for letters to the Kaiser, 16.8.99, 21.8.99, in BAK, NL C. v. Hohenlohe, 1612, f. 202, 192f, 30ff, 41ff; Bialke, 'Kanalvorlage', pp. 36, 47; [Löbell] to Bülow, 19.1.05, Rkz. 2006, f. 98f.

It is true that no Imperial Chancellor ever called a parliamentary election in order to defeat the Conservative Party. But the August 1899 crisis does suggest just how finely balanced the power relationship between party and government actually was. For in that summer, the Hohenlohe ministry and the Kaiser were forced to ponder the consequences of a Prussian election campaign against both the Conservatives and the Farmers' League. As Hohenlohe wrote to Philipp Eulenburg in July: 'If the Canal Bill is defeated we must have a dissolution, and the Prussian state will be moved onto rails further left. That does not frighten me; but it is always a step in the dark, and if it can be avoided, all the better.'[33]

The crisis came to a climax in the Prussian state ministry meetings and the crown council of 20-23 August 1899. In the first of these meetings, Hohenlohe and the majority of the state ministry believed they must recommend a Landtag dissolution to the Kaiser, in order to preserve the 'authority of the crown and the government.' Hohenlohe said that 'the whole attitude of the Conservative Party, which has allowed itself to be led by the Farmers' League and by personally-embittered leaders, is directed less against the canal than against His Majesty personally....' Since the DKP now regarded the issue as 'a question of power,' it was necessary to co-ordinate a Landtag dissolution with disciplinary proceedings against oppositional officials. Otherwise, Hohenlohe concluded,

> ... there exists the danger that the Farmers' League, including the Conservative Party, would force many officials more and more into its following and gradually, in common with the anti-Semites, reach for means against the government as pernicious as those used by Social Democracy.

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33 Hohenlohe notes, 2.7.99, as above; Hohenlohe to P. Eulenburg, 2.7.99, NL Eulenburg, 54, p. 150b; meeting protocols in Rkz. 2003, f. 40ff (20.8); 53ff (21.8); 60-84 (crown council, 23.8).

In the ensuing discussion, the ministers hotly debated the wisdom of a dissolution, as well as the severity of measures to be taken against the recalcitrant officials. One minister believed that 'the agrarians, supported by Conservatives and anti-Semites, seek domination and wish to topple the whole ministry.' Miquel, the Prussian Minister of Finance, on the other hand, suggested that the pro-government parties in the current Landtag had little enthusiasm for new elections.

A day later, the controversy still raged. Interestingly, the Prussian Minister of War was among those who called for a dissolution against the DKP, again to protect the authority of the Kaiser. True to his Conservative tendencies and connections, Miquel continued to argue against a dissolution. But the reasoning he used is important. He claimed it would be fruitless to try to separate the Conservative rank and file from their leaders, and that an election campaign on the canal issue would be as little likely of success for the government. In such a campaign, Miquel claimed, the government would have to offer the slogan, 'Here the Crown, there the Farmers' League.' But if the elections should fall to the latter - 'which,' Miqueal noted, 'is not entirely impossible' - the situation would become even more critical for the Kaiser and the state ministry. The Minister of Agriculture, like Miquel generally a friend of the Conservatives, disagreed with Miquel; for him, there would have to be both a dissolution and disciplinary measures taken, and the government's election cry would have to be: 'Government of the land by the Farmers' League and other aggressive agrarians, or by a legitimate, impartial government which respects a variety of interests.'

In these state ministry meetings, the Kaiser's wishes regarding a possible dissolution had been unknown, and thus, the debates about an election campaign against the DKP had been in one sense academic. At the opening of the crown council of 23 August, however, Hohenlohe did

his utmost to make the Kaiser move against the Conservatives. He said that the Conservative intransigence had the character of a 'systematic opposition ... indeed, a conspiracy,' and added that since a large number of DKP deputies appeared dissatisfied with their leaders, a dissolution or the offer of compensations might prompt their rebellion. Karl von Thielen, the minister responsible for the canal legislation, supported his Minister President, noting that new elections would not produce a very different House but would bring many Conservatives into line. Furthermore, he argued, a definite coupling of the dissolution with the disciplining of officials would make it clear that these deputies were not simply being 'punished' for their parliamentary votes but rather that the government no longer considered such officials to be 'politically trustworthy.'

Despite the advice from the majority of his Prussian ministers, Wilhelm feared to launch an election campaign against the Conservatives. Instead, he merely adjourned the Landtag, had his Chancellor pledge that the Canal Bill would be reintroduced to parliament sometime in the future, and dismissed from their posts the offending Prussian officials. The Kaiser's personal defeat was in fact minimized, because he chose to make the party 'feel his rage' simply by shutting Limburg et al from his court. He did not grant a dissolution, 'which,' he believed, 'the Centre and the Radicals hoped for.' He even deputized Bülow by telegram, instructing him: 'Let your press hounds loose, and with cudgel blows crush the party.' Since he believed that the oppositon to 'his' canal project reflected 'crass stupidity [the DKP?] paired with malicious intent [the BdL?]', Wilhelm sought to match his anti-Conservative blustering with practical measures against the Farmers' League. In the crown council of 23 August it was therefore agreed that Prussian officials should be forbidden from belonging to or supporting the BdL.

The Kaiser, however, soon found that his rhetoric did not translate well into practice.[34] Wilhelm had little more success with his censure of BdL-affiliated officials than Caprivi had had over five years before. The government reacted in a dilatory way to the Kaiser's pronouncement, and in any case, the leaders of the BdL were not unwilling to advise their followers who held such posts to renounce their formal affiliation with the League.[35] Regarding the two Regierungspräsidenten and eighteen Landräte who were actually dismissed, the Korrespondenz des BdL had already assured these Conservatives in May that 'whatever they might lose through their oppositonal action, they will win back as agrarians.' In September, the Kreuzzeitung reaffirmed this solidarity, writing: 'The League has done nothing which could prevent a Conservative from belonging to it. The hue and cry against the League is also directed exclusively against its Conservative members. The reason for this is simply that the liberals aim to destroy the Conservatives.'[36]

It was precisely this failure on the part of the government to divorce the DKP from the BdL, as well as the dangers inherent in allowing the Kaiser to take the lead in 'punishing' the Conservative Party, that inclined many government figures to draw back from a further heightening of tensions. The ambivalent government view, which could conceive of neither a full alliance nor a full break with the Conservatives, was illustrated in a letter the Chancellor sent his son, Alexander, only two days after the crown council of 23 August. Hohenlohe wrote:[37]

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34 Wilhelm to C. v. Hohenlohe, 19.8.99, NL C. v. Hohenlohe, 1679, f. 54; Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, pp. 295f; list of disciplined officials in Horn, Kampf, p. 136.

35 Westarp, Kons. Politik, I, p. 4; Horn, Kampf, p. 81; BdL circular of 12.9.99 in Puhle, Interessenpolitik, p. 211.

36 Ibid., p. 211; Bialke, 'Kanalvorlage', p. 94f.

37 NL C. v. Hohenlohe, 1612, f. 249ff.

> To have a dissolution without detaching the officials from the Farmers' League would not have much use. Above all, the administration must be purged. Still, I regret we have not had a dissolution. I am sure the Conservatives would have suffered a healthy defeat. But of course how would His Majesty be expected to work with a liberal ministry?

On 29 September 1899, Philipp Eulenburg wrote to Bülow with suggestions for combatting the broad front of Conservative-agrarian opposition:[38]

> A measure, which I consider not only a false but also a dangerous one, is the turn against the Farmers' League. The only element which is capable of keeping in check the decidedly democratic tendency of the League, is the Conservative estate owners who belong to the League. ... The broad democratic and demagogic stream is washing over the whole land. The turn against the League in the form of a fight against the Conservatives makes a hydra out of it.

By early 1900, the DKP had gained enough confidence to launch an interpellation against the government for its disciplining of 'political officials' in parliament. Though contemporaries concluded that the government had acted neither illegally nor unconstitutionally, this did not prevent two of Wilhelm's leading court figures from laying down their posts in sympathy with the dismissed officials. After Wilhelm lamented to Bülow, 'The great men of my court are leaving me,' Bülow began the quiet job of reinstating a number of Landräte.[39]

When the Prussian state ministry, now under Bülow's command, began to consider reintroducing a Canal Bill in December 1900, the government's wish to avoid a showdown with the DKP was clear.[40] As Miquel noted, 'one may no longer treat the construction of the canal as a political question of the first order, and no longer contemplate a full

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38 NL Eulenburg, 54, pp. 204ff.

39 Interpellation of 11.1.1900 discussed in Bialke, 'Kanalvorlage', pp. 105ff; cf. Rheinbaben to the Kaiser, 10.9.99, ZStA II, Zivilkabinet 2.2.1, 31954, f. 141; Hohenlohe-Oehringen to A. Eulenburg, 21.10.99; Kaiser to Hohenlohe-Oehringen, 25.10.99; and H. Fink v. Finckenstein to A. Eulenburg, 22/23.5.99, explaining his anti-canal stand, and reply, 28.5.99; in ZStA II, Hausarchiv, Rep. 53 E III, 4, f. 5-15; Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, p. 298; Waldersee, Denkwürdigkeiten, II, p. 431.

40 St.Min. protocol, 8.12.1900, Rkz. 2004, f. 33.

break with those who are technical opponents of the canal.' Yet two months before the government was forced to withdraw its bill and adjourn the Landtag a second time, Eulenburg was fearful that Bülow's tariff increases would produce only disappointment, since the canal question had not yet been 'depoliticized'.[42] He worried that the Left could succeed in using the political conflict to prompt a public disavowal of the intransigent Conservatives from the government: 'The Conservatives are gnawing like dogs on a stick of dynamite. The evil neighbour will not fail to urge on the dogs in this dangerous business.'

Eulenburg thought the Kasier's involvement in the conflict was counter-productive, since the Conservatives had come to believe that they must, as men of honour, oppose any threats, royal or otherwise. He wrote:

> When the agrarian parades the "man of honour", then all is up. ... One gets furthest when one displays good will, raises the tariffs, and takes agriculture fairly by the arm.... **Then** the agrarians will listen to reason.... His Majesty **must** wait. Therein lies the penalty for his canal speeches, which ruined everything. Through the constant reintroduction of the bill, the reputation of the government is not weakened, for there can be no question of capitulation, even though the whole German press will sing in this key. ... Everything will assume a dark face if the Kaiser undertakes banishments from court, etc., the effects of which he over- as much as under-estimates.

After the Landtag was adjourned in early May 1901, the Kaiser, Eulenburg, and others gave vent to their frustration with the DKP. Writing to Bülow in June, Eulenburg once again expressed this metaphorically: 'The Conservatives ... are playing with fire like children and **unconsciously** are revealing their character more and more. Nothing shows the progress of the democratic idea more than the history of this "loyal party".' Eulenburg reported to the Chancellor the possibility

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42 P. Eulenburg to Bülow, 1.3.01 and 4.6.01; NL Eulenburg, 57, pp. 23ff, 85ff.

that Limburg might resign from the leadership of the DKP Landtag caucus. But this would only be of benefit, he noted, 'if Heydebrand is removed; he is allegedly a poisonous, ambitious viper. Because of the latter characteristic, he would likely accept a post which might be offered to him.' Other possibilities for a reconciliation between Wilhelm and the Conservatives were pursued by Count von Finckenstein-Simenau and E. Günther, Duke of Schleswig-Holstein. The latter reported that since the adjournment of the Landtag, many Conservatives felt themselves in a very difficult situation, and the duke personally considered it 'would be the greatest misfortune if the Conservative Party showed itself to be unworkable as a government party.'[43] Wilhelm's scorn for the DKP, however, remained unabated: he referred to it as the party 'which has outlived itself and no longer understands the modern age - which has ceased to be, for all time, capable of governing.'[43a]

If the Kaiser was lucky enough to be able to maintain the posture of 'no surrender', his ministers did not regard their options so favourably. Through late 1901 and 1902, whenever the Prussian state ministry considered a new Canal Bill, fears were expressed that the increasing tendency of the Conservatives toward 'reconciliation and compromise' could only be disturbed by the introduction of concrete legislative proposals: the tariff issue was too delicate to risk 'upsetting' the Conservatives. Similarly strong doubts were expressed about the efficacy of the government's decree to its Oberpräsidenten from September 1901, which had suggested that the Prussian

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43 Letter to the Kaiser, 17.5.01, Rkz. 1391/5.

43a Quoted in P. Eulenburg to Bülow, 4.5.01, as above, note 42.

administrators support only those candidates in parliamentary elections who were decidedly in favour of the canal.[44]

As noted above, changes in the political situation in 1902-03 prompted many Conservatives to view the canal issue in a new light. Thus, Bülow was eager to emphasise to DKP leaders that no initiative against Social Democracy would be feasible before a resolution of the canal question had been reached.[45] Much of 1904 was spent trying to eke out Conservative votes for the canal. In April the Conservatives considered a prompt termination of the Caprivi trade treaties (which were due to expire in 1906) to be a quid pro quo for their canal votes. Seven months later, the Chancellery Chief, Friedrich Wilhelm von Lõbell, was still trying 'under the table and secretly to sway individual members or keep firm their resolution [to vote for the canal.]' By late December 1904 the Kreuzzeitung had in effect admitted that the third Canal Bill was sure to pass. This time, it claimed, the government had avoided many former mistakes, most importantly in not making it a **political** issue. In early February 1905, Bülow was able to arrange the Canal Bill's second reading in the Landtag very shortly after the new trade treaties had been presented to the Reichstag. Thus, the bill finally passed third reading by a vote of 244:146. There were 39 Conservative ayes and 79 nays.[46]

Before turning from the canal issue, the salient points of this discussion can be highlighted with reference to an internal Chancellery

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44 St.Min. protocols, 20.12.01, 6.3.02: Rkz. 2005, f. 56ff, 65ff; cf. letter from C. v. Delbrück, Oberpräsident of W. Prussia, to the Min. of the Interior, 15.12.01, Rkz. 1081; on BdL-government relations in W. Prussia, cf. Hauptverein der Dt.-Kons. to Rkz., 18.2.05, Rkz. 2006, f. 220.

45 Stolberg to Bülow, 27.12.03, BAK, NL B. v. Bülow, 107, f. 97-109; Bülow to Stolberg, 7.1.04, Rkz. 1391/5, f. 41-44.

46 Conrad memo to Bülow, 30.4.04; Lõbell memo to Bülow, 14.11.04; Rkz. 2005, f. 231ff, Rkz. 2006, f. 71; KZ, 21.12.04; CC, 9.2.05; DTZ, 20.1.05; Neumann, 'Bülows Innenpolitik', pp. 146-149; Rkz. 2006, notes, f. 81, 24.12.04.

memo which circulated just three weeks before this final vote, entitled: 'Regarding the Prospects for the Canal Bill in the House of Deputies.'[47] The central theme of this report considered the importance of winning as many Conservative votes as possible for the bill, for this would lie 'in the general interest of domestic politics, particularly in light of the advancing agitation of the Farmers' League, which all too happily makes use of the cloak of Conservatism.' Even at this late date, there was no assurance that enough Conservative votes in plenum would be won to produce a government victory, because BdL efforts to commit DKP deputies to an anti-canal stand were underway. Nonetheless, prospects were not too bleak: 'Happily the whole **Conservative** press ... has taken a stand against such agitation, and, in a calm way, decisively expressed the view that peace on the canal affair must now be made with the government.' The report then speculated at some length as to how many deputies could be expected to vote for the bill or absent themselves from the House. Finally, the author encapsulated the previous six years of BdL-DKP-government tension on the canal issue by pointing out, first, the dangers which still lay ahead and, second, the scope of the victory which the government stood to win over the demagogic Farmers' League.

> It would undoubtedly have a critical effect if it were to become known at the last minute that officials or bearers of court titles were influenced in their votes or threatened with proceedings if they should decide to vote against the canal. This would surely drive a number of present friends of the bill over to the opposition, in order to remove from themselves the suspicion that they had fallen into line on the vote due to fears for their personal situation.
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> However, if a majority can be won for the Rhine-Hanover Canal, that is at the same time a desirable strengthening of those Conservative circles who object to the demagogic intrigues of the BdL. The safe passage of the Canal Bill will therefore be at the same time an auspicious success for the whole of domestic politics in Prussia.

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47 Probably written by Löbell, 19.1.05; Rkz. 2006, f. 98ff.

8.3 The Finance Reform Crisis, 1909

In the period 1900-1909, Chancellor Bülow's adeptness at side-stepping political confrontation produced among many Conservatives the feeling that the compromises he demanded of both the German Left and Right were actually being delivered up by the latter. These doubts about Bülow's philosophy of political Ausgleich eventually impelled the DKP to follow the BdL and refuse the greatest demand made of land-owners during the Bülow Block (1907-09), the introduction of a comprehensive inheritance tax.

After BdL-Conservative relations reached their nadir under the impact of Bülow's tariff legislation in December 1902,[48] a variety of motives and issues continued to separate BdL and DKP leaders. The Konservative Korrespondenz and the Reichsbote sometimes had little patience with agrarian involvement in the parliamentary sphere: in a classic defence of DKP prerogatives, the Korrespondenz appended a 1906 resolution of the Conservatives' Landtag caucus on the school issue with a note to the radical agrarians:[49]

> However much the Conservative Party is convinced that the Farmers' League represents the special agrarian interest in the state with energy and success, it still claims **for itself** the right to play the same role in full measure and within the limits of the attainable, by a simultaneous safeguarding of the general political interests of the nation and through a healthy Realpolitik.

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48 The working-out of this conflict is richly documented in over 500 pp. of press clippings in the BdL/RLB press archive, 6515-6517, 'Handelsvertragspolitik, Oct. 1902-June 1903.' Cf. G. Schöne, 'Die Verflechtung wirtschaftlicher und politischer Motive in der Haltung der Parteien zum Bülowschen Zolltarif (1901/02)' (Diss., Halle a.S., 1932), pp. 61ff; D. Bleyberg, 'Government and Legislative Process in Wilhelmine Germany' (Diss., East Anglia, 1979), pp. 298f; Neumann, 'Bülows Innenpolitik', pp. 73-83. Cons. motives in breaking with the BdL are also discussed in correspondence found in NL Bülow, 22, 105, 107; NL Reck, f. 22ff; NL Eulenburg, 59.

49 CC, 3.7.06; Rb, 11.7.06; complaints about DKP leadership in Roesicke to Wangenheim, 28.3.05, NL Roesicke, 34, f. 55.

Within the Bülow Block, BdL-DKP relations remained uncertain, principally because the willingness to proceed with legislation on the basis of the Chancellor's Left-Right 'pairing' declined at a different pace in the agrarian and Conservative camps. Older tensions between the groups reappeared, such as when the Kreuzzeitung called on the 'Economic Union' (Wirtschaftliche Vereinigung) to join the ranks of the DKP, and spoke of 'the ambitious efforts of sectarians, who would rather be leaders in their small circle than mere co-workers in the large Conservative Party.' Around the same time, Roesicke emphasised in a letter to Wangenheim that the BdL needed to remain 'above the parties' and needed to be particularly careful not to appear as a 'Wahlverein' for the Conservatives.[50] Until early 1908, many non-agrarian Conservatives expressed considerable satisfaction with Bülow's legislative program. Even Heydebrand was eager to couch whatever doubts he had about future government initiatives in terms which would relieve Conservatives of any blame if the Block should have an untimely end. As early as February 1908, however, Wangenheim expressed serious misgivings about the Block's ability to survive if anything but 'national' questions were taken up in parliament.[51]

Even different elements within the DKP itself at times found themselves out of phase with each other. The Kreuzzeitung, for instance, returned to a basic pro-Centre line after the January 1907 Reichstag elections much more quickly than did the Reichsbote. Conversely, while the Kreuzzeitung saw the franchise issue only as an

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50 Cf. Dr. Böhme, 'Eine Fraktionsgemeinschaft der Rechten,' Das nationale Deutschland, 26, 3.5.08, pp. 798-802; Roesicke to Wangenheim, 4.6.08, ZStA I, NL C. v. Wangenheim, 3, f. 2.

51 KZ, 9.11.07.

apple of discord thrown between the Block parties by liberals, the Reichsbote warned against rejecting possibilities for reform out of hand. Even Bülow himself received uneven treatment from the Conservative press. When the Chancellor defended his planned finance reform with a speech in late November 1907, he told the Conservatives directly that they must be 'modern and broad-minded' like their counterparts in England. The Kreuzzeitung replied that the DKP could only be modern in the 'up-to-date', not the 'liberal', sense. The Reichsbote, on the other hand, took offence at the Chancellor's reference to the 'agrarian' essence of the Conservative Party: Engel wrote that the word 'agrarian' had the negative connotation of 'narrow-minded, self-seeking partisanship opposed to other interests.' He added that with agrarian one-sidedness and neglect of other important political issues, Conservatives would be 'in danger of losing the confidence and trust of all serious, national, and truly conservative circles.' Thus the Reichsbote editor tried at an early date to paint the wider political picture within which the DKP would have to manoeuvre on the finance reform issue.[52]

As both franchise reform in Prussia and finance reform in the Reich began to cloud the political horizon, more and more Conservatives came to share Wangenheim's pessimism about the left liberal-Conservative alliance. The Block disruptions initiated by Friedrich Naumann, Lothar Schücking, and others in the Reichstag summer recesses of 1907 and 1908 further eroded right-wing confidence in Bülow's grand strate-

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52 Rb, 4.8.07; KZ, 7.7.07; RT speech, 30.11.07; KZ, 2.12.07; Rb, 3.12.07.

gy.[53] In the political crisis of November 1908, prompted by the Kaiser's Daily Telegraph interview, the DKP presented a solid front in the Reichstag. But its keenness to support the Kaiser derived less from an enthusiasm for his personal intervention in politics than from a desire to oppose any expansion of parliamentary prerogatives and to drive a wedge between Kaiser and Chancellor. In virtually all retrospective accounts of the end of the Bülow Block written by Conservatives, the Kaiser's loss of trust in Bülow in November 1908 rather than any Conservative intrigue or parliamentary power-play was identified as the real reason for the Chancellor's resignation in July 1909. In any case, the obvious tension between Wilhelm and Bülow in the aftermath of the Daily Telegraph affair added substantially to the Conservatives' willingness to remain firmly opposed to franchise reform and to follow the BdL lead in resisting any compromise on the inheritance tax.[54]

Although the January 1909 issue of the Konservative Monatsschrift had subjected the DKP's immediate stand against the inheritance tax to very critical examination, strong dissent from within party ranks first

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53 Compare the KonsMon's pro- and anti-Block judgments, June 1908, pp. 846ff and Oct. 1908, pp. 12ff; Cons. were implicated, however vicariously, in the public denunciations of backstairs 'rulers' of Germany by Maximilian Harden, Lothar Schücking, Rudolf Martin, and others. See for example Schücking's Die Mißregierung der Konservativen unter Kaiser Wilhelm II (Munich, 1909) or Martin's Deutsche Machthaber (Berlin/Leipzig, 1910^3).

