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THE METTERNICH AND BISMARCK MEMOIRS:
A COMPARISON

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Degree
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INTRODUCTION

Men make their own history, but they do not make
it as they please, nor under conditions of their
own choosing, but rather under circumstances which
they find before them and under conditions handed
down from the past.¹

When studying nineteenth century European political and diplomatic history, it is immediately apparent that two figures, more or less in succession, dominated the century. As one was leaving the stage, the other was preparing to enter. A young Prussian diplomat, Otto von Bismarck, visited the retired Austrian Chancellor, Clemens von Metternich, at his Johannisberg estate in 1851 shortly after Metternich had returned from exile.² Of their meeting Princess Melanie Metternich noted in her diary that Bismarck "had a long conversation with her husband and seemed to have the best political foundation. My husband was immediately very interested in him."³

That meeting, on a vineyard-covered hill overlooking the Rhine, symbolized the approaching Central European power shift from Austria to a new Prussian-led Germany,⁴ but it was preceded by an experience which Metternich and Bismarck had in common, the revolutions of 1848.

¹ Karl Marx, *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, 3d ed., Berlin: (Dietz Verlag, 1965), 15.

² These two great statesmen met three times during the period after Metternich had left the political stage and before Bismarck came to power. As might be expected, Bismarck mentioned Metternich in his memoirs, making note of two of his three visits with "old Metternich," and revealing that Metternich advised him that Germany should not be an expansionist power (Otto Bismarck, *Die Gesammelten Werke*, eds. Gerhard Ritter and Rudolf Stadelmann, vol. 15 (Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1932), 184-185. (Bismarck's memoirs will hereafter be cited as *GW*, vol. 15.) Bismarck's only other reference to Metternich in his memoirs was an indirect one in which he referred to Austria during the Metternich era as stable and trustworthy (*GW*, vol. 15, 240).

³ Metternich-Winneburg, Clemens Lothar Wenzel Fürst von, *Aus Metternich's nachgelassenen Papieren*, ed. Fürst Richard Metternich-Winneburg, (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1880-1884), vol. 8, 102. (Metternich's memoirs will hereafter be cited as *NP*.)

⁴ G. P. Gooch, "Bismarck's Legacy," *Foreign Affairs* 30 (July 1952): 520.

Metternich's life's work was invested in the continuation of the political *status quo* in the Habsburg empire, and the Vienna revolution ended his career. Bismarck, in contrast, experienced 1848 as a young man just entering the political arena with only a limited political stake in the tumultuous events.

Comparing this event they have in common reveals very different pictures of the two Chancellors. Metternich's experience of the 1848 revolution was that of a seasoned statesman. Not surprised by the uprising in Paris in February, 1848, he warned that Austria must hold firm against the revolutionary forces--which he expected to erupt in Italy.⁵ When revolution did break out in Vienna and the Metternichs were forced to flee, it was Princess Melanie's diary that detailed their journey into exile, and the day after his resignation, as they were fleeing the continent, Metternich was writing letters of gratitude and support to Tsar Nicholas and Frederick William IV. The same week Metternich wrote to Count Karl Ficquelmont congratulating him on his appointment as Foreign Minister and warning him of the dangers Austria faced, particularly those created by the Empire's nationalities problems. Even then, Metternich warned Ficquelmont against Austrian centralization and stressed the importance of respecting the differences of habits and customs of the peoples of the empire.⁶ Thereafter, Metternich kept up a barrage of letters to sovereigns and statesmen with comments and advice about the situation in Europe.

Of the cause of the revolution in Vienna, he wrote in 1852, that Count Franz Kolowrat bore some of the blame but, the monarchy had allowed revolution to happen through its mismanagement of the empire and inattentiveness to the dangers. Of his own responsibility,

⁵ Metternich to Ficquelmont, March 1, 1848, *NP*, vol. 7, 566. Metternich to Canitz, February 29, 1848, *NP*, vol. 7, 594.

⁶ Metternich to Ficquelmont, March 20, 1848, *NP*, vol. 7, 611-613.

Metternich maintained that he had only a limited impact on internal affairs, but that he had attempted to save the monarchy.⁷

Metternich's comments about the 1848 revolutions were, not surprisingly, in keeping with his on-going criticism of revolution throughout the memoirs. In letters to his daughter, Leontine, written from London, he described the situation in Austria in October, 1848, as anarchy.⁸ The 1848 revolutions with their criminal activities and their foolish delusions, he said, were disgraceful aberrations to which central Europe surrendered, and their results--the misery and damage to society--would be lasting.⁹

The most striking difference between Metternich's and Bismarck's discussion of 1848 was indicative of their overall views--Metternich the internationalist focused not just on Austria's revolution, but on Europe's predicament as a whole, while Bismarck saw the events of 1848 through the eyes of a Prussian and--writing his memoirs after his resignation--with the hindsight of the statesman who had unified Germany.

Bismarck discussed 1848 in detail in his memoirs, devoting an entire chapter to comments about the revolution in Berlin. His own actions during the crisis--according to his self-portrait--were those of a man of action marshalling his peasants to defend his estate at Schönhausen and support the king. In disguise, he traveled to Berlin to offer his own services, recommending to Frederick William that he leave Berlin in order to take control of Prussia.

In his chapter about the Berlin uprising in March, 1848, Bismarck's primary focus was Frederick William IV's weakness in dealing with the revolutionaries. During the revolution, according to Bismarck, the loudest protests came from the press and parliament masquerading

⁷ Autobiographical Essay, *NP*, vol. 7, 617-632.

⁸ Metternich to Countess Leontine Sandor, October 18, 1848, *NP*, vol. 8, 189.

⁹ Metternich to Countess Leontine Sandor, November 2, 1848, *NP*, vol. 8, 191.

as public opinion, but the great majority of the people were not a part of the rebellion. Unfortunately for Prussia, the King listened to the press and parliament.¹⁰

Although he discussed his dislike of the revolution, his criticism, unlike Metternich's, was not directed against the revolution itself, but the Prussian response thereto. Prussian prestige had sunk very low during the revolution and this greatly disturbed Bismarck.¹¹ He deplored the removal of the army from Berlin and the false and humiliating accusations made against it by the "lying" press.¹² The revolution, he maintained, had been won by the King's troops, but Frederick William had failed to take advantage of the victory and crush the rebellion.¹³ Had the King been bold instead of timid, Prussia could have made its move "after the collapse of Austria."¹⁴ Bismarck expressed regret that Prussia missed its opportunity to unify Germany in the spring of 1848, and commented that of all the German states experiencing revolutionary tumult, including the Habsburg Empire, only Prussia had remained on a firm footing.¹⁵ "Military Prussia was strong and intact enough to arrest the progress of the revolutionary wave, and to offer the remaining German states... guarantees for law and order...."¹⁶ Instead, Germany had to wait until 1870.

* * *

¹⁰ *GW*, vol. 15, 47.

¹¹ Bismarck to Gerlach, May 2, 1857, *GW*, vol. 15, 112.

¹² *GW*, vol. 15, 23.

¹³ *GW*, vol. 15, 32-33.

¹⁴ *GW*, vol. 15, 32, 46.

¹⁵ *GW*, vol. 15, 32.

¹⁶ *GW*, vol. 15, 32

Both Metternich and Bismarck gave their names to an era, and at times, it appeared that the world was theirs to command. In his work about nineteenth century thought, Karl Löwith talks of the men who "are" the nineteenth century, that is, the men who defined the era and whose contributions molded the future. Among them he includes Hegel and Goethe, Marx and Kierkegaard, Beethoven and Wagner, Renoir and van Gogh, Heine and Dostoevski. "Not least," he adds, the nineteenth century "is Napoleon and Metternich, Cavour, Lassalle and Bismarck...."¹⁷

Similarities of the two statesmen were noted as early as 1866 after Bismarck's successful campaigns against the Danes and the Austrians. An experienced diplomat remarked at the time that a change in the driver of the locomotive of Central Europe had occurred, and although a different course was being steered, the important point was that both knew how to drive.¹⁸

There were numerous similarities in the careers of the two Chancellors which make a comparison of their memoirs interesting. Such similarities can be seen early in their professional lives when both Metternich and Bismarck were Ambassadors to Napoleons, representing Austria and Prussia in Paris. Both received their initial promotion to their leadership positions during political crises. Metternich was named Foreign Minister in 1809 as Count Stadion, the Austrian Foreign Minister, was forced to resign following the Austrian defeat by Napoleon at Wagram. Bismarck, as William I was threatening to abdicate, was summoned to end a stalemate between the King and the Prussian Diet in 1862.

Another similarity exists if Metternich's relationship with the allied armies in France in 1814 is compared to Bismarck's relationship with the Prussian armies in his wars of unification

¹⁷ Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Thought*, trans. David E. Green (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), vii.

¹⁸ Ottokar Lorenz, *Staatsmänner und Geschichtsschreiber des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Wilhelm Hertz, 1896), 4.

which culminated in 1871. Both men played major roles in the decision-making at the time, both accompanied the armies and courts, and both were on the winning side. Metternich's response to Napoleon's defeat was to revive the disintegrating Austrian Empire; Bismarck rebuilt the German Empire. Thereafter, protecting and maintaining their empires became both Chancellors' primary concern. Bismarck was above all a Prussian looking for immediate returns for his state. Metternich claimed to have wider vision, professing always to work not just for Austria but for Europe; but like Bismarck, his own country's interests were his driving force. From positions of weakness, Metternich and Bismarck led Austria and Prussia back to Great Power status, and the two Chancellors, each in his turn, became the arbiters of power in Europe. Once their empire's position was secure, they used their influence to preserve peace in Europe, and although their motives were guided by the needs of their own state, European interests, at least in their eyes, were served.

In the matter of foreign policy, too, there were points of comparison. Their common foreign policy interests included the fact that France was regarded by both Chancellors as their primary enemy. Both were wary of Russia because of its size and strength and believed that friendship between their own country and Russia was of paramount importance. And both regarded the "other Germany" as an important ally. During Metternich's years in power, Prussia was a solid supporter of Austrian policy and receptive to his guidance. After Bismarck established Prussia's predominance in Germany, Austria became Germany's most dependable ally.

Steadfast supporters of the monarchical system, both Metternich and Bismarck worked for an autocratic emperor for the greater part of their careers, and both Chancellors faced opposition at court. Metternich was not liked by Emperor Francis' wife or his brothers, who resented the Chancellor's influence over the sovereign. Bismarck, too, was disliked by the

Empress Augusta, Crown Prince Frederick, and his English-born wife. The Empress' dislike of Bismarck dated from his conduct during the 1848 revolution, and Frederick's and Victoria's animosity stemmed from their more liberal predilections.

Of his place in history, Metternich's champions refer to his leadership of Europe, particularly between 1809 and 1822, but also to his qualities of wisdom, moderation, and moral courage. Bismarck's admirers cite his bold moves which unified Germany and his calculated, often brilliant maneuvers as he guided the young empire.

Both Metternich and Bismarck were abruptly and unwillingly removed from office--forced to resign suddenly from positions of great power, giving the ends of their careers commonality as well. Even the editing and publishing of their memoirs were not dissimilar in that they were overseen by their eldest surviving sons--sons who despite serving in high office, did not have the impressive careers their fathers had.

* * *

Metternich and Bismarck have been compared often, their careers, their policies, and their accomplishments, but they have never been compared through their memoirs. Despite the Chancellors' similarities in situation and career, this work is not about parallel personalities. It is, instead, an attempt to deal with parallel memoirs, and the comments and generalities about the Chancellors, their philosophies, and policies are made based on the documents contained in their memoirs.

This thesis examines and compares how the Metternich and Bismarck memoirs were written, published, and received, but its primary focus is a comparison of what the memoirs disclose about the two Chancellors. The descriptions and appraisals of the events of their lives, the expression of their philosophies, and the revelation of their characters are compared to determine if it is possible to understand the two statesmen from their memoirs. Is the information

contained in the memoirs a fair representation of the truth, or do the memoirs contain distortions which were made in an effort to portray the Chancellors in a favorable light, thereby destroying the memoirs' value as historically significant source material? To what extent were the memoirs successful in presenting a flattering image of the statesmen, an image which represented the way they wished to be remembered and which the memoirs were intended to portray? And finally, how does an examination of the problems inherent with political memoirs help answer these questions? Do the problems incurred with memory, accuracy, and motivation which so often occur in political memoirs have a negative effect on the information contained in the Metternich and Bismarck memoirs making them misleading and unusable?

CHAPTER I

THE WRITING AND PUBLISHING OF THE MEMOIRS

Both Metternich and Bismarck, conscious of the roles they played in nineteenth century history, commented on their own memoirs. Metternich wrote that he only wanted to chronicle events in which he participated and which produced his "tone of mind," and the archives could take care of the rest.¹ Unlike Bismarck, he did not arrange for the publication of his memoirs but directed that his autobiographical essays be put into his family archives and made accessible to historians.

In 1829 Metternich wrote of his essay on the alliances that his objective was historical precision, believing that that which was not included in the archives would be lost for all time unless he recorded it. During the negotiations among the allies in 1813 through 1815, much of what was happening was not written down,² and he needed to record the important, sometimes indispensable, part Emperor Francis played. He wanted history to judge him, as well, since his contemporaries, he believed, did not always judge him the way he saw himself.³

I have made history, and have, therefore, not found time to write it. Neither self-love nor proneness to dogmatism have urged me to make known the views and sentiments by which the whole course of my life was governed. The feeling which inspires me rests on a regard for historical truth.⁴

As will become evident, his memoirs did not fully live up to these lofty ideals. "Pleadings *pro domo sua* rarely succeed in the world," Metternich wrote,⁵ and, about his own memoirs some would argue, this was indeed true.

¹ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 57.

² Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 139.

³ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 141.

⁴ Editor's Preface, *NP*, vol. 1, v-vi.

⁵ H. du Coudray, *Metternich* (New Haven: Yale Univ Press, 1937), 384.

Bismarck approached his historical legacy differently. In March 1891, in the middle of writing his memoirs, he said:

I have seen three Kings in a state of nakedness and frequently these three exalted gentlemen did not make altogether a very good show. Still it would not do to say that openly before the world—it would be inconsistent—opposed to principle. And yet I can just as little keep silent.... And if [the publication of my memoirs] takes place after my death, then they will say: 'There you have it! Even from his grave! What a detestable old wretch!'⁶

Bismarck fully intended that his memoirs be published, and he signed a contract with the publisher Cotta in 1890 to produce six volumes.⁷ Desirous of continuing to influence the course Germany would take after his resignation, his memoirs were a means to leave behind guidance to insure Germany's future success on the world stage. In addition, the memoirs provided an opportunity to glorify his own career and accomplishments.

* * *

During his official life, Metternich collected papers, letters, and documents and placed them in his family archives, along with his autobiographical essays.⁸ His intent was to let the documents speak for him, because that seemed more accurate than relying on his own memory.⁹ While Bismarck only began work on his memoirs after his dismissal, Metternich, as early as 1825, began drafting autobiographical segments with his confidant, Friedrich von Gentz, assisting as editor.¹⁰ The Metternich memoirs begin with a narrative about his boyhood, education, and

⁶ Moritz Busch, *Bismarck: Some Secret Pages of His History*, vol. 2, (Toronto: The Copp, Clark Company, Limited, 1898), 549.

⁷ Otto Pflanze, *Bismarck and the Development of Germany*, vol. 3, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 414.

⁸ The Metternich family archives, formerly located at Plass, are now found in the Czech National Archives in Prague.

⁹ Editor's Preface, *NP*, vol. 1, v-vi.

¹⁰ Metternich to Gentz, August 10, 1825, *NP*, vol. 4, 187. Alan Palmer, *Metternich* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1972), 235.

early his public life. According to Princess Melanie's diary, Metternich began writing this essay in 1843 while at the baths at Ischl. This work, "Materials for the History of My Public Life," covering the period up to 1810, was completed in 1844 and marked for inclusion in the family archives. The subsequent section of the narrative, covering the period 1810-1812, is a portion of an essay completed in 1852, entitled, "Guide to explain my Manner of Thought and Action during the Course of my Ministry from 1809 to 1848."

In 1829 Metternich wrote "On the History of the Alliances, 1813 to 1815," an essay he had originally planned to publish. This tract was substituted by the editors in place of the corresponding chapters of the "Guide" to complete the essay. These three essays, entitled Book One, compose the autobiographical portion of the first volume and deal only with events up to 1815. Volume One continues thereafter with "A Gallery of Celebrated Contemporaries," seventy pages on Napoleon and Alexander I which Metternich wrote in 1820 and 1829.¹¹

There are two additional autobiographical compositions contained in the memoirs, and they were written at the end of Metternich's life. The first, primarily an apologia, is the remainder of the 1852 autobiographical memorandum mentioned above, and although it professes to be an overview of his thirty-nine year ministerial career, it focuses on the cause of the 1848 revolutions in Paris and Vienna. This document, written during the period 1849-1855, is followed by Metternich's nine-page political testament in which he expounded once again his venerated principles.

The remainder of the Metternich Memoirs were compiled by Metternich's son, Richard, with the assistance of the archivist and historian, Friedrich von Klinkowström. The documents selected for inclusion illustrate what Richard Metternich believed was important to include and are of three types: Metternich's official correspondence and reports, his private correspondence--

¹¹ Editor's Remarks, *NP*, vol. 1, 220.

primarily with family members, and excerpts from the diary of Princess Melanie, Metternich's third wife. In the late 1870s Richard and Klinkowström assembled the papers which Metternich had written and collected, arranged them chronologically, and supplemented them with references to the Archives.¹² Richard stated that the documents which comprise the memoirs were not additions to the autobiography nor *pièces justificatives*, but were meant to explain Metternich's actions and complete the story of his life.¹³ Although Metternich scholars note a number of problems with the memoirs as a result of the editing, Richard maintained he neither altered nor added to the papers, reproducing them with "scrupulous fidelity" to bring out the greatness of his father's character."¹⁴

While Bismarck's *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, in three volumes was written in German, *Aus Metternich's nachgelassenen Papieren* fills eight volumes in both French and German. Most of Metternich's diplomatic correspondence and selected essays were written in French, while his *Vorträge*¹⁵ to the Emperor, Princess Melanie's diaries, some correspondence, and a few essays are in German.

The German edition of the eight volume work, *Aus Metternich's nachgelassenen Papieren*, was initially published from 1880-1884 by Wilhelm Braumüller Verlag in Vienna.¹⁶ English translations of the first five volumes were published beginning in 1880 by R. Bentley in London and Charles Scribner's Sons in New York. This was the only English translation made

¹² Editor's Preface, *NP*, vol. 1, vii-viii.

¹³ Editor's Remarks, *NP*, vol. 1, 338.

¹⁴ Editor's Preface, *NP*, vol. 1, vii.

¹⁵ Metternich wrote frequent (often several per day) briefing reports to Emperor Francis to keep him advised of the details of all matters which came under his supervision.

¹⁶ Volumes 1 and 2 in 1880, Volumes 3 and 4 in 1881, Volume 5 in 1882, Volumes 6 and 7 in 1883, and Volume 8 in 1884.

of the Metternich memoirs, and it was, unfortunately, poorly translated and unreliable.¹⁷ At the same time, E. Plon, Nourrit et cie in Paris published an abridged French translation. Beginning in 1881 an additional edition of the English translation was published by Harper in New York, and in 1882 an Italian translation was published by F. Ili Bocca. More recent printings include a reprint of the original Scribner volumes in English by H. Fertig in 1970 and a facsimile by Braumüller in German in 1989.¹⁸

* * *

The story of the "writing" of Bismarck's memoirs is more complicated. The title chosen by Bismarck for his memoirs hinted at what was to come. *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* was Bismarck's story of his years in office--how he wanted the story to be told and how he wished to be remembered.

Moritz Busch, a journalist who wrote about Bismarck throughout his career, documented the difficulties experienced in the writing of the memoirs in *Bismarck: Some Secret Pages of His History*. In 1888 Bismarck had asked Busch to assist with the memoirs and had begun giving him papers which Busch numbered and arranged chronologically. Busch revealed that, during his last days in office, Bismarck believed he was "being watched," and he asked Busch to sneak documents out of the Chancellory. Both Bismarck and his son, Herbert, took documents with them when they left office.¹⁹ At that time, Bismarck intended to dictate his memoirs to a secretary and had planned to hire for the task a young doctor who could do double duty in case Bismarck was injured or became ill.²⁰

¹⁷ Arthur G. Haas, *Metternich, Reorganization and Nationality, 1813-1818: A Story of Foresight and Frustration in the Rebuilding of the Austrian Empire*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1964, 1963), 224.

¹⁸ Source: Worldcat.

¹⁹ Pflanze, 414.

²⁰ Busch, 519.

As it turned out Busch was not selected to assist Bismarck and instead, in May, 1890, Lothar Bucher, Bismarck's former aide at the foreign office began work on the memoirs with Bismarck at Friedrichsruh.²¹ Bucher witnessed firsthand Bismarck's desire to continue to wield influence in Germany and "to warn and to teach," and Bucher wrote often to Busch on the progress of the memoirs. He complained of the slowness of their undertaking, reporting in July, 1890, that he was arranging in chronological order five to six thousand letters dating from the 1850s to 1890.

Bismarck, according to Bucher, was a reluctant participant, unwilling to spend time working on the memoirs, and the project continued sporadically until May, 1892, when a draft was completed. It was a period of great frustration for Bucher who had hoped to prepare a scholarly, objective account of Bismarck's career,²² and he was plagued by Bismarck's inability to "concentrate his thoughts sufficiently." Bismarck was easily distracted from his subject, and from day to day he would give different versions of the same story. His dictation was repetitious, disjointed, and inconsistent in its content, and he occasionally wrote concerning subjects about which his knowledge was deficient. The major problem, Bucher reported, was laziness, and it was difficult to get Bismarck to read even one of the fourteen chapters that Bucher had put together. Well into the project Bucher complained that Bismarck "begins also intentionally to misrepresent even plain and well-established matters of fact.... He will not admit his own share in anything that has failed and he will acknowledge no one to be of any

²¹ Busch, 536-537.

²² Pflanze, 414-415.

consequence compared to himself, except perhaps the old Emperor (to whom he now, as a foil to the young Emperor, gives a much higher place than he is fairly entitled to)."²³

In 1892, Bismarck decided the memoirs would be left to his sons to be published after his death. According to Busch, Bucher believed Bismarck's sons would not publish the memoirs because they contained easily discerned misrepresentations and unjust judgments of prominent people.²⁴

Bucher died in October 1892, and although further volumes of the memoirs had been planned, the enterprise came to an end. Until his death, Bismarck himself continued to revise and edit what had been written. The rights to publish the memoirs belonged to Cotta Verlag, but before they were published, to complete the work and ready it for publication, Herbert retained the services of Horst Kohl, a *Gymnasium* professor who had edited a Bismarck Yearbook and fourteen volumes of his Diet speeches. Kohl did stylistic editing, wrote an introduction, corrected factual information, and added correspondence and footnotes.²⁵ The first two volumes of memoirs were published in November, 1898, four months after Bismarck's death, and sold for twenty marks for the cloth edition and thirty for the leather. Despite its high price, the memoirs were a "huge success." Before year's end three hundred thousand copies had sold and the work was in its second printing.²⁶ In 1905 a "Volk Edition" and in 1913 a "New Edition" were published by Cotta.

²³ Busch, 537, 540-542, 549, 562, 566. The accuracy of Busch's account of the foregoing tale has been challenged by some scholars because it may have been his objective to discredit Bismarck's memoirs since his own book about Bismarck was in direct competition with the work. However, Busch's rendition of the facts concerning the compilation of the memoirs continues to be cited by many Bismarck scholars.

²⁴ Busch, 567.

²⁵ Pflanze, 416-418.

²⁶ Lothar Gall, *Bismarck: The White Revolutionary*, vol. 2, trans. J. A. Underwood, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 231.

Volume Three of the Bismarck memoirs had not been compiled by Bucher but by Herbert, and Bismarck had corrected and edited Herbert's draft to suit his own literary style. After Bismarck's death in 1898, Herbert was unwilling to allow this volume to be published because of its condemnation of the reigning emperor, William II. An additional consideration for withholding publication was the damage it could do to the monarchic system of government, which both Herbert and his father favored as the best system for Germany. Herbert negotiated with Cotta Verlag to delay publication until after his death, but it was later agreed to wait until after William II's death. When William went into exile after World War I, it was decided to publish the work and Cotta began printing. Sources disagree as to whether or not the Bismarck family wanted the third volume to be released in 1919 or not. William successfully sued to delay publication, but Cotta had already printed thousands of copies before the lawsuit was begun and some had leaked out. Publication of versions in other languages was imminent when William II changed his mind and allowed Cotta to publish Volume Three in exchange for 200,000 marks which he used for legal expenses and donated to charity. This volume, like its predecessors, was an immediate success and sparked renewed interest in the first two volumes.²⁷

²⁷ Otto Pflanze, "Bismarck's *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*," in *Political Memoir: Essays on the Politics of Memory*, ed. George Egerton (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1994), 54-56.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL CONTENT AND TONE

Neither Metternich nor Bismarck was willing to leave the task of writing their histories solely to biographers. They were sensitive to the impact of their personal contributions on the events of their times, and they wanted to leave a record of what they believed was important about events and personalities during their years in power.

The content of the memoirs and what is revealed about the two Chancellors is, by far, their most interesting aspect. The tone of both memoirs became evident as each Chancellor expressed his views and opinions and related his versions of the events of his political life.

The eight volumes of the Metternich memoirs are comparable to a single volume (number fifteen) of *Die Gesammelte Werke*, the definitive version of the Bismarck memoirs used by scholars today. (This fifteenth volume of Bismarck's collected works combines the three volumes of *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, which were originally published in 1898 and 1919.)¹ Both the Metternich and the Bismarck memoirs represent a selection of documents, analogous to the tip of an iceberg--what was considered important to include, what was instructive, and what was chosen to be emphasized. The iceberg itself, a larger body of documents of each statesmen are the Metternich archives and the other fourteen volumes of *Die Gesammelte Werke*.

General Content

What was selected for inclusion in the two memoirs was distinctly different. Metternich's *Vorträge* to Emperor Frances dealt, for the most part, with foreign policy, and these reports comprise a large segment of the memoir's documents until 1823. Thereafter the majority of the documents are letters to Austrian ambassadors in European capitals, Apponyi in Paris, Esterhazy

¹ Volumes One through Six of *Die Gesammelte Werke* contain Bismarck's political writings, Volumes Seven through Nine are conversations, Volumes Ten through Thirteen, speeches, and Volume Fourteen, letters.

in London, Ficquelmont in St. Petersburg, Ottenfels in Constantinople, and others. Occasionally an unusual document--such as an essay by Gentz on the Vienna Congress or a letter from Talleyrand on the Saxony problem in 1814-1815--is also included.²

Metternich's letters to his family were chatty and rarely mentioned anything of depth in regard to political matters. Personalities were described and professional frustrations, but much of the content was concerned with daily comings and goings. After 1829 two additional types of documents were added to the mix--a collection of Metternich's letters to the Austrian Ambassador in Paris, Count Apponyi, which contained an on-going and thorough commentary on foreign policy and the aforementioned extracts from the diaries of Princess Melanie. A listing of honors bestowed on Metternich and a description of his last day are also included.

Only the first volume and two documents in the seventh volume of Metternich's memoirs contain narrative, whereas Bismarck's memoirs are primarily narrative, with letters and various documents used to augment and illustrate. In addition to correspondence with friends, statesmen, and kings, the Bismarck memoirs contain such miscellany as an essay written for a newspaper, a poem about the army, minutes of a ministerial meeting, a quotation from Hamlet, several of Bismarck's speeches, and notes from William I.³

Metternich's memoirs covered his life and political career quite thoroughly, as might be expected in an eight volume political memoir. If the memoirs have a recurring theme, it is his principles of "right" and his continual fight against the forces of revolution. Metternich, unlike Bismarck, rarely digressed onto side issues in his chapters. The memoirs began with Metternich's youth and chronicled events up to 1815. A chronology follows, covering not only

² "The Vienna Congress," 1815, *NP*, vol. 2, 473-502. Talleyrand to Metternich, December 19, 1814, *NP*, vol. 2, 509-514.

³ *GW*, vol. 15, 26, 30-31, 40, 260-261.

Metternich's official life, but also his personal life and retirement. The Metternich memoirs are detailed—sometimes to the point of excess. For example, a whole volume—over 600 pages—is devoted to the Eastern Question.

The Metternich letters to Apponyi in Paris comprised a large part of the memoirs and were selected, according to the editor, because a complete series of letters was available for the years 1831 through 1848⁴. A careless reader might be misled as to what Metternich believed was important because the letters to Apponyi gave the memoirs a distinct tenor of being more concerned with France than with any other country (an argument with some merit). However, because they discussed not only Metternich's policies in regard to France, but international affairs in general, these letters provided an excellent delineation of Metternich's foreign policy.

Two other aspects differentiate the Metternich memoirs from Bismarck's. First was the use of Princess Melanie's diary entries which depicted the social life of the Metternichs, their domestic scene, and Melanie's devotion to her husband, along with descriptions of parties, dignitaries, and summer trips. The inclusion in every volume of a selection of Metternich's private correspondence also enables the reader to have a glimpse of Metternich, the family man, and more significantly, a sense of Metternich's character and personality. No similar personal information is contained in the Bismarck memoirs.

Bismarck's memoirs dealt only with selected topics and were arranged in more or less chronologically ordered chapters. The chapters varied considerably in subject matter: a review of Prussian history, an explanation of Bismarck's rupture with the conservatives, and a purported description of the *Kulturkampf*, among others. Most of them claimed to pertain to major political events in his career, although, as noted earlier, they often strayed from the subject of the chapter.

⁴ Editor's Remarks, *NP*, vol. 5, vii.

The third volume was devoted exclusively to Bismarck's forced resignation and disparagement of William II and his policies.

While letters written to Metternich rarely appeared in his memoirs, a noticeable contrast occurs between the two memoirs with Bismarck's inclusion of numerous letters from others--many of which were filled with gushing praise of Bismarck.

The content of the Bismarck memoirs is incomplete and somewhat disjointed. Digression and diatribes are characteristic and many pages are concerned with trivial matters. In his first chapter, for example, Bismarck digressed into the details of an unimportant divorce case in which he was involved as a junior attorney in training. As early as the fourth page, the work degenerated into an invective against the Prussian diplomats who preceded him. In his chapter on events at Versailles in 1870-1871, Bismarck diverged from the topic of the war against the French, one of the major political events of his career, first to discuss Russia's aspirations to control the Straits, then to defend his handling of the 1878 Congress at Berlin, and finally to castigate Russian Foreign Minister and Chancellor, Alexander Gorchakov, accusing him of attempting to create an estrangement between Russia and Germany.⁵

Bismarck's chapter on Schleswig-Holstein is an excellent example of how he approached his memoirs as a whole. It contained some information about the Schleswig-Holstein crisis but failed to describe in any detail shrewd Prussian diplomatic strategies utilized to maneuver Austria into war. Instead Bismarck focused on the logic of his belief that public opinion and popularity of the government were unimportant. In addition, he covered the topic of the importance of state power and Great Power status. Also off the topic of Schleswig-Holstein was his denunciation of the press, the Federal Diet, and liberal influences on William I, his discussion of canal and naval legislation, and criticism of his successor in Paris, Count Robert von der Goltz.

⁵ *GW*, vol. 15, 319-320.

Far from inclusive of the important events in his long year career, Bismarck's memoirs did not discuss his economic policies, social reforms, and his struggles with the socialist party. Over one third of the first volume dealt with Prussian policy during the 1850s *before* Bismarck came to power, yet the 1862 constitutional crisis which brought him to power received only a cursory review. A further illustration of his selectiveness was the lengthy description of his efforts in 1870 to get William I to agree to the title, German Emperor, whereas the immensely important German constitution in which Bismarck secured the power of the executive, was all but ignored.⁶ Particulars were not always omitted, however, and in the third volume Bismarck meticulously described the details of the events leading up to his dismissal.

Tone

Neither Bismarck nor Metternich could be accused of modesty in tone. Both were smug and self-righteous and praised themselves and their accomplishments well beyond what might, at least today, be considered appropriate. One of the most striking aspects of the Metternich memoirs was his vanity, a fact pointed out by most reviewers.

A large portion of the Bismarck memoirs criticized that which was not of Bismarck, by Bismarck, or for Bismarck. While Bismarck's negative tone is a dominant characteristic of his memoirs, the sense one gets from the Metternich memoirs is not that of a negative person. Metternich expressed negativity only when he was exhausted or discouraged or had suffered a loss of a loved-one.

The overriding impression gained from reading his memoirs is his belief in the rightness of his opinions and his preoccupation with his "principles." He thought of himself as a rational child of the Enlightenment and was quite obviously impressed with his own intellect. Philosophizing at length throughout the eight volumes of the memoirs, Metternich discoursed on

⁶ GW, vol. 15, 326-329.

his principles--principles which preserved "right" and "order." He insisted his principles had always been consistent, but the facts demonstrated he would sacrifice them for the sake of order if necessary.⁷

Interminable condemnation of the French, revolution, and revolutionaries gave Metternich's memoirs a somewhat monotonous and pedantic tone. He was often critical and, like Bismarck, denounced the tactics of his predecessors, blaming them for all sorts of failures.⁸ Yet, none of Bismarck's passion and anger are to be found in the Metternich memoirs; and he does not generally resort to blaming as Bismarck does. Although both Chancellors were subject to periods of melancholy, one senses in reading his memoirs that Metternich was a more light-hearted man than Bismarck. At times Metternich sounded optimistic that stability, the *status quo*, and monarchy as a governmental form would be preserved. At other times his fear of liberalism and revolution rendered him more pessimistic.⁹ After the 1830 revolution in Paris, Metternich expressed prophetically his belief that "ancient Europe was at the beginning of the end," and that he would perish with it.¹⁰

The tone of the Bismarck memoirs is negative, and dominated by certain recurring complaints: burdens of responsibility, loneliness, and isolation.¹¹ Reading Bismarck's memoirs without any preconceptions about the man or his policies, one immediately senses three overriding qualities--his passion, his bitterness, and his self-satisfaction. Bismarck's vivid

⁷ In 1925, Heinrich Ritter von Srbik wrote of the consistency of Metternich's principles in "Der Ideengehalt des 'Metternichschen Systems,'" *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 131, 1925, 243, however, the posthumously published third volume of Srbik's Metternich Biography, published in 1954 exhibited less certainty about this conclusion. See Haas, *Metternich, Reorganization and Nationality 1813-1818*, 225.