54 Cf. M. Schlegelmilch, 'Die Stellung der Parteien des Deutschen Reichstages zur sogenannten Daily Telegraph Affäre und ihre innerpolitische Nachwirkung' (Diss., Halle, 1936), esp. pp. 29ff; Westarp, Kons. Politik, I, pp. 39ff; on the C. of 11's initial parliamentary 'hiccup' in criticising Wilhelm, and subsequent retreat, cf. CC, 6.11.08 and KZ press review, 9.11.08; subsequent 'clarifications' could not erase Wilhelm's intense displeasure with the original C. of 11 resolution: Westarp, ibid., pp. 49f.

began to register in February 1909.[55] As Conservatives reacted to increasingly direct threats from both government and BdL circles - such as Bülow's Landtag speech of 19 January, which mentioned the decree of 1882 demanding loyalty to the government from its officials, or Elard von Oldenburg-Januschau's speech a day later to West Prussian Conservatives, which more than matched the Chancellor's rhetoric - official DKP attempts to moderate the conflict could not disguise differences of opinion within the party as to the wisdom of such radicalism. Count Dohna-Finckenstein, for example, tried to express to Löbell the horror West Prussians felt at seeing their two 'bêtes noires' - franchise reform and the inheritance tax - appearing 'unexpectedly' together in January.[56] But he also tried to explain to the Chancellery Chief that agrarian radicalism was a necessary tactical ingredient of the DKP's strategy within the Block:

> [Oldenburg's] impulsive manner is ... his **strength,** and one must bear with him if he sometimes lays it on too thick. ... Within the Block we Conservatives must press our views energetically. **For that purpose,** there are provincial rallies and other extra-parliamentary meetings. Then, in the committees and in the parliamentary caucuses, the "attainable" is separated from the "sought-after". We must not, however, allow ourselves to be pushed too far by our liberal Block brothers.

More Conservative voices were raised after the annual Berlin 'agrarian week' in February 1909. Oldenburg and the BdL leaders reaffirmed their total opposition to the inheritance tax at the

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55 The path of majority Cons. has already been chronicled in: P.-C. Witt, Die Finanzpolitik des Deutschen Reiches von 1903 bis 1913 (Lübeck/Hamburg, 1970), (page references below are to Witt's 1970 Hamburg diss. of the same title); and G. Vogel, 'Die Konservativen und die Blockpolitik Bülows' (Diss., Berlin, 1925); cf. Hauptverein der Dt.-Kons., ed., Die Konservative Partei und die Reichsfinanzreform 1909 (Berlin, 1909); Westarp, Kons. Politik, Chs. 5 and 6; and H.-G. Hartmann, 'Die Innenpolitik des Fürsten Bülow 1906-1909' (Diss., Kiel, 1950).

56 KonsMon, Jan. 1909, p.332f; KZ, 6.12.08, 3/22/25.1.09; Vogel, 'Blockpolitik', p. 395; CC, 23.1.09; Finckenstein to Löbell, 3.2.09, Rkz. 1391/5, f. 164f.

Farmers' League's general assembly, and Adolf Wagner's pro-reform plea to the Association of Tax- and Economic Reformers prompted a sharp denunciation of this staunch Conservative figure, both in the assembly and in the agrarian press. The left liberals cited differences of opinion between the DKP Reichstag leadership and Conservative Vereine in Hanover, East Prussia, southern Germany, and elsewhere.[57]

In February, the Reichsbote began publishing letters suggesting flexibility in negotiations on the tax question, particularly from governmental Conservatives in the Berlin suburbs and the Kingdom of Saxony. At first the newspaper limited itself to pointing out that **some** reform was required to generate the required 500 million marks in extra revenue annually. It wrote that Conservatives were obliged to suggest a viable alternative to the finance commission's proposal if it wanted to avoid the odium of an inheritance tax. But by early March, when the Block parties worked out a very tenuous compromise that was almost immediately disavowed by the Konservative Korrespondenz, the Reichsbote and the Konservative Monatsschrift were positively in favour of the inheritance tax.

In reaction, the agrarian Deutsche Tageszeitung labelled the Reichsbote 'disloyal' to the Conservative cause. But since the agrarians' principled antagonism toward the tax scheme was being further eroded at this time by articles like Hans Delbrück's exposé of tax evasion by eastern landowners, the bruskness of such BdL attacks on

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57 VossZ, 23.2.09; TR, 24.2.09; KZ, 26/28.2.09; Vogel, 'Blockpolitik', p. 417; FsZ, 26.1./2.2.09.

moderate Conservatives only increased the dissenting voices.[58] On 22 March, the Potsdam Conservative Wahlverein under Baron von Stössel issued a strong declaration against the DKP's unwillingness to break with extreme agrarian demands:

> A great many Conservative and nationally-oriented voters of the urban population here and throughout the Reich do not understand the fundamental opposition of the Conservative Party regarding the inheritance tax in its proposed mild form ... and there exists the danger of strong resentment and a great alienation from the Conservative policy which has hitherto been loyally followed and nationally reliable.

On 25 March 1909, the government published the long-awaited announcement that the Bundesrat rejected the compromise worked out by the finance commission earlier in the month. This announcement only heightened the sense of crisis which had arisen the day before, when the DKP Reichstag leader, Oskar von Normann, had effectively given notice of the dissolution of the Bülow Block. The National Liberal press reacted immediately, expressing outrage at Conservative and agrarian proposals for a reconstituted tax program. This in turn prompted the Reichsbote to astound and enrage hard-line Conservatives: on 26 March, Engel expressed doubt over the National Liberals' representation of the situation, by writing: 'We still do not believe that the Conservatives would have proposed to lay 400 million [marks] on consumers and only (!) 100 million on property.' At the same time, the Konservative Korrespondenz tried to offer a calm appraisal of the situation, and other Conservative organs hastened to deny that the DKP wished to destroy the Block.[59]

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58 Rb, 4.2.09; KZ, 10.2.09; DTZ, 11.2.09; the KZ warned the agrarians against employing 'Schlagworte.' On DTZ-Rb conflict, Rb, 10.3.09; Vogel, 'Blockpolitik', p. 436; 'Des Pudels Kern', Der Tag, 51, 2.3.090; cf. P.-C. Witt, 'Der preussische Landrat als Steuerbeamter, 1891-1918,' in Geiss and Wendt, Deutschland in der Weltpolitik, pp. 205-219; on BdL-DKP tension, BBC, 3.3.09; KVZ, 5.3.09; VossZ, 8.3.09; FsZ, 30.3.09; on Stössel, KZ, 25.3.09.

59 Vogel, 'Blockpolitik', pp. 444f; CC, 25.3.09, 'Ruhig Blut'.

The deepening of the crisis changed even the Kreuzzeitung's tone. Its lead article of 28 March offered a rebuff to BdL radicals by noting that the left liberals' tactic of blaming all difficulties on agrarian special interests was made easier by 'a systematic agitation in the sharpest tones set in gear by the provincial Farmers' League organizations.'

> That has been **neither clever nor necessary.** The Conservative Party does not need such backing support; it also does not allow itself to be influenced by it. Therefore one can only wish that no more agitational material against the Conservatives ... will fall into the hands of liberal opponents and "friends of the Block" through such political declarations.

Meanwhile, the Reichsbote remained rebellious. Engel pointed to the thanks and sympathy of the nation which the Conservatives would win if, instead of bearing the blame for the end of the Block or Bülow's fall from power, they compromised on direct taxes and thereby prompted the liberals to accept certain indirect taxes. He warned particularly against an over-hasty alliance with the Centre.[60]

The Kreuzzeitung soon returned to its full agrarian position, and the final fusion of the Conservative-Centre alliance against the government's tax bill did not happen immediately. Yet the same essential ingredients in these anti-agrarian arguments from late March 1909 inspired dissenting Conservatives in the following weeks: the need for landowners to be among those offering the 'national sacrifice' of 500 million marks in new taxes; the fear of popular and royal disapproval if a German Chancellor were ousted through an extreme-right parliamentary majority; the fear of losing Conservative voters in the cities and among the Mittelstand; and the wish to support a kind of 'noble Conservatism' standing above demagogic agitation, callous interest politics, and parliamentary intrigue.

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60 Rb, 27.3.09.

Because the finance commission began a three-week recess on 30 March, the field was left open for resolutions in favour of Conservative compromise to be drafted by groups seeking to moderate the DKP stand before the commission drew up its final report. This was the time when the government launched its most concentrated campaign to generate Conservative dissent against agrarian predominance. Notable successes here included 1) the German Mittelstand congress of 13 April, at which the Conservative Mittelstand leader, Carl Rahardt, called for an end to agrarian opposition and stood by as Diederich Hahn was shouted down by the assembly; 2) the resolution of 6 April from the executive of the Saxon Conservative Verein, calling for acceptance of the inheritance tax if necessary; and 3) a meeting of pro-government deputations in the Reich Chancellery on 20 April. Worried by the growing appearance of DKP isolation, the Kreuzzeitung called on Conservative groups in the land to desist from coming forward with resolutions of any kind, and even counselled the government to quell rising anti-Conservative fever. Bülow, however, responded with a speech on 20 April which explicitly mentioned Saxon Conservative heterodoxy and Mittelstand dissatisfaction. When Bülow proposed a tax on only a portion of an inherited estate's value, the Reichsbote eagerly took up this new plan.[61]

Eventually the Conservatives in the finance commission offered their own package of a betterment tax and a stamp duty to make up the needed revenue. To give a 'democratic' stamp of party approval to this new proposal, the Committee of Eleven endorsed the caucus's move, saying that the views of Saxon Conservatives had been taken into

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61 KZ, 30.3.09; pro-inheritance tax resolutions from Cons. groups sent to the NLP RT caucus, in BAK, R45 I/9 , NLP Sitzungen der Reichstagsfraktion, Nov. 1908-July 1909, f. 206, 242, 394; KZ, 4/13.4.09; CC, 13.4.09; Eley, German Right, p. 299f; FsZ, 8.4.09.

account. This claim, however, was proved false when Botho Eulenburg and the five Saxon Conservative delegates provided dissenting votes in the DKP Committee of Fifty meeting on 30 April, which had been arranged to give yet another endorsement to the group of parliamentarians around Normann. Meanwhile, the general belief that a Reichstag dissolution was imminent prompted a Konservative Korrespondenz attack on DKP dissidents which sounded like a final call to battle: 'We must keep our ranks loyal and resolute in the struggle against enemy interests. Then we can certainly hope that the party will remain respected, united, and strong....' At the same time, the Deutsche Tageszeitung was making pointed references to the DKP's inability to maintain discipline within its ranks at this critical hour.[62]

In fact, the DKP leaders who plotted their party's course through the final weeks of the finance reform crisis gave little indication in the Reichstag that any internal dissent would alter their stand. Supported by the Centre's cynical determination to follow the DKP lead as long as that meant the fall of Bülow, the DKP caucus leaders refused to compromise with the government. After the left liberals decided to boycott the commission debates in late May, events moved swiftly to their conclusion. The Conservative-Centre majority passed a series of taxes on consumer goods, rejected the government's final inheritance tax proposal on 24 June, and then completed the finance reform legislation in the Reichstag on 10 July 1909. Three days later, Bülow resigned as Chancellor.

A full documentation of Conservative-government relations under the impact of the finance reform issue would require an examination of the way central figures within the Prussian and Reich governments

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62 Cf. Rb, 22.4.09; DTZ, 21.4.09; KZ, 21.4.09; CC, 22.4.09; FsZ, 16.5.09, 'Die Furcht vor der Auflösung'; Rb, 4/6.5.09; CC, 1.5.09; Vogel, 'Blockpolitik', pp. 495ff; DTZ, 30.4./3.5.09.

reacted to the conflict between Bülow and the DKP in 1909. However, since past or forthcoming studies give considerable attention to the interaction of bureaucratic and parliamentary forces in this crisis, a narrower picture of government attempts to sow dissent among Conservatives can be painted.[63]

In many ways, Bülow's efforts to prompt defections from the DKP during the twelve months after the Kaiser approved his finance reform project in mid-June 1908 were nothing more than a series of measures to keep from his own mind, and Wilhelm's, the consequences if he should fail. Thus, on reports from Löbell and others, warning him in the autumn of 1908 that the DKP would never accept an inheritance tax, Bülow wrote impulsively 'then the whole reform will fail,' and carried on with his campaign to win public opinion and renegade Conservatives for his plans. In this propaganda campaign, inspired by the Reich Chancellery and Treasury and headed by Professor Dr. Ernst Levy von Halle, Bülow attempted to recruit as many fringe Conservative figures as he could to write brochures in favour of an inheritance tax.[64] (Ironically, the BdL leaders were trying to do exactly the reverse, co-opting a sympathetic Councillor from the Reich Ministry of the Interior to draw up a BdL tax program that would motivate a 'very pessimistic' Heydebrand to remain firmly in opposition.) But Bülow received indications of support from a wide variety of 'conservative' circles, and though the various viewpoints expressed did not amount to a tangible or cohesive anti-agrarian argument per se, the Chancellor

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63 G. Bonham, 'Bureaucratic Modernizers and Traditional Constraints: Higher Officials and the Landed Nobility in Wilhelmine Germany, 1890-1914' (Diss., U. of California at Berkeley, forthcoming); Witt, 'Finanzpolitik', esp. pp. 98, 129f, 184f, 189f, 209n, 213ff.

64 Bülow's marginalia on Löbell's notes of a conversation with Oertel, 8.9.08, Rkz. 208, f. 21; collection of memoranda, publicity materials, press clippings, and St.Min. protocols in GStA Dahlem, Rep. 90, 1345, 'Reichsfinanzreform, Dec. 1908-Nov. 1909'; other materials in Rkz. 207.

hoped - not entirely in vain - that some of these opportunities could be exploited.[65]

The 'Union in Support of the Reich Finance Reform' was established due in part to the involvement of retired General Major Arthur von Lõbell, who was the Chancellery Chief's brother and chairman of the Conservative Verein in the Berlin suburb of Groß-Lichterfelde. As well, the Union's executive included the Conservative Landtag deputy and later Committee of Fifty member, Karl von Bõhlendorf-Kõlpin; other supporters of the enterprise included the Christian Social leader, Reinhard Mumm, and the would-be DKP reformer, Dr. Friedrich Wegener-Steglitz. Bülow might also have been heartened to hear that Caprivi's old anti-BdL ally, Stolberg, was eager for the Conservative Party to win credit for supporting finance reform: as Stolberg wrote in mid-1908, the DKP could not leave the demand for fiscal economy to the Centre and left liberals alone; rather, the Conservatives needed to seize the initiative.[66]

There is considerable evidence that the uncertain path of moderate Conservatives troubled the Farmers' League leaders greatly, particularly in 1908 but also well into the spring of 1909. In August 1908, Roesicke wrote Wangenheim that the fate of the finance reform and of the Block revolved around 'how the Right will regard either the wealth tax or the inheritance tax. It is difficult to decide, because the opinions, as far as I know them from the caucus, are very diverse.' In November 1908, when Oldenburg wanted free rein to attack Bülow's Block-

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65 Wangenheim to Roesicke, 6.8.08; reply, 8/10.8.08; in NL Wangenheim, 3, f. 56-63; cf. Klasing to Lõbell, 11.11.08, and the 'Zentralverein der Kons. vor dem Potsdamer Tor' to Rkz., 6.11.08, Rkz. 209, f. 332ff.

66 See Rkz, 207, f. 268-273; Stolberg to Gamp, 8.6.08; Gamp to Bülow, 29.7.08, Rkz. 207, f. 246ff; also Witt, 'Finanzpolitik', pp. 222-225; on Wegener and others, see below, Ch. 9, pp. 292-295.

politik, Roesicke was intent on restraining him so that the governmental Conservatives would not see his remarks as too extreme. Warning Wangenheim that the BdL faced in Bülow an 'opportunistic politician' par excellence, Roesicke doubted whether Bülow would miss the chance to exploit the anti-BdL reaction from moderate Conservatives which Oldenburg's speech might elicit.[67]

> ... This initiative would signify a great test of strength for those members of the Right who are of a susceptible disposition and character. The direct attack, which Oldenburg wants, requires a much greater energy and resoluteness from the Right, that is, the Conservative caucus, which is in my view **not** to be had. ... To precipitate this conflict would alienate a large number of Conservative caucus members.

It is noteworthy that just at this time Roesicke was utterly exasperated with Hahn's radicalism and his apparent wish to press an anti-Block policy within the Conservative Reichstag caucus, to the point that Roesicke saw no alternative to resigning from the BdL directorate. Although this step was not taken, Hahn's radicalism and its effect on moderate Conservatives still troubled the BdL leaders some months later. When Heydebrand wrote in April 1909, asking whether Hahn's appearance at the Mittelstand congress of 13 April might not present too 'agrarian' a face to an unsympathetic audience, both Wangenheim and Roesicke admitted that they shared the same doubts but were unfortunately committed to let Hahn speak. Conversely, internal BdL dissent could also present Bülow or the head of the Reich Treasury, Reinhard von Sydow, with indications that their policy of cultivating heterodox opinions might succeed. Roesicke had to report to Wangenheim in November 1908, for instance, that Georg Oertel (now editor of the Deutsche Tageszeitung) had in fact - as rumours said - told Sydow that 'the League will surely give in on the inheritance tax.' These and

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67 Roesicke to Wangenheim, 14.8./[14].11.08, NL Wangenheim, 3, f. 65, 87f.

other disruptions to their campaign against the government still worried the BdL leaders in April 1909. As Roesicke and Wangenheim lamented to each other:[68]

> The Right is meant ... to sacrifice everything. Unfortunately, as you have likely seen from the debates, things are critically shaky on the Right, and indeed in places I would never before thought it possible. ... Due to this lack of insight, resoluteness, and reliability, our position is a very difficult one. ... The spiritus rector is Herr Levy von Halle.
>
> The characteristic thing is indeed the defection of all the weak ones. According to a letter I received today from Herr v. Frege, I surmise too that the Saxon Conservatives under Dr. Mehnert are now giving in out of fear of the imminent Saxon Landtag elections.

The agrarians' sensitivity on the question of solidarity sometimes led them to take prompt and effective action to quell dissent. On one occasion, Endell warned Roesicke of pro-reform sentiments expressed by a Conservative in Bromberg, who was 'otherwise a very reasonable Conservative man, but, unfortunately, apparently corrupted and emasculated through the Free Conservative environment.' Endell's report that many higher Prussian officials did not understand the agrarians' radical opposition on the inheritance tax issue prompted the BdL leaders to take counter-measures against Halle. As Roesicke wrote to Heydebrand, Halle was deliberately encouraging officials - who were due to take part in the Mittelstand congress - in the belief that their salaries would be raised only after the inheritance tax votes were completed. Roesicke tried to express his outrage by labelling the government's tactic 'democratic'. On other occasions, however, this vigilence backfired on the BdL. When a false rumour circulated in mid-April that the leading Conservative parliamentarian from Posen, Count Kuno von Wes-

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68 Heydebrand-Roesicke-Wangenheim correspondence, April 1909, in NL Wangenheim, 3, f. 102f; 4, f. 20-30.

tarp, intended to vote for the inheritance tax, letters of warning - hardly distinguishable from threats - were dispatched immediately. Before the misunderstanding was cleared up, Westarp had been deeply offended.[69]

Just as during the Russian trade treaty and Mittelland canal crises, the question of a large-scale Conservative defection from the policy of the Farmers' league was integral to the Chancellor's carrot and stick policy toward the DKP. That a number of Conservatives desired the 'carrot' of government attention to their views is shown by the Conservative correspondents who wrote to the Chancellery either with their own tax schemes or in order to help the government guage the mood of the party.[70] For a Chancellor growing more and more desperate to find a way around the impasse presented by the agrarians, these sympathetic reports from DKP circles must have assumed a disproportionate significance in his calculations, even though - once again - they documented no unitary anti-agrarian sentiment in the DKP.

The Chancellor was faced with information that Dohna-Finckenstein, the BdL chairman in East Prussia, planned to resign his post 'because the Farmers' League has become unpatriotic.' He received a letter from a Hessian member of the Committee of Fifty which provided details of legislation calculated to overcome Conservative opposition to the inheritance tax. He read press articles which claimed that Count Hans

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69 Endell to Roesicke, 3/19.4.09; NL Roesicke, 34, f. 267, 272; Roesicke to Heydebrand, 10.4.09, NL Wangenheim, 4, f. 29f; further correspondence in ZStA I, NL K. v. Westarp, 55, f. 18-24; NL Roesicke, 34, f. 273-279.