⁸ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 29-30, 87.

⁹ Metternich to Apponyi, January 29, 1827 *NP*, vol. 4, 340-343.

¹⁰ Metternich to Nesselrode, September 1, 1830, *NP*, vol. 5, 25.

¹¹ *GW*, vol. 15, 351-353.

descriptions reflect his passion. His enemies are intensely despised; his rightness is vehemently right. His tone is frequently caustic and disparaging--in keeping with his tendency to denounce his enemies and to deprecate everything which came before or after his term of office. The political players influencing William I before Bismarck was called to office in 1862 are thoroughly condemned as is most of Frederick William IV's reign. Bismarck saw his predecessors as incompetents who damaged Prussia and wasted its potential. Only when he wrote about William I did his tone change--here was reverence, respect, and affection.

At times the tone of Bismarck's memoirs was querulous and self-pitying, and there were only occasional positive episodes--usually proofs of his accomplishments and his greatness.¹² Despite the fact that much of his narrative was intended to explain and educate, the memoirs were dominated by his criticism and grievances--giving them their distinctly negative and pessimistic tone. Human life, Bismarck wrote, was "a series of struggles."¹³

Whether justified or not, Bismarck saw enemies everywhere, injuries real or imagined were an on-going lament, and his ill health was a constant refrain. His near paranoia was illustrated by his description of Conservatives' scrambling for his job at the time of his dismissal. He complained frequently about his opposition: the National Liberals deserted or assailed him; the conservatives were jealous of his lofty accomplishments; and the military leaders thwarted him because they hated him. Subordinates were ungrateful and disloyal; Gorchakov was jealous; and only William I supported him.¹⁴

Bismarck's third volume was even more angry and resentful--warning ominously of the results of foreign policy mistakes and protesting the new course politics took after his resignation.

¹² GW, vol. 15, 193.

¹³ GW, vol. 15, 339.

¹⁴ GW, vol. 15, 319, 341, 355, 384.

CHAPTER III

CHARACTER THEMES

View of Self

The events in which Metternich and Bismarck were involved--in which they often played the most significant role--charted the course of European history in the nineteenth century and beyond. Although they regarded themselves as major players on the European stage during their years in office, both professed humility and stated they would have preferred a simpler life. Their memoirs paint a different picture--of men who exercised power with clear relish.

Metternich wrote openly of his awareness of his place in history, and although Bismarck did not refer to his importance as an historical figure, the format and presentation of his memoirs demonstrate he knew very well his own significance.

Metternich disparaged Romanticism and emotional display, and wrote that he saw things "as they are."¹ Bismarck, on the other hand, labeled himself a Romantic, and his descriptions of his emotional responses attest to this self-description.² He reported that he wept over his frustrations, considered resignation, and even contemplated suicide.³ His well known threats to resign were not only a tactic to accomplish his objectives, but also an emotional response to his frustrations at not getting his way.⁴ Bismarck's emotionalism was, in part perhaps, a reflection of the spirit of the times, and the same might be said of Metternich's rational demeanor.

¹ Metternich to Neumann, July 3, 1826, *NP*, vol. 4, 282.

² Bismarck to Gerlach, May 2, 1857, *GW*, vol. 15, 111.

³ *GW*, vol. 15, 277, 279. This occurred in 1866 when Bismarck was frustrated in his attempts to convince William to settle the war against Austria quickly.

⁴ William I to Bismarck, February 22, 1869, *GW*, vol 15, 137, 234, 307-308, 370, 383, 494.

Bismarck claimed to have a sense of humor although the tone and content of the memoirs contain no evidence to prove this assertion.⁵ Apparently eager to display his honest character and to illustrate that he was above bribery, he included a description of his refusal of an expensive gift from Victor Emanuel.⁶ Bismarck emphasized his loyalty to Prussia and his king,⁷ and portrayed himself as putting Prussia, duty, honor, and service to King above all else. These assertions occurred regularly throughout the memoirs but most insistently in the last volume in which he related the story of his dismissal and his conflict with William II. His honor, he explained, compelled him to protect the endangered monarchy,⁸ and, blind to his own nature, he claimed that "no love of power or ambition" drove him, only his sense of duty.⁹

A sense of duty drove Metternich as well, and he often boasted of his lack of ambition, his service to emperor, and his desire only to "do good."¹⁰ He was resolved, he wrote, at least to attempt to prevent evil if he could do no good, and described himself as free of self-love and ambition.¹¹ Even as he fled into exile he wrote of his duty to respond to the crisis and defend the truth.¹² His "moral" life would end with his last breath, he asserted, and he went to England because he could best serve Austria there.¹³ He declared himself a man who

⁵ *GW*, vol. 15, 541.

⁶ *GW*, vol. 15, 340.

⁷ Bismarck to Gerlach, May 2, 1857, *GW*, vol. 15, 111.

⁸ *GW*, vol. 15, 508.

⁹ *GW*, vol. 15, 489, 504.

¹⁰ Metternich to Eleanore Metternich, August 29, 1817 *NP*, vol. 3, 44.

¹¹ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 54.

¹² *NP*, vol. 8, 7.

¹³ *NP*, vol. 8, 13.

persevered and never deviated from his principles,¹⁴ and he worked himself to exhaustion carrying out his duties.¹⁵

Metternich saw himself as more perceptive than most other statesmen and the only person capable of recognizing the problems of the day.¹⁶ He believed God gave him the talents he possessed in order to fight for the principles of conservatism, and with them he would ultimately prevail.¹⁷ Setting himself up in his memoirs as Napoleon's great opponent and likening their political duel to a chess game in which he checkmated Napoleon and revolution,¹⁸ he stated unabashedly that he had "vanquished the conqueror of the world."¹⁹ Although Bismarck had his own Napoleon as a foe, he had no great figure to "conquer." Instead he saw himself battling and conquering the forces which threatened the German empire he had created.

Both men quite obviously believed in the rightness of their own positions and policies. Constant repetition of his own outstanding virtues revealed a self-righteous Metternich's need to underscore the correctness of his beliefs and actions. Bismarck included letters of adulation in his memoirs to accomplish the same ends. Both memoirs reflected, additionally, the Chancellors' awareness of their critics and opponents, and it is clear that, in addition to portraying themselves as they wished to be remembered, they were responding to opposing points of view and defending their actions.

¹⁴ Private Correspondence, June 14, 1822, *NP*, vol. 3, 517.

¹⁵ *NP*, vol. 7, 15.

¹⁶ Metternich to Eleanore Metternich, September 4, 1818, Private Correspondence, April 3, 1821, July 18, 1821, *NP*, vol. 3, 110, 435-436, 443-444.

¹⁷ Metternich to Victor von Metternich, May 31, 1826, *NP*, vol. 4, 277.

¹⁸ Private Correspondence, May 31, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 332.

¹⁹ Metternich to Eleanore Metternich, July 26, 1819, *NP*, vol. 3, 217.

Biographical Information

Neither Bismarck's or Metternich's memoirs contained much information about their boyhoods or their families. Bismarck's *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, has very little autobiographical information; instead he focused on accounts of selected political events and topics. In his first chapter, with only a brief mention of his youth, he leapt ahead in his narrative to his entry into the first United Diet in 1847 at age thirty-two. Thereafter, only his political life was described.

Metternich's autobiographical chapters were, like Bismarck's memoirs, mainly political, but given their length and diverse content, more personal information was included. The Metternich memoirs contained sufficient personal information in Metternich's correspondence with family members and Princess Melanie's diaries to gain a better understanding of Metternich the man.

The lack of focus on personal life is a common characteristic of political memoirs. It is apparent that Metternich and Bismarck considered their political lives important, and this is what they recorded in their memoirs.

Family

Instead of personal details, Bismarck immediately began his memoirs, written in his mid-seventies, with his foreign policy views as a young man and his early support of the monarchic system. The first chapter, a cursory autobiographical section, began when he was seventeen and about to enter university, made only a brief mention of his parents and his schooling, and remarked on neither his childhood nor his siblings. Although he labeled himself a "respectable *paterfamilias*,"²⁰ in the entire three volume work, he never directly discussed Johanna, his wife

²⁰ Bismarck to Roon, June, 1862, *GW*, vol. 15, 172.

of nearly fifty years. In the memoirs, she is only indirectly referred to--and only rarely.²¹ Biographers note that Bismarck wanted to shield Johanna from the public eye and, therefore, did not include her in the memoirs. His family was mentioned in his memoirs only when Bismarck complained of the pain of separation from them, a result of his responsibilities and duties. Herbert, his eldest son, was discussed--but only in connection with political events in which Herbert was involved late in Bismarck's career. Bismarck's mother appeared only in relation to her family and father's position.

In Metternich's first volume, the autobiographical essay, mention of family was limited although he did provide more details than Bismarck about his parents, his education, and his marriage. His father was mentioned frequently in regard to his official posts and responsibilities, and he praised his father's contributions as a diplomat--defending the oft-maligned senior Metternich.²² Metternich appeared as a dutiful son to both his parents, solicitous of his mother's health, and praising his father's devotion to his emperor.²³ Inclusion of his letters to his family in the memoirs clearly was intended to illustrate that he was a caring husband and a loving and devoted father.²⁴ These letters disclose the unaffected and intense pain Metternich experienced at the death of close family members, and there can be no doubt as to the depth of his love for them.²⁵ Like Bismarck, Metternich expressed the misery of separation from his family, stating

²¹ *GW*, vol. 15, 105. Bismarck mentioned Johanna only because her illness caused Frederick William IV to complain when Bismarck asked for permission to go home to be with her.

²² Metternich to Eleanore Metternich, 1797, 1798 *NP*, vol. 1, 358, 360.

²³ Metternich to Emperor Francis, August 15, 1818, *NP*, vol. 3, 140.

²⁴ Metternich to his wife and mother, 1818, *NP*, vol. 3, 101-108; Private Correspondence, March 29, 1825, Metternich to Victor von Metternich, March 27, 1826, November 13, 1827, January 1, 1828, *NP*, vol. 4, 149-150 154, 269-270, 340, 410.

²⁵ Private Correspondence, 1820, 1822, *NP*, vol. 3, 319-329, 333-334, 340-341, 344, 525-526; Private Correspondence, 1825, Metternich to Countess Molly Zichy, 1828, 1829, Metternich to Victor von Metternich, 1829, *NP*, vol. 4, 147, 149, 419, 530-531, 534-535, 540, 557; vol. 6, 200; vol. 8, 140.

that they were his "only bright hour of the day."²⁶ There are no similar sketches of Bismarck experiencing the joys and sorrows of his family in his memoirs. Metternich's personal correspondence reveals a son, husband, and father, but Bismarck, the family man, was all but invisible in his memoirs.

Women

Women played a more prominent role in Metternich's memoirs than in Bismarck's.²⁷ Excluding Metternich's family, however, women were mentioned as they related to political events. His first wife's role in negotiations for Napoleon's marriage to Marie Louise was not given the attention it perhaps deserved, and comments about Marie Louise filled less than a half page.²⁸ During the negotiations for her marriage, Metternich candidly described Marie Louise much like an object being bartered--which indeed she was. She was plain, he wrote in a letter to his wife, but would improve with dressing.²⁹

As might be expected, most of the time only royal women were discussed in Metternich's memoirs, and then only briefly. The virtues of Queen Louise of Prussia were highly praised and a conversation with Empress Josephine was mentioned.³⁰ Queen Caroline of England, notorious for her love affairs, was singled out for a number of sarcasms and disparagements in Metternich's

²⁶ Private Correspondence, 1820, 1822, *NP*, vol. 3, 347, 524-525; vol. 8, 194.

²⁷ For a thorough discussion of Metternich's relationships with the women in his life, see Conte Egon Caesar Corti, *Metternich und die Frauen*, 2 vols. (Zurich and Vienna: Europa Verlag, 1948-1949).

²⁸ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 98, 100.

²⁹ Metternich to Eleanore Metternich, n.d., *NP*, vol. 1, 237.

³⁰ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 40, 76.

personal letters,³¹ and he also related how he rebuffed the Queen of Saxony when she became agitated as her country's fate was being decided in 1814.³²

Considering the times in which he lived, it was not remarkable that Metternich's comments about women's attributes were broad generalizations. Women were responsible for making home a pleasant place, he wrote, and this was their best attribute,³³ but their heads were full of nonsense.³⁴ He commented about a bride who was too tall to be charming;³⁵ but noted that beauty makes girls vulnerable.³⁶ Describing Alexander I, Metternich wrote that he had "masculine virtues and *feminine weaknesses*," (emphasis supplied),³⁷ and he dismissed women's role in politics, stating that they "exercise no influence on affairs."³⁸

Metternich's relationship with the women in his own life was observable through the inclusion of Princess Melanie's diary and personal letters to his mother, his wives, and his daughters. The reader sees a loving son, husband, and father genuinely fond of the women in his family. There was no reference, of course, to his early love affairs during his long first marriage to Eleanore von Kaunitz, although a number of the undesignated letters in the memoirs were, as Metternich scholars have shown, heavily edited letters written to Dorothea Lieven, one of Metternich's mistresses. These letters, once expurgated, did not noticeably differ in tone and content from the letters to members of his family.

³¹ Private Correspondence, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 335, 338, 353-354, 356.

³² Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 175.

³³ Metternich to Eleanore von Metternich, September 11, 1818, *NP*, vol. 3, 111.

³⁴ Private Correspondence, February 18, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 319.

³⁵ Private Correspondence, May 28, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 332.

³⁶ Private Correspondence, May 12, *NP*, vol. 3, 328.

³⁷ "Alexander I, Emperor of Russia," *NP*, vol. 1, 316.

³⁸ *NP*, vol. 5, 548.

The Bismarck memoirs contain no letters to female family members and, therefore, no glimpse of his relationship with the women in his life. Women were mentioned frequently, however, usually as political meddlers and intriguers.³⁹ He admitted he had adversaries among the women at court acknowledging that Queen Elizabeth, wife of Frederick William IV disliked him. And he reported that Princess Victoria baited him, but he dismissed her because she was a liberal and subject to influences from her relatives in the British royal family.⁴⁰ Empress Augusta, William I's wife, was Bismarck's ongoing political foe and the chief female target for his ire.

He condemned political meddling by the Queen of Holland in 1866,⁴¹ and claimed the 1870-1871 war with France was in danger of being "ruined" by "female influences."⁴² Using General Gustav von Alvensleben as his mouthpiece, Bismarck expressed his disdain for "petticoat influence" on official concerns. Alvensleben was indignant about ladies playing at politics, an activity bordering on criminal behavior—an opinion, it was clear, that Bismarck held.⁴³

Bismarck devoted a large portion of two chapters (Chapter 6, *Sanssouci und Coblenz*, and Chapter 21, *Kaiser Wilhelm I*) to castigating the Empress Augusta. His strongest condemnations were directed at her influence in 1870-1871 during the bombardment of Paris and her conduct during the *Kulturkampf*, although his aspersions appear regularly throughout the memoirs. She impeded Bismarck's policies, and it was his view that Augusta's influence caused William I to

³⁹ *GW*, vol. 15, 352.

⁴⁰ Notes, November 7, 1863, *GW*, vol. 15, 107, 109, 225.

⁴¹ *GW*, vol. 15, 280.

⁴² *GW*, vol. 15, 321.

⁴³ *GW*, vol. 15, 91.

make bad decisions. She consorted with Catholics and Bismarck's political opponents, and he charged her with employing a French spy as her secretary.⁴⁴

Their position in European society during the nineteenth century is a major factor in the way women were discussed in both memoirs. That women lacked the abilities of men and thus should have no official role in the political world was understood. The memoirs differed somewhat in that Bismarck's mention of women was usually hostile or negative and no sense of his personal relationship with women was evident. Metternich's memoirs revealed no hostility and no unusual condescension toward women, and his personal correspondence, as mentioned above, portrayed his relationships with the women in his family as warm, appreciative, and loving.

Religion

We get a much clearer picture of Metternich's attitudes about religion and the Church from his memoirs than can be gleaned about Bismarck's religious views from *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*. Except in his chapter regarding the *Kulturkampf*, Bismarck mentioned religion only rarely. He did not discuss his own faith, and it is difficult to gauge the depth of his beliefs from his memoirs. It was clear that Bismarck believed he was performing God's mission, and it was important that this was recorded for posterity. This he accomplished by including a letter to William I recounting a dream in which he called on God to guide him during the budget crisis of 1863.⁴⁵ Bismarck wrote that he was tolerant of different religious denominations as long as they were able to coexist peacefully with other sects, and he stated smugly that, like Luther, he believed marriage was a municipal matter.

⁴⁴ GW, vol. 15, 362.

⁴⁵ Bismarck to William I, December 18, 1881, GW, vol. 15, 377.

Although it is not clearly reflected in his memoirs, it was about political power, not religion, that Bismarck waged his anti-clerical *Kulturkampf*.⁴⁶ Priests who dabbled in politics were disparaged, and peace with the Catholic Church, he declared, was impossible because, not only was the Church ambitious and claimed a share in secular government, but it regarded Protestant dynasties as "irregularities needing correction."⁴⁷

Because of the length of the Metternich memoirs and the varied types of documents contained therein, it is easier to discern his position regarding the Church and to surmise what his personal beliefs were. An interesting excerpt from Princess Melanie's diary revealed that Metternich assiduously read his model and hero, St. Paul, for instruction.⁴⁸ A remark about devoting his life and work to God⁴⁹ or comments about family deaths being God's will,⁵⁰ revealed Metternich's faith, and he occasionally made reference to attending Mass.⁵¹ Traveling in Italy in 1819, he was moved to declare that he loved religion.⁵² Much later, in 1848, he expressed the opinion that "God alone is great" and man is small and very presumptuous.⁵³ Despite these statements, his piety is not convincing and his memoirs revealed he spent little time in devotional pursuits. The overall sense of Metternich gained from the memoirs is that of a man

⁴⁶ Bruce Waller, *Bismarck* (New York: Basil Blackwell Inc, 1985), 55-58.

⁴⁷ *GW*, vol. 15, 330, 332, 339, 342, 352.

⁴⁸ *NP*, vol. 5 242-243.

⁴⁹ Metternich to Victor von Metternich, March 26, 1829, *NP*, vol. 4, 545.

⁵⁰ Metternich to Victor von Metternich, January 17 and February 4, 1829, Metternich to Countess Molly Zichy, January 23, 1829, *NP*, vol. 4, 530, 534, 537.

⁵¹ Metternich to Eleanore von Metternich, 1797, *NP*, vol. 1, 358; vol. 6, 203.

⁵² Metternich to Eleanore von Metternich, April 10, and June 10, 1819, *NP*, vol. 3, 194, 210.

⁵³ *NP*, vol. 8, 164.

who is a child of the Enlightenment, a Deist perhaps, or a Catholic through tradition whose true beliefs were superficial.

The role of religion in society was very important to Metternich and mentioned periodically. Writing in the 1850s he asserted that Church and state can no more be divided than soul and body,⁵⁴ and religious belief, the highest power, cannot be taken from a nation without weakening it.⁵⁵ In regard to the conflict between Church and state, Metternich stated that the Church was not in the state, nor was the state in the Church, but "the two powers must seek common ground in regard to rights that are appropriate to both of them and in the observance of duties that are incumbent upon both of them...."⁵⁶ It was the Church's task to provide the people with something important and meaningful in their lives and to advance order by promoting a dutiful and obedient society.⁵⁷

Metternich believed that the Protestant Reformation was a religious, moral, and political catastrophe which led to revolution--1789 was its first victory.⁵⁸ France's problems were a result of the lack of religion in the lives of the French people.⁵⁹ He clearly supported maintenance of the Roman Catholic Church and the Pope's spiritual role in Europe--evidenced by his defense of the Pope against Napoleon's assault on papal temporal powers in 1810.⁶⁰ His support of the Church was again evident in the 1820s when Austria allowed expelled Russian and

⁵⁴ *NP*, vol. 8, 556.

⁵⁵ *NP*, vol. 8, 586.

⁵⁶ Notes, May, 1850, *NP*, vol. 8, 497.

⁵⁷ *NP*, vol. 7, 424; vol. 8, 569.

⁵⁸ *NP*, vol. 7, 402, 569.

⁵⁹ Report to Emperor Francis, March 28, 1825, *NP*, vol. 4, 163-164.

⁶⁰ Instruction for Lebzeltern, May 6, 1810, *NP*, vol. 2, 342-346.

Polish Jesuits to reestablish their order in Galicia, although his decision was political and based on Jesuit support of the monarchic system.⁶¹

It is difficult to infer from their memoirs how religion affected the attitudes and actions of these two powerful political figures of the nineteenth century. What is indisputable is that both Metternich and Bismarck believed in God, and it is clear that they used religion for political purposes, Bismarck to reduce the role of the church in Germany, and Metternich by supporting the Church's role in promoting order and safeguarding society against God-mocking revolutionaries.

Personality

The memoirs of these two great statesmen of the nineteenth century do allow the reader to get a sense of the men themselves. In Bismarck's three volumes only the political man is visible. Metternich's eight volumes gave a more complete view of the man and his complexities--discernable over decades through his own letters and reports. In addition to his love of his family, his grief at the loss of his beloved family members, and the burdens of office genuinely felt, the reader discovers what Metternich was reading, his interest in science--and his affection for spiders. The joy of his garden and the opera and his love of warmth and the sun made Metternich more human.⁶²

No qualities of this kind were apparent and no glimpse of a softer side of Bismarck was evident in his memoirs. Presumably to display his "human" side, Bismarck included one or two trifling anecdotes to demonstrate what a agreeable fellow he was--a trivial episode in which he

⁶¹ Report to Emperor Francis, October 18, 1825, *NP*, vol. 4, 232-234.

⁶² Private Correspondence, 1820, 1821, *NP*, vol. 3, 317, 319, 323-324, 431; Private Correspondence, 1823, 1824, Metternich to Neumann, May 24, 1826, Metternich to Victor von Metternich, June 11, 1827 *NP*, vol. 4, 8, 109-110, 275, 335; vol. 6, 77.

assisted a Prussian officer in gaining admittance to an official dinner in Paris, and a description of a Russian royal child who remarked to her grandmother that Bismarck was "nice."⁶³

A particularly illustrative example of a noted trait of Bismarck's--his intolerance of ambition and independence in others--was his discussion of the Prussian diplomat, Count Harry von Arnim. Bismarck believed it necessary to respond to accusations that he had taken personal revenge on Arnim. True to form, Bismarck blackened Arnim's character, condemned in detail Arnim's actions, and presented a lengthy justification of his own actions.⁶⁴

Bismarck referred a number of times to Frederick the Great, and it was clear that he was, for Bismarck, a heroic figure. In Metternich's memoirs no hero was detectable, not even his grandfather-in-law, Kaunitz (Maria Theresa's great Chancellor) and, although he was obviously impressed with Napoleon's talents, the French Emperor certainly was as much villain as hero.

A glimpse of their personalities by reference to social activities showed that Metternich was a social man and enjoyed society. He referred often to his activities--attending the theater, salons, and dining or playing cards with friends. Bismarck remarked, in contrast that he did not enjoy Berlin society and avoided it, escaping often to his estates for weeks or months on end. Metternich, the diplomat, was revealed in correspondence illustrating his recommendations on the finer points of diplomacy.⁶⁵ Metternich, the landholder, was also occasionally evident as he commented in personal letters on his estates, vineyards, renovations, and road-building projects.⁶⁶ The Junker Bismarck's memoirs have no remarks of this nature.

⁶³ *GW*, vol. 15, 108, 152.

⁶⁴ *GW*, vol. 15, 356-359.

⁶⁵ Metternich to Schwarzenberg, December 25, 1809, Metternich to Eleanore von Metternich, January 27, 1810, Instruction for Lebzeltern, May 6, 1810, *NP*, vol. 2, 317-319, 321-330, 342-351.

⁶⁶ Metternich to Eleanore von Metternich, 1818, Private Correspondence, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 110, 130, 334-335.

In comparing the two memoirs an interesting difference in personality is immediately obvious in the way health concerns Bismarck more than Metternich. Bismarck frequently used his ill health as a vehicle to criticize those who opposed him or his policies, blaming them for his health problems. Nearly every chapter dealing with 1862 and beyond contained references to the wear and tear on his health from his burdens of responsibility.⁶⁷ In contrast, Metternich mentioned ill health only a few times,⁶⁸ although Melanie mentions her husband's occasional illnesses in her diary. It appears from the memoirs that, aside from a bothersome eye ailment, Metternich enjoyed excellent health and complained little when ill. In contrast Bismarck was not particularly healthy and complained frequently and at length about his illnesses. Some scholars have labeled Bismarck a hypochondriac--a conclusion easily drawn from his memoirs.

A dejected tone was occasionally adopted by both Metternich and Bismarck, and both men wrote of the loneliness, fatigue, and the grueling schedule their responsibilities forced on them.⁶⁹ In Metternich's case, this dejection appeared in personal correspondence not meant for publication, whereas Bismarck chose to include these complaints in his political memoirs knowing they would be published.

The memoirs bear out that both men wanted to hold their positions of power but claimed they had no further ambitions. Metternich appeared to have been satisfied with his position in government and was not ambitious beyond his present office, although his genuine concern for

⁶⁷ Bismarck to Prince Obolenski, June 2, 1859, Bismarck to Roon, July 15, 1862, Bismarck to King Ludwig, August 10, 1874, June 2, 1876, Bismarck to William I, January 6, 1888, *GW*, vol. 15, 158-160, 243, 244, 352, 369-370, 378, 465.

⁶⁸ *Autobiographical Memoir*, *NP*, vol. 1, 76; Metternich to Eleanore von Metternich, 1823, *Private Correspondence*, 1823, *NP*, vol. 4, 11, 17, 24.

⁶⁹ *Private Correspondence*, 1819, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 293-294, 321; Metternich to Eleanore von Metternich, 1823, *NP*, vol. 4, 18.

Austria's fate led him to consider additional responsibilities after Francis' death.⁷⁰ Bismarck professed in his memoirs his wish to retire to private life, but his response to his forced retirement--which the memoirs illustrated--belied this claim.

The Negative: Pride, Immodesty and Self-Righteousness

Two attributes of Metternich and Bismarck which deserve special attention are their pride and vanity. If one judges from the memoirs of these two statesmen, modesty--among men at least--does not appear to be a virtue highly regarded in the nineteenth century. In reviews and critiques of the memoirs discussed later in this study, one reads frequently of Metternich's vanity, but Bismarck's vanity is only occasionally mentioned.

Metternich's memoirs included proportionately fewer letters from monarchs and statesmen praising his abilities,⁷¹ and in his autobiographical essay Metternich's vanity appeared primarily as pride of accomplishment and sureness of self. He extolled his own virtues periodically with phrases like, I was "inaccessible to prejudice," and modestly sought the truth in everything.⁷²

Metternich wrote that he felt himself the representative of all Europe when negotiating with Napoleon in Dresden in 1813,⁷³ and he boasted of having foiled Napoleon's attempts at intimidation.⁷⁴ He gloried, appropriately perhaps, in having returned a shattered Austria to preeminence in Europe in 1813,⁷⁵ and he never missed an opportunity to praise himself, with a recurring sprinkling of "I told you so's," as unfolding events proved his warnings and

⁷⁰ *NP*, vol. 6, 206.

⁷¹ *NP*, vol. 6, 444.

⁷² *Autobiographical Memoir, NP*, vol. 1, 24.

⁷³ *Autobiographical Memoir, NP*, vol. 1, 151.

⁷⁴ *Autobiographical Memoir, NP*, vol. 1, 67.

⁷⁵ *Report to Emperor Francis, July 12, 1813, NP*, vol. 2, 464.

predictions correct.⁷⁶ Early in his career his awareness of his superior skills was evident, but there was less trumpeting of his achievements, nor did he boast offensively or frequently. Letters to his mother did reveal, however, a certain pomposity as Metternich wrote of his involvement in the peace negotiations of 1809, describing himself as negotiating the fate of Europe and stressing his selflessness and righteousness.⁷⁷

During the period 1815 through 1829, as Metternich's career reached its apex, vain phrases appeared more frequently. Only rare mention was made of effusive praise from Alexander or other monarchs,⁷⁸ but Metternich declared he had become a moral power in Germany and Europe and would be missed when he was gone.⁷⁹

Although personal attacks are less frequent in Metternich's memoirs than in Bismarck's, he occasionally denigrated other statesmen with accusations of lacking insight and failing to grasp the proper principles.⁸⁰ In referring to fellow statesmen after Carlsbad in 1819, Metternich made the well known boast, "Good God, how right I am and how wrong they are."⁸¹

He was not unaware of his dwindling influence in Europe after the 1820s and described himself as a "spectator" rather than a leader of events,⁸² but his opinion of his own talents was

⁷⁶ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 19, 58; Metternich to Colloredo, October 18, 1805, Report to Emperor Francis, April 4, 1810, *NP*, vol. 2, 67, 335.

⁷⁷ Metternich to his Mother, August 1 and 17, 1809, *NP*, vol. 1, 233-234.

⁷⁸ Private Correspondence, 1822, Bavarian King Max Joseph to Emperor Francis, January 3, 1823, *NP*, vol. 3, 520, 588; Metternich to Eleanore von Metternich, October 27, 1823, King Frederick William to Metternich, September 29, 1824, *NP*, vol. 4, 22, 126.

⁷⁹ Metternich to Eleanore von Metternich, August 31, 1818, *NP*, vol. 3, 110.

⁸⁰ Private Correspondence, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 314; Private Correspondence, 1823, Metternich to Gentz, September 9, 1825, Report to Emperor Francis, December 9, 1827, *NP*, vol. 4, 13, 222, 408-409.

⁸¹ Metternich to Eleanore von Metternich, 1819, *NP*, vol. 3, 218.

⁸² *NP*, vol. 5, 595.

not diminished.⁸³ He boasted often of how he was called upon to make decisions for other countries,⁸⁴ and of the high regard others had of his extraordinary abilities.⁸⁵ German ministers saw him as a "Messiah"⁸⁶ and a lantern giving off wisdom.⁸⁷ He bragged of his influence over Alexander I,⁸⁸ and he claimed that he had called all the shots in Europe on international affairs and had saved society in 1821-22.⁸⁹

With the introduction of Melanie's diaries to the memoirs, praise of Metternich's qualities was more even more visible in her frequent and effusive comments about Metternich's superb character and outstanding attributes. She often repeated praise heaped on Metternich by important persons, particularly monarchs and especially Francis.⁹⁰

Metternich wrote in 1841 that he always knew how to apply right principles in every situation,⁹¹ and the year before he was forced out of office, he asserted that he had the pretention to count himself among those who have the conviction to be in the right and the courage of his conscience.⁹² After 1848 he repeated innumerable times how events would prove

⁸³ *NP*, vol. 5, 341.

⁸⁴ Report to Emperor Francis, October 24, 1821, Private Correspondence, 1821, *NP*, vol. 3, 492, 451.

⁸⁵ Private Correspondence, 1821, *NP*, vol. 3, 440.

⁸⁶ Private Correspondence, 1824, *NP*, vol. 4, 93.

⁸⁷ Private Correspondence, 1825, *NP*, vol. 4, 155.

⁸⁸ Private Correspondence, 1821, *NP*, vol. 3, 448.

⁸⁹ Memoir to Emperor Alexander I, May 6, 1821, Report to Emperor Francis, October 24, 1821, Private Correspondence, 1822, Metternich to Lützow, June 3, 1822, *NP*, vol. 3, 473, 490, 492, 516, 555, 557; vol. 6, 74.

⁹⁰ Princess Melanie's Diary, February 1, 1831, November 13, 1832, September 10, 1833, May 6, 1834, August 11, 1834, March 2, 1835, *NP*, vol. 5, 90, 251, 433, 553, 562, 626-27.

⁹¹ Metternich to Neumann, September 26, 1841, *NP*, vol. 6, 529.

⁹² Metternich to Buol, July 6, 1847, *NP*, vol. 7, 332.

him right, and declared that his personal position was strong because it was pure and clear.⁹³ In exile in 1850 he said he would do it all the same way again; he knew then--what others would learn in the future.⁹⁴ Time obviously did not dilute his vanity as evidenced by a letter he wrote to Lady Westmoreland in 1857 in which he declared that he had saved both the empire and Europe.⁹⁵

Although less is written about Bismarck's vanity, it appeared regularly in numerous ways throughout his memoirs. He took credit for saving William I from the liberals--transforming him through an appeal to his military values.⁹⁶ William I could not have achieved his exceptional triumphs without him, he said.⁹⁷ Like Metternich's statement that he would be missed, Bismarck, writing after his dismissal, declared that with all his experience, he would be very difficult to replace.⁹⁸ Innumerable examples of correspondence, especially that of monarchs, were included in his memoirs extolling Bismarck's virtues, and he missed no opportunity to include repetitious expressions of tribute to his talents like that of Albrecht von Roon, Minister of War who declared in 1862 that Bismarck was necessary for Prussia's well being. Perhaps the most effusive example is from William I, dated 1869, in which the King tells Bismarck. "Your name stands higher in Prussian history than any other Prussian statesman."⁹⁹

⁹³ Metternich to Countess Leontine Sandor, January 17, 1849, *NP*, vol. 8, 205.