70 Including Otto Beutler, Cons. mayor of Dresden, discussed in Löbell to Mehnert, n.d. [March 1909], Rkz. 211; Batocki-Bledau to Löbell, 3.5.09; Eschenbach to Löbell, 28.4.09; E. Weihe to Löbell, 4.5.09; Dr. Kurt v. Eichhorn, 6.5.09, sending his Vorschlag einer Reichs-Gewinnzuwachssteuer (Breslau, 1909); Mirbach to Löbell, 23.4.09; in Rkz. 212; Wahnschaffe to Dr. Andrae, 1.6.09; Mirbach to Löbell, 20.6.09; Dohna-Finckenstein to Löbell, 27.6.09; in Rkz. 213.

von Schwerin-Löwitz and the general secretary of the Conservative organization in Nearer Pomerania, Brehm-Stralsund, had both spoken out in favour of the government's tax program, and others from Heydebrand's Silesian press organ which regretted half-truths about the finance reform being propagated by BdL travelling speakers. He read resolutions in protest against the DKP leadership, sent to the Chancellery by the chairman and executive of the 'United Conservative Vereine' in the Berlin suburbs, and letters from former DKP candidates in these constituencies, which professed incomprehension at the Conservatives' short-sightedness and intransigence.[71] He would even have noted a letter from Mirbach, who wrote Löbell in April 1909:

> 'From the first - and later too - I was no absolute opponent of the expansion of the Reich inheritance tax. If I were the leader in the Reichstag, things would probably have come to an agreement....'

The reaction of Chancellery officials to such evidence of dissenting Conservatism was by no means passive. This is shown by Arnold Wahnschaffe's response to a letter from the influential Kiel judicial official, Dr. Andrae, who planned to resign from the Conservative Party over the finance issue.[72] As late as 1 June, Wahnschaffe retained some hope that the Conservatives would recognise their error at the last moment and vote for the tax in some form: 'If such a change of heart does not happen, then we will be faced with a serious crisis, which will fall heavily upon the account of the Conservatives.' Wahnschaffe was intent to inform Andrae that his dissent was not unique:

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71 Dohna to Rkz, 21.4.09; AnklamerZ, 11.5.09; SchlMbl, 23.4.09; Berlin resolution of 27.4.09; Mirbach to Löbell, 23.4.09; in Rkz. 212, f. 62, 88, 80f.

72 Cf. Westarp, Kons. Politik, I, pp. 63f.

> The party ... which destroys [the Block] in order to throw itself into the arms of the Centre undoubtedly sets itself in the sharpest opposition to the feeling of the nation's best elements. One hears that not only from Conservative circles in the Berlin suburbs, in whose Conservative Vereine affairs are coming to a head. Voices just as loud have reached my ear from our old constituencies, from Mecklenburg, from Further Pomerania, and from the west.

He was even more concerned to make the best possible use of Andrae's moderate convictions and willingness to speak out:

> Your idea of resigning from the party I can well understand; nonetheless I should say that it would be better to abandon it for the moment at least. Could you not somehow state your opinion in the Kreuzzeitung or, if this refuses to accept, in the Reichsbote? It is still not impossible that your voice will elicit an echo.

Wahnschaffe sent Andrae's letter to his uncle, Wangenheim, noting that it appeared to be an important 'sign of the times' that this critique of BdL policy came from 'an enthusiastic member of the Conservative Party and also an energetic representative of agrarian demands.' He also noted that Andrae, far removed from affairs in Berlin, judged the danger of the situation similarly to those in the capital.[73]

Certainly the two greatest successes of Bülow's campaign to foster dissent within the DKP came when Saxon Conservatives and the nominally Conservative German Mittelstand Association under Rahardt declared in favour of the inheritance tax.[74] The correspondence between the Chancellery and these rebels shows, however, how delicate an undertaking was being attempted. In the first place, Bülow had to recognise that many Conservatives could only be won for his inheritance tax if left liberals abandoned their own resistance to taxes on certain consumer goods. A preliminary vote within the DKP Reichstag caucus on 29 March indicated that sixteen of 62 deputies might vote for the inheritance

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73 Wahnschaffe to Wangenheim, 1.6.09, Rkz. 213, f. 11.

74 See Witt, 'Finanzpolitik', pp. 277f.

tax, but this would happen only if liberals assented to a brandy tax which benefitted a number of Conservative brewery owners.[75]

Secondly, Bülow felt it was necessary to moderate the tone of official and DKP press attacks on each other. To this end, Löbell met with the editors of the Kreuzzeitung and the Deutsche Tageszeitung, Drs. Hermes and Oertel, on 7 April. Bülow did not lend much weight to the two editors' promise that no personal campaign against him would be undertaken. When Hermes noted that the Kreuzzeitung had to be very careful, 'since undoubtedly a part of the country's Conservatives and a section of the Conservative Reichstag caucus would be inclined to accept the inheritance tax as the lesser evil,' Bülow wrote in the margin of Löbell's report: 'But the Kreuzzeitung is even more malicious than other Conservative newspapers (also as before 1890!)' Nevertheless, Löbell promised the editors that Bülow would seek to prevent personal attacks on Conservatives. The Chancellor even advised against making the reception of delegations on 20 April into an explicitly 'anti-Conservative' event. But once again, this strategy was supplemented by an attempt to have as many Conservatives as possible included among this 'spontaneous' demonstration. This tactic succeeded to the extent that the large estate owner and Saxon delegate on the Committee of Fifty, Rudolf Hähnel, and the chairman of the Conservative caucus in the upper Saxon chamber, Hans Edler von Querfurth-Schönheide, were members of the delegation from Saxony. Yet the BdL leaders were further enraged by the 'despicable' and 'demagogic' tactics of Bülow, Sydow, and Halle.[76]

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75 BT, 9.4.09; Westarp, Kons. Politik, I, p. 59.

76 Löbell notes, 7/8.4.09, seen by Bülow 10.4.09; Löbell to Mirbach, 21.4.09; Löbell to Sydow, 5.4.09; NAZ, 21.4.09, and Stresemann to Löbell, n.d., Rkz. 211, f. 226ff; Wangenheim to Roesicke, 27.4.09, NL Wangenheim, 4, f. 41ff.

Thirdly, the Chancellor could not proceed beyond a certain point in pushing Conservatives to break publicly with their party leadership. In the detailed correspondence with Mehnert in Saxony, for example, it became clear that the Saxon leader was not willing to sign the Reich Treasury's own resolution on tax reform, but instead had to proceed in accordance with the limits imposed on him by provincial DKP - and BdL - views. Halle believed that a personal letter from Bülow would ease the way for Mehnert to sign the Treasury's declaration, and the Chancellor promptly dispatched such a letter. But Mehnert replied that patience and moderation were required if BdL machinations to quash governmental sentiments in Saxony were to be defeated and the majority of the Saxon Conservative Verein's executive members won to Bülow's side. Mehnert made no secret of the fact that he was seeking to win popularity for his party in the forthcoming Landtag elections to be held under a wider franchise for the first time: this was his conception of his 'duty' as a regional party chairman. Nor did Mehnert fail to express either his dislike for Oertel personally or his distaste for the way Oertel and Roesicke had travelled to Dresden to 'leave no stone unturned' in their efforts to prevent a defection. There was more than a hint of a boast when Mehnert reported that his 6 April meeting had gathered together the chairmen of 72 local Conservative Vereine and passed a series of resolutions for the government's tax reform virtually unanimously. Mehnert expected a BdL backlash, but he still informed the Chancellery that the Saxon DKP press would be publishing more pro-reform articles in the days ahead: these were eagerly reprinted in the Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung. For Mehnert, then, the prime consideration was

that the Conservative organization in his own 'smaller Vaterland' should not suffer the liabilities of DKP opposition in the Reichstag.[77]

The fact that only two Saxon Conservatives sat in the Reichstag caucus did not dash Bülow's hopes that Mehnert, like Andrae, migh precipitate a full-scale defection. Mehnert himself reported on 1 April that 'in the German Conservative caucus, ... formerly sharp enemies of the inheritance tax are now prepared, with certain reservations, to vote for this tax.' After the Saxon resolution of 6 April, the Centre press suggested the possiblity that the 'backbone of Conservatives in the tax question' could be broken.[78] The profound fears of Roesicke and Wangenheim at this time have already been noted.

The major defection to the government's side which had been hoped for or feared so long by the Chancellor and BdL leaders did not materialize. In the decisive vote of 24 June, only six DKP deputies voted against the party majority, that is, for the government's inheritance tax. What is more significant about the outcome of the finance reform conflict, however, was the way the crisis in late June came to be interpreted by most parties involved as a verdict on the future of Conservative Volkstümlichkeit. Here, the question of moderate Conservative dissent from agrarian radicalism was crucial. Bülow, Heydebrand, Roesicke, and Wangenheim - plus the rank and file DKP membership, as will be shown in the next chapter - all sought to justify their course over the last months, to Kaiser, parliament, and

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77 Mehnert-Löbell-Bülow-Sydow-Halle correspondence, March-April 1909, in Rkz. 211, f. 89-199. Mehnert's fears were justified. In the Saxon LT elections of Nov. 1909, the Cons. sank from 46 to 29 seats, while the SPD rose from just 1 to 25 seats.

78 KVZ, 7.4.09, in Witt, 'Finanzpolitik', p. 278; on dissent elsewhere: KnZ, 30.4.09, 'Fahnenflucht aus dem kons. Lager'; FsZ, 16.5.09.

people. Each presented a different evaluation not only of the Conservative Party's role as a representative of 'popular' opinion on the finance issue but also of the historical step the party had taken in effectively toppling a German Chancellor appointed by the Kaiser.

If any of Bülow's later protestations against Conservatives' 'frivolous' politics are to be believed, it would appear that the Chancellor's exercise in self-deception as to the final DKP position on his tax program was greatly encouraged by the conflicting signals which emerged from the Conservative camp.[79] Nowhere, perhaps, was Bülow's claim that he had been misled more forcefully made than when, in late July 1909, Wahnschaffe met with a Deutsche Tageszeitung editor, P. Bäcker, to try to put an end to the agrarians' polemics against the former Chancellor. Wahnschaffe's argument on Bülow's behalf was summed up in four points:[80]

> "1) The Chancellor was not sufficiently informed by the Conservatives that they would not accept the inheritance tax on descendants and spouses under any circumstances.
> 2) He was particularly pained and distressed that, although he had reason to believe that a great number of Conservative deputies would relent, this defection in the end was limited to such a few.
> 3) The Conservative Party should have informed Bülow before it allied itself with the Centre.
> 4) particular one Conservative leader (according to the context, surely Heydebrand) [Roesicke's note] did not make his actions clear enough to Bülow."

The other principal component of Bülow's argument was his assertion that the party's willingness to follow radical agrarian policy would drive many former supporters from its ranks, possibly into the parties and pressure groups standing outside the circle of

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79 On the Bülow-Cons. conflict after 1909, cf. F. Thieme, ed., Front wider Bülow (Munich, 1931); also T. Cole, 'The Daily Telegraph affair and its aftermath: the Kaiser, Bülow and the Reichstag, 1908-1909' in Röhl and Sombart, Kaiser Wilhelm II, pp. 249-268. Cf. Bülow to Löbell, 23.1.10, BAK, NL F.W. v. Löbell, 6, f. 91; and Bülow to Stolberg, 23.11.09, NL Bülow, 107, f. 139.

80 In Roesicke to Wangenheim, 23/28.7.09; Wangenheim to Roesicke, 26.7.09; NL Wangenheim, 4, f. 70-76.

state-supporting elements. This aspect of Bülow's critique of DKP actions was painted most forcefully in his last major Reichstag speech of 16 June 1909, and in the notorious interview he gave the Hamburger Correspondenten the day after his resignation from office.[81] But his marginalia on Löbell memos from early April showed that his view of the DKP 'digging its own grave' was already supported by signs of the protest movement among dissenting Conservatives.[82] Significantly, Bülow headed his musings about the Right's motivation for a possible destruction of the Block with two different questions: 'What will the Conservatives achieve?' and 'What will the agrarians achieve?' To the latter question, Bülow replied that the agrarians would be labelled as 'base egoists'. Bülow painted the DKP's prospects even more darkly:

> Confusion, bitterness, [and] depression among wide circles of Conservatives, especially in middle-Germany, in the cities, among officials, lower-middle classes, etc.; ... real (not imaginary) compensations to the liberal-democratic idea in Prussia, in order to defend the party against the odium of a "reactionary" rule by Junkers and priests. The Conservative Party will experience a set-back similar to [the one] in the '70s.

In his speech of 16 June, Bülow repeated this motif, that 'a victory in the present is often the way to defeat in the future.' In 1911 - in correspondence with one of the Conservative dissenters on the 24 June vote - he offered the same view yet again: on the Conservative leaders' shoulders would rest the responsibility for a 'sharpening of conflicts between Conservatives and liberals, awakening of dangerous resistance against the Conservative Party, above all a restrengthening of radicalism.'[83]

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81 Discussed in Vogel, 'Blockpolitik', p. 530ff; Witt, 'Finanzpolitik', pp. 291ff.

82 Marginalia, 8.4.09, to Löbell notes of 6.4.09, in Witt, 'Finanzpolitik', pp. 275f.

83 Kaphengst to Bülow, 28.3.11; reply, 31.3.11; Bülow to Löbell, 31.3.11; in NL Löbell, 7, f. 23ff.

That the mounting criticism of the DKP leadership from within the party was also on Heydebrand's mind in July 1909 is clear from his speech - later printed as Conservative agitational material - of 10 July.[84] On the one hand, Heydebrand could note that past criticisms of the Conservatives had included the charge that they sacrificed their convictions in order to retain favour with the government, and thereby lost touch with the will and mood of the people: on this occasion, Heydebrand declared, the DKP had preserved its independence as a political party by refusing to abandon the principles it had always cherished. On the other hand, Heydebrand offered the dissenters within his party a challenge with the words:

> My political friends have preserved a good conscience throughout this whole difficult process. ... This has carried us forward and supported us, ... and it will maintain us when we go before the country and the voters to justify what we aimed for and what we have done. ...
>
> We have, without regard to your enmity, without regard to the scorn and disdain of our opponents, and - what says something as well - even without regard to the fact that in our own ranks there has appeared doubt, lack of courage, dissatisfaction [and] defection, taken the path, as far as we could follow it, to the end, and there we will stand firm.

If Bülow saw in the Conservative Party's future only decline and growing radicalism, and if Heydebrand suggested how near a thing it had been for the DKP leadership to stay the course in the face of dissenters who wanted to fall in with the government, the BdL leaders actually believed that the present and future hopes for the Conservative Party rested solely upon their willingness to oppose government attempts to 'deform' public opinion. Thus, for Roesicke and Wangenheim, Conservative Volkstümlichkeit required constancy. And yet it required more.

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84 BAK, ZSg 1, 70/1 (7).

The crisis of the Bülow Block reinforced the BdL leaders in their conviction that the Farmers' League itself represented the rallying point for a 'proper' block of state-supporting forces.[85] The agrarians' aggressive formulation of this argument during the June/July crisis of 1909 suggests, first, why they had such faith that their intransigence advanced the Conservative Party toward true popularity and, second, why internal DKP dissent, tending to push the party toward more 'moderate' policies, signified for them not a progressive but rather a retrograde force. In two separate letters immediately after Bülow's 16 June speech, one to his wife and one to Roesicke, Wangenheim formulated his idea of right-wing Volkstümlichkeit in virtually identical terms.[86] To his wife he wrote:

> Certainly it would be desirable to reconcile the antagonisms between Conservatives and liberals, and it is precisely the Farmers' League which works in this sense, in that it makes the Conservative Party volkstümlich; but understandings and compromises are only possible when there are honourable intentions on both sides, and that is lacking on the Left....

To Roesicke Wangenheim defined popular Conservatism thus:

> When Bülow says to the Conservatives that they must assimilate liberal viewpoints, he overlooks, I believe, the activity of the Farmers' League, which indeed ensures that the Conservative Party is brought from its former torpidity to a more volkstümlich and thereby naturally more liberal course.

Clearly, then, as government, Conservative, and BdL leaders contemplated what the agrarians' victory on the finance reform issue really signified in terms of the evolution of the German Right, the questions of 'moderate' versus 'extreme' Conservatism and of ways to

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85 See Puhle, Interessenpolitik, p. 264.

86 Letters of 17/18.6.09, in Wangenheim, Wangenheim, pp. 80f; NL Wangenheim, 4, f. 60ff.

eliminate the traditional 'torpidity' of the Conservative Party were problems which could not be separated from one another. In this sense, the triangular relations between agrarians, Conservatives, and the government were intimately bound up with the response of the German Right to the requirements of political influence and agitation.

Chapter Nine: Reformist Initiatives 1905-1914

This final chapter carries the story of reformism within the Conservative Party up to 1914, providing an analysis of proposals for a 'renewing' of party life to compare with evidence (much of which is included in the Appendices) about the actual expansion of the DKP's apparatus and press in Berlin and the provinces.

9.1 Reformism, 1905-1909

After a long period of relative quietude, a revived Conservative impetus for reform was signalled in late 1905 by the appearance of a new Conservative Party journal, sponsored by the publisher of the Konservative Monatsschrift, Reimar Hobbing.[1] Entitled Unsere Partei, this new publication announced in its subtitle that it would be a 'journal for the technique of political organization and agitation.' As a DKP 'professional journal,' Unsere Partei had four aims: 1) to disseminate information to party members on the art of practical politics; 2) to inform Conservatives of the activities of other DKP Vereine; 3) to interest youth in DKP affairs; and 4) to provide a source of material for use by party speakers, as well as to carry party advertisements and notices.

The trial number of Unsere Partei illustrated how these aims were to be met. The introduction lamented that 'the organization of the Conservative Party has become all too ramshackle in recent years.'

> In many provinces, for instance, the provincial Verein has completely ceased its activity, constituency Vereine hold no more rallies at all, except before elections. Many such Vereine exist in name only. Others, curiously, may not collect dues from their members!

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1 Hobbing to Lõbell, 7.11.05, with first number of Unsere Partei, 1.11.05; Rkz. 1573, f. 21ff.

In the article on 'Agitation in the Small Cities', the journal criticised Conservatives who felt it was enough to find a local notable - 'perhaps a retired officer or a state official' - and then 'elect him to the executive of a Verein or make him a delegate, and leave it at that.' The same critique of Honoratiorenpolitik came through when leaders of Conservative meetings were advised to ensure that they were familiar with the local area's social complexion and political history; speakers should aim to relate broad DKP policies to local circumstances and issues. Most pointedly, the article noted that Verein leaders should be less eager to have a second 'Hail' to the Kaiser or rush away to pre-arranged dinner festivities from which the 'little people' were almost always excluded. Instead, these rank-and-file Conservatives should have a forum at the end of the meeting to air their views, or indeed be drawn in when the agenda was drafted.

Attention to detail was a feature of other articles: in one entitled 'Experiences in the Mass Distribution of Printed Materials', Conservatives were informed of the fastest way to seal envelopes. As well, examples were given of program speeches, and a large number of quotations from the opposition press were provided in a section headed 'For the Armoury'. Finally, reports 'From the Party' painted a very dark picture of the DKP's existing organization, listed the number of Conservative constituency Vereine which could be 'traced' in each region of Germany. In West Prussia, for example, allegedly only one Conservative Verein was 'regularly active.' It was claimed that here, as in many other provinces, sickness and old age afflicted the Verein leadership, as did the disruptions of frequent changes of chairmanship. The recommended remedy was the assignment of a business manager to the Verein executive. But as the article also noted, even the Conservative Central Wahlverein was currently without a general secretary of its own.

Although it is uncertain whether Hobbing's journal ever achieved regular publication, other reformers began making similar observations about the sterility of Conservative Party life. A common reformist point of departure sent these observers in many different directions. For instance, the Berlin lawyer and one-time DKP candidate, Eschenbach, sent a desideratum to both the Committee of Twelve and the Reich Chancellery, in which he outlined the ways he believed the DKP must move to overcome its anti-intellectual viewpoint and image.[2] Eschenbach's main points were that the party should send representatives to the upcoming congress of the Verein für Sozialpolitik to outline the Conservative standpoint in debates, and that the Conservative press should publish reports of this and similar congresses, written by a Conservative reporter. When Löbell - who had been the DKP's speaker on organizational questions at the 1903 delegates' congress before becoming Bülow's Chancellery Chief the next year - passed along this desideratum to Bülow, he commented: 'In the letter to Manteuffel, [Eschenbach] undoubtedly is correct; within the Conservative Party one must struggle unendingly with great indolence and delusion.' This sentiment was echoed on another occasion, when the Conservative leader in West Prussia, Dohna-Finckenstein, reported to Löbell that a new Conservative Verein had been founded in his province, due mainly to local initiative. As he wrote: 'You know as well as I how much we need a younger leadership in place of the unhelpful central executive. Perhaps Manteuffel will make a little more effort this winter?'[3]

In the spring of 1906, the Conservative Verein in the Berlin suburb of Teltow-Beeskow went so far as to demand a general party congress to debate program reform. The Kreuzzeitung and the party leadership, however, did not want a repeat of Tivoli's proceedings, and so

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2 Eschenbach to C. of 12, 16.8.05; Eschenbach to Löbell, 15.9.05; Löbell memo to Bülow, 19.9.05; Rkz. 1391/5, f. 58ff.

3 Letter of 6.12.07; Rkz. 1391/5, f. 145f.

assented to only a delegates' congress, which was held in Berlin on 30 November 1906. The Conservative press was generally agreed that organization and agitation were far more pressing matters than program reform.[4] The Reichsbote noted that a greater organizational independence from the BdL was necessary, while the Ostpreußische Zeitung observed that greater DKP activity would reaffirm its role as a source of Conservative leaders for the nationalist pressure groups. Even the Konservative Korrespondenz, citing National Liberals' own worries about their party apparatus, called for new initiatives. The question of provincial party secretariats, however, was considered to require special effort not from Berlin leaders but from regional and local party men.

In early November 1906, Dr. Friedrich Wegener of Steglitz-Berlin - who in 1908 wrote a mildly reformist but strongly pro-Block tract on the history of the DKP[5] - sent the Chancellery a list of guiding principles for Conservative organizational reform, which he believed were important both for 'the narrow party interest and for raisons d'état.' Proceeding from a study of organizational techniques employed by the Social Democrats and nationalist pressure groups, Wegener wrote that he had realized how necessary it was to supplement 'a merely negative propaganda of defence' with 'a positive national program' and 'a strong organization.' Wegener sent his 'program' to Löbell - who in turn recommended it to Manteuffel - because he believed he would receive 'from the leadership of [the DKP] organization no consideration' of his proposals.[6]

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4 KZ, 6/24.4.06; 22.6.06; Rb, 10.4.06.

5 Die deutschkonservative Partei und ihre Aufgaben für die Gegenwart (Berlin, 1908), esp. p. 92; reviewed by Löbell, memo to Bülow, and correspondence with Wegener, May-June 1908; Rkz. 1391/5, f. 150ff.

6 Wegener to Löbell, 5/6/10.11.06; Löbell to Manteuffel, 19.11.06; ibid., f. 100f.

Thus the 1907 delegates' congress became a focus for various reformist initiatives. Some Berliners advanced unorthodox proposals for program revision. The Conservative Verein in Groß-Lichterfelde pushed the party leadership to take a stand against rising meat prices. The Charlottenburg lawyer, Willy Hahn, sent the Chancellor a draft DKP program which brewed up such a strange mixture of progressivism and reaction that large issues like anti-socialism and anti-Semitism lay side by side with points about the combatting of syphillis or the expansion of Prussian water reservoirs. As well, the East Prussian lawyer and later Committee of Fifty member, Edwin Meyer-Tilsit, made a celebrated call for the inclusion of more non-aristocrats in the DKP, and - in the interests of Conservative popularity - for a moderate revision of the Prussian franchise. But as the former Tivoli radical, Klasing, noted at the delegates' congress, more pressing matters than a further definition of Conservative policy faced the party. The Kreuzzeitung correctly observed that the assembly wished to subordinate programmatic or personnel questions to 'the main task of the Conservative Party: to work and organize energetically and untiringly.'[7]

The Conservative interest in party organization quickened in 1907 and 1908. In March 1907, the Committee of Fifty struck an 'Organizational Committee', and plans were set in gear for further congresses, since it was recognised that these were an effective way of breaking Conservatives from their agitational slumber between elections. The Kreuzzeitung was especially eager that the DKP learn from its opponents, and offered a number of articles through 1907 on 'the necessity of strict organization.' Once again, a strong motif in such articles was the need for particular effort from the rank and file. As the

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7 StaatsbgZ, 21.10.06; 'Programm der Deutsch-Konservativen Partei,' by Willy Hahn, sent to Rkz. 7.11.06; Lōbell to Hahn, 9.11.06; KZ, 3/4/6.12.06; Stillich, Konservativen, pp. 212f; Peck, Radicals, p. 52; Puhle, Interessenpolitik, pp. 103, 225.

Kreuzzeitung wrote in recommending the appointment of provincial party secretaries:

> The organizational question can only be solved in a salutary way "from below". One may not expect that everything can be conducted "from above". That would be impossible. First, district and provincial party congresses must prepare the ground, must seek to fill the holes in the local organizational network, and bring the party members in touch with each other; then the activity "from above" can begin in a useful way.

The uncertainties of party alignments in the Bülow Block were often cited as a prime motive for the DKP to become 'independent and united' in its organizational structure.[8]

Meanwhile, certain Saxon Conservatives were coming to find that they shared some of the Berliners' dissatisfaction with the DKP program. In April 1907, the Conservative mayor of Dresden, Otto Beutler, presided over a meeting of his city's Conservative Verein in which a number of program revisions were proposed. Beutler himself argued that Conservatives' anti-industrial viewpoint was a negative factor limiting DKP popularity in Saxony and elsewhere; other reforms advocated included the 'modernization of schools,' revived social policy, and even a Conservative endorsement of the Reichstag universal franchise as a fundamental principle of the Reich constitution. By October 1907, the Saxon Conservative journal, Das Vaterland, had created an even greater sensation by suggesting that Germany's present system of protective tariffs for grain could not be continued. The agrarian press of course attacked these program proposals, especially since they continued to appear from time to time through 1908 and after. More than once, Beutler's plea of April 1907 was noted when comment arose over Saxon

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8 Cf. SchlZ, 19.3.07; KZ, 25.3.07; 25.5.07; 5.8.07; DTZ, 14.4.07; CC, 11.11.07; Vaterland, 21.12.07.

heterodoxy in the finance reform crisis of 1909.[9] Nevertheless, tangible results of this new interest in organization were few, despite the rhetoric of party leaders at the December 1907 delegates' congress. As Mirbach wrote of the gathering:

> That the existing deficiencies in the party are themselves recognised without reservation and their elimination adamantly demanded, gives the best assurance for the success of organizational reform, after whose implementation it will become clear how deeply Conservatism is rooted in the political and economic principles of the people.

Yet in terms of tangible successes, neither party speakers nor the press had much to report.

9.2 The Conservative Union

The scale of the rank-and-file rebellion against the DKP leadership's finance policy is richly documented in the German political press from the summer and autumn of 1909.[10] The NLP even managed to print a 28-page brochure which chronicled the disaffection in Conservative Vereine all across Germany. Many Conservative parliamentarians either faced criticism from their constituents or made hurried trips back to their localities in the summer of 1909 to preclude such rebellions. One also finds that disaffection with the party leadership was especially prevalent among pastors, officials, retired army officers, Mittelstand organizers, and Conservatives from urban or semi-urban

9 See H. Opitz, 'Soll die Industrie kons. oder liberal sein?', KonsMon, 1906 (2), pp. 1125-1134; G. O. Beutler, 'Ergänzung der Programm der Kons. Partei', Vaterland, 14, 1907; DTZ, 9/14.4.07; MAZ, 12/13.4.07, 'Moderne Konservative'; Vaterland, 26.10./16.11.07; DTZ, 30.10./2.11.07; Vaterland, 23.11.07, 'Parteidisziplin'; the DTZ, 10.5.08, criticised the 'new reform-Conservatism' as exemplified in Friedrich Calebow's book, Alte Wege - neue Ziele! Ernste Worte aus konservativem Munde (Leipzig, 1908); cf. NatZ, 3.5.09, 'Die sächsische Kons. und die "besonderen Landesverhältnisse"'; Tag, 11.12.07.

10 Best overviews in Fränk. Kur, 2.8.09, 'Die "Konsolidierung" der kons. Partei'; BNN, 27.7.09, 'Aus kons. Wahlkreisen'; Ger, 22.8.09, 'Die Absplitterung unter den Kons.'; KnZ, 16.8.09, 'Kons. Parteirebellen'; BT, 2.7.09, 'Die Fahnenflucht in der kons. Partei'; CC, 16.8.09, 'Nun soll es genug sein!'

areas. Even before Bülow left office, there was talk of forming a 'Young Conservative Party', and almost every week from July onwards there were notices of Conservatives, prominent and obscure, who formally withdrew from the party in protest against the finance reform vote. Other Conservative groups or individuals with tender consciences published defences of DKP policy which argued their 'special reasons' for following the party leadership. The Saxons cynically abandoned their pro-inheritance tax stand altogether, and at least two of the Saxon deputies secretly agreed with the BdL leadership not to deviate from the agrarian program again.[11]

One Conservative group which wished neither to defend the Reichstag caucus leadership nor break entirely from the DKP was the Conservative Verein in Groß-Lichterfelde, headed by Arthur von Löbell. The meeting of 22 Conservative Bürgervereine in Berlin on 14 July 1909 was the first opportunity for the rebels around Löbell to expand the scope of their organization and criticism of the Normann group. The presence of the BdL's Dr. Kaufhold at this meeting could not preclude a resolution against the Reichstag caucus's policy. Various Verein representatives claimed their organizations had lost 25 per cent of their membership in the last weeks and months. Among the Bürgervereine most strongly represented in Löbell's rebellion were

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11 Konservative unter sich (Berlin, 1909), copy in BAK, ZSg 1, 74/6 (15); Post, 5.7.09, 'Eine jungkons. Partei?'; LeipZ, 8.8.09, 'Jungkonservativ'; Konservative unter sich, p. 20; cf. KZ, CC, and Rb, 22.9.09, and press review in NAZ, 12.9.09, for varying Cons. responses to the resignations; the BdL press often took the lead in questioning the Cons. credentials of the rebels. Self-justifications in: Liebermann v. Sonnenberg's explanation to his DSP followers, July 1909, NL Liebermann, 2, 16, f. 57ff; the Baden Cons. Verein's Die Reichsfinanzreform 1909 im Lichte der Öffentlichkeit (Karlsruhe, [1910]); and Hermes' long letter to Valentini, 6.10.09, ZStA, 2.2.1, 667, f. 53-63; also SchwMerkur, 28.7.09, 'Der Eiertanz der Sachsen'; Puhle, Interessenpolitik, p. 266.

those from Moabit, Charlottenburg, and the district which lent its name to this 'movement', Pankow.[12]

In early August, the 'Pankowers' formed a 'Free Conservative Union' under the leadership of Herbert Schmidt, and issued a founding declaration which sought to express the various elements of the Bürgervereine's disaffection.[13] After the Block had been destroyed by 'party egoism,'

> ... the Conservative name must be made honourable again and the Conservative cause be helped to regain its force of attraction! That is the reason we invite you, Conservative men of Germany ... to unite with us and, on the basis of the old program, create a new organization, a Union **within the party** which will represent non-aristocratic elements better than the Conservative Party has done until now, and which corresponds to the conservative and healthy social sensibilities. Unite with us for the renewal of Conservatism!

Through August and September, the Conservative Union in Pankow became a thorn in the side of the Kreuzzeitung and Deutsche Tageszeitung, since it provided a focus for dissent. While the Reichsbote did not agreee with party 'secession' - despite the rebels' claim that they opposed the Reichstag caucus leadership, not the party leadership as such - it consistently warned against rejecting calls for reform out of hand. It advised the DKP to admit that errors of policy had been made, and suggested that the Tageszeitung's practice of labelling all rebels 'Auch-Konservative' could alienate vital elements from the party, such as the educated Bürgertum. Only with a degree of open-mindedness, wrote Engel, could the Conservative Party begin a much-needed process of rejuvenation, organizationally and otherwise. After the party's intransigence had called into existence the Hansabund, Bauernbund, and other anti-agrarian movements, any other course, the Reichsbote argued,

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12 See F.W. v. Löbell to Heydebrand, 16.5.09, defending his brother from BdL-DKP attacks, and reply, 18.5.09; Rkz. 1391/5, f. 166ff; FsZ, 30.7.09.

13 Rb, 7.8..09, 'Die kons. Volkspartei'; KZ, 8.8.09.

amounted to 'political suicide.' Conservative journals in Silesia, Dresden, and elsewhere concurred.[14]

By early October 1909, the general Conservative party congress which had been planned in 1907 but postponed due to the finance reform crisis became another focus for reformist ambitions. As one Conservative newspaper in Saxony put it, 'everything which in the Conservative Party is somehow needful of reform must, and hopefully will, be brought to discussion in the coming party congress.' The party leadership, not wholly incorrectly, regarded the congress as a salutary outlet for frustration and radical reform proposals; the same motive probably lay behind the move to co-opt Otto Beutler into the Committee of 11 in late October 1909. Nevertheless, these moves could not prevent the Conservative Union from issuing its first official program declaration in November, which in turn revived all the issues which inspired dissent from the DKP leadership.[15]

This declaration is noteworthy in that it displays how the various threads of reformism and dissent were woven together in the wake of the finance reform crisis to produce a strong argument for change. There were five basic elements to the Union's argument. First, criticism was directed squarely against the caucus leadership's handling of the finance issue, not against either Conservative principles or the Tivoli program. Second, it was claimed that 'the leaders [had] lost touch with the people,' partly because men from academic, industrial, trade, small-business, small-farming, and working-class backgrounds were lacking in the party's membership. From this point emerged the third and fourth points: 3) that the Farmers' League leaders had misdirected the DKP and contributed to the conflict between rural and urban Conserva-

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14 Rb, 22.9./29.10.09; KnZ, 25.8.09; for different reactions, cf. KZ, 27.10.09; DTZ, 1.9.09; and Rb, 26.8.09, 'Organisation'; DresN, 26.9.09; W. v. Massow, 26.11.09, in Wallraf, 'Politik der DKP', p. 156.

15 'Konservative Männer in Stadt und Land!', 13.11.09.

tive viewpoints; and 4) that the party's rejection of an inheritance tax - which would have contributed to a balancing of the economic interests of all classes and professions - both diminished the popularity of the Conservative cause in urban areas and led the party away from the path to becoming a Volkspartei. Finally, the Union argued that the DKP leadership underestimated the dangers of a parliamentary alliance with the Centre and the Poles, and called for a return to the Bülow Block. As the Union's summation of its critique declared, the present dissatisfaction and unprecedented lack of commitment in wide Conservative circles were directly attributable to the errors made in 1909. Its call to arms read as one of the most succinct and yet comprehensive revisionist appeals in the history of the DKP:

> More contact with the people!
> Independence from the Farmers' League!
> Equity between city and country!
> Away from the Centre Party!
> Back to the Block concept against Social Democracy!
> **Then the Conservative Party will become a Volkspartei.**

Following upon this declaration, the Pankowers met on 8 December and formally constituted their Union as 'an organization within the Conservative Party.' The lawyer, Paul Bredereck, was elected as chairman; the retailer, Herbert Schmidt, became managing chairman; and the treasurer was Pastor Julius Koch. Interestingly, the Pankowers were willing to accept the DKP leadership's offer of an opporuntity to present its views at the general party congress three days later, but only if a speech by Bredereck could be followed by a discussion opened by Koch.[16]

Not unexpectedly, the Reichsbote looked favourably upon many of the Pankowers' reformist cries, while the BdL published very antagonistic articles against the Union. The Kreuzzeitung raised some eyebrows by reviewing the Union's demands relatively sympathetically.[17]

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16 See Rb, 9.12.09; CC, 9.12.09.

17 DTZ, 20.12.09; KZ, 14/16.11.09.

To be sure, the radical tone and utopian ideals of the Pankowers about the 'free competition' of economic estates or about the DKP's ability to accomodate all economic groups were strongly criticised. Yet the Kreuzzeitung wrote:

> Our party owes so much to the Farmers' League that we can only hope that an "Urban League" could in time prove as useful to the Conservative Party; the independence of the party from interest groups of all sorts, we also advocate. And "more contact with the people" will easily be achieved when this "people" pays more attention to the party, does not support liberal or "non-partisan" newspapers, ... creates impressive Vereine, and organizes everywhere, so that not only great words but also great deeds can be thrown into the balance.
> If the "Conservative Union" works in this sense, it can certainly help the party's cause. May it succeed in developing from all the contradictory program points in the declaration at least a good working program. At present, the "movement" seems to have made itself strong only in negation. That impresses no one.

For the Kreuzzeitung, then, these Conservative reformers were sitting in a glass house. Conservative notables could not be expected to hand over a share of power within the party to a group which had in no way shown what urban Conservatism could achieve.

Although the Conservative Party congress of 11 December 1909 succeeded in parading a host of supporters of DKP finance policy before the public, it did little to resolve the broad questions of Conservatism's 'renewal' which had raged since July. The Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung's observation that urban Conservatism - 'no longer a quantité négligeable' - was the most important issue facing the congress was not shared by enough Conservatives to pave the way for a truly critical self-evaluation by congress speakers or for practical consideration of how to expand the DKP's grass-roots organization and regional press.[18]

Thus the debate launched by the Pankowers and other dissenters persisted, spurred on by more resignations from the party by Mittelstand leaders and by a vigorous agitation by Conservative Union

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18 NAZ, 28.11.09; KZ, 11/14.12.09; Rb, 16.12.09.

leaders travelling to different areas of Germany in early 1910.[19] This activity in turn compelled the DKP leaders to begin their own agitational campaign to generate resolutions or press articles expressing faith in the DKP's Reichstag leaders. In his memoirs Westarp reports how Heydebrand at this time abandoned much of his former disinclination to speak at provincial rallies.[20] Such attempts to quell the controversy succeeded only in part. In Posen, for example, when Westarp's constituency election agent, Landrat Kley, sent him reports of unrest and dissatisfaction among local Conservative voters, suggesting that Westarp return to address a meeting which the Pankowers were going to stage there, Westarp's reply indicated how unwilling the DKP leadership was to face the rebels directly. Westarp wrote Kley that his proposal 'would certainly be unheard of, if the [Pankowers] still wanted to cook my goose. Is the connection with them completely broken off, or can one somehow approach them?' To Westarp's dilemma, there was no easy answer.[21]

9.3 Urban Conservatism and the Drive to the West

Although the Pankow rebellion had brought the problem of Conservatism in the cities before Conservative eyes, a general drive to expand DKP influence in the west of Germany actually preceded the

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19 Aspects of the debate are illustrated in: DTZ, 4.2.10, 'Eine stürmische Versammlung der Jungkons.'; Lübeck.Gen.Anz, 2.2.10, 'Die Notwendigkeit einer neuen kons. Partei'; Rb, 11.2.10, 'Keine Sezession!'; DtVksZ, 11.2.10, 'Ein Husarenritt der Pankower i. d. Hannoverland'; KZ, 10.2.10, 'Die Parteiidee der Kons.'; DtRp, 11.2.10; DTZ, 16.2.10; OstprZ, 17.2.10, 'Parteidisziplin'.

20 Westarp, Kons. Politik, I, pp. 397f; for Württemberg, Hessen, Mecklenburg, Bavaria, and Berlin, cf. DtRp, 8.1.10; KZ, 17.1.10; MecklN, 6.2.10; DTZ, 2.4.10; StaatsbgZ, 23.3.10. For a typical party congress in 1910, cf. the official protocol of the Pomeranian Cons. congress, 30.11.10, BAK, ZSg 1, 70/1 (15). Heydebrand (p. 31) declared: 'Gentlemen, if we Conservatives wish to have the right to exist in the present age, then our party must be a progressive party.'

21 Kley's reports, 29.7.09, 15.9.09, 6/11.10.09, 6.2.10, and Westarp's replies, 10.10.09, 7.2.10, NL Westarp, 55, f. 36-71; 1, f. 12ff.

controversy about urban Conservatism. As early as December 1909 the Kreuzzeitung published a letter from Cologne which sought to explain why the agitation against the DKP's finance policy had taken such root in the Rhineland and Westphalia. Noting that most western Germans believed in liberal typologies of reactionary, east-Elbian Junkers, the correspondent suggested that the practice of supporting Christian Social or Free Conservative candidates should be replaced by the nomination of as many DKP test-candidates as possible. Even if the DKP could not at first hope to win majorities in local Reichstag elections, the rising demographic importance of the west, the substantial Protestant population, and the growth of dissatisfaction with Young Liberalism apparent in industrial areas all argued for an increased commitment from Conservatives to expand their agitation in these provinces.[22]

By February 1910, Heydebrand had announced in his post-congress travels that party secretariats were to be established for both Westphalia and the Rhine Province. The political press discussed this organizational drive in articles headed 'Conservatives on the March,' or 'The Step Across the Elbe', and noted at the same time that the NLP was increasing its own agitation in 'Conservative domains' east of the Elbe. The Deutsche Tageszeitung emphasised the DKP's duty to take up the slack as liberal Honoratiorenpolitik broke down, while the Kreuzzeitung pointed out that the DKP spoke to the needs of the Mittelstand and of industrialists who distrusted the National Liberals' increasingly leftist orientation and 'softness' on the socialist question. The expansion of Conservatism in the west would help the party tactically as well, because even a minority in local elections would provide DKP leaders with 'compensation objects' which could then

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22 KZ, 14.12.09.

be bartered to secure Conservative victories in the east. Finally, the 'westernization' of the party - first conceived in 1876 but never realized - was now necessary to undermine the arguments of the Pankowers about DKP one-sidedness and unpopularity. The Kreuzzeitung wrote:[23]

> We must make propaganda for our ideals, not only in the east and north but also in the west and south, not only in the countryside but in the cities too. We have repeatedly said that the tasks of the DKP are by no means restricted to agrarian questions, but rather that it is a Volkspartei in the best sense....

Heydebrand echoed this thought when he said at a party congress in Hanover that the Conservatives needed 'to get closer to the cities,' since, he declared, a 'Conservative Party that cannot understand this has no right to play a leading role in our nation.' When the Conservatives staged a large party congress in Cologne in May 1911, the Kreuzzeitung triumphantly announced: 'The ice has been broken.'[24] The liberal press was quick to report the strongly anti-National Liberal speeches at the Cologne congress, and to comment on the Conservatives' wish to win the allegiance of large industrialists. On this and other occasions, however, opponents heaped scorn on the DKP's actual achievements in this westward drive. The Schwäbische Merkur noted that whatever impression the Cologne extravaganza made was due mainly to 'the carnivalistic tendencies of the Cologne public.' After the 1912 elections, the liberal press had even more concrete data, in the form of voting returns, with which to chronicle the DKP failure.

The effort to develop DKP organization in the west was accompanied by a wider debate on the role of Conservatism in an urbanizing society and the function of the DKP as a 'party of all interests and classes.'

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23 Ger, 23.1./6.2.10; NatZ, 11.7.10; DTZ, 16.2.10; KZ, 10.2.10.

24 See KZ, 9.5.11; CC, 9.5.11; BBC, 8.5.11; FsZ, 10.5.11, 'Die Kons. auf den Industriellenfang'; SchwMerkur, 10.5.11; BT, 2.8.11; FkZ, 27.1.14; KZ, 27.1.14.