⁹⁴ Metternich to Countess Leontine Sandor, May 11, 1850, *NP*, vol. 8, 255-56.

⁹⁵ Metternich to Lady Westmoreland, April 4, 1857, *NP*, vol. 8, 400.

⁹⁶ *GW*, vol. 15, 195.

⁹⁷ *GW*, vol. 15, 350.

⁹⁸ *GW*, vol. 15, 415.

⁹⁹ William I to Bismarck, February 22, 1869, Roon to Bismarck, July 24, 1862, *GW*, vol. 15, 138, 168.

An overwhelming impression of pride emanates from both Metternich's and Bismarck's memoirs. No effort at modesty or self-effacement is apparent in either. The message is clear-- both men were supremely confident that their policies and principles were unquestionably right. It might be argued, however, it required men with such absolute faith in themselves and their policies to accomplish what each achieved. Hesitancy or humility might not have secured the successes that Metternich and Bismarck attained.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL THEMES

Political Philosophy

The memoirs provide us with an outstanding illustration of the political beings that Metternich and Bismarck were. They served as the vehicle to enunciate their ideas about governing and society and were a window into their political souls.

Metternich's political philosophy was a simple one¹ which he defined as a struggle between the principles of preservation and those of destruction.² His principles were consistent and centered on several core ideas³ first among which was monarchy. Metternich believed the monarchic system was based on historically constructed society and inspired by the spirit of Christianity, as contrasted with Bismarck's belief that monarchy was the basis of national strength and unity.⁴ In every volume, Metternich's memoirs illustrated his belief in the monarchic principle.⁵ All power comes from God and the sovereign is God's minister for "the good," he wrote in 1846.⁶ Monarchy was an unalterable principle to be equated with right.⁷ Monarchies

¹ For a thorough discussion of Metternich's political philosophy, see Heinrich Ritter von Srbik, "Der Ideengehalt des 'Metternichschen Systems,'" *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 131, 1925, 240-262.

² Metternich to Apponyi, October 12, 1835, July 18, 1842, *NP*, vol. 6, 89; 583.

³ A thorough discussion of the Metternich "System" is contained in Heinrich Ritter von Srbik, "Die Ideengehalt des Metternichschen Systems," *Historische Zeitschrift* 131, (1925): 240-262.

⁴ Editor's Afterword, *NP*, vol. 8, 630.

⁵ Metternich to Stadion, April 27, 1808, *NP*, vol. 2, 171; Memoir to Emperor Alexander, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 414; Metternich to Ottenfels, December 18, 1825, Metternich to Apponyi, January 29, 1827, Metternich to Ottenfels, October 3, 1827, *NP*, vol. 4, 251, 340-343, 380; Instruction for Wessenberg, October 3, 1830, Metternich to Apponyi, September 17, 1834, *NP*, vol. 5, 41-42, 615-617.

⁶ Metternich to Lützow, July 12, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 250.

⁷ Metternich to Berstett, May 4, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 373-374; Metternich to Apponyi, January 26, 1837, *NP*, vol. 6, 179.

were stable and protected peace, order and stability, and it was the monarch's duty to be paternalistic and wise, and to oversee the well being of his subjects.⁸ According to Metternich, popular sovereignty in a multi-national state was a perversion,⁹ and representative government led to revolution and destruction, not only of the state but of world peace.¹⁰ Montesquieu's division of power was erroneous and rooted in a concept of eternal struggle rather than peace.¹¹ Regarding the Austrian Empire in particular, he asserted that "The only form of government which is suited to the concentration of peoples which makes up the empire as a whole, is the monarchical form, because the cohesion of the parties would be absolutely impossible under a republican form of government...."¹²

He considered himself a rational conservative and saw the events of his time as embodying a struggle between experience and theory.¹³ Experience was conservation--a strong, strict government which ruled with justice, respecting all rights and meeting the needs of the people.¹⁴ Theory, in contrast, was the first step to liberalism, anarchy, and revolution. Conservation of that which existed was his primary aim,¹⁵ but he believed in an enlightened evolutionary conservatism. Like Burke, Metternich favored an evolution which assumed that

⁸ Metternich to Buol, June 26, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 237.

⁹ "The Diplomatic Career," 1850, *NP*, vol. 8, 550.

¹⁰ Metternich to Wittgenstein, November 14, 1818, *NP*, vol. 3, 171-178.

¹¹ Political Testament, 1849-1855, *NP*, vol. 7, 634-635.

¹² Memorandum, January 2, 1852, *NP*, vol. 8, 520-521.

¹³ Notes, 1825, *NP*, vol. 4, 246.

¹⁴ Metternich to Emperor Alexander, December, 1820, May 6, 1821, *NP*, vol. 3, 418-419, 476.

¹⁵ Metternich to Ancillon, March 20, 1835, *NP*, vol. 6, 6.

progress and reforms would come gradually with monarchic government, for God had given the responsibility for power to monarchs.¹⁶

Although a child of the Enlightenment, Metternich was not complimentary of the Philosophes, considering them the ultimate inspiration for the revolutionary troubles which had plagued Europe since 1789.¹⁷ Discussing the results of the Carlsbad Conference in 1819, Metternich asserted that the Philosophes' erroneous values were pernicious and exploited by professors to fill youths' heads with contempt for the legally established order.¹⁸ Of liberty and equality he wrote that liberty of spirit is excellent if it is liberty to do good and not liberty to do evil; equality is much the same; equality before the law is good; social equality is nonsense.¹⁹

Emancipation of the people as fostered by the age of reason was absurd, he wrote,²⁰ and modern representative systems, a product of the eighteenth century Philosophes, were unacceptable.²¹ France's example, with its continued ministerial turnovers, proved representative government ended in chaos.²² Republican institutions, he averred, were flawed because concessions had to be made. These concessions fostered sovereignty of the people which weakened and eventually destroyed monarchic government.²³ Parliamentarism was the revolutionary spirit--honeyed radicalism--and the search for a middle course between truth and

¹⁶ Metternich to Emperor Alexander, December 1820, Circular Dispatch, May 12, 1821, *NP*, vol. 3, 414, 482-483.

¹⁷ Private Correspondence, March 11, 1821, Metternich to Lebzeltern, June 28, 1817, *NP*, vol. 3, 50, 433.

¹⁸ Dispatch to Buol, September 1, 1819. *NP*, vol. 3, 277-279.

¹⁹ Metternich to Sainte Aulaire, September 15, 1840, *NP*, vol. 6, 417-418.

²⁰ Metternich to Emperor Alexander, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 405-406.

²¹ Metternich to Buol, June 26, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 233-234.

²² Metternich to Apponyi, February 9, 1839, *NP*, vol. 6, 337.

²³ Metternich to Schönburg, May 24, 1833, *NP*, vol. 5, 497; Metternich to Baron Roller, October 24, 1850, *NP*, vol. 8, 309.

error which does not exist.²⁴ A republic was an expression to beautify anarchy,²⁵ and popular assemblies were the thrashing of empty straw²⁶—an evil which must be crushed because of their potential to destroy Europe.²⁷

Condemnation and destruction of revolution was another dominant principle expressed throughout Metternich's eight volumes. Bismarck's mention of revolution was less fervent and less frequent than Metternich's--and it was here that Metternich's passion surfaced. "Social Revolution attacks the foundations of society,"²⁸ he wrote, and hiding behind the mask of progress, it inevitably led to military despotism and war.²⁹

Metternich's abhorrence of revolution was a reaction to the Napoleonic wars, and preservation of peace dominated his recommendations to the Great Powers. He wrote ceaselessly to his ambassadors that peace must always be the objective in solving crises. In order to resolve them and preserve peace, the Great Powers must work together and recognize their common interests—including the fight against revolution. Only by maintaining peace can the conservative political order be preserved.³⁰

Order, peace and stability were equivalent terms for Metternich, and he wrote that he worked only to serve order.³¹ In exile, he asserted that freedom was possible only with order,

²⁴ Metternich to Prela, August 18, 1856, *NP*, vol. 8, 385.

²⁵ Metternich to Richard Metternich, December, 1852, *NP*, vol. 8, 528.

²⁶ Private Correspondence, 1825, *NP*, vol. 4, 196.

²⁷ Metternich to Apponyi, June 3, 1831, December 19, 1832, *NP*, vol. 5, 166, 292.

²⁸ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 7, 623.

²⁹ Metternich to Apponyi, December 30, 1833, *NP*, vol. 5, 465; Political Testament, 1849-1855, *NP*, vol. 7, 638; Metternich to Countess Leontine Sandor, November 2, 1848, April 8, 1850, August 26, 1853, *NP*, vol. 8, 191, 252, 267.

³⁰ Metternich to Esterhazy, September 14, 1828, *NP*, vol. 4, 496-497.

³¹ Metternich to Lützow, July 12, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 247.

and called himself the agent of social and moral order.³² Constitutions preserved order and were made by time, not men. The work of centuries, a constitution was a part of the law of nature, and the way in which social order progressed.³³ Constitutions evolved naturally and had to fit a country's needs and customs, but they were only acceptable if they preserved monarchic power.³⁴

A favorite term of Metternich's was the word "moral" and he used it to describe and defend his principles.³⁵ His feelings about his principles are best illustrated by his recurring statement that they were morally correct.³⁶ He criticized Napoleon because he had no moral principles,³⁷ but Nicholas I's firm repression of the Polish revolt in 1830 was a just cause which reflected his "moral firmness."³⁸ Mysticism, religious fanatics, and secret societies were condemned because they were a threat to the principles of morality.³⁹

If his memoirs are to be believed, Metternich's basic political principles remained unchanged throughout his career. In his last official letter he asserted once again that the principle of authority was the strongest defense against radicalism.⁴⁰

³² Metternich to Archduchess Sophie, March 31, 1848, Metternich to Countess Sandor, May 28, 1848, *NP*, vol. 8, 14, 155.

³³ Private Correspondence, April 10 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 322-323; Metternich to Buol, June 26, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 233.

³⁴ Metternich to Baron Stürmer, December 3, 1839, *NP*, vol. 6, 364.

³⁵ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 219.

³⁶ Metternich to Esterhazy, August 7, 1825, Metternich to Apponyi, June 11, 1827, *NP*, vol. 4, 215. 366.

³⁷ "Critical Remarks," April 25, 1809, *NP*, vol. 2, 303.

³⁸ Metternich to Trauttmansdorff, December 25, 1830, *NP*, vol. 5, 79.

³⁹ Metternich to Lebzeltern, June 28, 1817, *NP*, vol. 3, 50-53.

⁴⁰ Metternich's letter of resignation to Emperor Ferdinand, March 13, 1848, *NP*, vol. 7, 603-604.

Metternich's consistent political philosophy was in sharp contrast to Bismarck's flexible and pragmatic beliefs which were expressed in his memoirs as explanations for policy decisions. Because he intended his memoirs to be instructive, Bismarck repeatedly used his own correspondence to illustrate his political philosophy. Despite Bismarck's pragmatic approach to governing, several principles remained constant, particularly the independence, strength, and security of his country. The concept of a strong state was an unquestionable axiom, and Prussia's weakness and its dwindling Great Power status before he came to power was shameful to him. In war, or readiness for war, lay strength and Great Power status,⁴¹ and the loathsome alternative was to be someone else's lackey--isolated and friendless. Bismarck wanted Prussia (and by extension himself) to be powerful enough to be "master of the entire European situation," and, therefore, able to dictate peace.⁴²

The interests of the state, he believed, should come before any other feelings or objectives, and for this reason Bismarck advised William I to deal generously with defeated Austria and the annexed states of Hanover, Hesse, and Nassau.⁴³ His pragmatic approach to governing reflected few of Metternich's "moral" principles, as demonstrated by Bismarck's statement in 1866 that he was willing to do whatever it took to accomplish his national aims.⁴⁴ His advice to William to foreswear acts of violence against fellow Germans was not generated by humanitarian principles, but by his understanding that resentments would last for generations.⁴⁵

⁴¹ *GW*, vol. 15, 251-252.

⁴² Bismarck to Gerlach, May 2, 1857, *GW*, vol. 15, 57, 71, 72, 114, 234.

⁴³ *GW*, vol. 15, 277, 296-297.

⁴⁴ *GW*, vol. 15, 286.

⁴⁵ *GW*, vol. 15, 299.

Bismarck built the new German Empire while consciously opposing Liberalism⁴⁶. Like Metternich, he found parliamentary rule and sovereignty of the people abhorrent.⁴⁷ It was not out of democratic convictions that he instituted universal suffrage in Germany; instead it was a part of his efforts to gain approval of his 1867 North German Confederation constitution and, ultimately, unification.⁴⁸ In 1862 he assured William that a period of dictatorship was preferable to parliamentary rule,⁴⁹ and he continued to oppose the Reichstag's drive for power during his entire career.

It was Bismarck's belief that change in government must come slowly and orderly,⁵⁰ and his ideas about monarchy reflected a view of government which was far from static. Like Metternich, he believed strongly in the monarchic system⁵¹ and regarded it as the source of national strength. When he unified Germany, he retained the dynastic rights of the German states because he believed they benefitted national unity.⁵²

Bismarck designed and implemented a constitution which put all the power into the executive's hands, yet he opposed absolutism, professing that even as a youth he believed that an ideal government was not that of an absolute monarch but a constitutional monarchy in which the government was subject to criticism by parliament and the press.⁵³ Neither parliament nor

⁴⁶ Hans Kohn, *The Mind of Germany: The Education of A Nation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), 11.

⁴⁷ *GW*, vol. 15, 44.

⁴⁸ The 1871 constitution of the German Reich was essentially the same as that of the 1867 North German Confederation constitution which Bismarck had authored. *GW*, vol. 15, 287.

⁴⁹ *GW*, vol. 15, 179.

⁵⁰ *GW*, vol. 15, 288.

⁵¹ *GW*, vol. 15, 170.

⁵² *GW*, vol. 15, 448.

⁵³ *GW*, vol. 15, 15.

the crown should have absolute power; power should be shared, and neither the king nor the parliament should be able to alter the system without the other's consent.⁵⁴

Writing after his dismissal Bismarck asserted that his ideal government included a monarch with an independent national body representing classes and professions,⁵⁵ and that it was the task of press and parliament to see that the monarchy did not abuse its power. No doubt with William II in mind, he declared that Monarchs needed criticism by press and parliament because they were subject to human weaknesses--such as overestimating their own wisdom or listening to women and favorites.⁵⁶

Clearly illustrated in his memoirs was Bismarck's opposition to revolution.⁵⁷ Unlike Metternich who had youthful memories of the French Revolution, Bismarck's memories were of revolution in 1848. Like Metternich, Bismarck favored order,⁵⁸ and believed that revolution caused instability. Revolutionaries were troublemakers and revolution led to dictatorship.⁵⁹ He wrote that absolutism was "a fertile field" for revolution,⁶⁰ but he also declared that, in Germany, socialism was the revolutionary peril.⁶¹

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⁵⁴ *GW*, vol. 15, 293.

⁵⁵ *GW*, vol. 15, 15.

⁵⁶ *GW*, vol. 15, 288-289.

⁵⁷ Bismarck to Gerlach, May, 1857, *GW*, vol. 15, 120.

⁵⁸ Speech to the Second United Diet, April 2, 1848, *GW*, vol. 15, 26.

⁵⁹ Bismarck to Gerlach, May 1857, *GW*, vol. 15, 123; Bismarck to King Ludwig, August 4, 1879, *Bismarck, The Memoirs*, vol. 1, 408; *GW*, vol. 15, 288.

⁶⁰ Bismarck to Gerlach, May, 1857, *GW*, vol. 15, 122.

⁶¹ *GW*, vol. 15, 534-535.

The memoirs of Metternich and Bismarck provide the clearest articulation of political philosophy possible. What they wrote, their descriptions of decisions and events, illustrated clearly what they professed their beliefs to be, the ideas and concepts on which they based their actions. Their lives were political and the memoirs were the expression of their lives, their purpose, their goals.

Both Chancellors could be compromisers, a fact discussed in neither of the memoirs but readily apparent by reading between the lines. What the memoirs revealed--in addition to the articulated political philosophies they intended to impart--was information they did not consciously intend to communicate. Right is a matter of interpretation, of course, but considering his frequent assertions about principles and morality, including his declaration that his motto was "Strength in Right,"⁶² one statement Metternich made, that diplomacy required a "certain art in knowing how to conceal the truth," revealed as much about his political philosophy as did his constant repetition of his principles.⁶³ And Bismarck's willingness to do whatever was necessary to benefit Germany--even to foment revolution in Hungary and Italy--illustrated his political opportunism.⁶⁴

Above all, the overriding impact made by the memoirs is the strength of their convictions and the consistency of their political beliefs. In Metternich's case, it was the principles of conservation and balance; monarchy, order, and peace; the *status quo* and the defeat of revolution and liberalism. For Bismarck, it was his pragmatism and a belief in a militarily strong and independent Prussia/Germany with a dominant Great Power role. For both, it was ultimately a desire for peace and to control events in Europe.

⁶² Metternich to Countess Sandor, June 13, 1848, *NP*, vol. 8, 162.

⁶³ Metternich to Apponyi, December 30, 1833, *NP*, vol. 5, 464.

⁶⁴ *GW*, vol. 15, 286, 318.

The German Question and German Unification

Both Metternich and Bismarck sought a political frame for Germany to replace the Holy Roman Empire, and they both achieved it, although in a very different form. Both wanted a structure which would not upset the balance of power in Europe, and the structure Metternich created, the German Confederation, so vilified by later German Nationalists, actually contained more Germans than Bismarck's empire. Metternich's Confederation differed from Bismarck's German empire in that it was a defensive structure which did not threaten other European powers, whereas Bismarck's tighter structure verged on upsetting the balance of power--even without the eight to ten million Germans in the Austrian Empire.

Although he recognized the increasing influence of Prussia in the Confederation, Metternich gave only limited attention to the German Question in his memoirs after 1815, but his views were clear.⁶⁵ After Napoleon's defeat, Metternich recognized the importance of dealing with Germany's national fate. A non-threatening confederation was the only acceptable solution.⁶⁶ In 1815, because of legal claims if nothing else, the Holy Roman Empire could not be resurrected, nor could a new state be created--which would require a single sovereign. Metternich fought hard at the Vienna Congress to promote the German Confederation to constitute Germany as a polity⁶⁷ because it was an important component of the balance of power in Europe.⁶⁸ During the Metternich years, Prussia went along with Austrian leadership of the Confederation believing, as Metternich did, that Austria and Prussia's political strength lay in

⁶⁵ For a thorough discussion of this topic, see Robert D. Billinger, *Metternich and the German Question*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991, and Enno E. Krache, *Metternich's German Policy*. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, 1983.

⁶⁶ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 201.

⁶⁷ Metternich to Hardenberg, December 10, 1814, *NP*, vol. 2, 506.

⁶⁸ Metternich to Hardenberg, December 10, 1814, *NP*, vol. 2, 505.

alliance and preservation of the *status quo*. As the memoirs show, Metternich wanted Austria, under his direction, to control the Confederation,⁶⁹ but by 1833, Austrian dominance was less secure. Metternich warned Francis that a Prussian-controlled Zollverein was a threat not only to the Empire's commerce, but also to the sovereignty of the lesser German states. Of even greater importance was the Zollverein's threat to Austrian control of the Confederation.⁷⁰

Prussian domination of the Confederation was as unacceptable as unification, and were Prussia to head a German entity, the multi-national Austrian empire would be destroyed.⁷¹ The lesser German states did not want to become Prussian but wanted to remain distinct entities and a part of a larger European political entity.⁷² Metternich believed that German concepts of unity, empire, and equal rights increased national feelings and led to revolutions and the overthrow of existing governments.⁷³ The natural result would be the division of the Austrian Empire into parts--and its disintegration.⁷⁴ "There is only one practical political form for Germany to make her nationality secure," he wrote in 1849, and "that is by forming a confederation of States."⁷⁵ Even in retirement when it was clear to him that Prussia opposed the Confederation, Metternich asserted again that the only form which Germany should take was the Confederation created in 1814-1815.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Metternich to Emperor Francis, August 1, 1819, *NP*, vol. 3, 267.

⁷⁰ *Vortrag* to Emperor Francis, June 1833, *NP*, vol. 5, 508, 512.

⁷¹ "The German Question," August 1848, *NP*, vol. 8, 451-452.

⁷² Metternich to Apponyi, March 10, 1847, *NP*, vol. 7, 368-369.

⁷³ Metternich to Apponyi, April 21, 1833, *NP*, vol. 5, 448; Metternich to Kübeck, December 31, 1849, *NP*, vol. 8, 288.

⁷⁴ Metternich to Schwarzenberg, January 17, 1849, Metternich to Windischgrätz, February 24, 1859, *NP*, vol. 8, 463, 599.

⁷⁵ Metternich to Kübeck, December 31, 1849, *NP*, vol. 8, 484.

⁷⁶ Metternich to Roller, January 2, July 24, 1850, *NP*, vol. 8, 291, 308.

The German Question naturally played a more prominent role in the Bismarck memoirs. Bismarck represented himself in his memoirs as a strong supporter of German unification from the beginning of his political career, commenting on opportunities missed for Prussian-dominated unification before he came to office.⁷⁷ His position appears to have evolved over time, however, and the memoirs illustrated his early willingness to share power with Austria, creating a powerful German bloc to preclude other European powers meddling in German affairs.⁷⁸ While Prussian Ambassador to the Confederation Diet at Frankfurt, however, he came to believe that the idea of the Confederation--with power sharing by Prussia and Austria--was unrealistic. Prussia's pride was wounded, he wrote, after its humiliation at Olmütz, and when Bismarck learned of Austrian Prime Minister Schwarzenberg's real intentions at Frankfurt (a policy according to Bismarck of *avilir puis démolir*), he realized that resolution of the national movement would come only through the sword.⁷⁹

In his memoirs Bismarck clearly defined his position justifying unification. He understood the potential strength of a united Germany⁸⁰ and believed it was Prussia's role to dominate a consolidated Germany because, as history had demonstrated, the Prussian individual character was the most strongly German; German loyalty was found in love of fatherland; and the people needed a prince on whom to concentrate their attachment. A united Germany and permanent German patriotism depended on an experienced dynasty--the indispensable cement to hold Germany with its particularist elements together.

⁷⁷ *GW*, vol. 15, 46-50.

⁷⁸ *GW*, vol. 15, 228-230.

⁷⁹ *GW*, vol. 15, 197-198.

⁸⁰ Bismarck, *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, New Edition, vol. 1, Stuttgart and Berlin: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1921), 196.

The Metternich and Bismarck memoirs clearly delineate the Austrian and the Prussian positions on the German Question between 1815 and 1871. Despite their many shared political and diplomatic convictions, Metternich and Bismarck held opposing views about the German Question. Metternich's support for the Confederation was based on his concern for continued Austrian dominance of the German states, along with preservation of the *status quo*. Although early in his career Bismarck was willing to share power equally with Austria, he later insisted on the exclusion of Austria in a Prussian dominated Germany.

Politics, Personalities, and Political Power

Domestic political opposition was not a major concern expressed in Metternich's memoirs. He viewed "factions" negatively, and his understanding of the term generally applied to organized liberal or nationalist groups. He only rarely alluded to Austrian factions--liberal interests--whose attempts to weaken his control of foreign affairs in the Austrian Empire were unsuccessful. Most of his references to the despised factions which operated in other countries referred to groups which were part of what he perceived to be an international conspiracy of revolutionaries directed by radicals--usually centered in Paris. He repeatedly portrayed this radical opposition as evil destroyers of all that he held to be morally right, in particular, peace, order, and legitimate monarchy.⁸¹ "Parties try to lead governments astray and take their power away,"⁸² he asserted, and he blamed them for most of the negative events which occurred in Europe.⁸³

Metternich's attempt to increase his political power after Ferdinand's accession in 1835 was unsuccessful, and he was challenged by Kolowrat, and Archdukes Charles and John.

⁸¹ Metternich to Wittgenstein, November 14, 1818, *NP*, vol. 3, 178-181; Instruction for Wessenberg, October 3, 1830, *NP*, vol. 5, 40.

⁸² Metternich to Wittgenstein, November 14, 1818, *NP*, vol. 3, 173.

⁸³ Metternich to Sainte-Aulaire, June 30, 1836, *NP*, vol. 6, 140.

Metternich retained his foreign policy responsibilities, but his plans to restructure the administration of the government were thwarted by these political adversaries, and Austria sank into an abyss of mismanagement by quarreling ministers and princes. The political conflict which arose at this time was a frequent topic in the memoirs, and references appeared regularly in Princess Melanie's diary regarding Kolowrat's negligence, the wretched condition of state affairs, and Metternich's discouragement and exhaustion.⁸⁴ Metternich's own correspondence at this time reflected his concerns about inadequate Austrian leaders and his disagreement with Kolowrat about depletion of the currency.⁸⁵

Metternich had achieved the position he desired, and from his writings it can be concluded he had no burning desire for political power for its own sake. His objectives were better management and administration of Austrian affairs, and his concerns were reflected by his dismay at Austria's dilemma in the 1840s. After 1848, Metternich's letters showed no anger at having lost power, but instead continued to express concerns for Austria's fate and to give advice accordingly.

Metternich's treatment of his political adversaries varied. He resorted to personal criticism infrequently in his autobiographical essay, although Baron Karl von Stein was blamed for the reform fervor aroused in Prussia and exported to Russia in the Napoleonic era.⁸⁶ He rarely wrote more than a sentence or two about Stein or other reformers, but devoted several pages to condemning Austrian Minister of State, Baron Thugut's 1790s administration, accusing Thugut of acting dishonorably by putting self-interest above his country's. But even the statesmen Metternich criticized were treated without the bitterness or sense of a personal vendetta

⁸⁴ Princess Melanie's Diary, June 10, 1838, March 29, 1839, January 18, 1840, *NP*, vol. 6, 231, 301, 368.

⁸⁵ Princess Melanie's Diary, September 1, 1836, Metternich to Count Martinitz, July-August, 1837, *NP*, vol. 6, 112-113, 206-217.

⁸⁶ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 173-174, 176.

that the reader detects in Bismarck's diatribes. Napoleon, the arch enemy, and Alexander I, the unreliable ally, were thoroughly dissected by Metternich, but without rancor, each warranting his own chapter.

In the documents following the autobiographical essays, however, Metternich indulged in stronger criticism. During young Metternich's term as ambassador to Prussia, diplomatic dispatches to Emperor Francis, Foreign Minister Stadion, and Francis' advisor, Count Colloredo, Metternich targeted the Prussian diplomat, Count Haugwitz and Frederick William III, criticizing them for their failure to join a coalition with Austria and Russia. Frederick William III was labeled weak and indecisive, and Haugwitz's conduct in arranging the post-Austerlitz agreement with the French, Metternich asserted, was treasonous.⁸⁷

In official correspondence not intended for publication, Metternich's critique of foreign leadership and diplomacy could be expected, whereas Bismarck's memoirs were written explicitly for public consumption. Bismarck most frequently attacked domestic, not foreign "villains." Metternich's opponents were dissected impersonally in his memoirs, whereas with Bismarck there was a strong sense of dislike of the individual. In Metternich's writing the criticism was impassive and rational. An example of his sometimes biting character analysis was his description of Talleyrand: a politician--immoral and dangerous--but necessary to Austria.⁸⁸

In the period 1816 through 1822, Metternich singled out Count Capodistrias, the Russian diplomat, for disparagement, "A limited intellect is nothing but narrow-minded stupidity. My intellect says to me, 'Capodistrias has none.'"⁸⁹ It was because of Capodistrias' liberal beliefs

⁸⁷ Metternich to Colloredo, September 24, 1804, Metternich to Colloredo, October 18, 1805, Metternich to Colloredo, November 4, 1805, Metternich to Stadion, February 28, 1806, *NP*, vol. 2, 23, 66, 75, 106-107.

⁸⁸ Metternich to Stadion, September 24, 1808, *NP*, vol. 2, 240-241.

⁸⁹ Private correspondence, *NP*, vol. 3, 353.

and his liberal influence on Alexander that he received this attention, and Metternich blamed him for the troubles between Russia and Greece in 1822.⁹⁰

In Metternich's fourth volume covering the years 1815-1829, George Canning, the British Foreign Minister (later Prime Minister) was the object of Metternich's scorn. Canning's policy was uncertain, vacuous, and a grave error, and he used popular prejudices to come to power.⁹¹ In contrast to Metternich's praise of Canning's predecessor, Castlereagh, he called the more liberal Canning, the "scourge of the world."⁹²

Metternich labeled the French statesman and historian, Adolphe Thiers, inexperienced, slippery, conceited, and dangerous to society--a man who put his own interests above principles.⁹³ Metternich was appalled that not only France's but Europe's fate rested in his hands, and he compared Thiers' impact on France to Napoleon's.⁹⁴ Guizot, in power in France at the time of the 1848 revolution, was endowed with the correct conservative spirit, Metternich wrote, but although he was accessible to reason, he was a lightweight as far as his judgment of situations and events was concerned--a common flaw among French leaders. Palmerston was also singled out for scathing criticism. He was a trouble-maker, haughty, fickle, lacking knowledge, spiteful--a man motivated by politics whose pretensions should be stopped. He was animated by a heinous spirit and had the power of evil.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Private Correspondence, 1820, 1821, Metternich to Lützow, June 3, 1822, *NP*, vol. 3, 320, 424-425, 555-556.

⁹¹ Private Correspondence, January 23, 1824, Metternich to Esterhazy, August 7, 1825, *NP*, vol. 4, 92, 213.

⁹² Draft letter, August 23, 1826 *NP*, vol. 4, 310.

⁹³ Metternich to Apponyi, August 22, 1836, December 6, 1838, February 15, 1839, November 21, 1840, *NP*, vol. 6, 147, 276, 338-339, 424.

⁹⁴ Metternich to Apponyi, August 4, 1840, November 8, 1840, *NP*, vol. 6, 410, 422-423.

⁹⁵ Metternich to Apponyi, January 2, 1836, *NP*, vol. 6, 126-127; Metternich to Apponyi, March 15, 1845, January 4, April 12, May 25, September 12, December 24, December 29, 1847, *NP*, vol. 7, 87, 319, 327, 335, 348-349, 353, 385.

After Emperor Francis' death in 1835, Kolowrat was described as influenced by the opposition and incapable of understanding situations correctly.⁹⁶ But Metternich reserved most of his criticism of Kolowrat until after the 1848 revolution. Admitting Kolowrat's honesty and integrity, Metternich called him an administrator who never was able to rise to a higher sphere of political awareness. He was difficult to communicate with and slow to respond—which inevitably led to problems. Most significantly, Metternich believed Kolowrat bore substantial blame for the government's inaction which led to the 1848 catastrophe.⁹⁷

Metternich's foremost political enemies were not individuals, per se, but liberals, radicals, factions, and parties—evils which had to be checked because they were the betrayers of peace and political freedom.⁹⁸ In this group he included, in addition to politicians and radicals, university students, professors, and "doctrinaires."⁹⁹

Revolutionaries, like revolution, were a constant topic in the Metternich memoirs, and he labeled them vermin, the evil which must be destroyed.¹⁰⁰ Repeatedly in his reports and letters he expressed his belief that a conspiracy existed in Europe, directed out of Paris, bent on the destruction of "human society."¹⁰¹ It was a dominant theme in his political life. The

⁹⁶ Metternich to Count Martinitz, August 11, 1836, *NP*, vol. 6, 112-113.

⁹⁷ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 7, 618-619.

⁹⁸ "Alexander, Emperor of Russia," *NP*, vol. 1, 331-332; Metternich to Esterhazy, September 21, 1829, Metternich to Gentz, September 21, 1829, *NP*, vol. 4, 594, 596-597; Metternich to Esterhazy, October 21, 1830, *NP*, vol. 5, 47.

⁹⁹ Metternich to Wittgenstein, November 14, 1818, Metternich to Emperor Alexander, December 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 178-181, 410-416; Metternich to the Prince of Hesse-Homburg, November 13, 1826, Metternich to Apponyi, July 2, 1826, *NP*, vol. 4, 321, 371; Metternich to Apponyi, March 21, 1831, Metternich to Neumann, June 24, 1832, *NP*, vol. 5, 124-125, 358-359.

¹⁰⁰ Metternich to Apponyi, March 28, 1832, *NP*, vol. 5, 127.

¹⁰¹ Circular Dispatch, December 14, 1822, *NP*, vol. 3, 581-582; Metternich to Apponyi, March 16, 1831, June 4, 1831, April 19, 1834, *NP*, vol. 5, 122, 175, 579.

concepts espoused by the liberals were condemned as utopian schemes doomed to fail.¹⁰² Liberalism always led to radicalism,¹⁰³ he wrote, and problems in the smaller German states were blamed on liberal influences and the concessions made to them (constitutions).¹⁰⁴

The political milieu in which Bismarck functioned was very different from that of Metternich. Unlike Metternich, Bismarck faced a more organized, institutionalized opposition in the form of political parties. Bismarck wrote that politics was an arena in which honorable and courteous men become base and vulgar, where lies and slander are acceptable, and in which party interests become substituted for the interests of the state.¹⁰⁵ Presumably, Bismarck considered himself innocent of these character flaws--despite his scathing and emotional descriptions of his opponents. Political conflict occupied a substantial portion of his memoirs, including descriptions of the dissension during Chief Minister of Prussia, Otto von Manteuffel's administration under Frederick William IV and the power struggles during the first four years of William I's reign.