The concept of 'urban Conservatism' developed not only from the organizational intiatives taken in 1910 but also from the intellectual debates introduced in 1911 under the banner of 'cultural Conservatism.' In mid-1912, the Reichsbote and the Konservative Monatsschrift went so far as to suggest that the DKP program required amendment to address urban problems and interests, but the Kreuzzeitung and the Deutsche Tageszeitung resisted this.[25] The latter wrote that the DKP could not risk losing its roots in the countryside to win 'uncertain ground' in the cities. The Reichsbote, on the other hand, saw in such negativism only greater dangers for the Conservative Party. It wrote:

> It is not a question of overturning old and eternally valid ideals of our party to create new ones. No, these ideals are to flow into new forms, and be given new goals. ... The inadequacy of our program in terms of the challenges presented by the new age is felt most pointedly by those who, like us, have for years led the struggle for the Conservative Weltanschauung predominantly on the difficult territory of the large cities and industrial centres. ...
> Today, in the time of the universal franchise, a party must **go out among the people:** it must show the masses where their true friends lie and it must bring closer to them what they strive for. ...
> We need a **Conservative Volkspartei** - under the banner of the **old Christian-Conservative program** but with the challenge of **Conservative progress!**

Both the Reichsbote and the Konservative Monatsschrift moderated their demands for a program revision when the other leading DKP journals expressed contrary opinions. The Deutsche Tageszeitung had written:

> The cities must exist. But for the **city of millions,** with its mass devouring of popular and ethical forces, there is no logical place for a reasonable social policy. ...
> A Conservative politician must practice **politics of the future.** He must learn especially to assess the danger of one-sided urbanization. The large cities work purely as "an element of decomposition" - physically and morally.

Subsequently, the Monatsschrift wrote that 'our program is less bad than unpractical.' It returned to previous ideas of complementing a permanent 'program of principles' with an 'action program ... of Con-

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25 KonsMon, 2 (11), Aug. 1912, pp. 1083-1092; Rb, 13.8.12; DTZ, 9.8.12.

servative progress' which could be amended periodically. As it wrote in its October 1912 issue: 'In the party struggle, a party does not appear as the representative of its great ideals, rather it is judged by its practical demands and actions.... The wish for Conservative progress does not mean a change of Conservative goals....'[26]

Once again, left liberals were able to point to the DKP's notable lack of success in winning votes in the large cities. The statistical decline of Conservatism in urban and semi-urban centres is clear from Table 9.1 below.[27]

Table 9.1: Reichstag Elections, by Size of Locality
Percentage of Vote Won, 1898 and 1912

Inhabitants	DKP	FKP	NLP	Z	SPD	a-S	BdL
1. 1898							
a) 0-2000	15.9	5.6	11.8	23.4	14.2	3.4	2.4
b) 2000-10,000	7.4	4.5	13.6	19.5	32.8	3.2	0.6
c) Over 10,000	5.2	2.5	13.1	10.9	45.2	4.4	0.2
d) Over 100,000*	3.7	0.4	11.0	6.5	53.8	6.7	-
Total (a-c)	11.1	4.4	12.5	18.8	27.2	3.7	1.4
2. 1912						WVgg	
a) 0-2000	17.5	4.6	12.8	20.5	19.0	4.1	
b) 2000-10,000	5.7	2.6	15.0	19.8	35.8	2.2	
c) Over 10,000	3.0	1.7	13.8	10.9	49.3	-	
d) Over 100,000*	2.2	1.4	12.1	9.6	54.9	-	
Total (a-c)	9.2	3.0	13.6	16.4	34.8	2.5	

(* included in c)

Thus the left liberal press pointed out that in the 1912 Reichstag elections, Conservatives' share of the vote in German cities of over 10,000 inhabitants had shrunk to only three per cent. By contrast, in cities over 100,000, the Free Conservatives and National Liberals could both show in increased share of the vote over 1898, while the DKP share

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26 FsZ, 15.8.12; DTZ, 14/20/21.8.12; HannTN, 26.2.13.

27 Fränk.Cour, 4.9.13; FsZ, 31.10.13; FsZ, 10.3.14, 'Hinein in die Städte!' Ritter, pp. 104-120.

had sunk from 3.7% to 2.2%, a figure which beside the SPD's 54.9% of the vote was rightly described as insignificant. As an explanation for the failure of urban Conservatism, the Freisinnige Zeitung observed that perhaps German urbanites had not yet forgotten the words of Georg Oertel, who had declared that 'the city transforms flourishing life into stinking putrefaction.'

Conservative efforts in the cities did not end with the debacle of 1912. In November 1913, the former Christian Social pastor, Julius Werner, now a prominent Conservative Party speaker, was involved with plans to formulate a 'municipal program' for the Conservatives, after it had been discovered through a Wahlverein circular that 'in all of Germany not one Conservative municipal program exists.' In a March 1914 Committee of Fifty meeting, Werner spoke on 'the possibility and necessity of Conservatism in the large cities,' and this speech was printed shortly thereafter by the Kreuzzeitung. In two instalments, Werner managed to outline the program points designed to win the allegiance of urban voters. Characteristically, he concluded that chief among 'the spiritual weapons in the arsenal of the Conservative system of thought' was the 'inalienable adherence to the fundamental Christian principles of our national life, and the regard for authority.' In its May 1914 issue, the Konservative Monatsschrift returned to the theme of 'Conservative Movements in the West.' Then, on 12 June 1914, Werner addressed the Committee of Twelve, again on urban Conservatism. Directly thereafter, a commission was struck, with Westarp in the chair and members including Werner, Beutler, and the chairman of the Berlin (city) Wahlverein, Ulrich. Nothing is known of this commission's later activity; but at least one study was written for the DKP, by Wolfgang Kapp's friend, Dr. Georg Schiele. Thus,

despite the near-total electoral failure of the DKP in the cities, this brand of revisionism remained a persistent feature of Conservative politics after 1909.[28]

9.4 Cultural Conservatism

Apart from urban and west-German Conservative initiatives, a number of proposals in the period 1910-14 sought to increase the intellectual appeal of the DKP. The Konservative Monatsschrift provided some of the impetus for a public debate on these issues when in its December 1910 issue it discussed a possible change in the party's name; it wrote: 'the word "Conservative", if it signifies nothing but "preserving", has truly no power of attraction.'[29] Following upon this article, in early 1911 Der Tag published two articles by Dr. Adolf Grabowsky, entitled 'Cultural Conservatism' and 'The Conservative Weltanschauung and the Conservative Party.'[30] In the first of these articles, Grabowsky contrasted wordly and culturally refined English conservatives with their German counterparts, whose anti-literary and anti-intellectual bias divorced them from the broadly educated milieu in upper German society. As he wrote, 'the educated man longs to be able to call himself Conservative, but the word sticks in his throat when he thinks of the Conservative Party.' A broadening of Conservative horizons was the basic element of Grabowsky's cultural Conservatism: with this 'magical' word, Grabowsky argued, Conservatives could abandon the sort of Conservatism 'which suppresses or ignores what is

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28 Hauptverein d. Dt.-Kons. to Westarp, 4.11.13, NL Westarp, 1, f. 178ff; FsZ, 10.3.14; KZ, 15/17.3.14; Peck, Radicals, p. 137; Hauptverein d. Dt.-Kons. circular, 23.6.14, in NL Westarp, 2, f. 72; Schiele, "Konservative Partei und städtisches Bürgertum", n.d., 'written for Herr v. H.', in ZStA II, NL W. Kapp, D V 13. Cf. Schiele to Kapp, 12.11.12, and Schröter to Kapp, 17.1.14, in NL Kapp, C IX, 11, f. 43, and D V, 14, f. 25.

29 DTZ, 14/15.12.10; VossZ, 15.12.10; KZ, 15/15.12.10.

30 Tag, 19/31, 22.1./5.2.11; cf. Thierbach, Grabowsky, passim.

new' and instead protect it from 'an acceptance of plebian standards.' Such a reform could re-establish the DKP's 'national' credentials: 'Here it is a question of more than feed tariffs or the elimination of rural administrative districts.... Conservatism will only be patriotic when it becomes cultural Conservatism.'

In the second Tag article and in subsequent writings through 1911, Grabowsky expanded his argument to suggest that Conservatism's anti-intellectualism put it in opposition to the wider cultural movements of the age:[31]

> The educated want to [move toward] Conservatism, but this demands of them a sacrifizio dell' inteletto. ... Therefore, beside official Conservatism must be placed a cultural Conservatism, which does not want to create a new party but which rather wants much more, in the interests of Conservatism itself, to reconcile this with modern culture.

Cultural Conservatism in practice was designed to wed a new Conservative open-mindedness with the need to re-erect a parliamentary alliance of right-wing forces whose common bond was an anti-democratic elitism. In the Tag articles and then in his book on 'Cultural Conservatism and the Reichstag Elections',[32] Grabowsky echoed the DKP's conviction that the National Liberals who were disillusioned by Ernst Bassermann's increasingly leftist orientation as head of the NLP provided a large potential for Conservative recruitment. But Grabowsky argued that DKP parliamentary isolation demanded more enlightened Conservative policy to win over these irresolute right-wing 'liberals':

> Liberalism, which has totally abandoned itself to democracy, ... can no longer be considered among the true friends of progress. Progress today lies in the Conservative Weltanschauung, the educated are driven over to it as if by the force of fate.
> One would therefore assume that the Conservative Party is growing as never before, that our best are streaming into its Vereine in stormy masses. And yet one sees none of this; indeed, on the contrary, the Conservative Party at the moment stands alone, completely isolated, forsaken, cut off from the currents of development....

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31 See Puhle, Interessenpolitik, p. 277.

32 Kulturkonservatismus und die Reichstagswahlen (Berlin, 1912), esp. pp. 5ff.

> Cultural Conservatism is perhaps designed to replace Block politics in the coming [1912] Reichstag elections. Under the banner of cultural Conservatism can gather all those who do not condemn our age and its culture but who expect, for the welfare of the nation, that improvement will come from the best, not from the masses.

The reaction to Grabowsky's ideas from the Conservative press was strongly negative. The Kreuzzeitung printed letters criticising Grabowsky's faith in what was really 'the sham culture of the superficially educated.' The Deutsche Tageszeitung identified him with the Hansabund. Even the normally pro-reform Konservative Monatsschrift was critical of Grabowsky's equation of 'culture' and 'education'. Given this reaction, it is no wonder that the left liberals were able to undercut Conservative talk about a commitment to bettering urban life and gaining an organizational foothold in German cities.

By the time Grabowsky's book was published in early 1912, his tone had changed from one pleading for reform to one of disillusionment and alienation. Labelling the DKP as much a 'class party' as the SPD, Grabowsky wrote:[33]

> The Conservative Party is - I find no other expression - antediluvial.... The Junkers today, as centuries ago, sit on their small estates, provide, today as centuries ago, useful material for the army and administration; but the entire new development of industry, trade, shipping, colonization outside Europe, philosophy, science, has passed by the real cabbage Junkerdom, leaving hardly a trace. And thereby the Conservative Party, which is ruled by the small rural Junkers, has become estranged from all progress. ... The millions see how a little band of parochial agrarians pursue particularist politics at the expense of the people, under the name of Conservatism. ... And these millions are turning away from the extreme Radicalinskis of the Right.

Through 1912, Grabowsky found that his lack of success in reforming the DKP was assuaged by an increasingly warm reception in the Free Conservative Party. He was offered the post of editor of the FKP weekly, Das neue Deutschland: from 1 October 1912 onwards, this organ, with the subtitle 'Weekly Journal of Conservative Progress', followed

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33 See KZ, 5.2.11; Zeitfragen, 24.4.11; KZ, 4.5.11; FsZ, 7.5.11; CC, 11.7.11; KonsMon, March 1911, pp. 586-588; Westarp, Kons. Politik, I, p. 402; Grabowsky, Kulturkonservatismus, pp. 5f; also Puhle, Interessenpolitik, p. 277n.

Grabowsky's lead in emphasising the distinction between 'real' and 'unyielding' Conservatism.[34]

Grabowsky found an affinity for other 'cultural critics', such as the author of a book on 'The Art of Politics', Oskar A. H. Schmitz. In 1912, Schmitz offered his own answers to the questions raised in 1911 by Grabowsky, when he published an article in Die Zukunft entitled, 'Can a Modern Man be Conservative?' Like Grabowsky, Schmitz placed his initial hopes on a regeneration of the Conservative Party:

> Many will say: if only this sort of Conservatism prevailed in the Conservative Party! Unfortunately, many Conservatives restrict their political tasks to preventing the realization of any radical nonsense. The Conservative powers impel what is new to prove itself; if it is strong enough, then it will succeed against any resistance. However, a creative Conservative policy will not fail to attempt to shape things itself.

Through the First World War and afterward, Grabowsky and his circle continued to propagate the ideal of 'progressive Conservatism.' But apart from Julius Werner and Adam Röder, whose own brands of Christian Conservatism develped partly in reaction to this impulse, Conservative Party leaders and editors did not deign to debate cultural Conservatism after Grabowsky had definitely left their camp.[35]

9.5 The Women's Movement and Young Conservatism

Although there were reports as early as 1909 that Conservative women were organizing themselves, the absence of Conservative women speakers at the March 1912 congress of the 'German Evangelical Women's League' prompted the Kreuzzeitung to observe that this organization no longer ensured that the DKP viewpoint on the women's question would be

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34 Cf. FkZ, 19.10.12.

35 Schmitz, 'Kann ein moderner Mensch konservativ sein?', Zukunft, 78, 1912, pp. 153-157; J. Werner, 'Die kulturpolitische Notwendigkeit des Konservatismus für Stadt und Gesellschaft', Deutschvölkischen Hochschulblättern, 11, Feb. 1914; A. Röder, Konservative Zukunftspolitik (Karlsruhe, 1918); A. Röder, Der deutsche Konservatismus und die Revolution (Gotha, 1920); other 'progressive' Cons. critiques discussed in Mende, 'Kulturkonservatismus', pp. 93-125.

heard over increasingly loud liberal and Catholic voices. A short time later, the Kreuzzeitung printed a letter from a Conservative countess who claimed that previous Reichstag elections would have turned out very differently if Conservative women had been more active in politics.[36] Conservatives were discovering 'too late' that educated women from the upper classes had a duty to work among the women of other circles, in order to counter Social Democratic attacks on 'everything which is holy to mankind ... peace, monarchy, and faith.' (As she observed, many of the 110 Social Democratic deputies in the 1912 Reichstag had had 'bad mothers.')

On 17 November 1912, Julius Werner - who had reported on the same question to the Free Church Social Conference over a decade before[37] - told a Committee of Fifty meeting that the DKP must face its responsibilities on women's demands. In this report, Werner advocated Conservative support for improved educational opportunities for women, and for women's work, 'within natural limits.' He also noted that Conservative women had a strong role to play in charitable activities and in 'the defence of Conservative principles and ideas in our national life.' Any demand for **political** equality and the franchise for women, however, he rejected as 'neither necessary nor beneficial.'[38]

Werner's comments did not receive unanimous approval within the DKP, since many felt that all women's demands required a break with tradition. The Pommersche Tagespost, for instance, rejected the cry of 'equal pay for equal work', since the value of a woman's work could not be measured in wages alone. Nevertheless, following upon Werner's

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36 DTZ, 15.11.12, 'Der "kons. Fortschritt" und die Frauenbewegung'; Westarp, Kons. Politik, I, pp. 398; Puhle, Interessenpolitik, pp. 88f; BdL press archive, 7984, 'DKP und Frauenpolitik, 1912-32'; VossZ, 9.2.09; KZ, 4/8/11.3.12; FsZ, 9.3./12.7.12.

37 J. Werner, Die Geschichte und der gegenwärtigen Stand der Frauenbewegung (Berlin, 1899).

38 CC in KVZ, 28.11.12; VossZ, 28.11.12.

report, a 'Conservative Women's Union' was founded on 9 April 1913. The Union's pledge 'to convey to Conservative politicians an understanding for the legitimate wishes of women' was greeted by the Conservative press, though in tones which suggested that the tasks of the organization fell firmly within traditional bounds. The Reichsbote wrote that the Christian Weltanschauung would be the main element of this new defence of Conservative principles against 'disbelief' and 'cosmopolitan anti-nationalism.' The Kreuzzeitung observed that, although 'politics is without doubt a hateful business,' the 'new age demands new comrades-in-arms.' In any case, few unfamiliar faces appeared among these new comrades: the chairwoman of the Union was Frau Bertha von Krōcher, wife of the DKP House of Deputies President; the secretary was Frau Elisabeth Stackmann, wife of the Committee of Five's business manager; other prominent figures were Frau von Heydebrand, Frau von Normann, and Countess von Schwerin-Lōwitz.[39]

Nonetheless, after the initial founding of the Conservative Women's Union, doubts were continually expressed about the reliability of the Union as a bulwark against women's emancipation. Critics were most disturbed by the presence in the Union's executive of Fräulein Paula Mūller, the chairwoman of the German Evangelical Women's League, which offered only very ambiguous opposition to the extension of the franchise to women. The Deutsche Tageszeitung made clear its lack of conviction that women should mix in politics. The Kreuzzeitung was somewhat more enlightened, opening its columns to both pro- and anti-Union comment. By February 1914, however, even the Kreuzzeitung noted that the DKP leadership would have to veto the efforts of the Union if it abandoned Christian principles. This prompted an increasingly defensive posture from Frau von Krōcher, who declared that

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39 PommRp, 20.12.12; KZ, 9.5.13; Rb, 16.5.13, including founding declaration; DTZ, 17/24.5.13; Kōnigsbg.HartnZ, 9.7.13, 'Kons. Grūnde gegen das Frauenrecht'; Westarp, Kons. Politik, I, p. 399.

any 'opening to the left' was 'firmly bricked shut.' By the beginning of the war, the majority of Conservatives probably believed that the 1913 organization of Conservative women had been only the opening of yet another Pandora's Box full of modern, progressive, and democratic spirits.[40]

Much the same conclusion emerged from the shorter pre-war history of organized 'young Conservatism'. Like the Conservative women's group, the organization of young Conservatives was heralded long before it became a reality.[41] But in July 1914, the founding of an 'Imperial Young Conservative Association' was announced.[42] With its centre in Bonn, this 'organization' was little more than a collection of academic youths who wished somehow to gain attention for themselves within the DKP. The Association's statutes reflected a curious mixture of anti-Semitism, völkisch nationalism, political inexperience, and populist activism, summed up in the slogan:

Our watchword is:	**struggle**	for the most holy
Our means is:	**action**	good of our nation.
Our future is:	**success**	

The organization even had an odd concept of youth, since membership was open to all Germans between eighteen and 35 years of age.

Although the DKP general secretary, Bruno Schröter, had apparently been in touch with the Bonn group in April 1914, Heydebrand and Westarp were faced with a fait accompli in early July. The liberal press tried

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40 DTZ, 14.7.13, 'Der kleine Finger'; DTZ, 6/16/26.9.13; KZ, 5.10.13, 'Kann und soll die Tätigkeit der kons. Parteien durch die Frauen unterstütz werden?' SCC, 1.1.14, 'Gegen den Strom'; KZ, 14.2.14; KZ, 18.7.14, 'Die Vgg. kons. Frauen und der internationale Frauenkongress.'

41 See BdL press archive, 9023, 'Jungkonservative und Deutschnationale Jugendbund'; Peck, Radicals, pp. 143f; Die Gegenwart, 51, 1897, pp. 396f, 'Jungconservativ' by 'Caliban'; StaatsbgZ, 23.2.07; LeipNN, 8.8.09; DtRp, 12.2.13, 'Was ist jungkonservativ?'

42 Statutes and G. Siegesmund to Westarp, 4.7.14, in NL Westarp, 2, f. 75ff.

to make much of the Association's emphasis on 'idealism' rather than on 'economic interest'; the Freisinnige Zeitung linked the group's manifesto directly to earlier calls from Christian Socials, Pankow rebels, and cultural Conservatives for a broader DKP commitment to urban, academic, and non-agrarian elements of the Conservative milieu. Still, the Reichsbote and the Kreuzzeitung initially welcomed the 'spontaneous' appearance of young Conservatism on the political scene.[43] Heydebrand, on the other hand, was most upset by these developments: he criticised Schröter for having lost his usual political tact; he noted the failure of Rhineland Conservative leaders to steer this reformist activity along the desired path; and he moved to have a change in Kreuzzeitung editorial policy. As he wrote to Westarp on 4 July 1914:[44]

> Either [the Association] belongs completely within our party - then it is superfluous - or it pursues separate aims and can attain them; then it is unfortunate and dangerous, despite all its attractive principles; I would have thought we could have learned enough from the "Young Liberal" Association. I do not agree, therefore, with the Kreuzzeitung's favourable treatment of it yesterday, and have in the meantime ordered our press to **ignore it totally.**

Westarp was also worried, writing to Heydebrand:

> I am honestly not very happy with the founding, but one has to put a good face on a bad affair, as I have advised the Kreuzzeitung to do. ...
> One probably does not need to doubt the good will of the people in Bonn.... I see the unfortunate side of the matter in the danger that the affair will develop very differently than the founders themselves perhaps now believe.... Now that the [founding] declaration has been published, one can hardly move in with fire and sword.

Westarp reported that Schröter would be sending these young Conservatives clippings from the liberal press, 'to make them see what they have wrought.' For the longer term, Westarp proposed:

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43 Rb, 8/10.7.14; DTZ, 13.7.14; Hilfe, 16.7.14; FsZ, 12.7.14; KZ, 26.7.14; BT, 22.7.14.

44 Heydebrand-Westarp Correspondence, Gärtringen (H-W Corr.); Westarp to Heydebrand, 8/15.7.14; and reply, 21.7.14.

> I believe one will have to tolerate them, with something like the following changes later: [give it] a purely local character, and therefore set aside the name "Imperial Association"; restrict membership to those under 25 years of age - the participation of older ones with the franchise was probably crucial for the National Liberals.

Although Westarp showed himself here to be marginally more tolerant than Heydebrand in accepting new departures in Conservative activity - or at least in 'putting on a good face' - there was little chance that young Conservatism would ever be accepted by the Conservative leadership or old-guard rank and file: by 1914, the returns from such 'popular' appeals were too slim and the dangers too large.