Like Metternich, Bismarck saw political "opposition" from his own subjective perspective. He rightly contended that the opposition changed over the course of his career, a statement which reflects Bismarck's own change of position. In 1848 opposition was based on genuine and sincere ideological convictions, he wrote, whereas in 1890, the opposition's motives were about political power.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Metternich to Buol, June 26, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 237.

¹⁰³ Metternich to Buol, March 1, 1847, *NP*, vol. 7, 324.

¹⁰⁴ Metternich to Apponyi, November 15, 1831, *NP*, vol. 5, 139.

¹⁰⁵ *GW*, vol. 15, 350-351.

¹⁰⁶ *GW*, vol. 15, 45.

In his memoirs, Bismarck condemned political parties, accusing them of quarreling over political issues instead of important matters. Political parties generally threatened the *status quo* and divided the nation. Party conflict was counterproductive to governing, and parties harbored power hungry deputies and ambitious publicists.¹⁰⁷ It is noteworthy, however, that Bismarck did not single out for criticism several of his most important political opponents, the socialists, August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, and the Center Party leader, Ludwig Windthorst is only obliquely censure when Bismarck disparages the damage to Germany's future by parties.¹⁰⁸

As in the Metternich memoirs, liberals were mentioned often by Bismarck and generally in an unflattering context despite the fact that until the late 1870s, he needed the National Liberals' support to govern. Unlike Metternich, Bismarck's liberal opponents were a domestic concern rather than a foreign policy matter. Often opposed to Bismarck's policies, liberals were the mouthpieces of parliamentary government, influenced the press, represented foreign influences, and poisoned the minds of the women of the royal family.¹⁰⁹

The Center Party was rarely mentioned, although Bismarck did state that he believed its objective was the "destruction of disagreeable edifice of the German Empire with a Protestant Emperor,"¹¹⁰ but he devoted an entire chapter to his loss of conservative support over the School Inspection Bill in 1872.¹¹¹ The Conservative party, he wrote, lacked common sense and honesty. They could have left their stamp on Germany, but instead they ultimately hurt Germany

¹⁰⁷ *GW*, vol. 15, 262, 354.

¹⁰⁸ *GW*, vol. 15, 448-449.

¹⁰⁹ *GW*, vol. 15, 231.

¹¹⁰ *GW*, vol. 15, 448.

¹¹¹ *GW*, vol. 15, 343-355.

by not cooperating with the Government.¹¹² Bismarck's rapprochement with the National Liberals further alienated the Conservatives, and he adopted a defensive, almost paranoid tone in describing the political conflict generated in 1877 when he negotiated with National Liberal party leader Bennigsen regarding participation in the cabinet.¹¹³

Bismarck's power in Germany was broader than Metternich's in Austria. The executive responsibility in Prussia was under his command, and his memoirs show that he worked perpetually to retain his power and brooked no opposition. His attacks on his adversaries, glaringly visible in the memoirs, illustrated how he protected his position of power, and the venom expressed in the third volume betrays how sorely he missed power once he had lost it.

Admitting only occasionally that his political enemies had some redeeming characteristics, Bismarck freely criticized innumerable persons including members of his own cabinet. Many of these diatribes were not just castigation of an enemy, but also served as Bismarck's means to explain his unpopular decisions. With a dramatic flair uncharacteristic of Metternich, the founder of the second Reich singled out several political enemies for particular abuse, but Empress Augusta received his greatest censure. Count Usedom, Bismarck's replacement at the Frankfurt Diet in 1859, met Bismarck's disapproval for long absences from work--a surprising example considering Bismarck's own numerous and lengthy absences from Berlin during his long career.¹¹⁴ General Leo von Caprivi, Bismarck's successor, was also criticized at length, and he wrote a lengthy refutation of Caprivi's accusation that Bismarck was hostile to the army.¹¹⁵ A chapter in the third volume contained a resentful diatribe about his dismissal and provided

¹¹² Speech, February 13, 1872, *GW*, vol. 15, 341, 348.

¹¹³ *GW*, vol. 15, 366-373.

¹¹⁴ *GW*, vol. 15, 137.

¹¹⁵ *GW*, vol. 15, 349-350.

another opportunity to condemn Caprivi--in this instance, for not having consulted Bismarck to insure continuity in foreign policy.¹¹⁶

But Caprivi is not alone in warranting his own Chapter--an "honor" usually reserved for monarchs and princes in the Bismarck memoirs. Bötticher and Herrfurth, ministers whom Bismarck accused of disloyalty and political treachery, were singled out for what he perceived as their betrayal of him in 1890.¹¹⁷ Another subjected to Bismarck's wrath was the Grand Duke of Baden who merited his own chapter because of his position on socialist legislation, a position in direct conflict with Bismarck's policies at the time of his dismissal.¹¹⁸

Gorchakov, as mentioned previously, was frequently disparaged, but he was also singled out for specific and intense criticism for, among other things, dishonest dealings, underhanded practices, and inciting fear that Germany was about to go to war against France in 1875.¹¹⁹

Bismarck's diatribes against political enemies focused more on individuals than the larger forces of revolution and socialism. Bismarck's war on socialism and his social legislation, such significant features of his years of power, were mentioned only in the third volume in connection with his dismissal. How to deal with the Socialists was an important part of the policy disputes Bismarck had with William II, because Socialism was, for Bismarck, the revolutionary peril--a force hostile to the empire--and poised for civil war. The memoirs warned that meeting Socialist demands would not produce the expected result, and to discontinue their banishment was a step toward parliamentarism. The growth of the Social Democrats was

¹¹⁶ *GW*, vol. 15, 537.

¹¹⁷ *GW*, vol. 15, 481-483, 485-486.

¹¹⁸ *GW*, vol. 15, 474, 477.

¹¹⁹ *GW*, vol. 15, 392.

menacing and dangerous, and the German princes needed to take punitive action against them.¹²⁰

Revolutionaries were not Bismarck's bogeys as they were for Metternich and were rarely mentioned, although Bismarck did take a swipe at "some of the learned proletariat" troublemakers in North Germany who, he asserted, wanted revolution. Bismarck believed revolutionaries represented a small percentage of the electorate and he did not consider them a great threat.¹²¹

* * *

In their discussions of politics and power, the memoirs illustrated the difference in Metternich's and Bismarck's responsibilities and in the structures of their states. Metternich was primarily concerned with foreign affairs in a country without a parliament or political parties, and his opposition came from within the court and from outside Austria. Bismarck's responsibilities were broader, covering domestic as well as foreign affairs, and his dealings with a parliament lent an entirely different perspective to his attitudes toward parties, power, and opposition. The opposition Bismarck wrote of in his memoirs came primarily from domestic sources, parties and the court.

Through their portrayal of the politics of their world, the reader glimpses their personalities--Bismarck the intense, emotional statesman versus Metternich the aloof and rational one--and comprehends the political nature of these two great figures of the nineteenth century.

The People, Public Opinion, and the Press

Their memoirs revealed that neither Chancellor was ignorant of the people, public opinion, or the press. In fact, each was keenly aware of the political potential of these societal

¹²⁰ Bismarck to King Ludwig, August 12, 1878, *GW*, vol. 15, 248, 374-375, 483, 491, 494, 505, 508, 525, 534-535, 550.

¹²¹ *Bismarck, The Memoirs*, vol. 1, 408.

forces. Metternich, who received reports on public opinion, was not insensitive to "the people" and he mentioned them occasionally in his memoirs, but he regarded them more or less as a force whose economic dissatisfaction made them susceptible to revolutionary ideas. The masses left to themselves without proper guidance, he maintained, would self-destruct. Popular suffrage did not reflect the true voice of the people, and the people, he was convinced, could not be trusted with governing.¹²² He saw the people as longing only for peace, order, and economic well being, and he perceived no feelings of unrest among them--only among malevolent radicals. In the Metternich memoirs, the people are seen in the abstract, not as human beings, and this was well illustrated by Metternich's characterization of the 1840s as a time of political problems rather than social problems.

Throughout his career, Metternich referred to the desires of European peoples for order. The people of the Austrian Empire were fleetingly mentioned in regard to their support for each successive war against the French--despite their weariness of war and desire for peace.¹²³ In contrast, the French and their ongoing unrest was a recurring topic, along with their weariness of and later opposition to war.¹²⁴

Metternich believed the people were led to revolt by revolutionaries they did not understand.¹²⁵ His conviction that the people only wanted order and peace was proved again to his satisfaction in the Galician insurrection of 1846 when the peasants turned against the Polish landlords. The people, he wrote, have not changed in moral sentiment nor material interests--

¹²² Metternich to Apponyi, January 26, 1837, *NP*, vol. 6, 181; Metternich to Apponyi, February 27, 1847, *NP*, vol. 7, 164; Metternich to Countess Leontine Sandor, May 1, 1850, Metternich to Roller, April 27, 1850, *NP*, vol. 8, 254-255, 300.

¹²³ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 136.

¹²⁴ Metternich to Apponyi, December 19, 1832, *NP*, vol. 5, 292.

¹²⁵ Metternich to Emperor Alexander, May 6, 1821, *NP*, vol. 3, 475-476.

which to Metternich meant they supported monarchy and the *status quo*.¹²⁶ Even as late as December, 1847, Metternich believed the people supported the cause of "justice and reason"--the conservative path.¹²⁷ Expecting revolutionary activity in Italy at any moment, he declared in January, 1848, that the Italian people did not support the radical movement because it would interrupt commerce and peaceful life.¹²⁸ Six months later in exile in England when Paris experienced a second revolt, he declared again that what the people wanted was peace and prosperity.¹²⁹

Bismarck rarely alluded to "the people" and only occasionally mentioned the German people, praising their Prussian or German attributes. Bismarck, like Metternich, treated the people as an abstract concept, an entity which desired a strong country of which it could be proud.¹³⁰ Again like Metternich, Bismarck saw the people as a force, necessary to support not only government policy but the monarchic system.¹³¹ The masses were intellectually "undeveloped," Bismarck believed, and easily misled by clever or ambitious rhetoric.¹³²

His peasants at Schönhausen were portrayed as simple and dedicated to their master. The people's loyalty, he wrote, was necessary to the monarchy, and policy decisions were made to maintain the people's confidence in their emperor.¹³³

¹²⁶ Metternich to Buol, June 26, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 237.

¹²⁷ Metternich to Apponyi, December 12, 1847, *NP*, vol. 7, 345.

¹²⁸ Metternich to Apponyi, January 29, 1848, *NP*, vol. 7, 556.

¹²⁹ Metternich to Countess Leontine Sandor, July 12, 1848, *NP*, vol. 8, 170.

¹³⁰ Bismarck to Gerlach, May, 1857, *GW*, vol. 15, 114.

¹³¹ Bismarck to King Ludwig, August 12, 1878, *GW*, vol. 15, 248.

¹³² *GW*, vol. 15, 287.

¹³³ Speech, June 1, 1865, *GW*, vol. 15, 261, 542-543, 547-548.

Metternich and Bismarck had similar views about the middle class. Metternich singled out the French bourgeoisie for a large part of the blame for the evils society experienced after the defeat of Napoleon.¹³⁴ Metternich considered dangerous "the trouble making classes... the financiers, those genuine cosmopolitans who secure their profits at the expense of absolutely any order of things, the Civil Servants, men of letters, lawyers, and persons in charge of public education."¹³⁵ He saw the middle class as the champions of revolution who wanted kings only as figureheads—a group who instilled the lowest layer of society with the dangerous idea that they were "the people."¹³⁶

Bismarck claimed that he never favored an aristocratic system, nor "regarded birth as a substitute for ability,"¹³⁷ but his attitudes about class can be deduced from an article about voting rights which he published in 1848 and chose to include in his memoirs. In this piece Bismarck expressed antipathy to pushy townsmen and industrialists aspiring to a dominant political position in Prussian society.¹³⁸ Bismarck obviously had a low opinion of the middle class and believed them dangerous. In another instance he referred to "the educated, highly cultured gentlemen who, without property, without industry, without business, live either by their salary as civil or local servants or by the press.... These are the gentlemen who provide the revolutionary ferment and who lead the Progressive and National Liberal groups, and the press."¹³⁹

¹³⁴ Metternich to Emperor Alexander, December, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 411.

¹³⁵ Memoir to Emperor Alexander I, May 6, 1821, *NP*, vol. 3, 412.

¹³⁶ "The Nobility," 1850, *NP*, vol. 8, 548.

¹³⁷ *GW*, vol. 15, 15.

¹³⁸ Newspaper article, 1848, *GW*, vol. 15, 28.

¹³⁹ Bismarck, *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, 423.

Early in his career Metternich recognized the importance of public opinion. It was, he wrote, "the most powerful of all means, like religion it penetrates the most hidden recesses, where administrative measures lose their influence."¹⁴⁰ Metternich believed, however, that the principles of statesmen and empires must not be sacrificed to public opinion,¹⁴¹ and accordingly, advised Württemberg in 1820 to ignore public opinion if it was a matter of sacrificing their king to the liberal cause.¹⁴²

As early as 1805 he wrote that the French had been using public opinion and the press to "corrupt the German mind," and to combat this propaganda, he suggested the allies establish a newspaper to refute French lies.¹⁴³ Metternich himself used the press to promote his agenda, and in 1820 he revealed that "Anyone who picks up a copy of the *Journal des Débats* will read me without knowing it. Hardly a week passes without my sending an article to that journal."¹⁴⁴

Metternich viewed public opinion in Russia in the 1820s as a significant factor in their response to the Greek crisis, and concluded that public opinion was the driving force of Canning's policy and the reason British policy softened against the Turks after the combined naval forces of Britain, France, and Russia defeated the Turks at Navarino in 1827.¹⁴⁵ In 1832, the French government, he asserted, had meddled in the Papal States in part to court public approval.¹⁴⁶ Writing in retirement in 1852, however, Metternich stated that when it was the

¹⁴⁰ Metternich to Stadion, June 23, 1808, *NP*, vol. 2, 192.

¹⁴¹ Metternich to Esterhazy, August 7, 1825, *NP*, vol. 4, 217.

¹⁴² Metternich to Wintzingerode, March 31, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 370-372.

¹⁴³ Metternich to Cobenzl, December 7, 1805, "Ideas on the Establishment of a Newspaper under the Protection of and Published by the Allied Powers," December 5, 1805 *NP*, vol. 2, 84-86.

¹⁴⁴ Private Correspondence, October 6, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 348.

¹⁴⁵ Metternich to Vincent, January 5, 1826, Metternich to Ottenfels, October 3, 1826, *Vorträge* to Emperor Francis, November 26 and 30, 1827, *NP*, vol. 4, 298, 382, 403-404, 406.

¹⁴⁶ Metternich to Lützow, April 3, 1832, *NP*, vol. 5, 313.

outcome of experience rather than the product of external influences, public opinion, properly understood, could be valued as the voice of the people.¹⁴⁷

Bismarck wrote his memoirs purposefully to enlist public opinion to his cause, but in them he expressed the view that public opinion was a harmful force in society—not to be acquiesced to. A further indication of this sentiment was his disparagement of Frederick William IV's tendency to allow public opinion to damage policy and his depiction of William I "wisely resisting" the pressure of the press and public opinion.¹⁴⁸

In practice, Bismarck recognized the ever increasing importance of public opinion and the press and he used them to his own advantage with consummate skill during his career.¹⁴⁹ He mentioned the press often in his memoirs, yet despite taking advantage of their influence, he viewed the press as a negative force whose influence and opinion were not to be yielded to. He spoke of the importance of the press in influencing political views, and decried press "lies" about the army in 1848—lies which in time had come to be regarded as history.¹⁵⁰ "Public stupidity," he declared was susceptible to the "distressing success" of the press.¹⁵¹

Bismarck, writing in retirement, called the press a somewhat necessary balance to check against government or imperial power, and although he claimed to have held this opinion from early in his career, he generally disparaged the press—no doubt because it was most often the mouthpiece of his opposition.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ "Public Opinion," 1852, *NP*, vol. 8, 560.

¹⁴⁸ Bismarck to Roon, July 2, 1861, (*GW*, vol. 15, 53, 165, 231, 257.

¹⁴⁹ *Gall*, 220.

¹⁵⁰ Bismarck to von Prittwitz, May, 1848, *GW*, vol. 15, 23.

¹⁵¹ *GW*, vol. 15, 257.

¹⁵² *GW*, vol. 15, 81.

Although he used the press to influence public opinion, inserting Articles in the *Augsburger Zeitung*, Metternich supported government control of publishing and censoring. He considered the press irresponsible, but recognized that "the newspapers [were] worth to Napoleon an army of three hundred thousand men...."¹⁵³ An unregulated press was the most "urgent evil" threatening monarchic governments, he wrote, and he regretted that all writing could not be censored.¹⁵⁴ Writing about events in France in 1826, he declared again that a free press was dangerous and must be permanently censored.¹⁵⁵ He stated that France's problems were a result of the influence of the press on society, and he blamed the press, in part, for preparing the spirit of the people for revolution in Galicia before the uprising in 1846.¹⁵⁶

Although there was no discussion of censorship in the Bismarck memoirs, Metternich's comments about the practice were somewhat ambiguous. He viewed censorship as a necessary policy, but claimed that only what he called preventive censorship was effective against the press--anything else was repressive and could be counterproductive. He claimed censorship was a moral issue concerning the security of the citizenry. But in 1846 he insisted that the press was, in fact, free except for certain restrictions.¹⁵⁷

* * *

As the memoirs show, both Metternich and Bismarck found the middle class pretentious--and, in particular, deplored their inclination to revolution. Since both Chancellors regarded the people in an abstract sense, neither elaborated on the social problems of the day which resulted

¹⁵³ Metternich to Stadion, June 23, 1808, *NP*, vol. 2, 193.

¹⁵⁴ Metternich to Eleanore von Metternich, June 14, 1817, Metternich to Gentz, June 17, 1819, *NP*, vol. 3, 25, 255.

¹⁵⁵ Metternich to Apponyi, July 2, 1827, *NP*, vol. 4, 370.

¹⁵⁶ Metternich to Apponyi, March 15, 1845, March 18, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 87, 197.

¹⁵⁷ Metternich to von Canitz, April 16, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 215-218.

in considerable misery for the majority of the subjects of their empires. Both chose to depict the people as childlike and simple--Bismarck in the sense of loyal and dedicated subjects, Metternich as incapable of self-government. Metternich and Bismarck believed they knew what the people wanted--Metternich frequently wrote of the people's desire for peace and the *status quo*, and Bismarck believed that the people wanted a strong country of which they could be proud.

The difference between Metternich's and Bismarck's view of popular opinion reflected the changes which had occurred in nineteenth century Europe--nationalism had only begun to emerge when Metternich was in office, whereas it was firmly ensconced in the popular consciousness during Bismarck's years in power.

Although Metternich and Bismarck found it contemptible to sacrifice principles to public opinion, they both regarded it as a political tool and acknowledged its importance. Bismarck was the master of putting this theory into practice, although, quite understandably, this was not mentioned in his memoirs.

Downfall

Metternich did not appear to change when he was forced to resign in 1848 and fled into exile in England. He responded almost immediately--and in character--with letters of advice for those in power in Vienna. The letters contained no bitterness or anger, but instead a renewed compulsion to do his duty and a resigned sense of inevitability.¹⁵⁸ In marked contrast, Bismarck's reaction to his downfall was to write his memoirs, and he devoted an entire volume to that event alone. If he filled its pages with criticism, anger, and caustic character assassinations, Bismarck believed he was doing his duty in writing his third volume. If his professed objective was to inform the German public of the truth about his resignation and to

¹⁵⁸ *NP*, vol. 7, 611-614; vol. 8, 7.

warn them about the foreign policy errors of his successors, it met his need to express his anger and frustration.

In her diary entries in November 1847 as events proceeded toward Metternich's downfall, Princess Melanie described him as courageous and strong despite the burdens of office which weighed heavily on her husband.¹⁵⁹ Metternich's letters written after the 1848 revolution to his daughter, Leontine which covered 141 pages in the memoirs, were not those of an embittered man. His concerns were for the welfare of Austria and for Europe.¹⁶⁰ He wrote that he thanked God that he was not on the stage any longer,¹⁶¹ and was pleased he was free of the insoluble burdens he had borne.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ *NP*, vol. 7, 314.

¹⁶⁰ *NP*, vol. 8, 155.

¹⁶¹ *NP*, vol. 8, 155.

¹⁶² *NP*, vol. 8, 161.

CHAPTER V

DOMESTIC ISSUES AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Domestic Policy

In the first volume of his memoirs, Metternich discussed domestic policy only twice--suggesting an advisory council to Emperor Francis and emphasizing the importance of strengthening Austria financially and militarily in order to face the French armies.¹ With the exception of one document, the subsequent volumes focused heavily on foreign policy until Francis' death in 1835. That one document, notable for its inclusion, was a report written to the Emperor in 1817 containing Metternich's suggestions on the administration of the Empire--recommending decentralization of the imperial government, establishment of Chancellories for its constituent regions, some local autonomy, and recognition of differences of language and custom.²

In 1839, Metternich again declared that Austria's strength came from acknowledging the differences of its nationalities, recognizing the true needs of its peoples, and most importantly, preserving national character.³ The empire did not see its subjects as Austrians, he wrote in 1846, but rather as Hungarians, Italians and Poles.⁴ Even after the 1848 revolution, Metternich continued to press these points in his correspondence to Schwarzenberg stressing the importance of the necessary regard for the diversity of its component states to preserve the empire's unity.

¹ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 118-120.

² Report to Emperor Francis, October 27, 1817, *NP*, vol. 3, 62-75; Metternich to Ficquelmont, January 23, March 20, 1848, *NP*, vol. 7, 578, 612. For a discussion of this topic, see Arthur Haas, *Metternich, Reorganization and Nationality, 1813-1818*.

³ Metternich to Stürmer in Constantinople, December 3, 1839 *NP*, vol. 6 365.

⁴ Metternich to Apponyi, March 7, 1846, Memorandum, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 192, 205, 207.

To the end of his life, he held these views,⁵ but he also emphasized the need for a strong government which ruled with vigor, right principles, and countermeasures against the forces of liberalism and revolution.⁶ Proper governance, he wrote in 1847, was assured with security and paternalistic administration in combination with useful and appropriate native institutions.⁷

He recognized nationality as a force and understood its power, and he knew that there were growing nationalist feelings in the Austrian Empire. The device around which revolutionaries rallied their support was nationality--love of country in a drive for independence. The nationalist sentiment was elevated, and revolutionaries appreciated the value of these resonant phrases, but they were pushed to the absurd, and the people, he believed, forgot their "simple" duty.⁸

Proper use of force, Metternich contended, was an appropriate response to civil unrest, domestic or international. Experience on the Italian peninsula had shown him force could be used successfully against insurrections, and in 1847 he warned his government that force might again be necessary in Italy.⁹ He declared in 1849 that, had he been in charge in March, 1848, the revolt would have been immediately crushed.¹⁰

⁵ *NP*, vol. 8, 397-398.

⁶ Metternich to Schwarzenberg, 1849, *NP*, vol. 8, 474.

⁷ Metternich to Apponyi, January 4, 1847, Memorandum, January 4, 1847, *NP*, vol. 7, 355, 358, 363.

⁸ Metternich to Buol, May 29, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 224-226.

⁹ Arthur G. Haas, "Continuing Calm or Coming Calamity: Metternich's Perceptions of Revolutionary Danger in Austrian Italy," in *Consortium on Revolutionary Europe 1750-1850*, eds. by Donald D. Howard and John C. Horgan (Tallahassee: Institute on Napoleon and the French Revolution, Florida State University, 1990), 623.

¹⁰ Metternich to Countess Leontine Sandor, January 17, 1849, *NP*, vol. 8, 204.

It was for the maintenance of peace that he advocated repression of anything which threatened order, stability, and the *status quo*--the foundations of a moral society.¹¹ He labeled his repressive policies preventive measures, and saw the Carlsbad Decrees as his "great work."¹² For Metternich these laws were just because they were anti-revolutionary and promoted peace and tranquility.¹³

Metternich's discussion of Austrian policy toward its component states varied considerably. Although a number of its provinces were rarely if ever mentioned, Italy was discussed at length, and he considered Austria its natural protector.¹⁴ Italy, according to Metternich, was only a geographic expression--with a common language, but full of anti-Austrian revolutionaries.¹⁵ Despite Austrian efforts to repress rebellions, continued unrest in Italy plagued him during most of his career.

Despite its importance Hungary was not discussed in the memoirs as frequently as Italy. Metternich attended a sitting of the Hungarian Diet in 1825--which he described as a complaint session about royal encroachments on traditional Hungarian aristocratic privileges.¹⁶ But in the 1840s as tensions in Hungary were mounting, only a few documents were included in the memoirs which dealt with the Hungarian problem which Metternich obviously considered a

¹¹ Metternich to Lebzeltern, June 28, 1817, Metternich to Wittgenstein, November 14, 1818, *NP*, vol. 3, 52-53, 180; Metternich to Apponyi, January 4, 1847, *NP*, vol. 7, 354-358.

¹² Metternich to Eleanor von Metternich, September 1, 1819, *NP*, vol. 3, 219; Metternich to Neumann, October 31, 1832, *NP*, vol. 5, 382.

¹³ Metternich to Neumann, February 2, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 365.

¹⁴ Metternich to Rechberg, July 26, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 382-383.

¹⁵ Metternich to Apponyi, April 12, August 6, 1847, Metternich to Radetzky, August 22, 1847, Metternich to Ficquelmont, December 9, 1847, January 8, 1848, *NP*, vol. 7, 388, 410, 412, 440, 474-475, 573.

¹⁶Private Correspondence, 1825, *NP*, vol. 4, 190-198.

serious threat to the empire.¹⁷ From exile in England in 1848 Metternich acknowledged in a letter to Schwarzenberg that "Hungary is the most important part of the Empire," but it "is incapable of setting up an independent State separated from the other parts of the Austrian Empire without years of struggle."¹⁸

Metternich's discussion of Slavs focused, for the most part, on his concerns for preserving the empire.¹⁹ In the 1830s Metternich's uneasiness about Galicia centered on the possibility of revolution there. Fifty thousand Austrian troops were sent to Galicia to forestall trouble after the Polish revolt in 1830, and in 1834, eighty Polish and French "agents" in Galicia were arrested who were accused of planning a revolution.²⁰ Galicia is again addressed in the 1840s and a number of documents are included in which Metternich defends the Austrian response to the 1846 uprising and the empire's annexation of the free city of Cracow.²¹

Czechism and Illyrism were growing problems for the empire in the 1840s. Metternich was not unsympathetic to the Croats' protests against increasing Magyarization in 1843, and in a letter Palatin Archduke Josef in Pressburg, Metternich defended the Croat's objections to the Hungarian Diet's resolution making the Magyar language mandatory in its deliberations.²²

¹⁷ Metternich to Duke Joseph, November 29, 1843, *NP*, vol. 6, 676; Memorandum, 1844, *NP*, vol. 7, 51-63; Metternich to Ficquelmont, March 20, 1848, *NP*, vol. 7, 614. See also Arthur G. Haas, "Austria Before the Revolution: the Beginning of the Internal Breakdown," in *Consortium on Revolutionary Europe, 1750-1850: Proceedings 1986*, eds. Donald D. Howard, Harold T. Parker, and Louise Salley Parker (Athens, Georgia: Consortium on Revolutionary Europe, 1987), 368-383.

¹⁸ Metternich to Schwarzenberg, June 26, 1849, *NP*, vol. 8, 481.

¹⁹ For a discussion of this topic, see Arthur G. Haas, "Metternich and the Slavs," *Austrian History Yearbook* 4-5 (1968-1969): 120-142.

²⁰ Metternich to Trauttmansdorff, December 15, 1830, *NP*, vol. 5, 74.

²¹ Metternich to Apponyi, February 20, March 7 and March 18, 1846; Memoranda, February 20 and n.d., 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 187-298,

²² Metternich to Palatin Archduke Josef, November 2, 1843, *NP*, vol. 6, 673-676.

Reference to growing Czech nationalism in the memoirs was limited, but Metternich's concerns about the problem were visible in an entry to Princess Melanie's diary.²³

In his political testament written between 1849 and 1855, Metternich claimed that the internal life of the empire was always the highest priority for the government,²⁴ and to accusations that Austrian domestic policy was static, he responded that Austria marched with the times but in a direction which did not sacrifice its principles. Defending his policies, he declared that, in Austria everyone was equal before the law, that no privilege existed, and that nowhere were nationalities more respected. Furthermore, the existence of assemblies within the empire proved he was not an absolutist.²⁵

Metternich believed that the Austrian empire could survive only as a monarchy. Popular sovereignty would not work in an empire of divided parts²⁶ because there could be sovereignty for only one people and Austria was composed of many peoples.²⁷ Writing in exile, Metternich opposed a central parliament for the Austrian empire believing it a dangerous step because he assumed Hungary would not join if the German provinces did.²⁸

Metternich's ideal government was a system so well structured it could run more or less on its own without constant executive care.²⁹ With the assistance of a council of ministers, a prime minister--who could be more impartial regarding domestic policy--should head the

²³ Princess Melanie's Diary, April 24, 1845, *NP*, vol. 7, 66.

²⁴ Political Testament, 1849-1855, *NP*, vol. 7, 634-635.

²⁵ Metternich to Lützow, October 10, 1847, *NP*, vol. 7, 424-425.

²⁶ Metternich to Archduke John, July 10, 1848, *NP*, vol. 8, 442.

²⁷ Metternich to Schwarzenberg, January 17, 1849, *NP*, vol. 8, 465.

²⁸ Metternich to Bombelles, June 5, Metternich to Archduke John, July 10, 1848, Metternich to Schwarzenberg, 1849, *NP*, vol. 8, 430, 442, 465.

²⁹ Report to Emperor Francis, October 27, 1817, *NP*, vol. 3, 66.

government.³⁰ In addition, a council of state, with purely "moral" functions, as he put it, but without executive power, could function as the guardian of the law and serve as a link between the conscience of the sovereign and the administrative departments.³¹

Economic problems were mentioned infrequently before Metternich went into exile. Thereafter, Princess Melanie made several references to the Austrian government's disturbing financial problems, and in Metternich's own writings, Austrian fiscal difficulties became a more frequent topic.³² One topic of an economic nature was given extensive coverage. In a report to Francis written in 1833 Metternich expressed his grave concerns about the German Zollverein, a system damaging and dangerous to the Empire. A political disaster threatened Austria because the Zollverein was increasing Prussian power and influence and damaging Austria's leadership of the Confederation. Prussia, Metternich believed, was already putting its political forces into play to enfeeble Austrian influence, and the Zollverein was damaging Austrian commerce and weakening the independence of the smaller German states. Metternich predicted the Zollverein would become more important to its members than the Confederation, and warned of the "moral" harm which would result.

In contrast, Metternich claimed that Austria's motives to counteract the leverage of the Zollverein were based on natural rights. Austria wanted only to preserve its own influence and to protect Confederation members' liberty of action.³³ In 1841 Metternich urged consideration

³⁰ Metternich to Lützow, July 12, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 248.

³¹ Metternich to Lützow, July 12, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 249.

³² Metternich to Kübeck, January, 1854, *NP*, vol. 8, 352-355.

³³ *Vortrag* to Emperor Francis, June 1833, *NP*, vol. 5, 502-519.

of an Austrian Zollverein as a counterweight to Prussian influence and to benefit trade in the empire.³⁴

Bismarck's coverage of domestic matters was spotty. He criticized any Prussian domestic policy which was not his own and devoted a considerable amount of space to condemnation of Frederick William IV's handling of the 1848 revolution and its aftermath.³⁵ In discussing his own domestic policies, his posture was defensive, and considering his twenty-eight years in office, he singled out only a few domestic political events to discuss at length in his memoirs. Unlike Metternich, Bismarck was responsible for domestic as well as foreign policy, yet almost no mention was made in his memoirs about the coalition of iron and rye, voting issues, colonial policy, or the tariff and tax controversies.

Bismarck believed that domestic political problems, particularly securing monarchic government, could be handled most effectively once Germany was secure and free from international interference or threat--in other words, once he had strengthened it militarily and unified it politically.³⁶ He had designed the form of government under which he worked. The governmental system the Reichstag preferred, a single responsible minister, and a cabinet government, was unacceptable.³⁷ Bismarck realized his power was incomplete, however, and his government could not rule without the support of one major party. The alternative, forming coalitions, was dangerous because coalitions, he believed, were destructive.³⁸

³⁴ Metternich to Baron Kückeck, October 20, 1841, *NP*, vol. 6, 537.

³⁵ *GW*, vol. 15, 31-36.

³⁶ *GW*, vol. 15, 284.

³⁷ *GW*, vol. 15, 190.

³⁸ *GW*, vol. 15, 343.

Bismarck saw the problems nationalism created in the Austrian empire and considered Polish nationalism within the German empire unacceptable.³⁹ Feelings of nationalism among Germans, however, were honorable and a source of strength.⁴⁰ Bismarck did whatever he deemed necessary to accomplish his policy goals, and he considered using nationalism as a weapon against Austria. He wrote that, if it had been necessary, he would have incited nationalist movements against his enemies for the cause of monarchy and unification, and he confessed he had considered inciting Hungarian nationalists during the war with Austria.⁴¹

Within the German Empire, Bismarck was careful to court the German princes, and believed like Metternich, that the princes and dynasties were the key to German politics.⁴² He knew it was necessary for the Hohenzollern-led Empire to preserve the rights of each German state and to secure conservative and monarchic structures.⁴³ By retaining member states' rights and the federal council's powers intact, he was able to keep Austria in check and restrain the Reichstag in its struggle for power and demands for a "responsible ministry."⁴⁴

The *Kulturkampf*, a major political struggle over secular versus church control of certain functions within the society, was discussed at length in the memoirs and illustrated well Bismarck's tendencies to blame and justify. The *Kulturkampf*, he wrote, was the issue that had caused his split with the Conservative Party.⁴⁵ Bismarck justified it in his memoirs as a battle

³⁹ GW, vol. 15, 333, 336-337, 401-402.

⁴⁰ GW, vol. 15, 304.

⁴¹ GW, vol. 15, 271, 286.

⁴² GW, vol. 15, 197.

⁴³ Bismarck to King Ludwig, December 24, 1870, *Bismarck, The Memoirs*, 392.

⁴⁴ Bismarck to King Ludwig, June 29, 1877, GW, vol. 15, 245-246.

⁴⁵ GW, vol. 15, 347.

against Polish nationalism and superstition and an attempt to establish state control of schools. He had proposed the School Inspection Bill to insure all the empire's subjects were compelled to speak German.⁴⁶ According to his memoirs, the responsibility for the *Kulturkampf* was not Bismarck's but that of the Minister of Public Worship, Adalbert Falk. Additionally, he blamed the Empress Augusta who, he claimed, repeatedly worked against the objectives of the *Kulturkampf* and was influenced by Catholics in her entourage.⁴⁷

In his third volume Bismarck devoted particular attention to domestic policy in regard to the role it played in his dismissal. A major factor in his dissention with William II in 1890 concerned social democracy, which Bismarck saw as an enemy poised for civil war. The Emperor wanted to adopt a conciliatory attitude toward the socialists, but Bismarck wanted instead to clamp down harder.⁴⁸

Bismarck did not remark about his program of social legislation enacted in the 1880s. Instead he discussed the danger of raising the expectations of the workers to anticipate policy changes the government could not deliver.⁴⁹ This was precisely what he expected from William II's vague proclamations of 1890 in which he promised to "meet the needs" of the workers and "investigate complaints."

* * *

During the greater part of Metternich's career, domestic affairs were not a part of his primary responsibilities, although his State Chancellory contained within it an interior section with some domestic functions. Bismarck's discussion of domestic concerns in his memoirs was

⁴⁶ Speech, March 6, 1872, *GW*, vol. 15, 339, 348.

⁴⁷ *GW*, vol. 15, 335-336.

⁴⁸ *GW*, vol. 15, 483.

⁴⁹ *GW*, vol. 15, 499.

incomplete ignoring many important domestic matters with which he was involved, and elaborating only on those matters he chose to explain or justify.

Although domestic policy is not the central focus of either memoir, they both serve to illustrate how different the domestic concerns of their empires were. Bismarck was consolidating the strength and power of a newly created empire during most of his career, whereas Metternich focused on holding a disintegrating empire together. Nationality was a ticklish problem for both, a vital issue for Metternich's Austrian Empire, but less important for Bismarck with only Poles as a major nationalist group to consider. Neither dealt with economic matters at length, although Metternich voiced his concerns about the growing influence of the Prussian-controlled Zollverein.

The topics selected for inclusion in the memoirs revealed the subjects about which Metternich and Bismarck were most sensitive--particularly when justification or explanation was their motive, and this held true for their domestic policy discussion as well as their international affairs topics. Anticipating the massive criticism his reputation would undergo, Metternich felt it necessary to defend his policies against accusations of arbitrary absolutism, reaction, repression, and excessive privilege. Bismarck used his third volume to explain his opposition to socialism, but his most sensitive reaction to criticism in the area of domestic policy was his defense of the *Kulturkampf*.

Although their approaches to domestic policy were understandably different given time and circumstance, Metternich and Bismarck both espoused their theories about government systems, supporting not surprisingly, monarchic systems. Another, perhaps predictable similarity is exposed in the memoirs--they both favored a system designed to give themselves top ministerial power and control of decision making within their empire.

Criticism of their Monarchs

If both Metternich and Bismarck believed monarchy the most superior system of government, preservation of the institution for Metternich was an unquestioned objective. Bismarck, as noted above, wrote at the end of the century, when William II was Emperor, that monarchy should be balanced by criticism from both the press and parliament. In their memoirs, both Chancellors showed great respect and reverence in their dealings with their own monarchs--with the glaring exception of Bismarck's portrayal of William II.

Metternich paid tribute to the monarch he served the longest, stating that his memoirs were written to render the greatest last service he could to Emperor Francis I (reigned 1792-1835).⁵⁰ The Emperor had every kingly virtue, courage, wisdom, high principles, strength of mind, and firmness of character.⁵¹ In his autobiographical essay, Metternich referred to Francis often and with deep respect using very formal language. "Few sovereigns," he wrote, "have brought more honor to their crown than the Emperor Francis. His people recognized his worth as a man. He was their father rather than their master, and he united in himself all the virtues of private life." Metternich asserted further that Francis should be credited with much of the success of the "extraordinary results" of 1814 and 1815.⁵² In subsequent volumes Francis' virtues were occasionally praised, although the statements were shallow and repetitious. On the whole his portrayal of Francis was simplistic and superficial, noting frequently his kingly qualities and repeating them often. In the third volume covering the important years of the congresses, for example, Francis was depicted as a supporter of peace, justice and moderation, but rarely

⁵⁰ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 4.

⁵¹ Metternich to Eleanor Metternich, January 27, 1810, *NP*, vol. 2, 322; Circular, March 12, 1835, *NP*, vol. 5, 649.

⁵² Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 86, 141.

mentioned otherwise. Metternich appeared to have been sincerely fond of Francis, however, and many references to his affection for him were found in Princess Melanie's diary.⁵³

Unfortunately the reader has very little sense of the relationship between Metternich and Francis and no understanding of Francis, the man. This omission in itself was perhaps an unspoken statement about Metternich's estimation of Francis. Francis' own "appearance" in the memoirs was limited to a few terse comments at the end of Metternich's reports to him. In Volume Five covering the years 1830-1835, there is an excerpt from Melanie's diary which intimates that Metternich, not Francis, was responsible for making foreign policy. Shortly before Francis' death in 1835, Melanie quoted a letter that Metternich had written to the Austrian Ambassador in St. Petersburg stating that Metternich selflessly had credited Francis for all their successes--yet it was he who advised, and the Emperor acted. In her diary entry three days later, Princess Melanie quoted Francis' statement that, in truth, it was Metternich's work which has had historical impact, not his own.⁵⁴ Metternich admitted in a conversation with Count Hübner on March 1, 1848, that Francis "always adopted my ideas and followed my advice in matters relating to foreign affairs. On the home front things were different. It is true, that in this sphere, too, I had, in my capacity as Chancellor of State, the right to intervene, but I used it with moderation and only in moments of crisis...."⁵⁵

Although Francis was mentioned continually, albeit superficially, during his lifetime, Metternich's mention of Ferdinand I (reigned 1835-1848) was almost nonexistent. The Chancellor considered Ferdinand mentally disadvantaged, but he never attacked him. Mention was made of Ferdinand's favorable reception by his subjects and of his honoring his father's

⁵³ Princess Melanie's Diary, November 4, 1831, August 11, 1834, March 14, 1835, *NP*, vol. 5, 110, 562, 629.

⁵⁴ Princess Melanie's Diary, March 14, 1835, *NP*, vol. 5, 628-629.

⁵⁵ Count Joseph Alexander Hübner, *Une Année de ma Vie* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1891), 18.

advice to retain Metternich as his chief advisor.⁵⁶ A few remarks noted Ferdinand's arrival here or there, but no mention was made of his handicaps until Metternich's essay about his resignation at the end of the seventh volume. Here Metternich wrote that after Francis' death a deficiency existed in the state household, and that Ferdinand had neither the sense nor the will to rule. In a further comment Metternich made reference to Ferdinand's motto, "*Recta tueri*," and noted the nuance in the motto.⁵⁷

Metternich continued to focus on political affairs when Francis Joseph (reigned 1848-1916) came to the throne, and as in previous volumes, after 1848, Metternich concentrated on Austrian policy and his own opinions of it rather than writing about Francis Joseph. In the final volume of the memoirs, Metternich, writing in 1852, did mention briefly that Francis Joseph was upright and had good sense, and he had joined the battle against "the evil."⁵⁸

Bismarck's career spanned the reign of four monarchs, and the emotion with which his memoirs were written permits occasional glimpses into the characters of Frederick William IV, William I, and Frederick III, while his portrayal of the German Empire's last Emperor, William II, was a detailed character analysis. In his memoirs, Bismarck allowed his monarchs to speak by including a number of letters they wrote to him. However, these disclosed little of the personalities of the rulers and instead focused almost exclusively on extolling Bismarck's virtues.

The Chancellor criticized all of his sovereigns in his memoirs, but the tone of the criticism varied with each monarch. Frederick William IV (reigned 1840-1861) was criticized at length and labeled eccentric, untrustworthy, indecisive, and medieval.⁵⁹ It was, of course,

⁵⁶ Circular, March 12, 1835, *NP*, vol. 5, 651; Metternich to Princess Melanie Metternich, September 8 and October 5, 1835, *NP*, vol. 6, 58, 80.

⁵⁷ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 7, 618, 639.

⁵⁸ Metternich to King Leopold, January, 1852, *NP*, vol. 8, 533.

⁵⁹ *GW*, vol. 15, 31-36.

the reign of William I (regent 1858-1861, reigned 1861-1888) which encompassed most of Bismarck's years in power. An eighteen page chapter about William I extolled his virtues, but numerous letters of praise and gratitude from William made up a substantial portion of the chapter, and six pages were devoted to vilifying the Empress Augusta. Throughout the memoirs William I was, except for a few instances, treated with great admiration, respect, and even love. When Bismarck did actually criticize William I, he usually found a way to place the blame for poor decisions on the influence of others including the advisors who preceded him, but, more particularly, Empress Augusta.⁶⁰

Bismarck missed no opportunity to illustrate the negative influences on William I, particularly those of Augusta and the Crown Prince Frederick who often attempted to block Bismarck's policies. In his depiction of his working relationship with William I, Bismarck declared he did not have a free reign and his actions were limited by the emperor.⁶¹ In fact, the memoirs revealed Bismarck and William often disagreed to the great discomfiture of both; however, in the end William usually yielded to Bismarck. Their relationship was a close and trusted one, and ultimately, William came to have unlimited confidence in Bismarck's genius.⁶²

Bismarck's relationship with Frederick III (reigned 1888) was less secure because they differed so completely in political philosophy. According to the memoirs, Frederick had hoped to make major political changes when he came to the throne, including establishment of a parliamentary system of government. But fate intervened and his terminal illness allowed him

⁶⁰ GW, vol. 15, 192.

⁶¹ GW, vol. 15, 549.

⁶² Otto Bismarck, *The Kaiser vs. Bismarck*, trans. Bernard Miall (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1921), xiii-xiv. This is the English edition of the third volume of Bismarck's memoirs. The citation is from the introduction written by Charles Downer Hazen.

no opportunity to exercise power.⁶³ Frederick, whose reign spanned only sixty-eight days was frequently criticized in the memoirs because of his liberal convictions, however, the tone of Bismarck's criticism was consistently respectful. An eight page chapter about Frederick was included, although less than half of it was about Frederick and the remainder concerned constitutional issues. The Chancellor and Frederick often disagreed, but their relationship, according to the memoirs, was not a negative one. Frederick respected him, Bismarck asserted, and he included a letter of praise from Frederick to substantiate this point.⁶⁴ Bismarck also credited Frederick with a diplomatic success of great import--convincing his father, William I, to make peace with Austria in 1866 instead of marching on Vienna. To share recognition with Frederick for this important deed was quite unusual for this work; the credit for every other success was Bismarck's alone.⁶⁵

Bismarck's greatest censure was, of course, reserved for William II (reigned 1888-1918) about whom most of Volume Three is concerned. Bismarck began this last volume with a stunning letter which Frederick III had written to Bismarck in September, 1886, in which he described his son as defective in knowledge, immature, inexperienced, vain, egotistical, and presumptuous.⁶⁶ In describing his treatment at the time of his dismissal, Bismarck vented his spleen sparing no details of William II's character flaws and bad decisions. One of his primary vehicles for damning William II was the inclusion of his own letter of resignation which had not been made public in 1890. The public had been led to believe by William II's announcement of Bismarck's resignation that it was for reasons of ill health that Bismarck had retired. The

⁶³ Ibid., xiv.

⁶⁴ Frederick III to Bismarck, March 25, 1888, *GW*, vol. 15, 445, 450.

⁶⁵ *GW*, vol. 15, 279.

⁶⁶ Crown Prince Frederick to Bismarck, September 28, 1886, *GW*, vol. 3, 456.

memoirs tell the story of how, at the time of his resignation, the Emperor "brutally" forced Bismarck to vacate his official residence in the Chancellery with only one day's notice. To add insult to injury, Bismarck was ordered to return eleven days' pay.⁶⁷

William II's negative personal character traits were revealed without hesitation--something Metternich would not have done and Bismarck did not do elsewhere in his memoirs. Bismarck included an 1887 letter in which William II declared in reference to his expected reign, "I must be obeyed." A further string of damning accusations asserted that William II was too taken with splendor, approval, and fame. He wanted to be popular and to wield autocratic power, his sex drive was high, he liked to exhibit himself, and he was susceptible to mystical influences. The thoroughness of this condemnation continued with an accusation of distrustfulness, laziness, and a charge of underestimating the difficulties of ruling.⁶⁸

Bismarck attacked William II's policy decisions, stating that he could not, in good conscience, continue in office and implement William's policies. William's conciliatory gestures to social democracy and his consideration of action against Russia courted disaster.⁶⁹ William was listening to his military advisors who assumed it was only a matter of time before Germany would be at war with Russia. Quoting from a letter written by the emperor, Bismarck revealed that William not only saw war with Russia as probable, but asserted that Germany should fight the war with Russia in the near future.⁷⁰

There is a striking contrast between Metternich's and Bismarck's discussion of their monarchs in their memoirs. Metternich's comments about his own monarchs were limited and

⁶⁷ *GW*, vol. 15, 511, 537.

⁶⁸ Prince William to Bismarck November 29, 1887, (*GW*, vol. 15, 542-550, 457, 465.

⁶⁹ *GW*, vol. 15, 524-525, 549-551.

⁷⁰ Crown Prince William to Bismarck, May 10, 1888, *GW*, vol. 15, 554-556.

usually superficial; Bismarck's were extensive both in volume and content. Bismarck was free with criticism; Metternich's criticism was almost non-existent. This may be, in part a reflection of the times, but it also reflects the difference in personalities of the two men, and of course, the circumstances surrounding the writing of their memoirs. The non-confrontational Metternich supported monarchic government as the ideal, and he, diplomat to the end, outwardly devoted to his monarch, wrote only flattery. The more combative Bismarck, a somewhat less fervent supporter of the monarchic system, the cast-aside politician, ever striving to regain the power he had lost, criticized all his monarchs, reserving genuine praise only for William I. Yet despite criticizing each of them, Bismarck's treatment of his monarchs varied considerably. Because the memoirs were written after his dismissal, they reflected his bitterness toward William II and his portrayal of him was, therefore, extraordinarily condemnatory. Bismarck did not display the same degree of hostility and criticism for Frederick William IV nor for Frederick III despite his lack of genuine respect for the former or his differences of opinion regarding important policy issues with the latter. It was, in large part, Bismarck's inability to suppress his enmity toward William II which made his memoirs distinctly subjective and set their angry tone.

The Military

The army is not an important theme in either the Metternich or Bismarck memoirs, but the importance of a strong military is a key concept neither Chancellor failed to emphasize. Metternich believed, as Bismarck did later, that his country's army had to be strong enough to maintain its Great Power status. Austria had been defeated by the French several times before Metternich came to power, and war had sapped Austria's strength making its Great Power status very questionable. Thus, recovery was essential and reinforced military strength was imperative for a successful foreign policy.

Metternich, who viewed the army as a policy tool, wrote in 1836 that the army could be used for political objectives and public security,⁷¹ and in January, 1848, with troubles in Lombardy, he again declared that the Empire's strength in Lombardy lay with the army.⁷² But despite using the army to quell rebellions, he recognized that it was ultimately counterproductive for states to "govern with bayonets."⁷³

Bismarck's treatment of the army was multi-sided. His Prussian military values were clearly evident, particularly as he defended the army's much criticized handling of the 1848 revolution in Berlin.⁷⁴ To illustrate his own disappointment, he quoted a song the soldiers in Berlin sang which expressed the army's bitter reaction to Prussia's weak response to revolution.⁷⁵ He praised William I's soldierly qualities often, and in his first volume, only military men escaped his caustic tongue.

Bismarck's depiction of the 1862 crisis, the wars of unification, along with other statements made throughout the memoirs disclose that he advocated a strong Prussian army--initially to unify Germany and later to maintain its Great Power status. But the army was also his opponent, and army leaders sometimes attempted to thwart his policy. Bismarck wrote a revealing and dramatic description of his confrontation with the king and the army in 1866 when Bismarck had to restrain them from marching on Vienna after Austria's defeat at Königgrätz. Cognizant of international ramifications--possible French intervention and future Austrian

⁷¹ Metternich to Apponyi, April 14, 1836, *NP*, vol. 6, 135.

⁷² Metternich to Ficquelmont, January 8, 1848, *NP*, vol. 7, 574.

⁷³ Metternich to Lützow, January 30, 1848, *NP*, vol. 7, 557.

⁷⁴ Bismarck to von Prittwitz, May, 1848, *GW*, vol. 15, 23-24.

⁷⁵ *GW*, vol. 15, 30-31.

friendship--Bismarck favored an early peace treaty with limited punishment of Austria.⁷⁶ In another chapter, he described events in Paris in 1870-1871 when the army excluded Bismarck from military consultations. Bismarck and the army disagreed about the best method of taking Paris. Focusing on foreign policy concerns, Bismarck was interested in a quick conclusion to the war to keep the other Great Powers not only out of the conflict, but away from the peace table.⁷⁷ As in most other sections of the memoirs, Bismarck used this chapter to explain his position (here the bombardment of Paris) and to present his reasoning about his political decisions--as well as to criticize military opposition to his policies.

* * *

Metternich's and Bismarck's handling of domestic concerns, along with their relationships with their monarchs and the army illustrate more clearly perhaps than any other aspect of their memoirs, the differences in their circumstances and personalities. Their political philosophies revealed their similar conservative leanings, and their foreign policies had, as will be come evident, more in common than might at first be expected.

⁷⁶ *GW*, vol. 15, 277-278.

⁷⁷ *GW*, vol. 15, 315.

CHAPTER VI

FOREIGN POLICY AND RELATED THEMES

Foreign Policy

Foreign policy was where Metternich's successes lay, and it was the topic of nearly every letter and report in his memoirs. No aspect of Metternich's views on international affairs is omitted from discussion. In his autobiographical essay, Metternich focused on political players and events in Europe, with strong emphasis on Napoleon, his power, and his wars. Metternich's personal story was secondary to the analysis of events, decisions, negotiations, and alliances. In the years before Napoleon's defeat, Metternich maneuvered Austria along the tricky path between peace and war. Seeing the larger picture in Europe, he evaluated the positions and actions of each of the powers and determined the smartest and most beneficial course for Austria.¹

After Napoleon was defeated and order reestablished, Metternich began his long career working to preserve order and stability. During these decades, his foreign policy objective remained unchanged,² and the content of the memoirs reflects his belief that it was his duty to preserve peace. He recognized the danger to the Austrian Empire of unrest in bordering territories and worked assiduously to maintain the *status quo* in Europe.³ Under his leadership, Austria and its allies had to destroy destructive liberal and revolutionary forces, and for its own survival, Austria had to be strong enough financially and militarily to be able to "command peace."⁴

¹ Metternich to Emperor Francis, November 28, 1811, *NP*, vol. 2, 426-438.

² Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 97.

³ Metternich to Apponyi, October 12, 1843, *NP*, vol. 6, 672.

⁴ *Vortrag* to Emperor Francis October 9, 1827, *NP*, vol. 4, 603.

The key to peace was monarchic solidarity, and early in his career, Metternich preferred conferences as the diplomatic instrument to preserve the monarchic systems. The meetings, decisions and policies of the Congresses at Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen), Troppau, Laibach (Ljubljana), and Verona when Metternich's power and influence were at their greatest, were the focus of his third volume. Calm deliberation was the correct solution to international disputes, and it was Metternich's view that the years of peace following 1815 proved this course was successful.⁵ He lost faith in conferences when the statesmen whose views were similar to his own were no longer participants in the process. Later in life, when his influence in European affairs had diminished, he explained his rationale--the conferences had been corrupted by liberal influences.⁶

The memoirs clearly demonstrated that Metternich was an internationalist who favored a balance of power and a Great Power consensus to promote and protect peace, order, and stability. "Modern History," he wrote, "demonstrates the principle of the international community of interests and the balance of power, and furnishes the example of several states trying together to withstand the domination of one."⁷ It was his contention that the alliance initiated in 1815 established peace and preserved political freedom and independence for the states of Europe.⁸ After the revolts in Naples and Piedmont had been suppressed in 1821, an Austrian-Russian alliance was, in his view, an unbeatable force capable of enforcing its will on Europe.⁹

⁵ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 212.

⁶ Metternich to Apponyi, January 25, 1832, Metternich to Trauttmansdorff, December 8, 1832, *NP*, vol. 5, 260-261, 406-407.

⁷ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 34.

⁸ "Alexander I, Emperor of Russia," *NP*, vol. 1, 331.

⁹ Metternich to Stadion, April 22, 1821, *NP*, vol. 3, 467.

Although alliances played an important part in the protection of peace and the balance of power, Metternich considered the Holy Alliance only a moral pronouncement. "The Holy Alliance," he said in his Autobiographical Memoir, "was not founded to restrain the rights of the people nor to encourage absolutism and tyranny in any form. It was simply the expression of the mystical sentiments of the Emperor Alexander and the application of Christian principles to politics."¹⁰

The Metternich memoirs have numerous examples of his recommendations for multi-power cooperation to solve to European crises,¹¹ and he repeated often his recommendation that the Great Powers must stand united, acting together to oppose revolutionary subversives, stop insurrections, or support an ally.¹² During the crises in Spain, Greece, Italy, and Belgium in the 1820s and 1830s, the memoirs illustrate how often Metternich sought consensus and unity in support of Austrian positions.

Metternich's foreign policy principles, so often repeated in the memoirs, included his belief in the inviolability of treaties, a principle he applied frequently as his rationale for supporting or condemning an action or a policy.¹³ For Metternich, treaties were a matter of ethics, the principle of keeping one's word.

In matters threatening peace in Europe, Metternich favored consensus of the Great Powers over independent intervention. He was not an expansionist and never supported conquest

¹⁰ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 215-216.

¹¹ Metternich to Trauttmansdorff, December 8, 1832, Memoir, January 18, 1833, *NP*, vol. 5, 406, 470.

¹² Metternich to Vincent, March 23, 1823, Instruction for Esterhazy, March 25, 1827, *NP*, vol. 4, 41, 346; Metternich to Apponyi, May 3, 1833, *NP*, vol. 5, 453.

¹³ Metternich to Esterhazy, August 7, 1825, Metternich to Gentz, September 9, 1825, *NP*, vol. 4, 216, 225; Metternich to Apponyi, May 3, 1832, *NP*, vol. 5, 316.

as policy,¹⁴ neither in 1815 when Austria rejected the return of its Lowlands provinces,¹⁵ nor at any other time during his long career.¹⁶ His goal was preservation of the Habsburg Empire. In 1846, however, he defended the Empire's annexation of the tiny republic of Cracow as a security measure and "the humanitarian thing to do." Cracow had become a sanctuary for nationalist intrigue and this justified the annexation--according to Metternich's "principles."¹⁷ The era in which Metternich lived was characterized by transition which, he declared, necessitated intervention, painful for men of conscience, but necessary in some circumstances.¹⁸ It was the right of the Great Powers, according to the 1815 treaty, to intervene in crises--in the name of governmental and social order, morality, and peace.¹⁹ Austrian intervention in its rebellious territories was appropriate, an internal matter, and Metternich defended the policy of intervention in support of legitimate governments against rebellions in Spain, Italy, Poland, and elsewhere. He condemned, however, the French intervention in Belgium and the Papal States in 1832 as schemes of aggrandizement and maneuvers to maintain the French government's power.²⁰

Metternich asserted innumerable times that his principles were his guiding light and the reader of his memoirs is convinced that he believed this himself. However, his foreign policy

¹⁴ Metternich to Apponyi, February 15, and June 27, 1831, *NP*, vol. 5, 152, 185.

¹⁵ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 218.

¹⁶ Metternich to Buol, May 29, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 172.

¹⁷ Princess Melanie's Diary, March, October, 1846, Metternich to Apponyi, February 20, March 18, 1846, Memorandum, November 6, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7 144-145, 158, 161, 163, 168, 276-287.

¹⁸ Metternich to Guizot, June 15, 1847, *NP*, vol. 7, 397.

¹⁹ Circular Dispatch, December 8, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 392-393; Metternich to Esterhazy, March 20, 1823, *NP*, vol. 4, 38-39; Metternich to Apponyi, February 15, and March 12 and 28, 1831, *NP*, vol. 5, 121, 126-127, 151; Metternich to Apponyi, January 4, 1847, *NP*, vol. 7, 355.

²⁰ Metternich to Neumann, March 21, 1832, Metternich to Lützow, April 3, 1832, Metternich to Wessenberg, April 16, 1832, *NP*, vol. 5, 309, 312-314, 325.

decisions were those of a pragmatist and, on occasion, his principles were forsaken. In 1808 as Napoleon was considering conquest of Constantinople, Metternich's pragmatism became evident. He advised Stadion that, as Austria could not save Turkey, it must share in the spoils.

As Napoleon's aggression could not be stopped, it was a matter of self-preservation to deflect it away from Austria.²¹ The pragmatic Metternich chose to save the Empire by accommodating Napoleon in 1809 rather than face annihilation after Austria's fourth defeat by the French.²² In deciding in 1814 to recognize Napoleon's brother-in-law, General Murat, as the King of Naples, Metternich found it necessary to sacrifice the principle of legitimacy in order to prevent the reactionary Bourbon regime's return. During 1828 as war against the Turks threatened, Metternich chose the lesser of two evils, independence for Greece, rather than risk collapse of the Ottoman Empire and revolution in Europe.²³ And when Belgium gained independence in the 1830s, he accepted what he could not change.²⁴

Like Metternich, Bismarck made foreign affairs the central focus of his memoirs. Although large segments of his memoirs were devoted to international relations, unlike Metternich's, they are by no means a thorough examination of international affairs during Bismarck's years in power.

What his memoirs reflected was Bismarck's overriding concern with Prussian strength and its position vis-a-vis the other Great Powers, first in unifying Germany and then in preserving

²¹ Metternich to Stadion, January 18, 1808, April 27, 1808, *NP*, vol. 2, 152-153, 171.

²² Metternich to Emperor Francis, August 10, 1809, *NP*, vol. 2, 311-312.

²³ Metternich to Esterhazy, March 15, 1828, *NP*, vol. 4, 441.

²⁴ *Vortrag* to Emperor Francis, October 11, 1830, Metternich to Ficquelmont, December 29, 1831, *NP*, vol. 5, 44, 220.

the empire. Germany must stay aloof from issues not in its own interests,²⁵ and it must be independent, respected, strong, and prepared--"*toujours en vedette*," as he put it.²⁶ Great Power status, he maintained, was determined by military might,²⁷ and Bismarck's passionate belief in the need for a strong Prussian army and independence from other powers was the topic of forty pages of correspondence between himself and his friend General Leopold von Gerlach in the 1850s. It was in this exchange of letters, criticizing Prussian weakness and Frederick William IV's foreign policy, that Bismarck expressed his basic political canon, that self-interest should be the operative principle in foreign policy.²⁸

In his chapter about the Crimean War, a number of pages were concerned with political intrigue, but Bismarck's real focus was condemnation of Prussian weakness and dependence on Austria during that era. He criticized the Prussian leaders during the war who opposed friendship with Russia, but it was more important for Bismarck to express his abhorrence of the fact that Prussian Great Power status had been obtained on Austria's coattails. "A Great Power requires for its recognition, above all else, the conviction and the courage to be one," he wrote, and this was what Prussia lacked before 1862.²⁹

A number of examples of Bismarck's opportunistic foreign policy are revealed in his memoirs. During the Crimean War Bismarck proposed positioning Prussian troops in Silesia so

²⁵ Bismarck to Gerlach, May, 1857, *GW*, vol. 15, 112, 416; Bismarck to Gerlach, May, 1857, *Bismarck, The Memoirs*, vol. 1 (New York: Howard Fertig, 1966), 188.

²⁶ Bismarck to Gerlach, May, 1857, *GW*, vol. 15, 112, 416, .

²⁷ *GW*, vol. 15, 57.

²⁸ Bismarck to Gerlach, 1854-1856, (*GW*, vol. 15, 74-84; 110-126; Pflanze, "Bismarck's *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*," 48.

²⁹ *GW*, vol. 15, 188.

that Prussia, with Austria vulnerable, would have an opportunity to dictate policy in Europe.³⁰ When France and Piedmont invaded Lombardy in 1859, Prussia should have exploited Austrian weakness, he declared, and presented it with an ultimatum demanding acceptance of Prussian terms regarding the German question.³¹ What is interesting is the fact that the most opportunistic statements refer to events which occurred before Bismarck came to power--opportunism is less conspicuous in the memoirs after 1862.

Like Metternich, Bismarck saw a coming struggle between order and anti-monarchic, republican forces which he believed would ultimately result in dictatorship. In spite of this view, he admitted that he would have fomented revolution in Italy had the Great Powers intervened in France in 1870-1871.³² Preserving political and social order in the monarchic form, he declared, was more important than quarreling over less important issues--like the Balkans.³³

Wary of congresses because he could not necessarily control the outcome, Bismarck worked to end the Franco-Prussian war quickly so that Germany and France could negotiate alone, and he kept France out of the Black Sea Conference in London in 1871 because he did not want the Franco-German question discussed there.³⁴

Bismarck's approach to foreign policy was pragmatic and cold blooded--dealing with each situation as it related to the here and now. He clearly wanted his memoirs to instruct future German leaders to be realistic in dealing with foreign powers, judging each country as it related

³⁰ *GW*, Vol. 15, 72.

³¹ *GW*, vol. 15, 192.

³² *GW*, vol. 15, 306, 311, 318, 365.

³³ *GW*, vol. 15, 398.

³⁴ *GW*, vol. 15, 399.

to Germany's present situation and present interests. Foreign policy was fluid, not static, and interests, not emotions, Bismarck emphasized, must be primary.³⁵

In 1857 he wrote that a country must be strong and respected in peacetime in order to make favorable alliances in time of war.³⁶ His greatest fear was a French-Austrian-Russian alliance,³⁷ but he understood Russia's desire for a strong France as a counterweight to Germany. A German-Russian alliance would make Germany vulnerable to Great Britain, Austria, and France, therefore, Germany should instead be one of three in a system of five Great Powers. To assure German security and to protect the monarchies, the preservers of political and social order, Bismarck preferred the *Dreikaiserbund*.³⁸

Nor did he want the other Powers to assume automatically that Prussia was hostile to France--and take advantage of it. Napoleon III was not Germany's only potential enemy, and hatred of France should not be generic. Bismarck did not want the other powers to think that Germany had only limited options regarding alliances. Alliances should be determined by need or utility, he advised, and the empire should leave its options open.³⁹

Bismarck discussed war as a foreign policy tool in response to accusations that Germany intended to attack France in 1875. He maintained that war with France was furthest from his mind and would have resulted in damaging alliances against the new, still forming German empire. Germany's peaceful policy--after it had proved its military might--enabled the powers

³⁵ Bismarck to Gerlach, May, 1857, *GW*, vol. 15, 111-112, 414-415.

³⁶ Bismarck to Gerlach, May, 1857, *GW*, vol. 15, 112.

³⁷ *GW*, vol. 15, 400, 414.

³⁸ *GW*, vol. 15, 397, 415.

³⁹ Bismarck to Gerlach, May, 1857, *GW*, vol. 15, 115, 173.

to tolerate the new German power. War, Bismarck wrote, was infrequently warranted and a dubious strategy—but could be employed when justified.

Quite obviously, moral principles were not a factor in Bismarck's foreign policy decision-making. Nor were they a factor in the treaties he helped draft—because Bismarck, unlike Metternich, regarded treaties as grounded in power, not principles. From this position, as well as from his other foreign policy statements, it may be inferred that it was Bismarck's view that not only treaties, but foreign policy as a whole, was grounded in power.

Relations with Other States

Metternich asserted that he understood the French and Napoleon better than anyone, and Napoleon occupied center stage in Metternich's memoirs until 1815.⁴⁰ As the memoirs attest, France continued to be the country to be feared after Napoleon's defeat when Metternich's objective remained solidarity with the other Great Powers against the liberal, revolutionary forces emanating, he believed, from France.⁴¹ It was Metternich's view that on-going revolution was the basis of all the problems in France,⁴² and he declared that the revolution in the Papal States in 1831 was the result of French Bonapartists whose objective was to put Napoleon II on the throne of "Italy."⁴³

The French system of government—made unstable by the dangerous ambitions of its leaders—was a constant topic in the memoirs and the French government was deprecated ad infinitum.⁴⁴ During Louis Philippe's rule, Metternich declared that the French were motivated

⁴⁰ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 193.

⁴¹ Metternich to Wessenberg, October 21, 1830, Metternich to Count Orloff, October 6, 1830, *NP*, vol. 5, 52, 55-56.

⁴² Metternich to Apponyi, August 20, 1840, *NP*, vol. 6, 412-413.

⁴³ Metternich to Apponyi, February 15, 1831, *NP*, vol. 5, 150-151.