9.6 Press Reform and Finance

Before 1908, neither individual journalists nor Conservative delegates entrusted with the task of expanding the party press had accomplished much in the way of practical reform. Although the BdL had established an impressive publishing network, even agrarian calls for greater DKP commitment to its own press usually did not get far beyond critiques of the 'political indolence' and 'lack of material support' displayed by Conservatives. When the 'Conservative Press Association' met in Berlin in early October 1908, a number of striking deficiencies in the DKP press were discussed. Lamenting the fact that press agitation was still regarded as a 'quantité négligeable' within Conservative ranks, the assembled delegates agreed that their organization must move beyond its present function as a forum for the exchange of professional viewpoints and experiences, by establishing a 'central body' whose functions would include: 1) the regular transmission of information and directives from parliamentary, government, and party circles to Conservative newspapers free of charge; and 2) the dissemination of congress reports, lead articles, entertainments, and so on, as inexpensively as possible. Yet the idea of establishing a direct connection between this central press body and the DKP executive was rejected.

In the wake of the finance reform crisis, more and more Conservatives realized that the success of liberal attacks on their party could be ascribed to the lack of a popular DKP press. A number of different viewpoints were advanced: whereas some Conservatives believed a new, inexpensive urban organ should be founded - or an already established, non-Conservative newspaper purchased and adapted to DKP aims - others believed that more effort was needed in rural areas, not Berlin. At the 1909 DKP congress, Karl Stackmann and the leader of Berlin Conservatives, Ulrich, both delivered reports on the need to found a 'popular' Conservative daily. But the Kreuzzeitung remained dubious, noting that the 'little man' in the party would have to cancel his subscription to his local DKP newspaper if he were to do his 'duty' and subscribe to the new organ. As the Kreuzzeitung wrote, 'we do not lack a large, popular newspaper, but rather newspapers which are popular in the area they serve.'[45]

Through 1910-11, articles about DKP efforts to expand its press appeared regularly in German newspapers and journals, although notices of the failure of Conservative press enterprises seemed to be provided by liberal organs as often as new foundings were celebrated by Conservative editors. The Conservative effort continued to be hampered by divergent motives among reformers. Some changes were introduced as a means to limit the possibilities for dissent within the party. The party leadership successfully exploited Heinrich Engel's death in late

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45 Cf. Circular of the 'Verein zur Verbreitung kons. Zeitschriften', BT, 30.9.92; KdBdL, 17.11.08; the Rb, 14.7.08, said the 'Verband der christlich-kons. Presse' had had little practical effect; press association meeting of 10/11.10.08, protocol and letter from CC ed., A. Clar, sent to Rkz., 29.10.08, Rkz. 1391/5, f. 157ff. KZ, 1.8.09; DTZ, 2.8.09; KZ, 4.2.10, 'Zum Kapital der kons. Presse. Ein Wort aus der Praxis für die Praxis', by C. v. Zeppelin; on the rural press, cf. G. Muser, 'Statistische Untersuchung über die Zeitungen Deutschlands 1885-1914' (Diss., Leipzig, 1918), pp. 36f, 82ff; on Kreisblatt editors, Westarp to Rkz, 3.4.03, Rkz. 1391/5, f. 27ff; FsZ, 21.10.10. KZ, 19.12.09; the Deutsches Volksblatt f. Stadt u. Land was allegedly already a Conservative 'Arbeiterblatt'.

1911 as a chance to bring the troublesome Reichsbote closer to the DKP, 'financially and politically', by placing its editorial staff under the direction of a Conservative Party collegium. The Konservative Monatsschrift had already been reined in: the journal's August 1909 criticism of the DKP's Block policy prompted Westarp to take over responsibility for writing its monthly political overviews. Even the Kreuzzeitung suffered disruption and scandal due to the efforts of the DKP executive - principally Schröter - to enforce party discipline.[46]

In April 1913, Engel's successor as editor of the Reichsbote, Gerhard Kropatschek, was dismissed. Kropatschek's 'personal differences of opinion' with the Reichsbote directorate centred on his refusal to oppose the 1913 inheritance tax wholeheartedly and his criticism of Conservatives who were moving closer to the Evangelical League as a means of courting the NLP. In the wake of these disruptions, the left liberal and Centre press spoke of the 'dictatorial ambitions of the party executive' and of a 'revolutionary movement' within the Conservative press. After these sensations, the Kreuzzeitung staff stood under the influence of Schröter, Stackmann (chairman of the Kreuzzeitung board of governors) and Westarp (whose access to the columns of the Kreuzzeitung was contractually assured.) Similar action to quiet dissent was taken at the local level.[47]

There were a number of reasons for the resurgence of reform efforts which occurred in the summer of 1913. One factor was the publication of the new Mosse 'Catalogue of Newspapers', which documented

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46 KonsMon, Oct. 1910 issue on the Cons. press; FsZ, 21.10.10; Westarp, Kons. Politik, I. pp. 400ff; obit. for Engel in Rb, 6.9.11; the FsZ, 6.9.11, noted that the DKP had never broken Engel's independent Cons. spirit.

47 KZ, 27.10.12, with details of KZ organizational changes; StaatsbgZ, 22.2.13, 'Wie es in der Kreuzzeitung zugeht. Die Kulissenarbeit des Herrn Bruno Schröter'; on Rb-KZ conflicts, BT, 22.4.13; on Kropatschek, KZ, 24/25.4.13; BT, 25.4.13; also Vorwärts, 28.4.13, 'Die Disziplinierung der kons. Presse'; KVZ, 3.5.13, '"Umsturzbewegung" in der kons. Presse?'; FsZ, 17.10.13, 'Die Naturgeschichte einer kons. Zeitungsgrundung.'

the weakness of the Conservative press. Of 188 German- or Free Conservative newspapers appearing between three and seven times per week, 143 of these appeared in Prussia, and thirty in the Kingdom of Saxony, leaving only fifteen in the rest of Germany. While the Kreuzzeitung circulation continued to hover around 10,000, a level at which it had stood when the German Reich was born, and other Conservative organs rarely exceeded circulations of 20,000, by 1913 the party faced the competition of newspapers like the Berliner Morgenpost (circulation over 350,000), the Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger (250,000), and the Welt am Montag (150,000).[48]

Another cause for concern was the uncertainty of support for the party press from agrarian and government circles. In 1910, the DKP made a bold attempt to purchase the moderate right-wing Tägliche Rundschau, which with its high circulation among officers and officials had been particularly galling to the party with its criticism of DKP finance policy in 1909. Far from reflecting the Conservative leadership's concern to neutralize this threat, the BdL leaders showed themselves quite willing to see the Rundschau come under the influence of National Liberal agrarians. Wangenheim believed that 'if the paper is directed reasonably by this group, more use can be made of it than in the hands of the Conservatives. In [illegible] I could imagine that with it one would work toward an understanding between agriculture and industry in a clever way.' The same BdL reserve towards strictly DKP press ambitions was displayed in mid-1913, when a reorganization of the party's press in south-west Germany was carried out. Not only did the BdL wish to avoid the loss of 25,000 marks which it felt likely to

48 Rb, 29.6.13; DTZ, 16/22.7.13; compare Cons. claims for Saxony's 'exemplary' Cons. 'Agitationspresse', KZ 1.8.09, with statistics from H. Burkhardt, 'Die politische Tagespresse des Königreiches Sachsen' (Diss., Frieberg in Saxony, 1914), pp. 38-49. Cf. Appendix 2.2, and Wallraf, 'DKP', p. 674; Reiger, Wilhelminische Presse, pp. 111-114; Koszyk, Presse, pp. 130-139, 143; Muser, 'Zeitungen', pp. 9, 58ff; Westarp, Kons. Politik, I, p. 400f.

incur if it supported the dubious Conservative enterprise to found the Süddeutsche Zeitung; there was also a wish to allow 'the Conservative Party for once to go ahead independently, to show what it can achieve on its own strength.'[49]

In the files of the Chancellor's office, Conservative efforts to win government patronage for their press is richly documented. Correspondents included the Saxon Conservative leaders, asking that the government subscribe to Das Vaterland; Dr. Willy Hahn, the prominent reformer in the Charlottenburg Bürgerverein, asking Löbell for advice on how to transform the Staatsburger Zeitung (which Hahn had just acquired) into a 'dignified national newspaper' with closer connections to the DKP; Stöcker, asking for support for the CSP organ, Das Reich; Reimar Hobbing, asking Löbell to subscribe to the Konservative Monatsschrift; and Heinrich Engel, requesting printing assistants.[50] In late 1907, Löbell asked Bülow whether the Chancellery should meet the DKP's request to have the Konservative Korrespondenz distributed in government offices; he even suggested that Prussian provincial authorities should also subscribe to it. Bülow scribbled on Löbell's memo, 'Certainly!', and after meetings between Löbell and Stackmann, the Korrespondenz was sent to five ministries and Reich offices. In 1914, the Chancellery was requested to support the 'Reports from the Conservative Party' as well, and Adam Röder attempted to win sponsorship for

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49 Westarp, ibid., p. 401; Wangenheim to Roesicke, 17.1.10, NL Wangenheim, 5, f. 17; Münchener-AugsbgZ, 17.8.13; FkZ, 19.9.13, 'Unter Brudern'; Schmid-Platzhof to Roesicke, 3.7.13, NL Wangenheim, 8, f. 63f.

50 Saxon Cons. Verein to Rkz, 31.12.04; Löbell reply, 2.1.05; Rkz. 1572, f. 114f; Hahn to Löbell, 30.9.05, 17.10.05, 1.11.05; Stöcker and Mumm to Rkz, 20.12.05, 1/4.1.06; Hobbing to Rkz, 16.7.05, 2.11.05; in Rkz. 1573, f. 9ff, 19ff; Hobbing to Wahnschaffe, 17/30.11.11; Wahnschaffe memo to Bethmann, 6.12.11; Rkz. 1576, f. 27, 45.

his Süddeutsche Konservative Korrespondenz after it was founded in Karlsruhe in 1913.[51]

Apart from organizational initiatives, stricter discipline, and a concern for agrarian or government patronage for the Conservative press, the cause of reform was pushed ahead when Grabowsky turned his attention to the deficiencies in the DKP press in late 1913. The main criticism of the cultural Conservatives was that the DKP resorted too often to political polemics and included only 'superficial' or 'entertaining' literary articles. But the real issue was the popularity of the Conservative press in general. In response to such criticism, the Konservative Korrespondenz wrote that 'the press must not be judged by quantity but rather by quality. And there the Conservative press need not fear the light of public view.' However, steps were taken to dispel the anti-intellectual image of the DKP press. The Kreuzzeitung chronicled the contribution of authors and poets to its columns through the years; plans were announced for a Conservative satirical journal (though with the motto: 'Antidemos'); and in June 1914 the Conservatives staged a large exhibition of their press and its history in Leipzig. They tried to reflect in their reports of this event how the dynamism of the 'eager pens' and the 'printing presses which work day in and day out throughout our nation' were ensuring that the Conservative ideal was being 'enlivened, strengthened, and deepened.'[52]

In truth, however, Conservatives never overcame their inclination to dismiss the press as either an ineffective or an undignified means for influencing public opinion. Röder himself reflected the problem-

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51 Löbell memos, 26.11/3.12.07; Löbell to DKP Hauptverein, 19.12.07; in Rkz, 1574, f. 50-56; Hauptverein letter of 6.4.14, in Rkz. 1578; Röder-Wahnschaffe correspondence, May-June 1914, Rkz. 1578, f. 85ff, 231-238.

52 Das neue Deutschland, 6, 8.11.13; DTZ, 10.11.13; CC, 11.11.13, 'Eine eigenartige Kritik'; Rb, 12.11.13; Post, 13.6.14, 'Ein kons. Witzblatt'; Hann.Cour., 15.6.14, '"Der wahre Michel"' (proposed title); BayrVksfreund, 12.6.14.

atic way Conservatives tried to expand their press when he wrote in July 1914 how misguided it was to believe 'that the people could be influenced in a decisive way **politically** by mass newspapers.' He also reflected Conservative prejudices when he noted that 'the farmer and peasant abandons newspaper reading completely for a good third of the year; for he has **important** things to do.' Westarp noted that Heydebrand never published attributable articles in the Kreuzzeitung, and criticised the Free Conservative leader, Zedlitz-Neukirch, for this practice. Perhaps most enlightening of all, in contrast to the dynamic picture cultivated by the 1914 DKP press exhibition, is an impression of the Conservative press left by Franz Sontag, who was an editor of the Free Conservative Post until 1911, and then editor of the Alldeutsche Blätter. Considering that Free Conservatives had hardly overcome the stuffiness of Honoratiorenpolitik themselves, Sontag's picture contrasting the scenes in the Post and Kreuzzeitung editorial offices suggests how the inertia of traditionalism retarded reform of the DKP press:[53]

> There, an enterprise [the Post] which was filled with the tension of the Essen atmosphere and in which it seemed that the roar of hammers and machines pressed in from every work station; here [the Kreuzzeitung] on the other hand, a quiet, subdued mood, saturated with tradition and filled with a cool aloofness which regarded all haste as taboo, as plebian bad conduct....

Count Westarp recalled in his memoirs that lack of money was 'the greatest hindrance to a strong organization and propaganda in the Conservative Party.'[54] Around 1909, the annual budget of the DKP's Wahlverein was allegedly about 100,000 marks, that is, approximately one-tenth the budget of both the SPD and BdL. Interest from

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53 SCC, 14.7.14; Westarp, Kons. Politik, I, p. 402; BAK, NL "Junius Alter", 6, 'Kampfjahre der Vorkriegszeit', Ms., p. 12.

54 Westarp, Kons. Politik, I, pp. 399ff and for the following.

accumulated capital and private contributions, Westarp claimed, were the central office's principal sources of income. Little is known of contributions to the Wahlverein by the regional and provincial organizations: in 1913, the Silesian Conservatives raised their annual contribution to the central party chest from 5000 to 7500 marks. But at that point, Silesians - along with East Prussians - were considered to have the healthiest finances in the party.[55]

The Conservative press, after the general interest in organizational reform was reawakened around 1906, occasionally devoted articles on the need to rationalize the party's finances, but, again, these usually were little more than calls for greater individual sacrifice. The Kreuzzeitung in 1906 spoke of a 'party political savings bank', to which party members would make deposits between elections and from which the cost of election campaigns would be met; but no action was taken. Instead, the effort to begin accumulating campaign funds would simply begin further in advance of elections (if possible) or else funding drives would be launched for a specific purpose, such as providing the salary for a new party secretary in northern Hanover in 1913.[56]

In Chapter Two, figures from the Wahlverein's 1882 financial report were cited, showing that important party members often contributed the most meagre sums to the DKP. Westarp substantiated this. Prince von Hohenlohe-Oehringen, one of the wealthiest Germans of the time, left the DKP Reichstag caucus in protest over the 'toppling' of Bülow in 1909. Westarp was horrified to learn from Schröter that Hohenlohe had also cut off his donations to the party. Schröter added, however, that the DKP was not likely to miss his annual benefaction of twenty marks! Over time, the central leadership played a larger part

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55 FsZ, 9.12.13, 'Die kons. Kriegskasse'.

56 KZ, 7.6.06; Vaterland, 51, 21.12.07; KZ, 5.3.11; WeserZ, 25.2.13, 'Parteimitgliedschaft und Parteifinanzen'.

in co-ordinating regional campaigns and outlays of party funds; but the individual party patron remained extremely important. In January 1912, the Brandenburg Conservative, F. von Grumme, wrote an almost desperate letter to Wangenheim, criticising a recent Deutsche Tageszeitung article which had attacked the wealthy and influential Silesian, Count von Thiele-Winckler. Thiele was 'the biggest Silesian magnate and one of the few north-German large estate owners who is willing to open his pocketbook at all for Conservative goals,' Grumme observed.[57]

The Conservatives' efforts to build their organizational structure on a sound financial basis was also hindered by the unwillingness of the BdL leaders to use their own money to fund Conservative organizations. As well, the fees demanded of farmers by the League prevented Conservatives from tapping this wider base of financial support, since commitment to the general DKP-BdL cause would have been weakened if financial sacrifice were demanded twice. Westarp was unsuccessful in his bid to persuade Roesicke to share some of the BdL's 'harvest' in dues with the DKP. The BdL's strict financial independence from the DKP went so far that Roesicke at one point gave his approval to Dr. Kaufhold to travel to East Prussia to address a Conservative meeting only if the DKP met Kaufhold's travel costs. In 1910, a Posen Landrat reported to Roesicke that a new Conservative Verein had been established in the province; adding that this Verein could be expected to bring farmers there back into the BdL fold, the Landrat requested that the BdL contract to pay a party secretary for the province. Roesicke wanted no part of this. He wrote to Wangenheim that 'we can bring the farmers back to us just as well on our own,' and noted that the League had 'neither the funds nor the warrant' to commit itself to paying a secretary's salary. Wangenheim agreed, writing: 'I find the demand

57 Nipperdey, Organisation, pp. 263f; Grumme to Wangenheim, 14.1.14, NL Roesicke, 3, f. 29f.

somewhat naïve that we should pay the Conservatives for a secretary; we can do the work ourselves.'[58]

These difficulties prompted the DKP leaders to turn more attention to tapping all possible sources of revenue from sympathetic industrialists. As the Marxist historian of the Conservative Party has noted, the DKP after 1908 began to cultivate ties with the Central Association of German Industrialists. As well, from 1910, Conservatives showed more willingness to tailor their speeches to win support from industrial audiences, as when Heydebrand spoke to Westphalians in 1910 or to the new Hamburg Conservative Verein in 1912. Apparently a 'Union of Industrialists' was established within the Saxon Conservative Verein in late 1913, although the influence of this group remained small. Because the question of Conservative relations with industry was related to many of the other issues discussed above - western and urban Conservatism, for example - and because it was closely tied up with the attempt of the DKP after 1912 to draw away the right wing of the National Liberal Party, it became a major topic of discussion in the political press. From what is known about industrial contributions to DKP finances in 1907, 1912, and just before the war, it appears that the need to reform the party's fiscal situation was the main impetus behind the celebration of Conservatives' 'Friendliness to Industry.'[59]

Thus, when Westarp reported to Heydebrand on 1 July 1914 that plans were underway to commit as many Conservatives as possible to contribute at least 100 marks annually, he noted that 'people in the legal profession and in the larger industrial enterprises' were not to be canvassed with undue pressure at this point, since their irregular

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58 Roesicke-Wangenheim correspondence, April-June 1910, in NL Wangenheim, 5, ff. 33ff, 55-58.

59 Wallraf, 'Politik der DKP', pp. 173-180; Peck, Radicals, p. 137; DTZ, 24.11.10; Rh-WestfZ, 4.5.12; Rb, 8.8.12; Nipperdey, Organisation, p. 263; see the NLP's Die "Industriefreundlichkeit" der Konservativen (Leipzig, 1914), and the BdL press archive, 6764, 'Kons. und Industrie, 1911-14'.

but larger contributions should be held in reserve for when a fund would be generated for election campaigns or trade treaty agitation.[60]

One final consequence of moves for reform of the party's finances was that the DKP leaders were forced to relinquish some of their personal control over the funds which the main Wahlverein executive had at its disposal. Westarp told Heydebrand that a number of Conservatives wanted changes in the administration of the party's finances. Specifically, Westarp reported that

> ... it is generally assumed ... that Herr Schr[öter] manages the finances very independently; and since people in the country have no idea at all of the scope of the central Verein's work, it would likely increase people's generosity if an institution could be established, whereby there was some consultative input from the side of the finance committee as to how the money could best be spent.

Westarp reported that he had succeeded with his arguments - 'practical and political' - against the reformers' plan. Still, they had pushed for a firm annual budget which would take account of the finance committee's wishes, 'so that outwardly, too, it would be recognised that those who collect the money are also involved in distributing it.' Westarp's position was seconded by both Stackmann and Schröter: 'they tried to keep me firmly opposed to any interference of the finance committee in the control of expenditure.' It appears, however, that Westarp eventually inclined to the view that greater party democracy in the matter would have to come. He wrote:

> If I may speak out immoderately, ... I believe - if you and the Committee of Five wish a change from the present situation at all - that it would be wholly worthwhile and, despite the personal difficulties, also practical, ... to find a way whereby the finance commission reports to the party at large on the taking-in and accounting of the money it collects.

Heydebrand replied that the plans of the reformers 'naturally [went] too far,' and were 'impossible.' However, he was aware that some reform would be efficacious in terms of making the party **appear**

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60 Westarp to Heydebrand, 1.7.14; H-W Corr., pp. 8f; reply, 3.7.14, pp. 11f.

more democratic. He also hoped that the community of interest between Conservatives and heavy industrialists on the issue of protectionism might incline the latter to contribute to a quasi-independent campaign to gather a 'trade treaty agitation fund.' This explains why Heydebrand proposed creating 'a special **subcommittee** with the view to easing the collection or extraction of money,' which would be 'in party terms **neutrally** oriented and also include industrialists.' Otherwise, however, Heydebrand believed that any money the finance commission transferred into the general DKP account 'must, as **heretofore,** remain at the free disposal of the Committee of Five.' One sees, then, that a certain cynicism lay behind even the minor concessions which the Conservative leadership granted to those who wished to inject an element of internal party democracy into the administration of DKP finances.

9.7 Central Leadership

The top party leadership's reluctance to give up any large part of its independence and authority is also reflected in the minimal changes in the institutional structure of the party after the Hammerstein-Stöcker period.[61] As shown in earlier chapters, the DKP by April 1895 had erected a hierarchical party structure with Committees of Fifty, Eleven, and Three representing the various levels of executive competence. A number of changes were introduced in 1902/03 after the reform of the Prussian laws of association. The Wahlverein was transformed into the 'Central Association of German Conservatives,' which was now permitted to base itself not only upon individual membership but also upon the regional and provincial Conservative Vereine. The new organizational statutes also enlarged the Committee of Eleven to Twelve, and the Committee of Three to Five. One of the members of the Committee of

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61 For the following: Westarp, Kons. Politik, I, p. 396; TR, 2.12.02; CC, 10.2.11; FsZ, 4.1.11; DTZ, 21.5.12; KZ, 20.11.12; Nipperdey, Organisation, p. 254; Puhle, Interessenpolitik, p. 222.