⁴⁴ Metternich to Apponyi, September 25, 1839, *NP*, vol. 6, 356.

by money and influence, and their policy was driven by domestic instability and financial problems.⁴⁵

Metternich denounced France's role in the Eastern Question and in the Belgian struggle for independence, and it was his contention that French occupation of Ancona in response to insurrections in the Papal States in 1832 was politically motivated for domestic as well as international reasons.⁴⁶ He blamed France for the Cracow revolt in 1846, the Swiss problems in the late 1840s, and the revolution he anticipated in Italy early in 1848.⁴⁷ Even in exile Metternich continued to give France more attention than other countries, referring to it occasionally as the red republic.⁴⁸ Until his death, Metternich continued to believe France was unstable and the center of liberal and revolutionary efforts across Europe.⁴⁹

Metternich criticized Prussia in his memoirs for its hesitant posture and its unreliability as an ally during the Napoleonic era.⁵⁰ Writing of his term as Ambassador in Berlin from 1803 to 1805, he complained of Prussia's indecisiveness,⁵¹ and he believed the treaty at Schönbrunn, negotiated by Haugwitz with Napoleon in 1805, abrogated their alliance with Austria and

⁴⁵ Metternich to Apponyi, November 2, 1834, *NP*, vol. 5, 593.

⁴⁶ Metternich to Lützow, April 3, 1832, Metternich to Wessenberg, April 16, 1832, *NP*, vol. 5, 313, 325.

⁴⁷ Memorandum, 1846, Metternich to Apponyi, October 7, 1847, Metternich to Colloredo, January 14, 1848, *NP*, vol. 7, 205, 336, 551.

⁴⁸ Metternich to Countess Leontine Sandor, April 8, 1850, *NP*, vol. 8, 252.

⁴⁹ Metternich to Apponyi, March 16 and 21, and June 4, 1831, *NP*, vol. 5, 122, 125, 176; Metternich to Apponyi, June 18, July 25, August 7, 1835, March 25, October 14, 1837, August 7, 1838, *NP*, vol. 6, 34, 38, 40, 187, 189, 267.

⁵⁰ Metternich to Cobenzl, December 13, 1805, *NP*, vol. 2, 86-89.

⁵¹ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 49.

Russia.⁵² Prussia was further reproached for frustrating the political restoration of Europe in 1815 (the issue of Saxony and Poland).⁵³

In spite of these early criticisms, and although he regretted its liberal reforms and poor policies, Prussia was portrayed as an ally throughout the memoirs, and the friendship between Prussia and Austria and its monarchs was continually emphasized.⁵⁴ Metternich considered Prussia second only to Austria in the German Confederation,⁵⁵ and in order to preserve and guide the Confederation, Austria needed Prussian support and cooperation. The Confederation was formed to protect the sovereignty, security, and independence of the German states,⁵⁶ and it was the most effective means of achieving German solidarity in order to preserve the monarchies, combat revolution, and secure peace.⁵⁷

As Prussia's role as a Great Power faded, so did Metternich's mention of it in his memoirs. "Prussia," he declared in 1833, was burdened by an indecisive cabinet and, "ranks as one of the Great Powers without really meriting it.... [Its] geographical boundaries, combined with a lack of certain essential internal resources, force [it] back into the second rank."⁵⁸

Until the end of Metternich's official career, Prussia remained an important ally and supported Austrian policy, but after 1848, Metternich began to express doubts about Prussian

⁵² Metternich to Stadion, January 10, 1806, *NP*, vol. 2, 95-100.

⁵³ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 173.

⁵⁴ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 117.

⁵⁵ Metternich to Frederick William IV, October 9, 1840, *NP*, vol. 6, 470.

⁵⁶ Metternich to Neumann, October 31, 1832, *NP*, vol. 5, 375.

⁵⁷ Metternich to Emperor Francis, August 1, 1812, Metternich to Buol, September 1, 1819, *NP*, vol. 3, 266-267, 271, 275; Metternich to Apponyi, November 15, 1831, Metternich to Wessenberg, March 21, 1832, *NP*, vol. 5, 139-140, 319-323.

⁵⁸ Metternich to Hügel, October 22, 1833, *NP*, vol. 5, 522. But at the same time, as previously noted, Metternich recognized the power and influence which Prussia had gained through the Zollverein, and the threat it represented to Austria's position as the leader of the German states. See *Vortrag* to Emperor Francis, June, 1833, *NP*, vol. 5, 508-512.

ambitions and its policy of "utility politics." Prussia, he declared, was a "daughter of the Reformation, seeking to strengthen her influence in the conflicts of the present age by following the path to revolution."⁵⁹ In a statement Metternich made in 1849 about Prussia, his political insight was singularly precognitive. He predicted that were German unification to take place under Prussian dominance, "the consequences must of necessity be incalculable in regard to the dangers that it would create not only for Prussia but for the whole of European society."⁶⁰

Mention of the other German states in the Metternich memoirs included a rebuke of Baden, Württemberg, and Bavaria for "making common cause" with Napoleon in 1805.⁶¹ As Metternich perceived liberalism spreading its influence across Europe, he vehemently denounced the smaller German states, especially the North German and Rhine provinces which he accused of democratic tendencies and nationalistic inclinations.⁶² In the 1830s, the memoirs regularly contained comments about the problems in the German states where Metternich perceived revolution to be a growing threat. Germany was being undermined by liberalism, and the German princes, he declared, had to either "govern or perish."⁶³

Russia appears regularly in Metternich's memoirs as part of the narrative of events. The courts and cabinets of Alexander I and Nicholas I were, according to Metternich, feeble and vacillating with deplorable policies which contradicted their former positions.⁶⁴ Despite these

⁵⁹ "The Three Emperors League and the Erfurt Confederation," 1849-1850, Notes, July 29, 1850, *NP*, vol. 8, 494-495, 502.

⁶⁰ Metternich to Kübeck, December 31, 1849, *NP*, vol. 8, 485.

⁶¹ Metternich and Alopäus to Hardenberg, 1805, *NP*, vol. 2, 90.

⁶² Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 207.

⁶³ Metternich to Ficquelmont, October 13, 1830, Metternich to Apponyi, May 14, 1832, *NP*, vol. 5, 62, 274.

⁶⁴ Metternich to Emperor Francis, August 10, 1809, Metternich to Schwarzenberg, February 19, 1810, *NP*, vol. 2, 311, 329; Metternich to the Prince of Hesse-Homburg, November 13, 1826, Metternich to Esterhazy, March 24, and September 14, 1828, *NP*, vol. 4, 321, 458, 490-491.

weaknesses, it was Metternich's view that Russian policy decided Europe's fate,⁶⁵ and the memoirs demonstrate that he considered it Austria's responsibility to keep Russia pacific.⁶⁶ With Russia a giant on Austria's eastern flank and Austria in the way of Russian expansion, their relations would always be tense.⁶⁷ Metternich's policies, therefore, reflected his efforts to come to agreement with Russia over the major events,⁶⁸ and to check Russian enlargement and aggression.⁶⁹

Great Britain was discussed in Metternich's autobiographical essay in regard to his early visits there and in regard to Britain's position during the negotiations for peace in 1814-1815. Britain, during that period, was portrayed in a favorable light because it supported peace and legitimacy.⁷⁰ Britain fared well in the memoirs until the death of Castlereagh. Of Castlereagh's suicide, Metternich wrote that, he was irreplaceable, and that "It [was] one of the worst catastrophes that could have happened to me."⁷¹

In contrast, when Castlereagh's successors George Canning and Lord Palmerston were in power, Britain was mentioned often and bitterly criticized for its policies--policies Metternich said could destroy Europe.⁷² His criticism of the British government focused on differences regarding the Eastern Question, Belgian independence, Austrian intervention in Italy, and

⁶⁵ Metternich to Apponyi, January 29, 1827, *NP*, vol. 4, 342.

⁶⁶ Metternich to Apponyi, December 2, 1835, *NP*, vol. 6, 51.

⁶⁷ Instruction for Ficquelmont, January 17, 1829, *NP*, vol. 4, 561.

⁶⁸ Metternich to Apponyi, June 4, 1831, *NP*, vol. 5, 177.

⁶⁹ Metternich to Esterhazy, September 21, 1829, *NP*, vol. 4, 594-595.

⁷⁰ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 192.

⁷¹ Private Correspondence, August 22 and 25, 1822, *NP*, vol. 3, 522-523.

⁷² Metternich to Esterhazy, June 8, 1826, Metternich to Count Bombelles, September 7, 1826, Metternich to Apponyi, November 8, 1826, *NP*, vol. 4, 304-305, 316, 318; Metternich to Apponyi, May 9, 1830, *NP*, vol. 5, 4.

problems in Spain and the Americas.⁷³ It was Metternich's opinion that Great Britain was in part responsible for the abandonment of the congress system, as well as the Russian-Turkish war in 1828-1829. The Anglo-Russian alliance not only gave Russia the latitude to declare war on the Porte, but also precipitated the ruin of the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁴

England's diplomatic efforts were sometimes clumsy, Metternich said, and it was motivated by its own interests.⁷⁵ "The English Cabinet," he noted in 1840, "is capable of making eminently progressive remarks without wanting to implement them at home. England freely exports certain principles, but at home she pursues a wiser policy...."⁷⁶ Metternich, believed, however, that England was Austria's natural ally and their interests were similar, and he endeavored to work in concert with Britain despite their differences over Greece, Italy, Belgium, and the Middle East.⁷⁷

In exile in London in 1848, Metternich wrote that England was strong because of its unchallenged belief in the value of right, order, and freedom, and because simple common sense reigned.⁷⁸

The problems in Spain were referred to often in the 1830s, and Metternich declared that the Spanish, with their anarchic representative system, did not know what they wanted.⁷⁹

⁷³ Metternich to Apponyi, January 8, 1832 and April 6, 1833, Metternich to Schwarzenberg, October 13, 1832, *NP*, vol. 5, 256-257, 388-389, 446-447; Metternich to Apponyi, October 14, 1837, *NP*, vol. 6 189.

⁷⁴ Metternich to Esterhazy, May 31, and December 18, 1828, *Vortrag* to Emperor Francis, October 9, 1829, *NP*, vol. 4, 480, 525, 600.

⁷⁵ Metternich to Apponyi, June 11, 1826, *NP*, vol. 4, 368; Metternich to Apponyi, January 28, 1837, *NP*, vol. 6, 181-182; Memorandum, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 288-292.

⁷⁶ Metternich to Apponyi, August 20, 1840, *NP*, vol. 6, 415.

⁷⁷ Metternich to Esterhazy, August 7, 1825, and December 2, 1828, *NP*, vol. 4, 213, 513; Metternich to Apponyi, June 5, 1830, Metternich to Neumann, July 30, 1832, February 15, 1833, *NP*, vol. 5, 8, 369, 480.

⁷⁸ Metternich to Countess Leontine Sandor, April 22, and March 1, 1848, *NP*, vol. 8, 148, 150.

⁷⁹ Metternich to Apponyi, January 28, 1837, *NP*, vol. 6, 182.

Metternich considered the on-going civil unrest in Spain a manifestation of the forces of revolution against conservative power, and the Spanish queen, he believed, was a representative of the revolution. In 1841 he warned that the civil war and revolution in Spain threatened Louis Philippe's reign in France.⁸⁰ But Spain was not actually the focus of his comments; instead it was French and British policy regarding Spain which received his scorn.

Metternich frequently found fault with the Ottoman Empire, although he firmly supported maintaining its sovereignty and independence--based not only on his belief in the monarchic principle, but as a bulwark against Russia.⁸¹ The collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Metternich wrote prophetically, would be a first step to the disintegration of the old order,⁸² and trouble in this neighboring state could spread to the Austrian Empire and threaten all of Europe.⁸³

A foreign policy concern that Metternich and Bismarck had in common was an on-going distrust of France, and because it was always a consideration in the equation of European power, France was a frequent topic in Bismarck's memoirs as well. Bismarck always regarded France as *the* enemy to guard against--a country willing to use war to solve domestic problems.⁸⁴ France could always be counted on to meddle in foreign affairs--as they had threatened to do in 1866 after the Prussians defeated Austria--and a foreign policy of war and prestige like Louis Napoleon's was dangerous.⁸⁵ In writing of the Ems telegram affair, Bismarck blamed the

⁸⁰ Metternich to Count Woyna, November 3, 1841, *NP*, vol. 6, 553.

⁸¹ Metternich to Neumann, May 12, 1826, *NP*, vol. 4, 274.

⁸² Metternich to Ottenfels, January 6, 1828, Metternich to Esterhazy, September 21, 1829, *NP*, vol. 4, 425, 591-595; Metternich to Neumann, February 15, 1833, *NP*, vol. 5, 476.

⁸³ Metternich to Neumann, May 12, 1826, Metternich to Esterhazy, March 15, 1828, September 21, 1829, *NP*, vol. 4, 274, 446, 591-593.

⁸⁴ *GW*, vol. 15, 290.

⁸⁵ *GW*, vol. 15, 364.

French, whose behavior, he claimed, proved they wanted a quarrel with Prussia under any pretext.⁸⁶ Bismarck said that his major concern in 1875 was the possibility that France might join a coalition with Austria and/or Russia and isolate Germany,⁸⁷ and his memoirs prove he considered this menacing possibility a threat throughout his official life and beyond.

A key focus of Bismarck's foreign policy, to which he frequently referred in the memoirs, was the importance of friendship between Russia and Germany.⁸⁸ As early as the 1850s, he believed an anti-Russian policy was irresponsible and damaging to Prussian interests.⁸⁹ Prussia and Russia had no competing political interests, and Prussia would never need to go to war against Russia.⁹⁰ He warned prophetically, that war with Russia was dangerous because of Russia's potential strength,⁹¹ and it was irrational, even criminal, to foment misunderstandings with Russia.⁹² The relations between Russia and Austria were a difficult situation which Bismarck had attempted to keep from conflict because the alternative would necessitate choosing between them.⁹³

It was his view that a positive relationship with Russia was a sound defensive posture,⁹⁴ but he did not trust Russia. Nor did he believe Russia was interested in Germany's welfare,⁹⁵

⁸⁶ *GW*, vol. 15, 303.

⁸⁷ *GW*, vol. 15, 360.

⁸⁸ *GW*, vol. 15, 284-285, 291.

⁸⁹ *GW*, vol. 15, 80-83.

⁹⁰ *GW*, vol. 15, 151; *Bismarck: The Memoirs*, vol. 2, 122.

⁹¹ *GW*, vol. 15, 153.

⁹² *GW*, vol. 15, 414.

⁹³ Bismarck to King Ludwig, July 5, 1876, *GW*, vol. 15, 244.

⁹⁴ Draft of Bismarck's letter of resignation, March, 1890, *GW* vol. 15, 213, 520.

⁹⁵ *GW*, vol. 15, 284-285.

and his ongoing policy had been to secure against an attack by Russia while seeking peace at the same time.⁹⁶ The memoirs reveal that in retirement Bismarck did not consider it likely that Russia would begin a war against Germany because their primary interests were control of the Straits--which Bismarck did not oppose.⁹⁷

In 1864, Bismarck wrote that Austria was untrustworthy and unstable without Metternich.⁹⁸ Its interests were varied, and it was plagued by confessional conflict and nationality problems. In chapters dealing with events after 1866, however, Austria, Prussia's ally, was treated more charitably, although infrequently mentioned. Bismarck warned, however, that alliance with Austria was problematic, and Germany should not become embroiled in the impending nationalities crises which he expected the Austrian Empire would experience in the not too distant future.⁹⁹

Of all the Great Powers, Great Britain was the least important factor in Bismarck's foreign policy equation because he considered it an unreliable ally whose constitution forbade alliance with continental powers. In his memoirs, he devoted very little time to discussion of Anglo-German policy, but instead, focused on British parliamentary government and British personalities--particularly the royal family. Bismarck felt threatened by liberal influences and parliamentary government, and he often referred to the dangerous and damaging liberal (British) influence on Empress Augusta, Crown Prince Frederick, and his wife, Victoria. It was his view that British influence during the Franco-Prussian war had thwarted his policies, in part because the British took the position that the bombardment of Paris was inhumane. Bismarck responded

⁹⁶ *GW*, vol. 15, 415.

⁹⁷ *GW*, vol. 15, 418-420.

⁹⁸ *GW*, vol. 15, 240.

⁹⁹ *GW*, vol. 15, 412.

to this accusation in his memoirs declaring that starvation, the method the British preferred, was certainly not humane either.¹⁰⁰

* * *

The Metternich and Bismarck memoirs demonstrated the importance each Chancellor assigned to diplomacy and foreign policy. Metternich's memoirs are a thorough treatment of the Austrian Empire's foreign policy concerns, whereas Bismarck's memoirs, while focusing on foreign policy, are less complete. Bismarck, for example, did not explain his thinking about the British-German relationship and said nothing about German colonial policy.

While Bismarck's memoirs were a guidebook for the future enabling him to speak to the German people about contemporary international affairs, Metternich's memoirs were a record of events and decisions. More or less a manual in *Realpolitik*, Bismarck's memoirs stressed the importance of putting German interests first in foreign policy decisions. He wanted to warn Germans that the path German foreign policy had taken after his dismissal in 1890 was in error--especially the alienation of Russia--and he denounced William II's foreign policy mistakes, attributing them to incompetence and inexperience.

Both Metternich and Bismarck, as the memoirs demonstrated, were wary of Russia because of its size and strength, and friendship between their own country and Russia was of paramount importance. Neither considered Great Britain a threat to the interests of their country, and France was regarded by both Chancellors as their primary enemy. Metternich devoted much more of his memoirs to denouncing and disparaging the French than Bismarck did, understandable considering the recent wars against Napoleon and the French. Metternich was looking back to the most recent threat to European peace, but Bismarck was looking ahead. Although concerned with the French threat, the strongest impressions left by Bismarck's memoirs

¹⁰⁰ GW, vol. 15, 321, 323.

were his passionate advocacy of a militarily and diplomatically strong Germany and his belief in the need for a Russo-German alliance.

A difference of opinion about congresses was evident from reading the memoirs, and Metternich early in his career supported the congress system. The consensus for peace, so strong in post-Napoleonic era statesmen like Metternich, necessitated a system of working together to preserve order. Bismarck, in contrast, disliked congresses, because, as noted above, he knew that he could not always control a congress, and German interests might, therefore, be frustrated.

Metternich's memoirs illustrated he was a pragmatist despite his claims that his foreign policy was based on moral principles. Bismarck, on the other hand, ignored moral principles, as his memoirs demonstrated. Pragmatism and opportunism in foreign policy were the "principles" under which he operated.

Metternich and Bismarck regarded each other's state as an important ally, but never as important as friendship with Russia. Metternich's dealings with Prussia were in an advisory capacity, and Prussia was receptive to his guidance. This legacy of Austrian dominance had a strong, negative effect on Bismarck who believed it necessary to establish Prussia's predominance in Germany. Once that had been accomplished, however, Austria became one of his "three" in his five power alliance system.

The most striking similarity between the foreign policy of the two Chancellors and perhaps the most important is, as mentioned above, their interest in peace and preservation of empire. The memoirs show a consistency of viewpoint in that regard—once their empires were secure, war and aggression were not a part of their foreign policy.

War

The effects of war underlay much of what was contained in both memoirs. Bismarck claimed that when they met in 1851, Metternich advised him against Prussian expansion.¹⁰¹ This is very much in keeping with Metternich's own generally pacific and non-expansionary position in Austria.

When describing the defeat of Napoleon, Metternich wrote about war as an abstract evil--something to be vanquished. After 1815, avoiding war was his continuing objective. Stability and *status quo* were necessary to maintain the Austrian empire, and war could be avoided by a balance of power in Europe. Metternich said that he never believed in political war, calling it the symptom of an illness which damages the life of a state. War was dangerous, it has unforeseen consequences, and should be avoided because it opened the door to revolution.¹⁰²

Only if the empire or its provinces were threatened was war an option--as in 1820 when he employed the Austrian army to quell the revolt in Naples. In 1831 when France was meddling in the insurrection in the Papal States, it was the French who wanted war, he declared, not Austria, and the Emperor would become no one's vassal.¹⁰³ The following year Metternich wrote that Austria would act if revolution occurred in Germany, reasoning that it was a matter of preserving the German states.¹⁰⁴ Despite these more aggressive statements, Metternich always favored diplomatic solutions to crises in Europe because, he reasoned, in addition to opening the door to revolution, armed force was financially devastating.

¹⁰¹ Heinrich Ritter von Srbik, *Metternich, der Staatsmann und der Mensch* vol. 2 (Munich: G.F. Bruckmann KG, 1925), 414.

¹⁰² Metternich to Gentz, September 9, 1825, Instruction for Esterhazy, March 25, 1827, Metternich to Esterhazy, March 15, 1828, *NP*, vol. 4, 225, 346-347, 442; Metternich to Apponyi, March 28, 1831, *NP*, vol. 5, 128; Metternich to Hartig, December 1850, Metternich to Buol, March 26, 1853, *NP*, vol. 8, 136, 311.

¹⁰³ Metternich to Apponyi, June 4, 1831, *NP*, vol. 5, 176.

¹⁰⁴ Metternich to Apponyi, August 4, 1832, *NP*, vol. 5, 362.

It was in his treatment of war that Bismarck's memoirs revealed most clearly an important part of his strategy of governing--his pragmatism and his opportunism. War's objective is to conquer peace in accordance with the political policies of the state.¹⁰⁵ Writing after his resignation, Bismarck stated that the decision to go to war should be made after evaluating the potential effect on the German people, the capacity of Germany to wage war, and the war's impact on the balance among the Great Powers.¹⁰⁶ For Bismarck, the wars of German unification were appropriate responses to given circumstances. Once Germany was unified, he wrote that he avoided war because Germany had no more ambitions which war might fulfill.¹⁰⁷

Although war was anathema for Metternich, Bismarck passed no judgment on war as either good or evil. He wrote that for the army, war was natural and desirable, but the decisions to wage or conclude wars should be left not to the generals, but to the diplomats--because only they understood the larger political picture.¹⁰⁸

Bismarck had used war as a tool to accomplish his aims, but after unifying Germany, he avoided war to protect what he had created. In his chapter about the Ems telegram Bismarck stated that war was at best a dubious strategy because it could not be controlled and its outcome could not be predicted. War was desirable only when justified, and became necessary only to enhance or protect one's position as a Great Power.¹⁰⁹

Metternich and Bismarck were not interested in the details of war; their interests lay in power and diplomacy--as their treatment of the military and war in their memoirs illustrated.

¹⁰⁵ *GW*, vol. 15, 313.

¹⁰⁶ *GW*, vol. 15, 422.

¹⁰⁷ *GW*, vol. 15, 421.

¹⁰⁸ *GW*, vol. 15, 311, 313.

¹⁰⁹ *GW*, vol. 15, 306, 311.

Bismarck devoted a greater percentage of his memoirs to discussion of the military and war than did Metternich--perhaps because as a Prussian, Bismarck, it could be argued, placed a higher value on the military than did Metternich, the Austrian Chancellor.

The Eastern Question

The amount of attention given to the Eastern Question in the memoirs reveals both Metternich's and Bismarck's concern about the region. The Eastern Question was an issue of vital importance to Metternich because of its impact on the balance of power in Europe and because of the proximity of the Ottoman Empire to Austria. As early as 1806, Metternich began expressing his desire to protect the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.¹¹⁰ The topic occurred regularly throughout Metternich's memoirs, and his entire fourth volume was concerned with the Eastern Question. It was Metternich's view that it was in Austria's interest to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and Russian encroachment into Ottoman lands worried him, a concern he regularly expressed.¹¹¹ Metternich believed if the European powers were to become embroiled in a war in Turkey, it would open the door to revolution in Europe, affecting Germany, Italy, and France.¹¹²

Writing in retirement during the Crimean War, Metternich stated that the Ottoman Empire was more important to Austria than any other European power, and it must be supported not only to disseminate European civilization, but more importantly, to limit Russian power.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Essay, January, 1806, *NP*, vol. 2, 104.

¹¹¹ Reports to Emperor Francis, July 9, 1808, July 28, 1810, October 31, 1810, *NP*, vol. 2, 370, 379-381, 387, 403; Metternich to Lebzeltern, January 28, 1822, Metternich to Emperor Alexander, April 19, 1822, *NP*, vol. 3, 530-536, 539-545.

¹¹² Metternich to Lebzeltern, January 28, 1822, *NP*, vol. 3, 533.

¹¹³ Metternich to Netz, October, 1854, *NP*, vol. 8, 367.

In contrast to Metternich, Bismarck devoted almost no attention to the Eastern Question in his memoirs. He did think it important, however, to include a statement that it was natural for Russia to want to control Black Sea ports and have naval installations there. Bismarck wrote in his memoirs that Russian control of the Straits was not a threat to European peace or even to Ottoman independence,¹¹⁴ but he predicted that Russo-British relations would cease to be amicable if Russia took Constantinople. Bismarck did not see the situation as dangerous and mentioned the Eastern Question only obliquely as a part of his discussion of Russia's reaction to the Berlin Congress of 1878 and in relation to balance of power concerns between England and Russia regarding dominance in the Ottoman empire. It was not in Germany's interest to get involved in the Eastern Question, he said, except as an arbiter.¹¹⁵

Other Monarchs

Metternich and Bismarck used similar approaches in their treatment of foreign monarchs in that they discussed them, as might be expected, almost exclusively in regard to European foreign policy matters. Exceptions to this pattern were Bismarck's chapter on Ludwig II and Metternich's thorough examination of both Napoleon and Alexander I.

Although Bismarck centered his personality sketches on German monarchs, Metternich did not include chapters about his own Austrian monarchs but instead wrote extensively about foreign monarchs. Metternich's treatment of foreign monarchs in his memoirs demonstrated his attitude about monarchy. When kings and emperors used bad judgment, it was--with the exclusion of Napoleon--because they had been badly counseled or misled by their (often liberal) advisors.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ *GW*, vol. 15, 319, 419.

¹¹⁵ Bismarck to King Ludwig, July 5, 1876, *GW*, vol. 15, 245;

¹¹⁶ Metternich to Apponyi, January 29, 1827, *Vortrag* to Emperor Francis, July 7, 1827, *NP*, vol. 4, 341-342, 370; *Vortrag* to Emperor Francis, July 31, 1830, Metternich to Lützow, June 15, 1832, *NP*, vol. 5, 10.

Metternich wrote lengthy character analyses of both Napoleon Bonaparte and Alexander I. In his description of Napoleon's genius and his flaws, Metternich was dispassionate. He referred often to Napoleon's love of conquest and expressed the opinion that Napoleon's insatiable desire for power was the reason for his downfall.¹¹⁷ As the true expression of the French Revolution,¹¹⁸ Napoleon understood the revolution and took advantage of it with superb skill.¹¹⁹ Metternich defended Napoleon's courage and paid tribute to his intellect and military genius, but he could not resist deprecating his social skills and dress.¹²⁰ In 1819 he wrote that Napoleon's correspondence revealed "the most marvelous man the world has even seen," yet Metternich considered Napoleon's empire a great work of destruction.¹²¹

The chapter on Alexander I was neither as lengthy nor as detailed as that on Napoleon, but Metternich believed it necessary to record his observations. He wrote that Alexander was hard to describe--there was "something missing in him," and instability was his primary characteristic.¹²² Alexander had many good qualities but was easily influenced and led astray--especially by liberals. He was a man of his word, Metternich wrote, and not restlessly ambitious as some have accused him,¹²³ but his deficiencies were quite damning. Weak, with a peculiar personality and a strange and inexplicable character, Alexander was a religious mystic with poor judgment who regularly changed his mind.¹²⁴

¹¹⁷ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 56, 60.

¹¹⁸ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 211.

¹¹⁹ "Napoleon Bonaparte," *NP*, vol. 1, 276; Political Testament, 1849-1855, *NP*, vol. 7, 638.

¹²⁰ "Napoleon Bonaparte," *NP*, vol. 1, 277, 284-286.

¹²¹ "Napoleon Bonaparte," *NP*, vol. 1, 300; Private Correspondence, 1819, *NP*, vol. 3, 296.

¹²² "Alexander I, Emperor of Russia," *NP*, vol. 1, 315.

¹²³ "Alexander I, Emperor of Russia," *NP*, vol. 1, 317.

¹²⁴ "Alexander I, Emperor of Russia," *NP*, vol. 1, 317-320.

Until the Congress of Vienna, Metternich usually chose to deflect criticism of Alexander to his ministers,¹²⁵ although he did condemn Alexander's feeble reign.¹²⁶ By 1817, Metternich was writing that Alexander was a real thorn in his side, and "it was difficult to determine where [Alexander's] madness would lead."¹²⁷ By 1820 when Metternich had Alexander under his influence again, he referred to him as annoying, childish, and a dreamer.¹²⁸ At the time of the Tsar's death in 1825, Metternich recorded that he personally had indoctrinated Alexander with the correct conservative stance—one in total agreement with Austrian policy,¹²⁹ but the following year Metternich declared that Alexander had "led Russia to the verge of ruin."¹³⁰

Alexander's successor, Nicholas I, came to the throne during the Greek crisis, and in the volume devoted to the Eastern Question, there were frequent references to Nicholas. Metternich's tendency to blame policy errors on inferior advisors rather than monarchs continued with Nicholas.¹³¹ Metternich's opinion of Alexander had corresponded with Russia's political position vis-a-vis Austria and his judgment of Nicholas followed the same pattern. When there were no real European crises and therefore no reason to differ, Nicholas was the beneficiary of Metternich's praise,¹³² and when Nicholas suppressed the Polish revolt in 1830, Metternich

¹²⁵ Report to Emperor Francis, January 17, 1811, *NP*, vol. 2, 410.

¹²⁶ Metternich to Emperor Francis, November 28, 1811, *NP*, vol. 2, 429.

¹²⁷ Metternich to Emperor Francis, August 29, 1817, *NP*, vol. 3, 54.

¹²⁸ Private Correspondence, January 21 and 23, 1822, *NP*, vol. 3, 500-501.

¹²⁹ Private Correspondence 1824, *NP*, vol. 4, 93-94.

¹³⁰ Metternich to Neumann, April 8, 1826, *NP*, vol. 4, 270.

¹³¹ Metternich to Apponyi, January 29, 1827, *Vortrag* to Emperor Francis, July 7, 1827, *NP*, vol. 4, 342, 370.

¹³² Metternich to Princess Melanie Metternich, September 28, 1835, *NP*, vol. 6, 74.

commended his "moral attitude," his vigor, and his wisdom.¹³³ But when Russia declared war on Turkey in 1828, Metternich directly criticized the Tsar. Nicholas had had unrealistic expectations about the war, and Metternich charged him with being childish and underestimating the Turks.¹³⁴

Spanning many decades, Metternich's correspondence contained many comments about a number of other monarchs as well. Generally, his remarks turned on whether the monarch was liberal or conservative and how closely they were allied in policy with Austria at the moment. In January, 1848, for example, as Metternich feared revolution in Italy, he wrote that Charles Albert of Sardinia was ambitious, vacillating, and despotic--a danger to Italy and the world.¹³⁵

English kings and queens were rarely mentioned. Metternich was evidently conscious of the growing weakness of the role of the monarch in Britain because George IV's death, unlike the deaths of other monarchs, was not even noted, much less evaluated as a political event.

The French monarchs were particular targets for Metternich's criticism. Metternich labeled Louis XVIII a feeble ruler who missed his opportunity to build a new monarchic France. Instead he built a monarchy with republican elements--a major blunder and disastrous for France.¹³⁶ The reactionary Charles X was self-willed, prejudiced, and weak.¹³⁷ Metternich was reluctant to recognize Louis Philippe as a legitimate monarch, a position which created a delicate problem for Metternich in 1834. While attending a ball, Princess Melanie, reflecting her husband's point of view, responded to the French Ambassador's comment that she was wearing

¹³³ Metternich to Trauttmansdorff, December 25, 1830, *NP*, vol. 5, 79.

¹³⁴ Metternich to Gentz, September 13, 1828, Metternich to Esterhazy, September 14, 1828, *NP*, vol. 4, 418-419, 491.

¹³⁵ Metternich to Apponyi, January 29, 1848, *NP*, vol. 7, 555-556.

¹³⁶ Metternich to Apponyi, July 30, 1842, *NP*, vol. 6, 585.

¹³⁷ Private Correspondence, 1824, Memoir to Baron Werner, October 23, 1824, *NP*, vol. 4, 110-111, 142.

a crown, "Why not? It belongs to me; if it were not my own property, I would not wear it!"¹³⁸

Metternich spent two months smoothing the feathers ruffled by the unfortunate remark.

Metternich accused Louis Philippe of putting himself at the head of the 1830 revolution, and charged that his ambitions threatened French stability. His reign was feeble, existing only to maintain itself, and its successes were attributable to the fact that it played to public opinion.¹³⁹ He saw things only as they affected him and applied principles only when it suited his interests. Moral leadership under the Orleans king played only a secondary role to utility.¹⁴⁰ In 1847 when France did not join the Great Powers for a united declaration against radicals in Switzerland, Metternich again criticized Louis Philippe, calling him calculating, egoistic, rigid, and loathe to take correct steps for his own government.¹⁴¹

Nor was Louis Napoleon spared Metternich's barbs. In the memoirs, he quoted Thiers' remarks that Louis Napoleon was an opportunist and a madman with the appearance of good sense.¹⁴² It was Metternich's view that Louis Napoleon's power was grounded in his embodiment of the Napoleonic ideas which France honored.¹⁴³ Unlike Louis XVIII, a legitimate king, Napoleon III had blatantly disregarded dynastic rights in his proclamation as

¹³⁸ Princess Melanie's Diary, January 9, 1834, *NP*, vol. 5, 539.

¹³⁹ *Vortrag* to Emperor Francis, August 5, 1830, Metternich to Hügel, October 22, 1833, Metternich to Apponyi, February 3, 1835, *NP*, vol. 5, 17, 523-524, 634.

¹⁴⁰ Metternich to Apponyi, May 20, 1845, *NP*, vol. 7, 90-91.

¹⁴¹ Metternich to Kaiserfeld, July 1, 1847, *NP*, vol. 7, 458.

¹⁴² Metternich to Buol, September 18, 1856, January 30, 1859, *NP*, vol. 8, 387, 590.

¹⁴³ Metternich to Buol, September 18, 1856, *NP*, vol. 8, 388.

emperor.¹⁴⁴ Writing in 1853, Metternich questioned Louis Napoleon's ability to keep France calm and suggested prophetically that he, like his uncle, might turn to military conquests.¹⁴⁵

Metternich devoted only limited attention in his memoirs to Prussian monarchs. In 1819 he described Frederick William III as weak, easily led, and prone to mistakes.¹⁴⁶ In 1838, however, after years of alliance and cooperation, Metternich called Frederick William III the most personally virtuous man in the world.¹⁴⁷

Frederick William IV was first mentioned in 1845 when Metternich was invited to join the king in greeting Victoria and Albert in Germany. Metternich remarked that Frederick William IV's deeds were in direct opposition to what he professed he wanted, and he took no definable position--creating moral disorder and confusion. He was a dreamer, and his spirit followed the ultra-Prussian, the radical, and the fanciful. Prussia was in danger, Metternich asserted, because Frederick William IV had good intentions but made mistakes--the Prussian king had asked Metternich for advice but had not followed it.¹⁴⁸

Metternich's devotion to the monarchic principle was less evident in his discussion of monarchs other than his own. He was more willing to describe the faults of foreign monarchs, and he criticized them often. The monarchic system itself, however, was never criticized. The amount of coverage French monarchs received in the memoirs strengthens the argument that France was a primary concern of Metternich's. The tsars received full treatment, reflecting the power of Russia and their major role in on-going political events. The monarchs of Prussia,

¹⁴⁴ Metternich to Richard Metternich, December, 1852, *NP*, vol. 8, 528-529.

¹⁴⁵ Metternich to King Leopold, January, 1852, *NP*, vol. 8, 530.

¹⁴⁶ Metternich to Emperor Francis, August 1, 1819, *NP*, vol. 3, 262-266.

¹⁴⁷ Metternich to Princess Melanie Metternich, July 23, 1838, *NP*, vol. 6, 283.

¹⁴⁸ Metternich to Apponyi, July 19, October 26, 1845, Metternich to Buol, July 6, 1847, *NP*, vol. 7, p 98, 100, 322; "The Three Emperors League and the Erfurt Confederation," 1849-1850, *NP*, vol. 8, 495.

Austria's main ally, were discussed less frequently in the memoirs, and the British were all but ignored. The reader can evaluate each continental Great Power's importance in the balance of power--in Metternich's view--by the degree of coverage their monarchs received in his memoirs. Additionally, the tone of Metternich's comments directly reflected each monarch's position vis-a-vis Austria. When they were non-threatening and in complete agreement, they were generally praised; when they disagreed or threatened Austria, they were disparaged.

While Metternich wrote extensively about foreign monarchs, Bismarck only occasionally commented on them. Bismarck quoted conversations with Louis Napoleon to illustrate his own ideas and policies regarding international relations, and he mentioned the Russian Tsars when their foreign policy affected Germany.¹⁴⁹ Nicholas I, Bismarck observed, considered himself the leader of the three conservative powers and personally called on by God to lead the monarchic fight against revolution advancing from the West.¹⁵⁰ Queen Victoria, Bismarck remarked, was not as condescending as her husband Albert, and Louis Napoleon, "not as clever than the world esteems him."¹⁵¹ The Austrian Emperor was rarely mentioned--although a letter from Francis Joseph written shortly after Bismarck's resignation effusively praising Bismarck's glorious contributions was included.¹⁵²

Quite out of character with the rest of the work, Bismarck devoted an entire chapter to King Ludwig II of Bavaria. His purpose, it would appear, was to demonstrate Ludwig's admiration for the Chancellor and his policies--particularly Bismarck's desire for peace and his position on federalism. He also used this exchange of letters to illustrate his views on the

¹⁴⁹ *GW*, vol. 15, 173-174, 290, 388-390.

¹⁵⁰ *GW*, vol. 15, 146.

¹⁵¹ *GW*, vol. 15, 107, 110.

¹⁵² Emperor Francis Joseph to Bismarck, March 22, 1890, *GW*, vol. 15, 531.

Catholic Church and his opposition to social democracy and parliamentary government. In addition, it provided Bismarck with another opportunity to remind the reader of his misery caused by ill health.

While Metternich felt it necessary to record for posterity his views and observations about Napoleon and Alexander I because he believed he had the best position for objective observation of these two historical giants, Bismarck, although he had a similar opportunity, singled out no monarchs for such treatment, and comments about monarchs other than his own were limited.

Chauvinism

Disparaging those who are perceived to be somehow inferior, or the enemy, or those whose policies differ from one's own was not uncommon in the century in which nationalism came into its own. Nor was objectivity an issue. Both Metternich and Bismarck exhibited some chauvinism in their memoirs although this characteristic would not have been questioned or considered unusual in their own times. Neither wrote with any particular passion in disparaging other peoples, and each wrote as if the superiority of his own people was an unchallenged fact--in keeping with his belief in his own superior judgment, and understanding.

To Metternich, Germans were prudent, faithful, and possessed a deep, natural patriotism.¹⁵³ When Napoleon spoke of sparing French soldiers at the expense of his German corps, Metternich's sentiments were revealed in his response, "You forget sire that you are speaking to a German."¹⁵⁴ During the early stages of his career, Metternich viewed Prussian leadership as weak and indecisive, however by the time of his exile his opinion had changed: Prussia was ambitious and wanted to enlarge its power.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Metternich to Wittgenstein, November 14, 1818, *NP*, vol. 3, 179.

¹⁵⁴ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 155.

¹⁵⁵ "The Three Emperors League and The Erfurt Union," 1849-1850, Memorandum, July 29, 1850, *NP*, vol. 8, 494-495, 502.

Although born a Rhinelander, Metternich held Austria in high esteem asserting it represented peace and political balance.¹⁵⁶ Austrians were a superior people who had demonstrated their good sense,¹⁵⁷ always calm and reasonable—a striking contrast to Prussians.¹⁵⁸ He wrote that ultimately, in the struggle against Napoleon, the fate of Europe had depended on the Austrians—it was they who had saved the world,¹⁵⁹ and it was they who "always stood ready to thwart the organizers of destruction."¹⁶⁰

Despite his respect for French culture and his flawless command of the French language, Metternich disparaged the French countless times. It was their revolution, a monstrous social catastrophe, which prepared the way for Napoleon and the disruption of peace in Europe.¹⁶¹ A country bankrupt of common sense, France after 1848 played the role of a powerful body without a soul, a republic without republicans, and a monarchy without a king.¹⁶² Confusion reigned in the world and France was at the head of it.¹⁶³

While Metternich's negative comments about the Russians were infrequent, he did comment about the dearth of talented Russian statesmen and made derogatory remarks about their army which "easily degenerated into swagger."¹⁶⁴ In contrast, most of Metternich's comments

¹⁵⁶ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 54.

¹⁵⁷ Metternich to Apponyi, October 18, 1834, *NP*, vol. 5, 593; Metternich to Ficquelmont, April 2, 1835, *NP*, vol. 6, 8.

¹⁵⁸ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 206-207.

¹⁵⁹ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 148-149.

¹⁶⁰ Metternich to Esterhazy, December 12, 1828, *NP*, vol. 4, 521.

¹⁶¹ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 54.

¹⁶² Metternich to Countess Leontine Sandor, January 17, 1849, *NP*, vol. 8, 206.

¹⁶³ Metternich to Roller, April, 1851, *NP*, vol. 8, 315.

¹⁶⁴ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 167, 331.

about the British were favorable, although in 1826 when Canning was serving as the Foreign Secretary, Metternich called the British ludicrous and slightly mad. Their policy toward Greece at the time--erroneous according to Metternich--could result in the "political destruction of Europe."¹⁶⁵

Metternich made a number of negative comments about Italians and their culture,¹⁶⁶ reporting that Italian doctors were thirty years behind in their knowledge of medicine,¹⁶⁷ and claiming that Italians had a penchant for rioting and were poor at taking action.¹⁶⁸ Neapolitans were semi-barbarous, illiterate, totally ignorant, and as hot blooded as Africans.¹⁶⁹ In 1847, as the danger of revolution threatened Austria's hold on Italy, he expressed the view that Italians were inclined to intrigues and subject to climatic influences.¹⁷⁰ Despite these unflattering remarks, it was evident that Metternich loved Italy and was captivated by its beauty, its art, and its opera.

His tone about the Middle East reflected general European feelings of superiority during this era. "Greeks and Turks are barbarians, but Greeks are better because they are Christians," he declared.¹⁷¹ The Turks were stupid, suspicious, and fearful, and the Muslim people barbaric.¹⁷² The sultan was "naturally" ignorant and his government was obstinate and

¹⁶⁵ Private Correspondence, 1823, 1824, Metternich to Esterhazy, June 8, 1826, *NP*, vol. 4, 25, 91, 304-305; Metternich to Apponyi, May 9, 1830, *NP*, vol. 5, 4.

¹⁶⁶ Metternich to Eleanor von Metternich, April 10 and 13, and May 3, 1819 *NP*, vol. 3, 194-195, 198.

¹⁶⁷ Metternich to Eleanor von Metternich, June 14, 1817, *NP*, vol. 3, 31-32.

¹⁶⁸ Metternich to Apponyi, August 6, 1847, *NP*, vol. 7, 416-417.

¹⁶⁹ Private Correspondence, July 17, 1820, *NP*, vol. 3, 340.

¹⁷⁰ Memorandum to Apponyi, April 12, 1847, *NP*, vol. 7, 392.

¹⁷¹ Metternich to Neumann, June 12, 1826, *NP*, vol. 4, 279.

¹⁷² Metternich to Lebzeltern, January 28, 1822, *NP*, vol. 3, 532.

incompetent.¹⁷³ Metternich asserted he would be pleased to be a German, Russian, Englishman, or even a Frenchman--anything but a Turk.¹⁷⁴

Bismarck clearly felt that Germans, particularly Prussians, were a superior people and declared that history had proved Prussian individual character to be the most strongly German--a praiseworthy trait.¹⁷⁵ Prussian manners, he declared, were superior to all others.¹⁷⁶ Bismarck's Prussian values were also discernable in his militaristic principles, particularly in his description of himself as a youth who had the admirable values of a Prussian Officer.

In portions of the memoirs dealing with the period before 1866, Bismarck never missed an opportunity to criticize or rebuke Austria. It was untrustworthy, unstable, and devious. Not only had Austria tried to bribe him in 1859 when he was in St. Petersburg, but it had succeeded in bribing members of the Empress Augusta's entourage.¹⁷⁷

Bismarck castigated the French and Russians as well. Manners at the French court were inferior (except among legitimists),¹⁷⁸ and Russians, excluding members of the court, were portrayed as ill bred and even dangerous. He related stories of diplomats being attacked not only in the streets of St. Petersburg but in Paris as well.¹⁷⁹ Austrians and Russians were charged with diplomatic espionage, spying, and murder.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷³ Metternich to Ottenfels, January 6, 1828, Metternich to Esterhazy, March 15, 1828, *NP*, vol. 4 420-432, 445; Instruction for Prokesch, February 23, 1833, *NP*, vol. 5, 481; Metternich to Apponyi, May 21, 1839, Metternich to Baron Stürmer, December 3, 1839, *NP*, vol. 6, 346, 361.

¹⁷⁴ Private Correspondence, 1825 *NP*, vol. 4, 191;

¹⁷⁵ *GW*, vol. 15, 200.

¹⁷⁶ *GW*, vol. 15, 108-109.

¹⁷⁷ Levinstein to Bismarck, March 1859, *GW*, vol. 15, 142-143, 144-145, 240.

¹⁷⁸ *GW*, vol. 15, 108-109.

¹⁷⁹ *GW*, vol. 15, 149.

¹⁸⁰ *GW*, vol. 15, 156.

Not surprisingly, Metternich and Bismarck agreed about the Poles. Bismarck considered the excitability of the Poles and the desire for power among their nobles an on-going problem.¹⁸¹ Polish nobles, according to Metternich, were habitually anarchic and created disorder.¹⁸² In his view, the Poles acted passionately--but based on illusions. They were not smart about their cause, and, he asserted, Poland had committed suicide.¹⁸³

Bismarck leveled an interesting insult against Celts, Poles, Slavs, and Frenchmen who, unlike Germans he wrote, were quick to chop down trees. This unusual comment was made in conjunction with his criticism of Caprivi--who Bismarck could forgive for his other shortcomings but not his cutting down of the lovely old trees in front of the Chancellor's residence in Berlin.¹⁸⁴ Curiously, Metternich also commented about the destruction of trees in a similarly chauvinistic manner. He remarked on the ugliness of a Galician town because it had no trees¹⁸⁵ and commented on Bohemian peasants who, thankfully, had learned not to destroy the trees at the Metternich estate at Königswart.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ *GW*, vol. 15, 339.

¹⁸² Memorandum to Apponyi, January 4, 1847, *NP*, vol. 7, 361.

¹⁸³ Metternich to Apponyi, March 7, 1846, *NP*, vol. 7, 191-192.

¹⁸⁴ *GW*, vol. 15, 538.

¹⁸⁵ Private Correspondence 1823, *NP*, vol. 4, 21.

¹⁸⁶ Metternich to Eleanor von Metternich, August 1818, *NP*, vol. 3, 104.

CHAPTER VII

REACTION TO THE METTERNICH AND BISMARCK

MEMOIRS: REVIEWS AND CRITIQUES

Metternich's and Bismarck's reputations at the time their memoirs were published were not of equal stature. By the 1880s when his memoirs appeared, Metternich had been labeled a reactionary by German nationalists as well as by liberals and democrats of every sort. His policies were considered at best anachronistic and oppressive, and, as Heinrich von Srbik noted in his biography of Metternich, his memoirs, *Aus Metternich's nachgelassenen Papieren*, made a very poor impression.¹ In contrast, Bismarck's prestige at the time of the publication of his memoirs was relatively untarnished, and with William II in charge for almost a decade in Germany, Bismarck's absence was regretted by many. Appearing just ten years after the publication of Metternich's memoirs, Bismarck's *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* was more favorably received.

In examining reviews and comments about the memoirs, it is evident that reviewers writing in the 1880s and 1890s when the two memoirs were published were less concerned with objectivity than their twentieth century counterparts. Unlike their predecessors, post World War II critiques and studies of Metternich like those of Bertier de Sauvigny, Enno Kraehe, Robert Billinger and others are substantiated by archival research. Modern scholars and reviewers of the Metternich and Bismarck memoirs have been, for the most part, more objective in their analyses, evaluating content, style, and tone dispassionately and refraining from comments reflecting personal bias, while contemporary reviewers were, generally, unable to review the memoirs without commenting on the character and politics of the authors. Reviews at the time

¹ Srbik, 19.

of publication of Metternich's memoirs generally faulted the man and the work, whereas reviews of Bismarck's memoirs varied more in tone, ranging between passionate admirers and detractors.

The Memoirs as Historical Sources

From reviews and comments dating from 1880 to the present, it is impossible to make generalizations about either memoir on which scholars and reviewers agreed. Both memoirs were usually seen as valuable historical sources, although, even with this simple assertion, some disagreed.

The Metternich memoirs were often accused of containing little new historical information, but Srbik disagreed labeling the memoirs a rich source for Metternich scholars. Bertier de Sauvigny concurred saying the memoirs include the most historically important documents contained in the Metternich family archives and are of irreplaceable value. A French review appearing in 1882 declared that the Metternich memoirs would become a reference work on French history.²

Viewing the Metternich memoirs with a little more caution, Arthur Haas warned that, despite the fact that the editing of the memoirs reflected some omissions and "remolding," they include an abundance of important and revealing documents which provide a representative and usable sampling. That Metternich's memoirs reflect Metternich's point of view is substantiated by examination of the archives, but the use of the Metternich memoirs as an historical source requires some caution because of editorial indiscretions and because the autobiographical essays were written long after the events described. Further, Metternich's descriptions of events after

² Srbik, 4-33. G. de Bertier de Sauvigny, *Metternich and his Times* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1962, 307-310. "Bulletin Historique," *Revue Historique* 22 (May-August 1883): 381-382.

1848 may be presumed to include a "flavoring of self-justification," common to political autobiography.³

Enno Kraehe stated in *The Metternich Controversy* that Metternich's memoirs are the most important primary source in print, and that a comparison with the Metternich papers located in the archives in Prague shows that while not without flaws, the memoirs are "surprisingly complete and accurate."⁴ But Paul W. Schroeder commented in "Metternich Studies Since 1925," published in 1961 that the memoirs were "incomplete and tendentious."⁵

As with reviews of the Metternich memoirs, a common criticism of the Bismarck memoirs was that they contained little new historical information, but Bismarck scholar, Hans Rothfels, a post World War II scholar commented in *Bismarck: Vorträge und Abhandlungen* that there was a considerable difference of opinion about the value of the Bismarck memoirs as an historical source--passionately challenged by some, and over-glorified by others as one of the greatest masterworks of world literature.⁶ The most effusive praise of the Bismarck memoirs came shortly after their publication in 1899 from Friedrich Meinecke who labeled *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* a "master work of historical representation," a feast for historians, and a source of the first rank.⁷ Many reviewers commented, as did Otto Pflanze in 1994 in "Bismarck's

³ There are numerous instances where archives research upholds what is included in *NP*. Arthur G. Haas, "The Conservative Order Confronts the Italian Revolutionary Threat, 1822-1848," is an excellent example in which the parallel documents in the archives consistently confirm the Metternich position presented in the *NP*. Additionally, research by other Metternich scholars such as Kraehe, Billinger and others seem to bear this out. Arthur G. Haas, *Metternich, Reorganization and Nationality: 1813-1818*, American Edition (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1964): 223-225.

⁴ Enno E. Kraehe, ed., *The Metternich Controversy* (Huntington, New York: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1977), 133.

⁵ Paul W. Schroeder, "Metternich Studies Since 1925," *Journal of Modern History* 33, no. 3, (September 1961): 238.

⁶ Hans Rothfels, *Bismarck: Vorträge und Abhandlungen* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1970), 220.

⁷ Friedrich Meinecke, "Die Gedanken und Erinnerungen Bismarcks," *Historische Zeitschrift* 82 (1899): 282-295.

Gedanken und Erinnerungen," on the numerous inaccuracies in the Bismarck memoirs,⁸ but despite these flaws, most historians considered them a valuable source and reasonably reliable.

Monroe Smith reviewed Bismarck's first two volumes for the *American Historical Review* in 1899, commenting that as a source and a contribution to the history of the nineteenth century, they were extremely valuable, and errors of dates and sequences criticized by detractors of the memoirs were not significant because they were corrected in the footnotes.⁹ In a balanced and insightful review, "Bismarck's Legacy," G. P. Gooch, asserted the memoirs have an immeasurable value, particularly in their revelation of Bismarck's personality.¹⁰

Editorial meddling by the sons of both Chancellors was disparaged by a number of historians and reviewers, and the *Historische Zeitschrift* focused on this specific topic in regard to the Bismarck memoirs. In this article, Johannes Bauermann asserted that comments about Herbert Bismarck in Volume Three were obviously his own, and he cited examples which "proved" these allegations. Furthermore, Herbert's considerable input was particularly evident because this, unlike the first two volumes, kept to strict chronological sequence.¹¹

Metternich's son, Richard, and his professional co-editor, Friedrich von Klinkowström were also criticized for their editorial actions in compiling the Metternich memoirs. Arbitrary document selection and editorial "liberties" were criticisms made against Richard by E. L. Woodward in *Three Studies in European Conservatism*,¹² and, as noted previously, scholars have found that a number of the considerably edited undesignated private letters included in the

⁸ Pflanze, vol. 3, 413-421; Pflanze, "Bismarck's *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*," 28-58.

⁹ Munroe Smith, *American Historical Review* 4, no. 3 (April 1899): 536-541.

¹⁰ Gooch, 519.

¹¹ Johannes Bauermann, "Ein quellenkritischer Beitrag zum dritten Band von Bismarcks *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*," *Historische Zeitschrift* 127 (1923): 273-277.

¹² E. L. Woodward, *Three Studies in European Conservatism* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1963), 19-20.

memoirs were actually letters to Metternich's mistress, Princess Lieven--a detail which the editors failed to acknowledge. In a particularly hostile review published in 1958, "*Bemerkungen über die bürgerliche Metternich-Forschung*," the East German Marxist, Karl Obermann, charged Richard with deceit and historical falsification and attempting to have Metternich, the statesman, overshadow the events in which he participated.¹³

In contrast, Ottokar Lorenz, while admitting editorial changes by Richard, believed that the resultant flaws were those of style rather than substance, and credited Richard with creating a first rate work whose excellence far outweighs its imperfections.¹⁴ Arthur Haas asserted that Richard's loyalty to his father no doubt prompted his questionable editorial practices, but his attempts at discretion usually did not seriously alter the basic meaning or tone of what his father had written.¹⁵

Inaccuracies and Omissions in the Memoirs

Accuracy of information in both memoirs was a frequent criticism, particularly from certain contemporary reviewers whose motive was to disparage the memoirs and their authors. For example, in an 1880 American review in *Scribner's Monthly*, a "petty" and "deceitful" Metternich was accused of coloring the facts to his own advantage.¹⁶ Karl Hillebrand, writing in *Contemporary Review*, maintained that Metternich, self-righteous and hypocritical, presented the facts in "an altered state."¹⁷ Particularly malicious was an extensive essay reviewing the Metternich memoirs which appeared in the *Historische Zeitschrift* in 1880. It labeled Metternich

¹³ Karl Obermann, "*Bemerkungen über die bürgerliche Metternich-Forschung*," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 6 (1958): 1327-1342.

¹⁴ Lorenz, 1-94.

¹⁵ Haas, *Metternich, Reorganization and Nationality, 1813-1818*, 223-225.

¹⁶ *Scribner's Monthly* 19 (November 1879 - April 1880): 711-720.

¹⁷ Karl Hillebrand, "Metternich," *Contemporary Review* 37 (1880): 644-672.

a trickster and called the memoirs an unbelievable, worthless, and unusable invention.¹⁸ Writing in more recent times, Henry Kissinger disagreed, commenting in *A World Restored*, that, although they were accused of inaccuracy, "the deviations are all trivial and the documents are consistent with Metternich's other writings."¹⁹ Srbik admitted the memoirs have numerous errors of memory, but he excused the memoirs' flaws because many years had elapsed since the events Metternich wrote about and when he wrote about them--years during which his memory blurred. According to Srbik, the Chancellor carefully wrote and polished his fragments of memory, defending himself in response to the libelous anti-Metternich writings of his own times.

According to A.J.P. Taylor, Bismarck's *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* "ranks with the most remarkable political memoirs ever written, not least for its artistic inaccuracy of detail."²⁰ Lothar Gall states in his 1986 two volume biography of Bismarck that the Bismarck memoirs were "anything but an attempt to draw up a historically accurate balance sheet of a political career, anything but a self-critical review of his public life and his achievements."²¹

Although an accusation that Bismarck's descriptions of the *Kulturkampf* and the Congress of Berlin were fallacious was made by René Pinon, in *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*,²² some of the most serious criticisms of Bismarck's errors of detail came from Otto Pflanze who, in addition to noting Bismarck's embellishments, glaring omissions, and selective memory, charged that his rendition of the Ems telegram incident was his own myth--a criticism similar to that made by Gooch several decades earlier.

¹⁸ Paul Bailleu, "Die Memoiren Metternich's," *Historische Zeitschrift* 44 (1880): 227-276.

¹⁹ Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace 1812-22* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957), 335.

²⁰ A.J.P. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe: 1848-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954, 1960), 585.

²¹ Gall, vol. 2, 232.

²² René Pinon, *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 1 (1899-1900): 194-203.

While only Peter Viereck charged the Metternich memoirs with "arbitrary omissions,"²³ in reviews of the Bismarck memoirs, omissions are as frequently criticized as inaccuracies. Gooch bemoaned the dearth of information about Bismarck's domestic policy, while Antoine Guiland labeled the memoirs an incomplete history because of their glaring omissions.²⁴ However, the fact that Bismarck would have had to answer to the authorities had he made certain disclosures concerning William II was sufficient reason for Ziekursch to forgive the incomplete condition of the work.²⁵

Vanity

Both Bismarck and Metternich are faulted by reviewers and scholars for their vanity which their memoirs exposed. Although it makes a strong impression on the reader, only a few critics like deKay²⁶ and Guiland remarked about Bismarck's arrogance, vanity, and self-satisfaction, while the majority of the reviewers of the Metternich memoirs found his vanity highly worthy of mention. According to Albert Sorel, Metternich's "elaboration of me" was the most striking characteristic of the memoirs,²⁷ and Paul Bailleu attributed Metternich's "reshaping" of events to his "incomparable vanity,"²⁸ while Karl Hillebrand condemned the entire work as "pure hypocrisy... inspired by vanity alone."²⁹ The memoirs' poor reception, Srbik maintained, was the fault of Metternich's ever-present smugness and self-glorification.

²³ Peter Viereck, "New Views on Metternich," *The Review of Politics* 13 (1951): 211-228.

²⁴ Gooch, 519. Antoine Guiland, *Revue Historique* 74 (September-December 1900): 440-409.

²⁵ Ziekursch, *Historische Zeitschrift* 128 (1923): 491-493.

²⁶ Charles deKay, "Bismarck's Autobiography," *The Critic* 34, n.s. vol. 31 (January 1899): 61-64.

²⁷ Albert Sorel, *Essais d'histoire et de critique* (Paris: E. Plon et C^{ie}, 1883), 3-54.

²⁸ Bailleu, 234.

²⁹ Hillebrand, 644-672.

A psychological explanation attempting to explain Metternich's vanity was offered by Bertier de Sauvigny, who, using quotations from the memoirs to substantiate his argument, suggested that Metternich's vanity may have been a facade to conceal his limitations and uncertainties.³⁰

Only G. P. Gooch defended Metternich's vanity. While acknowledging Metternich's memoirs exude his egotism, Gooch stated it was appropriate for him to celebrate his decisive role as the mastermind of the alliance which defeated Napoleon.³¹

Self-revelation

If political memoirs usually reveal the true character of their author, whether intentionally or unintentionally, reviewers of the Metternich memoirs differed considerably in their assessment of what Metternich actually revealed of himself in his memoirs. Reviewers' comments often reflected not only what they perceived to be Metternich's revelations about himself, but their own biases as well.

Lorenz pointed out that the memoirs revealed his true character and exposed Metternich's human and intellectual imperfections.³² *The Eclectic Magazine* elaborated, declaring that the memoirs revealed a Metternich who was "politically unscrupulous in the extreme."³³ Charging Metternich with "originating acts disgraceful to the annals of Austria," *The Nation* did acknowledge that not only Metternich's zeal and expertise were illustrated by the memoirs, but also his sincere efforts for what he believed was the greater good of Europe.³⁴ Several reviews

³⁰ G. Bertier de Sauvigny, *Metternich and his Times* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1962), 307-310.

³¹ G. P. Gooch, "Political Autobiography," *Studies in Diplomacy and Statecraft* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1946), 252-255.

³² Lorenz, 1-94.

³³ *The Eclectic Magazine*, n.s. 31 (January - June 1880): 372-375.

³⁴ *The Nation* 30, no. 763 (February 12, 1880): 120-122.

pointed out, as did that appearing in the *London Quarterly Review*, that what the memoirs revealed of Metternich was not what he intended, but instead his extraordinary self-delusion and vanity.³⁵ Metternich presented himself, in Hillebrand's opinion, as he wished to be remembered, but revealed himself--especially through his vanity--as he really was. But Hillebrand admitted, as did many other reviewers, that the memoirs also revealed Metternich's talents, his excellent insight and judgment, and his ability to evaluate not only relationships among the Great Powers but the character of the leaders as well.³⁶ This opinion was not shared by the *Revue Historique* which concluded the memoirs exposed Metternich as a mediocre spirit incapable of judging the true value of men and of things, but the reviewer did concede Metternich's energy and versatility--instrumental in the defeat of Napoleon--were also evident.³⁷ In 1882, the *Revue Historique* acknowledged the memoirs depicted a talented statesman and diplomat, endowed with perceptiveness and finesse,³⁸ but its 1884 review was of a different opinion, finding the Metternich who appeared in the memoirs narrow and pedantic, a man who "shows himself naked in these pages, rarely attractive, but always instructive."³⁹

In his Metternich biography, Srbik maintained that the memoirs were the perfect vehicle to understand Metternich's character. Metternich's fervor to publish the truth was indisputable, and those who endeavored to understand the psyche of the author would come to understand,

³⁵ *London Quarterly Review* 149 American Edition, (January-April 1880): 83-105.

³⁶ Hillebrand, 644-672.

³⁷ "Bulletin Historique," *Revue Historique* 12 (January-April, 1880): 386-387.

³⁸ "Bulletin Historique," *Revue Historique* 19 (May-August 1882): 382.

³⁹ "Bulletin Historique," *Revue Historique* 25 (May-August 1884): 364.

through his memoirs, Metternich's inherent morality, his nobility of character, and his eminence as a statesman.⁴⁰

Nor could critics agree on what Bismarck revealed of himself in his memoirs. Friedrich Meinecke, Bismarck's greatest champion among the reviewers selected, declared that the Bismarck memoirs presented him as the heroic figure that he was, a lonely, battling giant, unique among men, and the essential content of his life—his glorious objectives—German strength, German unification, and German dominance were revealed.⁴¹

A review in *The Academy*, in contrast, found the Bismarck which his memoirs exposed to be a man of genius and exceptional power, but brutal, unscrupulous, and opportunistic.⁴² A valiant hero with kingly passion and elemental strength was Ziekursch's evaluation of the Bismarck disclosed in his memoirs,⁴³ but this opinion was not shared by French and American reviewers. René Pinon declared that Bismarck was a man who apparently did not know the importance of moral force,⁴⁴ and *The Dial* called Bismarck a man with "no humane or amiable traits."⁴⁵ Obviously not an admirer of Bismarck, Charles deKay said the memoirs revealed a statesman whose "minute, cold-blooded considerations" precipitated three wars and whose politics "fail[ed] to accord with right, fairness or the true interests of the world."⁴⁶ A number of reviewers, including Antoine Guillard, commented on the intense resentment, vindictiveness,

⁴⁰ Srbik, 4-33.

⁴¹ Friedrich Meinecke, "Die Gedanken und Erinnerungen Bismarcks," *Historische Zeitschrift* 82 (1899): 282-295.

⁴² *The Academy* 55, (December 10, 1898): 411-412.

⁴³ Ziekursch, 491-493.

⁴⁴ Pinon, 194-203.

⁴⁵ "A Statesman's Retrospect," *The Dial* 26, no. 301 (January 1, 1899): 8-11.

⁴⁶ DeKay, 61-64.

and bitterness which the Bismarck memoirs illustrated.⁴⁷ According to Pflanze, not only did his memoirs expose his misanthropy, but the Bismarck revealed by his memoirs was "a man of formidable talents, perhaps of genius, driven by a narcissistic compulsion to dominate and govern...."⁴⁸

Perhaps the most interesting comment about what was revealed about Bismarck's character and personality in his memoirs came from G. P. Gooch, who maintained "the self-portrait would have been unconvincing had the tiger's claws been kept out of sight.... Here is the authentic superman of blood and iron, fighting with the gloves off as he had fought all his life, hating and thundering to the last...."⁴⁹

Assessment of Style and Tone

Comments about style offered conflicting views as well. Detractors outnumbered defenders of Metternich's style, and a number of reviewers commented upon the qualitative differences between his official documents, his essays, and his personal letters. Hillebrand declared that Metternich's literary style was less than noteworthy, but was at its best in the documents written in his official capacity, rather than his recollections and essays which were monotonous, repetitious, and commonplace.⁵⁰ *Eclectic Magazine* declared the work has few "charms of style except simplicity and directness," and a "calm and phlegmatic tone."⁵¹

⁴⁷ Guillard, 440-409.

⁴⁸ Pflanze, "Bismarck's *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*," 40, 58.

⁴⁹ Gooch, "Bismarck's Legacy," 517-530.

⁵⁰ Hillebrand, 325-326.

⁵¹ *The Eclectic Magazine*, 372-375.

Most critical, Bailleu accused the memoirs of being theatrical and ruined because Metternich himself was the center of every scene. The work is poorly written and dull--"a shadow in whose veins no blood flows."⁵²

In his evaluation of Metternich's style, Sorel wrote that the memoirs communicated an air of indifference and non-involvement. His style was "guarded"--polished, official-sounding, and full of "politeness for posterity," with Metternich disguising himself behind a mask of pedantry.⁵³ Lorenz accused the Metternich memoirs of theatricality,⁵⁴ while a lusterless and commonplace style was the verdict of the *Revue Historique*.⁵⁵ *Scribners* pronounced amusing Metternich's pretentious claims to be truthful, but found his private papers the best feature of the memoirs because Metternich appeared more natural and human--instead of trying to improve his image for posterity.⁵⁶ De Bertier agreed with this assessment remarking that Metternich had two styles, an official one, unimaginative and tedious, and a lively, stimulating, and even humorous one which appeared in his personal correspondence.⁵⁷

Metternich's language skills were critiqued as well. Hillebrand noted that Metternich's German reflected his lack of contact with the language, but his French, was masterful--a view shared by a number of other reviewers including Lorenz.⁵⁸

⁵² Bailleu, 235, 247.