Five (the later Chancellery Chief, Lõbell) was charged with the task of managing the executive's affairs and maintaining contact with both the general party secretary (Strosser) and the editor of the Konservative Korrespondenz (A. Clar), neither of whom sat on the top executive body. The fact that the over-all party chairman (Manteuffel) was obliged to convene the Committees of Fifty and Twelve only once per year suggests how the Committee of Five was beginning to take over the day-to-day running of official party affairs.

The structure of the party leadership was not changed again until reforms were introduced in the period 1910-12. The new statutes of 1912 gave the Committee of Twelve a number of new prerogatives. These included the right to expel oppositional Vereine or individuals from the party; the right to decide when official party congresses would be convened; and most importantly, the right to determine, at the beginning of each Reichstag legislative period, how many representatives each of the parliamentary caucuses and regional organisations would send to the Committee of 'Fifty' (which by 1912 had actually grown, through increased use of the top executive's right of co-optation, to roughly 80 members.) It appears that the Committee of Twelve could also decide matters of party membership dues, and issue urgent - that is, all important - party directives; in practice, the Committee of Five assumed these tasks. Indeed, the Committee of Three was in effect revived when Manteuffel stepped down as overall head of the party in February 1911. In his place a 'managing executive' of Heydebrand, Normann, and Stackmann assumed the top leadership. In May 1912, the Committee of Five officially consisted of these three men plus the former Minister of the Royal House, Wilhelm von Wedel-Piesdorff, who replaced Manteuffel, and August Klasing, who replaced Mirbach. In the same year, Westarp was admitted to the Committee of Twelve, in effect replacing Normann, who died in October 1912. Significantly, Kanitz, who was made the DKP Reichstag caucus chairman on Normann's death

because of his seniority, and who himself passed on these duties to Westarp in 1913, was not a member of either top executive body. As Westarp noted, both Wedel and Kanitz were little more than the dignified figureheads desired by Heydebrand to mask his own de facto control of the party. Existing correspondence from the years 1912-18 confirms that Heydebrand, in consultation with Westarp, Stackmann, Schröter, and - to a lesser extent - with BdL leaders, directed DKP policy.[62]

Unfortunately, the sort of collective biographical investigation which would add to our knowledge of the top party structure must await another study. It would be worthwhile to study changes in the social composition of the DKP's various executive bodies and parliamentary caucuses.[63] As well, the study of Conservative voting patterns - as under the Prussian three-class franchise - and the social make-up of grass-roots Vereine would extend our understanding of the breakdown of Honoratiorenpolitik. One would like to know more about the corps of 'party secretaries' and 'organizational managers' who at one time or another were entrusted with the task of initiating or implementing reforms in the Conservative Party: such shadowy figures included Baron von Seckendorff, August Strosser, Karl von Pappenheim, Josef Kaufhold, F. W. von Löbell, Richard Kunze, Karl Stackmann, and Bruno Schröter, not to mention the provincial party secretaries. Finally, it is not yet clear why the Committee of Twelve had assented to virtual one-man rule by 1914. When one considers that this committee in 1903 included personalities like Durant, Klasing, Irmer, Meh-

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62 See the 'Berichte des Hauptvereins der Dt.-Kons. an v. Heydebrand, März 1914 - November 1918', in NL Westarp, 98.

63 See the preliminary work done by A. O'Donnell, 'National Liberalism and the Mass Politics of the German Right 1890-1907' (Diss., Princeton, 1973); and C. Bacheller, 'Class and Conservatism: The Changing Social Structure of the German Right, 1900-1928' (Diss., Wisconsin-Madison, 1976); such statistical studies should not neglect important subjective accounts of caucus life, like that provided by the MdPAH from Silesia, A. v. Goßler, 'Erinnerungen', Bundesmilitärarchiv Freiburg i. Br., NL A. v. Goßler, 1, f. 40.

nert, and Löbell, it becomes clear that further studies might answer questions such as why the Conservative attitude to party reform was so ambivalent, why more voices were not raised against top DKP leaders who prevented the establishment of internal party democracy, and why would-be reformers of the DKP like Julius Werner and Karl Mehnert were given such a leading agitational role or co-opted into the top leadership in the first place. They might also help explain why factionalism and dissent within the DKP, so strong in the nineteenth century and during the Kreuzzeitung-group episode in the early 1890s, did not produce another rebellion among rank-and-file Conservatives potent enough to topple traditional party leaders.

Some of Heydebrand's successes and failures in resisting reform within the party after 1912 have been investigated elsewhere;[64] in any case, the consequences of his intransigence were open to world view when the Conservative Party disintegrated in 1918. To party insiders, the implications of this petrification in the DKP leadership were evident early in the war. For the moment, one observation will have to convey the sense of alienation which was produced. In June 1915, one of the 'new generation' of Conservatives, Albrecht von Graefe, wrote to Westarp:[65]

> ... And so I come to my old hobby-horse. I fear that in the "state of Denmark" of our so-called Conservative organization there is something rotten everywhere! With the candidness I was born with I say that I see the root of this evil in that our party - perhaps also the caucus - is not ruled altogether constitutionally, but rather is still afflicted with absolutist tendencies!

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64 See esp. Peck, Radicals, pp. 107ff; and Eley, German Right, Chs. 10/11; concentrating on the nationalist opposition, Peck and Eley neglect attempts by Mehnert and others to bring the DKP closer to the NLP or the government, particularly in 1911-13; see Mehnert-Löbell-Bethmann correspondence in Rkz. 1391/5, f. 194ff and other correspondence in Rkz. 1391/5 and 1392. DKP-FKP-NLP relations in the half-decade before 1914 will be the subject of a future study planned by the author.

65 Letter of 15.6.15, in Wallraf, 'Politik der DKP', p. 215f.

> Thus there is no general co-operation - indeed, no general passion - such as one can observe bearing fruit for the other parties. In the end it is always only the few rulers who do everything - the profane and vulgar ones, both in parliament and among the people, remain more or less a mere herd of voters, who know nothing because they experience nothing, and therefore feel themselves neither obliged to, nor capable of, intensive party work.

9.8 Agitation

From the time of Hobbing's journal, Unsere Partei, and even more so after July 1909, the DKP leadership accelerated its efforts to expand local Verein organization and agitation. Parallel with the development of new means to disseminate information on the party's policies and activities in parliament ran attempts to emphasise the practical side of Conservative politics. The emphasis on new agitational techniques was especially prominent in publicity material designed primarily for party members, such as the annual Konservatives Kalendar or the official 'Reports from the Conservative Party,' which appeared after 1907.[66] In August 1910 the DKP Reports were already urging party members to begin grass-roots organization and activity for the next Reichstag election, warning that **'in no constituency,** no matter how secure it may appear, is one safe from surprises.' Even a seven-point checklist was provided for discussion of local party readiness. Another issue of the Reports outlined in similar detail how a non-local agitator should make himself familiar with the constituency to which he was sent. Among other things, this agitator was advised to learn about local peculiarities; legislative issues of pariticular local interest and whether new DKP publicity materials were required;

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66 For example, Konservative Politik im Reichstage (Feb. 1907 - Mai 1908) (Berlin, 1908); the first Kons. Kalendar appeared with 590 pp. at a cost of 1 mark to party members; in the first 8 months of 1910, the 'Mitteilungen aus der konservativen Partei' appeared only 13 times, but by August 1913, 34 issues of the Reports had been issued that year. Cf. 'Technik der Politik', Ms., in ZStA II, NL Bovenschen, B VI, n.d., f. 43ff; and Levetzow-Roesicke correspondence on agitational and press reform, April 1912, in NL Wangenheim, 7, f. 37ff.

the urban-rural and occupational balance of the constitutency; local history; transportation opportunities; past petition campaigns; and the area's press. Upon this groundwork, it was suggested, successful political agitation could be built. Later in the year, the Saxon party secretary, Richard Kunze, a teacher, was co-opted by the central Berlin leadership to lead new speakers' courses.[67]

After the debacle of the January 1912 elections, the DKP Reports printed articles by Wolfgang Eisenhart and others who sought to identify the reasons for DKP failures in local organization and agitation.[68] One or two interesting new features were introduced into these critiques. For instance, great importance was placed on the general political education of both party speakers and rank-and-file members, in order to learn from opponents' tactics and to be better prepared for a defence of the Conservative position in potentially uncomfortable political meetings. A certain 'cold-bloodedness' and 'self-control' were considered to be essential characteristics of those party members entrusted with the task of attending opponents' meetings.

Another feature of these articles was their reliance on a military vocabulary to describe the methods of 'mobilization' against the Social Democrats.[69] In February 1912, Eisenhart wrote of how Conservatives must 'cross swords' with the enemy:

> Here one can learn from Social Democracy; their conduct of war is now organizationally unparalleled. They know exactly the number of their followers, and have already drilled them in peacetime. With the coming of war - that is, elections - only the mobilization order is required, and the well-trained - ie. fundamentally radicalized - troops stand there, ready like a well-outfitted and disciplined army. The parties of the state still often conduct their campaigns in the style of

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67 DKP Reports, 13, 20.8.10, 'Die nächsten Arbeiten in den kons. Vereinen'; BT, 2.8.10; FsZ, 4.1.11.

68 See DKP Reports, 5, 3.2.12; 34, 23.8.13; 8, 21.2.14, 'Kons. Kleinarbeit und Kleinagitation durch die Ortsgruppen'; Pommersche Tagespost, 26/27.2.13.

69 One writer likened SPD tactics to the 'American election racket.'

> warfare in earlier centuries, where only upon the beginning of hostilities would one start to collect and train troops. No wonder, then, that these fail.

Such Conservative advice suggested a new awareness of the need to apply the 'lever' of Conservative agitation to the 'democratic franchise' in order to balance socialist heresy with a 'mass education' of the German electorate. Generally, however, the new candidness and radical tone of calls for increased Conservative agitation merely provided left liberals and socialists with ammunition for polemics decrying DKP 'press gang' recruitment tactics or other unscrupulous forms of demagogy, all without yielding relative gains for the DKP in 'combat' with political agitators from other parties. One is struck by how the calls for greater sacrifice, increased communication between local and central party Vereine, rational finances, and an expanded press identified essentially the same weaknesses of party activity as had been noted in 1882 by the convention of Wahlverein delegates, by Fechenbach, and by the Reichsbote and other reformers in the 1890s. Characteristically, Westarp's reflections on the deficiencies of the DKP in this sphere were summed up in the casual observation that 'organization, and especially propaganda, were not the strongest side of the party.'[70]

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70 VossZ, 10.10.11, 'Wie die Kons. Mitglieder "pressen"'; Westarp, Kons. Politik, I, p. 397.

Conclusion

From 1912 to 1918, the DKP leadership was buffeted by the winds of political change resulting from economic and social developments in Germany, and many of the central themes discussed in this story of Conservative reformism were played out to their final conclusion. Even in 1913, pressures on the party mounted from a number of directions. The Free Conservative, Ernst Deetjen, published a pamphlet entitled Freikonservativ! Die nationale Mittelpartei, which sought to unite all moderate right-wing elements of the NLP, FKP, and DKP.[1] At the same time, the Farmers' League leaders, Mittelstand groups, and the Pan-German League were moving toward the celebrated 'Kartell of Productive Estates', which was finally established in September 1913.[2] The Preußenbund in early 1914 mounted another initiative - largely independent of Conservative Party leaders - to create a new right-wing grouping, while Mehnert and other 'moderate' German Conservatives grew more and more desperate to assert their independence from Heydebrand.[3] The leader of Baden Conservatives, Baron Udo von La Roche, wrote to the

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1 'The Conservative Party ... has shown that it cannot stop the general evolution of a swing to the left in parliament. It is no longer a popular party since it has represented one interest too strongly and has failed to understand the dramatic changes in the development of our Volk.' Ernst Deetjen, Freikonservativ! Die nationale Mittelpartei (Breslau, 1913), pp. 29f.

2 Cf. Eley, German Right, Ch. 10; Peck, Radicals, Ch. 5

3 Prominent among founders of the Preußenbund was Wolfgang Eisenhart, who had been offering critical views of Conservative and party politics for over 25 years; cf. Eisenhart's works listed in bibliography, and ZStA I, 61 Pr 1, 'Preußenbund'. On 11 August 1911, Mehnert had written with proposals to attract right-wing National Liberals to the DKP, observing:
'I do not turn to our official party leadership with these reports because I fear that at the moment it is not to be had for such considerations. ... Even though I believe myself to be a strict party man, I still cannot conceive of party membership in such a way that I would not be obliged also to consider the **general** situation of our political state.' Rkz. 1391/5, f. 194ff.

Reich Chancellery:[4] 'We are not "feudal Conservative" here in the narrow Prussian sense, but rather more Christian-Conservative, ... with the wish to include in our ranks the right-wing elements of the National Liberals....' And like so many times before, such heterodoxy spurred further hopes in government circles for a reconciliation with the DKP and a new pro-government party alignment. As Löbell and Bethmann-Hollweg wrote to each other in the wake of the Morocco debates:[5]

> All reasonable men on the Right and from the right wing of the National Liberals must share [Mehnert's] view. But Mehnert is correct when he judges the Conservative Party leadership - that is, Heydebrand - sceptically. Here the errors do not end, and all understanding for far-sighted policy is lacking. However, one may not give up hope, in any case one may not fail to **try** to propagandize the ideas which Mehnert rightly represents.
>
> No wonder that Conservative men feel indignant in the face of such conduct. - I hope for an improvement in that one is beginning more and more in the Conservative and National Liberal parties to recognise the errors of the leaders. It is our task to deepen this awareness, so that it may influence the leadership of both sides.

Such attempts to introduce a new, 'enlightened' dimension to Conservatism, however, seemed to elicit from Heydebrand and other DKP leaders only an increase in the sharpness and volume of Conservative claims to be a Volkspartei. When the party met in mid-March 1913 for a general party congress, the Volkspartei theme dominated all speeches and subsequent commentaries in the press.[6] The Kreuzzeitung claimed

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4 La Roche to Wahnschaffe, 7.10.10, Rkz. 1391, f. 86.

5 Löbell to Bethmann, 14.8.11; reply, 16.8.11; Rkz. 1391/5, f. 192ff.

6 KZ, 16.3.13; 22.3.13, 'Die kons. Partei eine Volkspartei', by O. Pfister; DTZ, 25.3.13, 'Die kons. Parteitag und der "Kulturkonservatismus"; Tag, 72, 28.3.13, 'Die Ausbreitung des kons. Gedankens' by Mirbach; Rb, 13.3.13. Cf. Rb, 4.5.12, 'Gouvernmental oder Volkspartei?'; FsZ, 11.8.11, 'Die kons. Kandidaten'; Rb, 22.2.13, 'Kons. Großstadtpolitik'; Post, 12.3.13, 'Die DKP und die Bodenreformer'; KZ, 14.7.13, 'Kons. und Alldeutsche'; Tag, 31.10.13, review of Pfister's pamphlet; DKP Reports, 17, 29.4.13, 'Ist die DKP eine Großgrundbesitzer- und Junkerpartei?'; BT, 11.12.13, 'Die Konservativen. Konstruktiver und destruktiver Konservatismus', by Lujo Brentano; KZ, 4/5.11.13, 'Politik vom kons. Standpunkte' by G. v. Below.

that Conservatives now faced 'the time of renewal and self-awareness,' and that 'there [was] no longer any "going back".' A celebratory Conservative pamphlet, entitled Deutsch-Konservativ, reinforced the populist theme, stating: 'We were and we are a true Volkspartei which has set out to be the choice of the entire people, and are independent from top to bottom.'[7] The election results of 1912 and the outflanking manoeuvres of radical nationalists and agrarians, however, had shown the hollowness of such claims.

After the Conservative Party disappeared along with the Kaiserreich in 1918, Conservatives did not find it any easier to reconcile elitist and popular goals. That they became a 'national Volkspartei' in name did not mean that they were any more capable of preventing 'movements' of the Right from overwhelming them by questioning the essential function of political parties. The parallels between the pre-1914 phase of Conservative history and the Weimar era are tantalizing indeed, and can suggest the wider scope of the problems of political adaptation and party alignments in the Imperial period. The Farmers' League's ambivalent parliamentarism and the National Socialists' doctrine of legalism were both employed toward basically revisionist goals, while more traditional Conservatives either decried these descents into demagogic extremism, worked to exploit traditional avenues of power, or retreated to a world of disillusionment and political obscurity. The characters of Theodor Fontane's novels illustrate how inappropriate Conservative values were to the new politics, either at the end of the Kaiserreich or of the Weimar Republic: the aloof cynicism of Der Stechlin, the degenerative allegiance to out-worn principles in Die Poggenpuhls, or the militaristic (yet romantic) code of honour in Effi Briest - all proved unreliable as a guide to action in an unfamiliar political world.

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7 O. Pfister, Deutsch-Konservativ (Berlin, 1913), p. 18.

And yet the same arguments for Conservative reform and renewal appeared over and over again. The battle between Westarp and Alfred Hugenberg for control of the Deutschnationale Volkspartei in the late 1920s found the latter working to abandon the idea of a mass party, suggesting instead that the DNVP, to be a nationalist 'nucleus' for popular anti-democratic forces in the Republic, had to become 'klein und fein'.[8] Ironically, Westarp argued the classic Helldorffian position, that the party had suffered because it had not been reliable enough to the government or a practical alternative to the mass of right-wing voters. Before losing his position as party leader and watching his successor embrace the newest advocates of radical anti-Semitism and anti-liberalism, Westarp, like Helldorff, made a plea for the independence of the party's Reichstag caucus to participate in the government and legislation of the day. His appeal, however, fell on deaf ears.

Other less precise parallels can be distinguished. A number of the concepts which had inspired both protagonists and antagonists of party reform in the Kaiserreich were reworked by later conservatives to argue an 'overcoming' of traditional politics: these included an anti-liberal 'cultural opposition', a 'new nobility', 'young conservatism', 'revolutionary conservatism', and radical anti-parliamentarism through a 'cabinet of barons.' The continuing dilemma of political exclusivity

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8 The parallels with the 1890s are unmistakable from John Leopold's account of the struggle in 1927:
'[Hugenberg] argued that participation in the government impeded the party from attacking fundamental issues and that compromise would mean the loss of young people to the party. ... He requested that local German National organizations be allowed to criticise the parliamentary delegation - thus forming the conscience of the DNVP - and eventually "free the forces for a solution of the real tasks of the party." ... Moreover, on a purely tactical basis, Hugenberg asserted that this change would enable the party effectively to attack the government and capture the masses.'
Leopold, Alfred Hugenberg (New Haven/London, 1977), pp. 36f. On the DNVP journal, Unsere Partei, on organizational reform as a means for expressing dissent, and on the DNVP's 'mobilization' for political 'warfare', cf. pp. 39-49, 93, 140, 148, 171.

and mass participation for politicians of the Right was summed up when Edgar Jung reviewed the failure of Franz von Papen's chancellorship from the perspective of 1933:[9]

> Von Papen had the last opportunity to eliminate, from above, the pluralistic forces (the parties and the economic interests) and restore the purity of the state without mobilizing the masses.

If some Conservatives had learned to be **responsive** to the demands of the non-elite, in party and state, they had not progressed to being **responsible** to them. Thus the splintering of the traditional Right and the search for new avenues for engineering political change, by completing a long process whereby Conservatives lost influence and moral objectivity both 'above' and 'below', played a part in formulating the volatile mixture of anti-democratic values and revolutionary means which introduced German fascism.

Looking ahead too earnestly can make one lose sight of the more immediate relevance of a study of Conservative politics before 1914. For it was in the Kaiserreich that Conservatives went through a particularly critical phase of disillusionment with the direction of change in German politics. The London Economist was not wholly correct when it wrote that 'one of the disadvantages of disillusion is that politicians are never likely to be lucid in expressing it.'[10] One aim of this study has been to explore the ways two groups of Conservatives expressed their disillusionment quite forcefully: one group being the

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9 Cited in W. Struve, 'Elites versus Democracy' (Diss., Yale, 1963), p. 209.

10 Cited in Aandahl, 'Free Conservatism', p. 78. One can hardly dispute the force of Heydebrand's uncompromising challenges to advocates of political reform, as when he declared:
'The future does indeed belong to you, the mass will assert itself and deprive the aristocrats of their influence. A strong statesman may stem this current for a while, but only for a while. Nevertheless we shall not abandon our position of our own free will. If you force us, however, then you will have what you want.' Cited in H. Pachnicke, Führende Männer im alten und im neuem Reich (Berlin, [1930]), p. 63.

reformers who sought to dismantle or reshape Honoratiorenpolitik within the DKP, the other being the traditionalists who responded in only slightly more muted fashion to the challenges that were mounted.

It could be said that this rough dichotomy was symptomatic of the political situation in the Empire: the tension between 'progressivism' and 'reaction' within the Conservative Party had its analogue in the conflicting pressures for 'modernization' and 'stability' within the government and political establishment of the Kaiserreich. It has been shown that the lucidity with which an older style of politics was attacked or defended by Conservatives did not always bring with it reasoned judgement or a willingness to consider the broader consequences of reformism or intransigence. The fact that reformers like Engel and Lange remained loyal to a party which illustrated the political bankruptcy of unyielding Conservatism had its parallel in the belief among government figures like Hohenlohe and Philipp Eulenburg that conservatism was the only option open for Germany's rulers. As Hohenlohe asked in 1899 after arguing for a radical break with the Conservatives: 'But how would His Majesty be expected to work with a liberal ministry?'