⁵³ Sorel, 3-54.

⁵⁴ Lorenz, 1-94.

⁵⁵ "Bulletin Historique," *Revue Historique* 12 (January-April 1880): 386-387.

⁵⁶ *Scribner's Monthly*, 711-720.

⁵⁷ Bertier, 307-310.

⁵⁸ Hillebrand, 644-672. Lorenz, 1-94.

Reviewers were, on the whole, less critical of Bismarck's style. While Pflanze accused him of occasional overdramatization,⁵⁹ the *Academy* found the memoirs "dull and heavy" with "laborious, rather pedestrian prose."⁶⁰ Favorable comments about Bismarck's style were not uncommon, although most were not as effusive in their praise as the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* which hailed Bismarck's literary ability as perfect. The memoirs were a "masterly piece of work" in which the narrative was colored with irony and wit, and events vividly pictured.⁶¹ Gooch declared the memoirs have a dynamic power and a majestic sweep,⁶² and Guillard found Bismarck's details picturesque and his stories well told.⁶³

Based on his descriptions and style, Meinecke elevated Bismarck to the rank of eminent historian,⁶⁴ and Smith commented on Bismarck's masterful descriptions of his diplomatic principles.⁶⁵ In his biography of Bismarck, Gall praised his narrative talents including nuances of characterization, "carefully administered ambiguity, and the malicious subordinate clause"--which made the work fascinating. The memoirs continue to be successful and influential, he added, because they are intense and spirited.⁶⁶

Whereas the Metternich memoirs were sometimes accused of an indifferent tone, Bismarck's tone was most commonly labeled bitter by critics. Emotion distorted Bismarck's

⁵⁹ Pflanze, "Bismarck's *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*," 50.

⁶⁰ *The Academy*, 411-412.

⁶¹ "Bismarcks versiegeltes Testament," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung und schweizerisches Handelsblatt*, (December 11-12, 1920), 2045, 2047, 2053.

⁶² Gooch, "Bismarck's Legacy," 517-530.

⁶³ Guillard, 403-404.

⁶⁴ Meinecke, 282-295.

⁶⁵ Smith, 536-541.

⁶⁶ Gall, 231-233.

perceptions according to some, while vanity distorted Metternich's. The tone of the Metternich memoirs was not often mentioned by reviewers except to lament his arrogance or his penchant for moralizing. Hillebrand's judgment is a representative example. He found the memoirs' tone smug, self-righteous, and full of hypocritical censure, and Metternich's moralizing and didactic proclivity tedious.⁶⁷

Bismarck's emotional intensity was a conspicuous difference between the two memoirs and was noted by several reviewers as damaging the quality of the work. Guiland remarked that Bismarck's resentful, bitter, and vindictive tone reflected the fact that the memoirs were written after Bismarck's dismissal, and Pflanze pointed out that Bismarck's tone undermined his warnings of disaster for Germany in the third volume.⁶⁸

Although Ziekursch admitted the intensity of the last volume sullied its impression, every German reviewer forgave Bismarck his angry tone. The strongest impression made on German reviewers by the Bismarck memoirs was his "kingly" passion and elemental strength.⁶⁹

G. P. Gooch believed that power emanated from the Bismarck memoirs, along with an air of superiority and injured innocence not uncommon in memoirs written after a fall from power. Gooch's explanation and absolution of the tone of the memoirs is quite convincing. He noted that Bismarck's memoirs were polluted by his frustrations at having lost power, but added, that Bismarck's vendettas were always too fierce to have been concealed, and the memoirs would not have been genuine had his bitterness been disguised.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Hillebrand, 644-672.

⁶⁸ Guiland, 402, 408. Pflanze, "Bismarck's *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*," 57.

⁶⁹ Ziekursch, 491-493.

⁷⁰ Gooch, "Bismarck's Legacy," 517-530.

Motive in the Memoirs

It may be argued that both *Aus Metternich's nachgelassenen Papieren* and *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* were written to improve the public image of the author. Srbik contended, as noted above, that Metternich's motives in composing his autobiographical essays were to defend himself in response to the "libelous" anti-Metternich writings of his own times⁷¹--an opinion not shared by *The Edinburgh Review* which claimed the goal was to establish Metternich as an unerring statesman and the stalwart champion of right.⁷² Hillebrand declared Metternich's motive was to portray himself in the most superior light, with "absolute indifference to truth."⁷³ In fact, the Metternich memoirs were, in part, an attempt to exonerate Metternich,⁷⁴ but, as Woodward pointed out, Richard's attempts at improving his father's image by publishing his memoirs failed.⁷⁵

Bismarck, too, wrote his memoirs "to shape the image of himself and his deeds that he wished to imprint on the public mind." His efforts to win public opinion in his battle against his critics and those who held the power he had lost were his strongest motive, and his statements about foreign policy were influenced by his desire to "cleanse the record."⁷⁶

Bismarck had an even more urgent motive for writing his memoirs than improving his public image, and it is a factor which significantly differentiates his memoirs from Metternich's. Gall wrote that *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* was "essentially a polemical treatise, a work of

⁷¹ Srbik, 4-33.

⁷² *The Edinburgh Review*, 1-31.

⁷³ Hillebrand, 644-672.

⁷⁴ Lorenz, 1-94.

⁷⁵ Woodward, 19-20.

⁷⁶ Pflanze, "Bismarck's *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*," 29, 34, 50.

undimmed political passion aimed entirely at the present," written by "an author locked in combat with his present and his successors." The memoirs were political dynamite and a summons to Bismarck's political heirs, calling them to action. The content of the memoirs was determined by Bismarck's analysis of current political conditions, and they were written to influence, to put forward Bismarck's political opinions and program. It is Gall's contention that this alone was what mattered to him, and the rest was all "trimmings." Because of these motives, the memoirs are politically and historically misleading.⁷⁷

Reviewer Bias

Obviously, scholars and reviewers of the two memoirs have conflicting opinions, and excluding modern scholars, most revealed their personal biases. Quotes from Srbik, Meinecke, and Ziekursch, noted above, are outstanding examples, but a number of others are noteworthy--including the review in *The Edinburgh Review* which concluded that Metternich was not a great statesman and should not be credited with the European peace following Napoleon's defeat. Instead, the British Prime Minister Palmerston and other factors deserved the credit.⁷⁸ In the *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, Karl Obermann, writing in 1958, bemoaned the fact that bourgeois historians, including Metternich biographers, did not tell the truth about the role of the masses in history. The Metternich memoirs misrepresented the story of Metternich's resignation and flight from the continent which was, in fact, his expulsion by the people--not radicals--as the memoirs indicate.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Gall, 231-233.

⁷⁸ *The Edinburgh Review* 153 (January-April 1880): 1-31.

⁷⁹ Obermann, 1327-1342.

A particularly ardent detractor of Metternich, Viktor Bibl, found the Chancellor so evil that his work, *Metternich, der Dämon Österreichs*, was diminished by its polemical attack.⁸⁰ Bibl maintained that Metternich put his own welfare ahead of Austria's and followed policies which he knew would lead to the empire's demise. The Metternich memoirs, Bibl considered unworthy biography and a biased historical account. Full of errors of memory like most memoirs written in old age, they were an attempt to justify and blame others.⁸¹

A pro-Bismarck bias was obvious in the Swiss review in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* which declared Bismarck the greatest German statesman since Frederick the Great. Pinon used his review of the Bismarck memoirs to criticize Germany's settlement with France after the Franco-Prussian war. Bismarck's policies, according to Pinon, were wrong when they conflicted with French interests, but the German Chancellor was lucid and articulate when his policies conformed to Pinon's pro-French views.⁸²

International Responses to the Memoirs

Reviews of both memoirs, not surprisingly, reflected the political attitudes of many of the reviewers, and some patterns of criticism of the memoirs were recognizable by time written and nationality. Contemporary reviews reflected some political and national biases, and more recent reviews and comments reflected changes in historiography between the time of the publication of the memoirs, the 1880s and 1890s, and the present. In particular, when commenting on the memoirs, modern scholars' biases were not generally evident--with the notable exception of Obermann--and they generally refrained from excessive condemnation of

⁸⁰ Haas, *Metternich, Reorganization and Nationality, 1813-1818*, 224-225.

⁸¹ Viktor Bibl, *Metternich: Der Dämon Österreichs*, (Leipzig and Vienna: Johannes Gunter Verlag, 1936), 17-18, 393-398.

⁸² Pinon, 194-203.

either Chancellor or their policies and restricted themselves to criticism of the memoirs themselves.

Except for national bias, most notably French and English, there were no distinctive differences conspicuous among the German, French and English language reviews of the Metternich memoirs. The French as a group, with the exception of de Bertier who wrote in more modern times, found significant fault with Metternich and his memoirs, as might be expected. The contemporary reviews of the Metternich memoirs in the *Revue Historique* formed an interesting quintet. Although each review averred that Metternich was a conservative whose policies were detestable, the critical tone of the reviews became less malicious during the course of the five year period in which they were published. A common characteristic of these reviews was a lack of challenge to Metternich's facts and data--very much unlike the German reviews. The *Revue Historique* reviewers were consistent in another interesting way: except for the first review, they were relatively unconcerned with Metternich's vanity, a characteristic found insufferable by most other reviewers.

Both de Bertier and Sorel betray in their opinions of the memoirs, their opinion of the man. De Bertier, who saw Metternich's good qualities as well as his defects, commented on the value of the memoirs. Sorel found Metternich's policies, his "principles," and his actions mistaken, and his estimation of the memoirs is correspondingly negative, disdaining the style, thought, and content of the work and focusing particularly on Metternich's vanity.

Of the French reviewers, only de Bertier wrote in the twentieth century, and his work reflected the change in historical criticism mentioned above. To some extent, the criticism and animosity of contemporary reviewers is understandable. Not only was this an era when liberalism was championed--especially in France, but France and Austria were in opposing camps in Europe at this time--as they had been for most of the century.

Overall, the reviews of the Metternich memoirs appearing in English are more negative than positive. Contemporary reviews appearing in American periodicals were, on the whole, relatively shallow. Much of the negative criticism stemmed from the British and American tendency to critique the man as much as the memoirs, and Metternich's conservative stance—or reactionary, according to some—did not fare well, particularly with reviewers in the 1880s. Modern day scholars commenting on the memoirs in English language publications took more balanced views of the memoirs generally acknowledging their flaws but emphasizing their value as a source and accentuating the importance of the work.

Criticism of the Metternich memoirs in German and Austrian publications was mixed, and contemporary as well as twentieth century reviews varied significantly. There are both negative and positive reviews not only at the time of the publication of the memoirs, but well into the twentieth century, and the comments made were similar to those of reviewers in both French and English language publications. In no critique of the Metternich memoirs was the man or his memoirs praised so uncritically, however, as Friedrich Meinecke praised Bismarck and his memoirs. The negative critiques of the Metternich memoirs damaged themselves by their unbalanced negativity, and the positive reviews to their credit, acknowledged the flaws found in the memoirs.

The reaction to the Bismarck memoirs, while not totally positive, was somewhat less critical than the reaction to Metternich's memoirs. It is difficult to generalize about reviews of the Bismarck memoirs because they ranged in tone from worshipful tribute to denunciation. Although the memoir's most blatant flaws were acknowledged by the German language reviewers, they were noteworthy in that they were consistently laudatory of Bismarck. The English and French reviewers' opinions about the man and his memoirs were less consistent. The contemporary German reviews of the Bismarck memoirs were wholly complimentary of

Bismarck, the statesman, and his policies and reveal a kind of hero worship, strikingly German, with allusions to Hun warriors and a triumphant giant fighting on through tempests. While acknowledging flaws in the memoirs themselves, German reviewers found the errors of Bismarck's autobiography forgivable. After World War I when the third volume was published, German reviewers were willing to critique the flaws and errors in the Bismarck memoirs somewhat more frankly, however, but it is obvious that, for them, William II, Bismarck's nemesis, was the villain and Bismarck the hero.

Unlike German and Austrian reviews of the Metternich memoirs, nowhere in any of the German reviews was Bismarck's policy challenged and nowhere was the man questioned or condemned. His ego, blatantly obvious to the reader, was not mentioned, and only the Swiss review acknowledged a tiny flaw in the heroic Bismarck. It is clear that Bismarck, even as late as the 1920s was a German hero, not to be criticized or reproached.⁸³

Gall and Rothfels examined the memoirs as Bismarck scholars of a later era. Gall dissected the memoirs for motive and concluded that Bismarck's desire to affect the future outweighed any concerns about historical accuracy he may have had, and Rothfels noted the passionate responses the memoirs evoked. Neither attempted a thorough review of content, style, and tone, however.

The French, as might be expected, had their own view of the Bismarck memoirs, but they differed considerably. As with so many of the reviewers of both Chancellor's memoirs, the French found no historical revelations in Bismarck's memoirs. The omissions, justifications, and self-serving selectiveness of topics were, of course, noted. Pinon betrayed French partiality with an ardent attack on the memoirs and a condemnation of Bismarck's policies and decisions--particularly in regard to the Franco-Prussian war. Guiland refrained from critiquing Bismarck

⁸³ *Neue Zürcher Zeitung und schweizerisches Handelsblatt*, 2045, 2047, 2053.

and his policies, and instead limited his comments to a scholarly historical review, noting both positive and negative aspects of the work--with particular praise for Bismarck's ability to understand and describe events and personalities of his times.

The reviews appearing in English language publications, like their French counterparts, were less enthusiastic about Bismarck than the German critiques. There was no consistent pattern of either censure or praise, however, most reviewers noted some of the flaws of the work and several commented on Bismarck's literary style. Three reviews stood out for their scholarly approach, The Smith review written in 1899, the Gooch review of 1952, and Pflanze's of 1994.

The Smith review is less than thorough in its examination of the memoirs, but Pflanze's critique is complete and balanced. Although the Gooch article concerns Bismarck's foreign policy legacy as much as it critiques the memoirs, it is insightful in its analysis of the memoirs.

* * *

Dating from their publication to the present, there has been more interest in Bismarck's memoirs than in Metternich's, and several explanations for the disparate reactions come to mind. The Bismarck memoirs were published immediately after his death when many of the topics about which he wrote were still of current import, and Bismarck was still considered a hero by many in Germany at the time. In contrast, the Metternich memoirs appeared twenty years after his death, during which time he had become a European villain in the eyes of many, and the topics of his memoirs were "old history."

Another possible explanation for the interest generated by the Bismarck memoirs is the path German history took after 1890. Bismarck was the statesman who not only unified Germany and wrote the second empire's constitution, but set the tone of German politics from 1862 to 1890 (and, some argue, thereafter). In consequence, Bismarck became an important part of the explanation of German history in the twentieth century.

CONCLUSION

Because Metternich and Bismarck played a major role in the political events of much of the nineteenth century in Europe, whatever they left behind in the way of memoirs is of unquestioned value. Scholars who study memoirs and autobiography are cognizant of the problems inherent with using them as historical sources, and historians will continue to debate whether the Metternich and Bismarck memoirs reflect historical truth and to what degree.

From this examination of the memoirs, however, we have seen that it is possible to understand the two German statesmen from their memoirs. The information contained in the memoirs is a fair representation of the truth, and, therefore the Metternich and Bismarck memoirs were successful in presenting favorable portrayals of the Chancellors as they would have wished to be remembered.

The Metternich and Bismarck memoirs defined the men, revealing the personality of the author through his dealings with his world and clearly establishing the Chancellors' points of view on many pertinent topics. The consistency of their views makes it possible to state the opinions they held about their own role, their state, their monarchs, foreign policy, etc.

Both Bismarck's and Metternich's memoirs were written with what appeared to be rather obvious motives, and although they knew they had achieved a place in history and their immortality was assured, the memoirs show they felt compelled to justify and explain themselves--and to celebrate their accomplishments. Bismarck's memoirs were not only self-congratulatory, but were used as a vehicle to disparage his enemies, influence foreign policy, and to send a message of warning to the German people.

Metternich wrote his autobiographical essay and the descriptions of Napoleon and Alexander I for posterity because, he explained, much of the information was not available elsewhere. It was his intent to tell his version of what really happened and to clarify

misunderstandings he believed existed about himself.¹ As noted above, Metternich also stated that his motive for writing his memoirs was to leave an accurate historical record of the events occurring as the allies joined together to defeat Napoleon, and he declared that it was not an act of egoism nor to have things put right that motivated him. His predominant concern was history and his duty to the truth,² he said, yet the two short autobiographical writings in the seventh volume, written in old age, belie this claim. These documents resemble Bismarck's memoirs in their rationale and tone. Here was explanation and justification--an attempt to exonerate Metternich from accusations that he was responsible for the problems which befell Austria during his years in power,³ and he, like Bismarck, ascribed the guilt for the failures to others.⁴ This same tone was reflected in a letter Metternich wrote as he fled the continent in 1848, "What I had tried to tell anyone who would listen, through the years, has happened.... But my efforts were in vain and no one understood me."⁵

There is no evidence in the Metternich memoirs that, in writing the essays, he was attempting to affect future decisions or provide a guide to his successors--something clearly evident in Bismarck's memoirs. Instead, the most lasting impression of Metternich's memoirs was his affirmation of his policies and principles--his strongest motive.

It is clear that Bismarck's memoirs differed from Metternich's significantly in that they were written purposefully as memoirs--and with an obvious political intent. Bismarck was appealing to the Germans and his motives--openly professed--were to explain and instruct.

¹ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 138-142.

² "My Political Testament," 1849-1855, *NP*, vol. 7, 642.

³ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 7, 617-628.

⁴ "My Political Testament," 1849-1855, *NP*, vol. 7, 633-642.

⁵ Metternich to Ficquelmont, 20 March 1848, *NP*, vol. 7, 612.

Bismarck's memoirs demonstrated that he wanted to establish his image for posterity, but another conscious objective was apparent--that of recording a foreign policy guideline. Germany's future, he advised, depended on strength, independence, and smart leadership,⁶ and he included an entire chapter on his recommendations about relations with Russia, explaining why Russia wanted the Straits and why he believed this was a legitimate claim.⁷

A more complex, concealed motive in the writing of memoirs is apparent in the Metternich and Bismarck memoirs, that of recomposing and interpreting one's life to validate that life. Writing their memoirs was, no doubt, a process of validation for Metternich and Bismarck, and it was clear that both Chancellors believed unquestioningly in the rightness of their policies and decisions, and neither expressed misgivings about their lives.

Most importantly, we have seen that the memoirs were a means to enunciate their political philosophy, their ideas about governing and society, their purpose and their goals. Their memoirs display the consistency in the two Chancellors' most cherished political beliefs, and the strength of their convictions, and this consistency enables the reader to perceive and to understand the policies of the two Chancellors.

While Bismarck's memoirs were written as a unitary whole at the end of his career, and his remarks had a consistency of view, the Metternich volumes are a collection of documents written as events were unfolding and were composed over a period of more than five decades. Surprisingly, it is clear that Metternich's opinions, with only a few exceptions, were quite consistent as well, reflecting the fact that his positions remained, for the most part, unchanged during his political career (arguably a misguided consistency considering the changes in Europe which occurred during this period).

⁶ *GW*, vol. 15, 420.

⁷ *GW*, vol. 14, 419.

Metternich and Bismarck clearly wanted to guide not only events in their own state but in Europe as well, and their memoirs revealed two men who held great power and exercised it with relish. Metternich's memoirs demonstrated that he concentrated most of his time and effort on international affairs in Europe to preserve peace and Austrian dominance. In contrast, Bismarck, as his memoirs show, dealt with domestic affairs as well as international matters, reflecting the fact that Bismarck's power in Germany was greater than Metternich's in Austria.

While Metternich strove to hold a disintegrating empire together and waged war only on the defensive, Bismarck's wars were offensive, and he spent his career consolidating the strength and power of a new empire. In their comments about war, both Metternich and Bismarck illustrated their pragmatism. More cold-blooded about war as a foreign policy tool, Bismarck used it successfully to unify Germany, and acknowledged that, although it was not his preference, he would wage war again if necessary to protect German interests. Metternich, once Napoleon had been defeated, avoided war assiduously and was outspoken in condemnation of war as policy. However, he, too, admitted war was not to be eschewed if Austrian interests warranted it--as was the case with the Neapolitan Revolution.

Aus Metternich's Nachgelassenen Papieren and Gedanken und Erinnerungen are important because they clearly delineated the opposing Austrian and Prussian positions on the German Question, but they also revealed an important character trait in the two Chancellors. Dominance in Germany was both Metternich's and Bismarck's objective, and they considered the "other Germany" a threat to their own state's primacy. Left unsaid but clearly evident was the fact that each one was convinced it was he who was the appropriate decision-maker to guide the German states.

When they fell from power, the memoirs reveal that Metternich's and Bismarck's reactions were strikingly different. Although he had lost power, Metternich did not appear to

change. His correspondence attested to his on-going concern for Austria and Europe. Writing his memoirs after his dismissal, Bismarck exposed the intensity of his anger at having to let go of the enormous power he had so recently wielded.

Metternich and Bismarck faced different opposing forces as the memoirs reflected. Metternich saw as his enemy, liberalism and revolution--challenges to peace, order, and the *status quo*. Bismarck at first challenged the *status quo*; thereafter he was concerned with safeguarding what he had achieved against not only his foreign foes but his domestic opposition--political parties, liberals, socialists, and members of the court.

Looking more broadly at the themes of the two memoirs, what is clearly established is that a principal concern of Metternich and Bismarck was state power and its proper use. They both viewed themselves as power brokers, to use a modern term, and were proud of their accomplishments. First among these accomplishments was foreign policy-- which to them meant the establishment of a strong state within a stable and conservative state system. Their philosophies, their political aspirations, their dealings with others, their attitudes about the forces in their society, be it the press, public opinion, or liberalism--all of these topics were expressed in the memoirs as they related to the maintenance of their state's position as a Great Power.

The memoirs obviously provide the reader with a better understanding of both Chancellors. Metternich's positive personality and character traits became visible in his personal correspondence, while Bismarck's softer side was not revealed. Bismarck's tenderness expressed frequently in letters to his wife and children was not evident, nor was the good-natured Bismarck, discernible in letters to his friends, visible.⁸ If Bismarck's bitterness dominated the tone of his memoirs, his passion gave them their flavor, and the strength of his personality penetrated the

⁸ Guillard, 409.

narrative. While Metternich's private correspondence had a spirited tone, his official documents were dispassionate and revealed his cool-headed professionalism.

Metternich's memoirs portrayed a man who held principles dear and used them, or at least professed to use them, as the basis of his actions; Bismarck's memoirs disclosed a flexible, pragmatic, and sometimes opportunistic statesman. Bismarck was a Romantic and labeled himself so; Metternich spurned Romanticism. Bismarck's pride as a Prussian, his German nationalism--a characteristic not evident in the cosmopolitan Metternich⁹--reflected the growth of nationalism in Europe during the nineteenth century. This revelation of character and personality portrayed in their memoirs is, indeed, a fair representation of both Metternich and Bismarck.

Scholars examining political memoirs expect to find inaccuracies and personal bias, but omissions or distortions, while diminishing historical truth, do not necessarily destroy the true value of an autobiography.¹⁰ G. P. Gooch stated in "Political Autobiography" that most political autobiographers "invent freely, omit or twist vital facts, exaggerate their role, and blacken their enemies."¹¹ Using this standard, the Bismarck and Metternich memoirs certainly fit the norm. Much has been written critiquing factual errors in both memoirs, however, the historical record has not been damaged by these inaccuracies, and they have served only to confirm that the authors were human and subject to error. Bismarck claimed, for instance, to have always supported universal suffrage, yet his actions, and even his memoirs, belied this claim.¹²

⁹ Metternich was conscious of his German heritage, of course, which he pointed out to Napoleon I in 1813 at Dresden. *Autobiographical Memoir*, NP, vol. 1, 155.

¹⁰ George Egerton ed., *Politics of Memory* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1994), 344. Roy Pascal, *Design and Truth in Autobiography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 64, 67.

¹¹ Gooch, "Political Autobiography," 232.

¹² Guillard, 405.

Both Chancellors, the memoirs revealed, were keenly aware of their critics and opponents, and it is reasonable to conclude that their memoirs were vehicles to respond to these opposing points of view. While Metternich (and his son, Richard) wanted to defend his conservative principles, Bismarck wanted to set the record straight about policies which had aroused strong opposition. In this defense and explanation, a certain amount of justification and rationalization was evident in both memoirs.

Because he always believed in the rightness of his own position, Metternich rarely offered excuses in his memoirs. His constant reiteration of his "principles," however, could be interpreted as defensive and a response to the criticism he well knew was heaped upon him. Contrary to the opinions of his critics, he asserted, the Congress system and the Holy Alliance were not intended to suppress the rights of the people or to promote absolutism or tyranny.¹³ In retirement Metternich wrote a lengthy explanation in which he ascribed Austrian policy errors to the Emperor's immersion in detail and failure to heed his Chancellor's advice, as well as to the numerous shortcomings of Count Kolowrat, Metternich's later rival and co-member of the State Conference.¹⁴ The monarchy's problems in 1848 were a result of its own mistakes, and, "neither I nor anyone else had shoulders strong enough to save it."¹⁵

Bismarck's response to those who criticized his actions in March, 1848, was rationalization at its best. Claiming he was working on a counter-revolution to liberate Frederick William IV, he denied having made the impulsive suggestion that the King abdicate and attributed the idea to the liberal leader, Baron Vincke.¹⁶ He defended both his aggressive, threatening

¹³ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 1, 216.

¹⁴ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 7, 617-628.

¹⁵ Autobiographical Memoir, *NP*, vol. 7, 626.

¹⁶ *GW*, vol. 15, 29.

stance toward Austria when it was at war with Italy and France in 1859,¹⁷ and his "Blood and Iron" speech of 1862.¹⁸ An entire chapter was devoted to justifying the policy which led to the Alvensleben Convention in 1863, a major diplomatic blunder which alienated the other Great Powers and nearly resulted in Bismarck's resignation. The pattern of explanation and self-justification was repeated again in the chapter on the *Kulturkampf*, and he even implicated the Empress Augusta in the intricacies of the affair. Never acknowledging that he made errors, Bismarck did admit to his lack of foresight about difficulties with William II--difficulties which Tsar Alexander III had foreseen.¹⁹

Justification and rationalization, a natural occurrence in political autobiography, can be attributed to the Chancellors' desire to present favorable images of themselves for posterity. Enough records and documents exist to uncover mistakes, but on the whole, the stories told in the Metternich and Bismarck memoirs were not distorted. Instead they served, as Gusdorf said in "Conditions and Limits of Autobiography," as their contributions to their own biographies and their own rendition of the facts.²⁰ If embarrassments or mistakes in Bismarck's case were rationalized, blamed on others, or omitted altogether, and if Metternich saw his accomplishments as flawless, neither Chancellor could be accused of misunderstanding himself so much as misunderstanding, in Metternich's case, the force of events of his times, and in Bismarck's case, the changes which occurred after William I's death.

The Metternich and Bismarck memoirs bear out Roy Pascal's assertion that a man's life can be said to signify his character, and it is, therefore, difficult to stray too far from the truth

¹⁷ GW, vol. 15, 192.

¹⁸ GW, vol. 15, 194.

¹⁹ GW, vol. 15, 415.

²⁰ Gusdorf, 36.

and misrepresent either oneself or known facts.²¹ Inaccuracies and distortions in the Bismarck and Metternich memoirs, therefore, can be viewed as a part of the person, his truth.²² In *Political Memoir: Essays on the Politics of Memory*, George Egerton explained the inaccuracies of political autobiographers stating, "the principal temptation is not so much to exaggerate one's personal credit for political successes... as to depict past behavior and experience from the interpretive perspective of the author *at the time of the writing*, with retrospective knowledge of the consequences of past engagements." This tendency to give present meaning to events in the past may be a conscious or an unconscious act of justification resulting in rationalizing mistakes and overstating intentionality in describing accomplishments. In addition, the political memoirist finds it more satisfying to see unity and design than disarray in political events and conflicts.²³ Accuracy in autobiography is, obviously, problematic, but "with all the distortions to which this type of personal historiography is prey, the potential for honesty, accuracy and insight remains."²⁴

As we have seen, both the Metternich and Bismarck memoirs attempted a chronology of a career, provided insight into the character of the man, and defined what was significant in their political lives. The convictions expressed in their memoirs reflected their perspectives at the time of writing, and both Chancellors, understandably, preferred to see design rather than disarray in political events over which they had control. Hillebrand maintained that it was natural for Metternich, writing his political testament in his late seventies, to see in his public life "a conscious plan which in reality it had hardly the... freedom to pursue, and that he should ascribe

²¹ Pascal, 189.

²² Pascal, 67, 75, 78, 83.

²³ Egerton, 347.

²⁴ Egerton, 347-348.

to himself principles on which, as a young man of thirty, he had never thought."²⁵ This statement is true, as well, of Bismarck who wanted the reader to believe that his convictions when he wrote his memoirs were the same as those he held as a young man. Despite these flaws, both memoirs are outstanding contributions to the historical record.

The accuracy of the Metternich and Bismarck memoirs cannot be discussed without addressing the element of memory. The symbols and meaning of a memoirist's life are not fabricated by his imagination but selected and ordered by his memory, and this process imparts to the reader an intuitive understanding of the character of his life.²⁶ Reading any autobiography points out how flawed memory is. We justify our lives, not so much in our conscious mind, but our memories unconsciously perform the task.²⁷ Later experiences have an impact on memory and act as a sieve sorting through recollections of past events and deciding what is important to relate.²⁸ As Bismarck and Metternich scholars have noted, the memoirs of both Chancellors have flaws which betray faulty memories. Bismarck himself admitted to Bucher in March, 1891, when they were working together on the memoirs, that even though he could clearly remember main points, without documents, he could not possibly remember the details of the events of thirty years.²⁹

²⁵ Hillebrand, 327.

²⁶ Pascal, 187.

²⁷ Pascal, 15.

²⁸ Pascal, 69-71.

²⁹ Busch, 549.

In understanding the effect of memory on memoirs, we become aware of a teleological consideration in memoirs: the present is the end--the objective of the past.³⁰ For Bismarck in particular and in the autobiographical essays of the Metternich memoirs, autobiography became a second reading of experience. The significance of their experiences had modified over time--their memories consciously or unconsciously distorting, transforming, and justifying. The ends of the stories were known and memory was correspondingly affected by the outcomes.

Some of the complexities apparent with accuracy and memory surface again in looking at truth in the Metternich and Bismarck memoirs. As with memory, truth can be influenced or distorted in the telling of the story of a life by knowing the outcome. Because a memoir presents the author's principles and ideals, he must, as a consequence, describe his life by creating a kind of ideal self with an "over-riding purpose." His truth, developed from the experience of his life as a whole, is contained within this purpose which imposes itself on him, affecting memory, selection, and tone, and giving meaning to his life.³¹ Historical truth can be elusive because a memoir is not the objective truth about a person, nor is it a final or complete truth.³² All autobiographers are guilty of tampering with the past and with the truth, but rather than label this untruth, Pascal defines it as a "range of truth."³³ Objectivity can even be ignored, Gusdorf asserts, because the truth of the individual is more important than the truth of the facts.³⁴

³⁰ James Olney, "Some Versions of Memory/Some Versions of *Bios*: The Ontology of Autobiography" in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*, ed. James Olney, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 240-241.

³¹ Pascal 16-17, 67, 75, 78, 83, 183.

³² Pascal, 72, 75.

³³ Pascal 75, 179.

³⁴ Gusdorf 42-43.

Autobiography's importance is found beyond truth and falsity,³⁵ and because of its unique truth, that of a life seen from within, there is no other source to rival it.³⁶

Historical objectivity was not considered a problem during the eras in which Metternich and Bismarck composed their memoirs. Writing in maturity meant a remoteness from events described, and when viewed from the perspective of maturity, the truth of Bismarck's and Metternich's experiences took on a different meaning because their significance was modified over time. The memoirs portrayed Metternich's and Bismarck's lives as having an over-riding purpose in which their ideal self operated. If the memoirs revealed that Bismarck's over-riding purpose was a strong, Prussian-led Germany, and for Metternich, a preservation of Empire, stability, and the *status quo*, then they can be better understood by perceiving that this over-riding purpose contained their truth. It was their most highly valued reality. It was that around which they constructed their lives, and it gave them meaning.

In describing past events and conditions, explaining the perceived causes of these events and interpreting their meaning, it can be assumed that Bismarck and Metternich genuinely believed their memoirs were accurate and objective. Faulty memory, self-interest, or other problems associated with the writing of a memoir were not considered an important problem, and their belief in their own knowledge of right insured this. As Egerton asserted, the political memoirist can aspire to write a history of important events in which he was a central figure, a "first history of the episode based on both unique remembrance and privileged documentation."³⁷ This is what Bismarck and Metternich gave us with their memoirs. In so doing they were making a contribution not only to history and to their own biography--but, more

³⁵ Gusdorf, 42-43.

³⁶ Pascal, 195.

³⁷ Egerton, 348.

importantly, they gave us a glimpse into their political souls. Removed from the prejudices of the past and viewed from the perspective of the end of the twentieth century, the images of the Chancellors which the memoirs give us are not unfavorable.

The memoirs represent not only an occasionally selected version of events, but also an interpreted truth of Metternich and Bismarck. Such personalized truth shifts the reader's focus from abstract policy to the very human person, and thus adds a new dimension which an analysis of policy alone does not provide. Despite an occasional "spin," the reader, in perceiving the two statesmen's dynamics, comes to understand history from the point of view of those who not only experience history but make it.

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