Factionalism within the DKP was the principal reason why no clear division between reformers and traditionalists arose in the party, as well as why tensions between the DKP and the BdL on the one hand, and between the DKP and the government on the other, prompted no 'clean break'. Instead, the internal and external conflicts which the pressures of political adaptation introduced into the Conservative Party took on the character of latent warfare, complete with occasional forays into the enemy camp, offers to defect, deadlock, and the final siege mentality after 1912.

Once again, the implications of the government's reaction to factionalism and moderate dissent within the DKP are large. On the one hand, one might argue that without the prospect of co-operation with the moderate Conservatives, the government would have abandoned hope of reliable support on the Right, sought a leftist alliance, and moved towards parliamentary government. However unlikely such a development may have been, the paradox of this case is that moderate Conservatives may have actually perpetuated the old system and prevented the final break with unyielding political elites. On the other hand, one might argue that the government would have been forced to move toward the chauvinist and reactionary policies of the Farmers' League if the moderate Conservatives had not continually pressed agrarian radicals for compromises and provided alternative parliamentary support on government bills which the BdL could not sanction. In any event, the major confrontations between the government and the Farmers' League, as well as the uncertainty about the strength of traditional governmental sympathies within the DKP, revealed how significant - and irreconcilable - these questions became.

The relations between the DKP and the Farmers' League itself were similarly complex and impermanent. Although the League's leaders wanted to be 'even better than the parties they knew,' claims by radical agrarians that the traditional parties had outlived their usefulness usually prompted Conservatives to strike back at BdL 'interest politics' and 'demagogy'. Aware that the agrarians' success at popular agitation had its benefits and liabilities, Conservative parliamentarians were often unable to clarify their obligations as 'servants of the state,' while urban and intellectual advocates of reform declared that agrarian chauvinism destroyed any Conservative hopes of becoming a Volkspartei. Thus, the paradoxes of 'a loyal Conservative opposition' which had first become apparent during the Kreuzzeitung era continued

to colour the history of reformism in the DKP; the fact that adjectives like 'democratic' and 'demagogic' were used on all sides to vilify opponents' agitational tactics showed how questions of political mobilization and BdL-DKP-government relations were intertwined.

The issues of Conservative popularity and the political function of the DKP were further complicated by the various extra-parliamentary interest- and pressure groups which were conceived as alternative means to fulfil anti-socialist and nationalist tasks of which the Conservative Party was becoming incapable. Many of the tensions between the DKP and BdL which were documented in Chapter Eight appeared between the Conservative Party and such organizations as the Imperial League against Social Democracy, the Pan-German League, and the Society for the Eastern Marches. Furthermore, the attitudes of Free Conservatives and National Liberals played a part in determining the success or failure of movements for reform within the party. As conflicts between right-wing groups and parties continued after 1909, the question arose: What was the Conservative Party if not a 'government party'? As the DKP, FKP, and NLP all reacted differently to the breakdown of Honoratiorenpolitik, it is not surprising that divergent motives for a reform of Conservatism produced contradictory answers to another question: Were the parties of the Right, with their genesis in the 1860s and 1870s, capable of a separate existence in the face of popular twentieth-century challenges?[11]

Finally, arguments have been made long ago for the insights to be gained by investigating the evolution of political institutions and the character of party systems through studies of the way political parties

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11 See, for example, the pamphlet by the DKP reformer, K. Eichhorn, Konservativ-Nationalliberal oder Nationalliberal-Sozialdemokratisch? Ein Bild deutschkonservativer Politik (Berlin, 1905), sent to Rkz. 1391/5, f. 69.

are organized.[12] Although it is perhaps natural that the least democratic of Imperial German parties should have deliberately shrouded its inner workings in mystery, a focus on dissident and reformist Conservatives has provided a number of answers to important questions posed by theorists of party politics.

This study has shown that problems of party definition, organization, membership, finances, and agitational methods can now be investigated for the German Right with some precision, as well as with a sense of chronological development. It has demonstrated how the distinction between caucus and rank-and-file politics was central to the problem of participation;[13] thus, the registering of political demands in the DKP press, in the provinces, and in the party congresses has been highlighted. An examination of efforts to introduce an element of party democracy has led to a new picture of how different Conservative groups believed the 'true will' of the party at large could be expressed, while a chronicle of demands for representation of different geographical or occupational segments of the party in the top decision-making bodies has indicated that some reformers regarded the Volkspartei ideal in very concrete terms. Throughout, an emphasis has been placed on co-ordinating a study of programmatic and organizational reform, to suggest the close relationship between the quest for new Conservative policies capable of attracting wider circles of voters and the wish to break with the traditional elitist premise of Honoratiorenpolitik.

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12 See works listed in bibliography by Bottomore, Duverger, Kornhauser, Lepsius, Michels, and Ostrogorski.

13 Robert de Jouvenal once observed: 'There is more in common between two [parliamentary] deputies, one of whom is revolutionary, than between two revolutionaries, one of whom is a deputy.' Cited in Duverger, Political Parties (London, 1959), p. viii.

If these pages have tended to concentrate on the 'losers' in the campaign to recast the Conservative Party as a Volkspartei, this is only because the roles of winner and loser, leader and follower, traditionalist and radical, are less clear than it might appear. 'Winners' like Heydebrand and Oldenburg-Januschau were losers in the long run because their policies were unable to save the party from electoral decline. This decline eroded their power base for political influence, making the DKP less attractive or visible as a partner either for the government or other right-wing groups. 'Losers' like Hammerstein, Fechenbach, Engel, and Mehnert, on the other hand, are not to be dismissed easily. The Kreuzzeitung group of rebels and reformers may have saved the DKP from incorporation into a Bismarckian Mittelpartei in the 1880s, and during the period 1890-1896 they created a situation in which a multiplicity of political paths was laid open for the Conservative Party. Fechenbach, too, demonstrated that the possibilities for an interconfessional social-conservative alliance were viewed seriously in the party's early days. Engel, Mehnert, and other party men who wished to demonstrate that official Conservatism meant 'something more than a restoration of hunting privileges' played a part in increasing the attractiveness of the party to other groups of Conservatives and extending its life. Together, all these reformers and dissenters who portrayed the Christian, social, progressive, or 'responsible' sides of Conservatism may have been decisive in convincing what remained a substantial body of Conservative voters that the

DKP reflected their political philosophy and was worthy of their allegiance.[14]

As the actual Conservative experience was distinct from developments elsewhere on the Right, it does not fit into either Eley's model of 'self-mobilization from below' or Puhle's picture of 'pre-fascist manipulation from above'. Instead, DKP history must be viewed as having been shaped by ambiguous personal motives, contradictory institutional pressures, and unique political opportunities. These factors together produced a diverse and dynamic party in which many conflicting forces for political adaptation were at work.

This study of political influence and popular mobilization was introduced by citing Heine's undifferentiated picture of the German Junkers as card-sharping rascals. As a final illustration of the inadequacy of such analyses, one might quote a man who was perhaps the greatest 'winner' in German history, Bismarck. After his dismissal from office, Bismarck remarked that Conservatives regarded politics and parliament as 'mere sport':[15]

> One enjoys living a few months in Berlin, going to breakfast in the House, and, when the bell for a division rings, quickly wiping one's mouth, rushing into the chamber, and asking, "How do we vote?"

Just as Honoratiorenpolitik began to pass away after the departure of the Great Man in 1890, so, too, have monochromatic views of the DKP become untenable.

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14 The persisting social benefits of allegiance to Conservatism, which were deprecated by Grabowsky, were summed up by the ambitious Kommerzienrat in Frau Jenny Treibel:
'... I have weighed up progressiveness and conservatism according to the same statement, and I have come to the conclusion that conservatism - I will not say is more profitable, for that would of course be false - but suits me better, fits me better.' Cited in E. K. Bramsted, Aristocracy and the Middle Classes in Germany (Chicago, 1964), p. 197.

15 From comments made at Friedrichsruh in 1891, quoted in FkZ, 6.4.95.

Appendix 1: Provincial and Regional Vereine, 1876-1914

Prov./ Region	Principal Chairmen	Party Secretary Appointed	Verein Established (Refounded)	Notable Prov./Reg. Congresses
E. Prussia	Auer, 1881 Dohna-Schlodien, 1884 Dohna-Lauck	Schulze, 1883 Reissert, c. 1908 Blum, 1909 Hildenhagen, 1911	Dec. 1881	Feb 08/Jan 09/Dec 10 Oct 11/Dec 11/Apr 12 Oct 13
W. Prussia	Dohna-Finckenstein	Brunzen, 1909	1903 DKP-FKP (1911) DKP	Dec 07/Jan 09/Dec 09 Dec 11/Dec 12
Berlin	Blume, c. 1882-1894 Irmer, 1894-95 Krause, 1895-97 Langen, 1897-98 Loebell, 1898- Ulrich, c. 1909		1881 (1894)	Feb 96/Feb 98
Brandenburg	Treskow-Friedrichsfelde, 1906-10 Dollwitz-Tornow, 1910-	Mannes, c. 1907 Meyer, c. 1912	1897	Dec 97/Dec 13
Pomerania	Brockhausen	Ohm, until 1912 Pfotenhauer Küntzel, c. 1914 1912, 3 sec. in Stralsund 1914, 1 sec. in Greifswald		Nov 10
Posen	Staudy, to 1909 Dziembowski Klitzing, 1911-	Huver, c. 1912	1908 DKP-FKP (1910) DKP	Nov 12 (1st)
Silesia	Durant, 1880- Harrach, c. 1890- (Richthofen, Lower Silesia)	Nitschke, c. 1906 (SchlMbl) Breslau office, 2nd sec. est. 1911	c. 1880	Oct 80 (1st)/Nov 91 Nov 95/Apr 10/Oct 11 Oct 12
Saxony	(Hohenthal: Merseburg) (Suchsland: Halle)	Plehwe		Feb 11
Schleswig-H.	Waldersee-Neverstorff	Kries-Kiel, 1911	1911 DKP-FKP	Mar 13 (1st)
Hanover	Bothmar-Bennemühlen	Hupfer, 1908 (HannTN) Kubel, 1910	1884/85 (1898/99)	Oct 85/Apr 94/Feb 10 Feb 13
Westphalia	Strosser, c. 1854- Schmalenbach Möller, 1902- Klasing	Werner Allers, c. 1912	1850s	Dec 78 (1st)/May 94 Nov 10/Nov 12
Hessen-Nassau	(Wilhelmi: Wiesbaden) (Ziehen: Frankfurt/M.) (G. Kropatschek: Frankfurt/M., 1911-)			
Rhineland	Plettenberg-Mehrum, -1893 Weber, 1893- Leyen-Bloemersheim	Maruhn, c. 1888 Grund, c. 1910	c. 1882 (1894) DKP	Aug 82 (1st)/Oct 84 Oct 85/Oct 93/May 94 Oct 10
Bavaria	Pfaff, 1881-84 Rechteren-Limpurg, 1884-93 Beckh, 1894- (Cetto, 1911: Bav Con Vgg.)		1881 (1911)	Mar 94/Apr 95/Apr 10 Apr 11/Apr 12/ (Dec 11)
Saxony	Friesen-Rötha Mehnert	Kunze, to 1910 Kretzschmar, c. 1913		Jun 92/Dec 93/Mar 97 Feb 98 (DKP)/Dec 12
Württemberg	Kraut	Schrempf, 1890	1894	Feb 10
Baden	Mühlhäuser, 1878- Göler, c. 1885 Stockhorner Douglas, to 1908 Löwenstein, 1908- La Roche, 1908-		1878	Sept 13 (1st in 20 years)
Hessen/ Waldeck	Solms-Laubach, 1880s Pappenheim Weihe, c. 1910	Hüpeden Weihe		Mar 11/Feb 12
Mecklenburgs	Oertzen-Kotelow, to 1911 Haeseler, 1911-1912 Bernstorff-Wedendorf, 1912	Jordan, c. 1912	1894 (1912)	Apr 94 (1st)/Feb 10 Nov 13
Braunschweig	Schulenburg-Nordsteinke, 1913			Apr 94 (w. Hanover)
Anhalt Lippe Sch.-Lippe Reuß (Weimar) Thuringia	 Lengerke Oheimb Bloch Hagen, c. 1903; Postler Wangenheim-Erfurt	Thiele-Dessau, c. 1913 Sec., 1912	 1897 (1908) 1912 1894	 Dec 11 Mar 12 Sept 94
Hamburg Lübeck	Koch		1912 1912	

Appendix 2.1: Selected DKP Berlin Press

Newspaper	Date	Circulation	Principal Editors
Neue Preußische (Kreuz-) Zeitung	1848	c. 25,000 (1850) c. 6000 (1860) c. 10,000 (1881-1914)	P. v. Nathusius-Ludom, -1876 Niebelschütz, 1876-81 W. v. Hammerstein, 1881-96 H. Kropatschek, 1896-1905 Dr. Hermes, 1905-12 Dr. T. Müller-Fürer, 1912-13 Dr. Wendland and G. Förtsch, 1913-
Der Reichsbote	c. 1873	c. 12,000	Heinrich Engel, 1873-1911 Gerhard Kropatschek, 1911-13
Das Volk	1889	c. 8000 (1890)	Helmuth von Gerlach and Heinrich Oberwinder, 1889-96 Dietrich von Oertzen, 1896-
NeueEvKirchenZ DtEvKirchenZ	1887		Dr. Zöckler (Stöcker organs)
Das Deutsche Tageblatt	1881-1891		Martin Griesemann (Berlin Movement, then Helldorff organ)
Konservatatives Wochenblatt	1890-1893		(Helldorff organ)
Das Deutsche Adelsblatt	1883		P. v. Roëll, 1883-1886 R. v. Mosch, 1886-
(Allg.) Kons. Monatsschrift f. d. christl. Deutschland (Leipzig)	1879-1899	c. 2000	Martin v. Nathusius, 1871- Dietrich v. Oertzen
Konservative Monatsschrift f. Politik, Literatur und Kunst (Berlin)	1905		
Konservative Korrespondenz	c. 1880	1885, distributed to 200 Cons. newspapers	Baron v. Seckendorff Eduard v. Ungern-Sternberg Martin Griesemann A. Clar

Appendix 2.2: Selected DKP Provincial and Regional Press

Prov./ Region	Newspaper	Date	Circulation	Notable Editors
E. Prussia	Ostpreußische Z (Königsberg)	1851	4000	
	Preußische Volksfreund (Königsberg)		2000	
	Preußisch-Littauische Z (Gumbinnen)		c. 1250	
W. Prussia	Danziger Allgemeine Z		c. 2500	
	Elbinger Z		c. 8000	
Pomerania	Pommersche Reichspost (Stettin)	1882	2400	Heinrich Contzen, 1882-85 Gustav Malkewitz, 1885-1911
	Pommersche Tagespost (Stettin)	1911		
	Norddeutsche Presse (Neustettin)		1700	
	Stolper Wochenblatt (Stolp) (Zeitung für Hinterpommern)		5000	
	Fürstentümer Z (Köslin)	1903		Schwintzer, c. 1913
	Pommersche Volksfreund (Greifswald)			
Silesia	Schlesisches Morgenblatt (Breslau)	1880-93		Hermann Lange, 1880-85
	Schlesisches Morgenzeitung (Breslau)	1893	3000	
	Schlesische Z (FKP-DKP) (Breslau)		15,000	
Saxony	Hallesche Z			
	Thüringer Volksfreund (Leipzig)	1880		Heinrich Contzen, 1880-82
Hanover	Hannoversche Post (Hanover)	-1899	2000	Otto de Grahl, c. 1881 Moritz de Jonge, to 1892
	Hannoversche Tagesnachrichten	1899		
Westphalia	Neue Westfälische Volkszeitung (Bielefeld)	1877	2000	Pastor Dietz, 1877-87 Hermann Lange, 1887-
	Conservativer Volksfreund (Minden)	1862	c. 1000	
Hessen-Nassau	Kasseler Journal (Frankfurt a.M.)	1877		Hermann Lange, 1885-87
	Deutscher Volksfreund (Frankfurt a.M.)	1871		J. Reimers
	Wiesbadener Presse (Wiesbaden)	1875		
Bavaria	Süddeutsche Landpost (Augsburg)	1874		C. F. Gebert, publisher
	Bayerischer Landbote (Munich)	1824		
	Nürnberger Volksfreund	1880		
Saxony	Das Vaterland	c. 1900		
	Sächsische Landes Z			
Württemberg	Deutsche Reichspost (Frankfurt, -1880) (Stuttgart, 1880-)	1876-1913		Friedrich Schrempf, - 1909 Adam Röder, 1909-12
	Süddeutsche Z (FKP-ADV) (Stuttgart)	1913	c. 10,000	H. Heinz
Baden	Badische Landpost (Karlsruhe)	1877		Adam Röder
	Badische Post	1901-06		Adam Röder
	Badische Warte	1909		
	Süddeutsche Kons. Korrespondenz	1913	c. 350	Adam Röder
Mecklenburg	Mecklenburger (Landes-) Nachrichten (Schwerin)	1877 (1887)		D. v. Oertzen, - 1896

Appendix 3: Reichstag Elections, 1890-1912

Percentage of Vote won (seats won)

Region	1890	1903	1907	1912	Prov. Seats
E. Prussia	51.3 (14)	49.1 (13)	56.5 (13)	36.2 (9)	17
W. Prussia[1]	29.3 (5)	21.3 (6)	27.8 (6)	28.8 (7)	13
Berlin	14.4 (-)	12.4 (-)	7.3 (-)	3.4 (-)	6
Brandenburg	34.6 (12)	26.8 (7)	20.4 (8)	16.3 (5)	20
Pomerania	48.4 (11)	44.1 (10)	49.5 (10)	45.4 (10)	14
Posen[1]	29.9 (4)	29.1 (4)	34.3 (4)	28.3 (3)	15
Silesia	10.4 (3)	18.4 (8)	17.0 (10)	15.2 (7)	35
Saxony	16.5 (4)	11.9 (4)	11.3 (4)	15.5 (3)	20
Schleswig-H.	4.2 (1)	- (-)	- (-)	5.4 (-)	10
Hanover	0.0 (-)	4.7 (1)	4.1 (2)	6.1 (-)	19
Westphalia	10.4 (3)	3.5 (2)	3.5 (1)	2.9 (-)	17
Hessen-Nassau	10.5 (3)	3.3 (-)	0.8 (-)	3.9 (-)	14
Rhineland	0.5 (-)	0.5 (-)	1.5 (-)	1.6 (-)	35
Hohenzollern	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	- (-)	1
Total Prussia	15.1 (55)	13.3 (48)	13.2 (52)	11.5 (37)	236
Bavaria	1.3 (1)	1.4 (-)	1.8 (-)	4.5 (-)	43
Saxony	22.6 (10)	10.1 (-)	7.7 (2)	8.0 (1)	23
Württemberg[2]	0.4 (-)	11.7 (2)	10.8 (3)	17.6 (2)	17
Baden[2]	11.0 (3)	0.7 (-)	6.4 (1)	4.1 (1)	14
Hessen	-	-	-	-	9
Mecklenburgs[1]	36.7 (4)	33.5 (5)	32.1 (4)	31.1 (2)	7
Oldenburg	-	-	-	-	3
Braunschweig	-	-	-	-	3
Anhalt	5.9 (-)	-	-	7.6 (-)	2
Waldeck, Lippe Schbg.-Lippe	20.8 (-)	11.6 (-)	13.9 (-)	-	3
Thuringia	1.0 (-)	8.5 (-)	2.9 (1)	5.5 (-)	12
Lübeck	-	-	-	-	1
Bremen	-	-	-	-	1
Hamburg	-	-	-	-	3
Alsace-Lorr.	12.5 (1)	4.8 (1)	-	-	15
Total Germany					
% of vote	12.4 (73)	10.0 (54)	9.4 (60)	9.2 (43)	397
No. of votes	895,000	948,000	1,060,000	1,126,000	1,442,000

1 DKP and Free Cons. Party (RP) combined.
2 DKP and BdL (WVgg) combined.

Calculated by the author from data in Ritter, pp. 67-96.

Appendix 4: Prussian Landtag Elections, 1898 and 1912

Percentage of Vote won (seats won)

Province	1898		1912		Prov. Seats
	%	seats	%	seats	
E. Prussia	67.0	23	50.8	24	32
W. Prussia	17.3	6	22.3	5	22
Berlin	18.1	-	1.0	-	9/12
Brandenburg	53.9	28	22.2	18	36/38
Pomerania	67.9	24	49.5	24	26
Posen	20.5	8	21.5	9	29
Silesia	33.2	24	26.9	26	65/66
Saxony	45.6	17	26.1	19	38
Schleswig-Holstein	10.4	2	5.7	2	19
Hanover	4.9	1	8.8	6	36
Westphalia	9.2	4	3.8	6	31/34
Hessen-Nassau	17.6	6	9.1	8	26
Rhineland	2.0	2	2.2	1	62/63
Hohenzollern	1.7	-	-	-	2
Prussia	25.3	145	14.8	148	433

(Source: Ritter, p. 148.)

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Konservativer Verein Brandenburg (60 Pa 2)
Preußenbund (61 Pr 1)
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NL B. v. Bülow
NL P. zu Eulenburg
NL K. v. Fechenbach
NL A. v. Goßler (BA-MA Freiburg)
NL A. zu Hohenlohe
NL C. zu Hohenlohe
NL F. v. Löbell

Kleine Erwerbungen
329 W. Abegg
319 R. Hepke
536 Erinnerungen an Dr. v. Heydebrand und der Lasa
227 G. Hüpeden
455 W. v. d. Reck
230 G. Roesicke

Reichskanzleiakten
Sammlung K. v. Fechenbach
Zeitgeschichtliche Sammlung

Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitzes (GStA Dahlem)

NL R. Bosse
NL T. Schiemann

Staatsministerium (Rep. 90)
XII. Hauptabteilung IV: Flugblätter und Plakate (Konservative Partei)

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