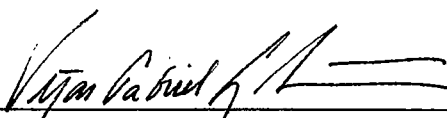


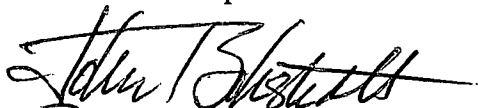
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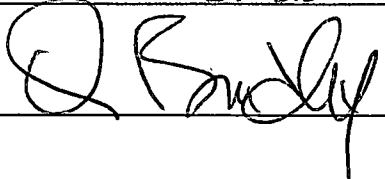
I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Vanessa Gera entitled "Making Subjects: History Lessons in Elementary Textbooks in Württemberg, 1855-1910." I have examined the final paper copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.



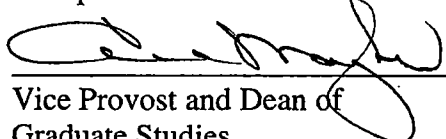
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recommend its acceptance:





Acceptance for the Council:



Vice Provost and Dean of
Graduate Studies

MAKING SUBJECTS:
HISTORY LESSONS IN ELEMENTARY TEXTBOOKS IN
WÜRTTEMBERG, 1855-1910

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Vanessa Gera
December 2001

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Claudia Plumlee Gera, my father, Ferruccio Gera, my grandmother, Mary Irene Plumlee, and my sister, Daniela Gera, for having done so much over the years to encourage and support my learning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, for providing me with insight and guidance during this project and throughout my master's program. I would also like to thank Dr. Owen Bradley and Dr. John Bohstedt for serving on my committee and providing me with ideas that helped me as I wrote this.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine whether history lessons in elementary school readers used in the German state of Württemberg between 1855 and 1910 changed in response to the unification of Germany in 1871. Textbooks used in the years before unification were compared to those used for several decades after 1871.

An examination of readers used in both Catholic and Protestant schools revealed that history lessons were changed in only very minor ways in the first few decades after German unification. The Prussian leaders of the Second Empire did not push the state of Württemberg to change its curriculum, in part because they did not want to promote the notion that the state derived its legitimacy from the people. Instead, the Prussian rulers viewed unification as a coming together of various dynastic houses. The message of the schoolbooks used in Württemberg before unification stressed that children should develop into hardworking, obedient and religious subjects in a monarchical state. Because the children attending elementary schools were not expected to have more political power in the new state, the old books were able to continue to serve their same function and were largely left unchanged by state authorities.

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Section One – Introduction

When Germany was unified as a nation state in 1871, the formerly fragmented region in the heart of Europe took a fateful and dramatic step towards becoming a powerful political force that would shake up the balance of power in Europe. Bismarck's unification of Germany under a policy of blood and iron—the national question being settled fairly late in this age of nationalist agitation, one might add—established that the German nation would be a *Kleindeutschland* excluding Austria. Despite the momentous changes brought to the new Germany in 1871, much in the daily life of average people throughout the Reich remained fairly stable and unchanged. The individual *Länder* that made up the Reich maintained many of the powers that they had enjoyed before unification. Even the Prussian king, now Emperor Wilhelm I, envisioned the unification primarily as a coming together of individual dynastic houses which should continue to exist separately.

Far from Prussia, in the southwestern state of Württemberg, school children continued to head off to schools which remained relatively unchanged in the years following unification. One might expect the Prussian leadership to have quickly begun to manipulate the content of schoolbooks in order to inculcate devotion to the new state which it had just brought into existence. However, an examination of readers used in *Volksschulen* in Württemberg between 1855 and 1910 reveals that this did not occur. Continuity marks the tone of the textbooks, with only minor changes made in the editions published in the early years after unification. The leaders of the Second Reich did not believe that the new political entity should be based on notions of popular legitimacy, and

therefore saw no need to capture the hearts and minds of every person living throughout the empire. The inhabitants of the new Germany were expected to continue to live as subjects, just as they had previously done under their regional dynastic rulers. Thus the textbooks used in Württemberg, imbued with a conservative and religious spirit aimed at creating obedient subjects, continued to serve the same useful purpose after 1871 that they had in the decades before unification. It wasn't until the late 1880s that Prussian rulers, frightened by socialist agitation, tried to manipulate the curriculum in order to inculcate Germany's inhabitants with their desired political beliefs.

Württemberg's schoolbooks, however, served as powerful tools of propaganda in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Filled with stories of ancient German rulers, medieval myths and moral injunctions to love God, one's family and the fatherland, they were clearly meant to teach children that their proper role was to become religious subjects obedient to their dynastic rulers. The Protestant readers were heavily imbued with the spirit of Pietism, the German Puritanical movement which stressed the virtues of hard work, inner devotion to God, and self-denial. Württemberg's Catholic readers, strongly influenced by the dominant Pietist spirit, stressed the same conservative religious values and the need for obedience to worldly authorities. The schoolbooks remained largely as they were after 1871 because common people were not expected to provide legitimacy to the new state, but were simply expected to continue living as obedient dynastic subjects. The old books continued to serve this function very nicely. Thus, the Second Reich marked a new beginning in political history, but did not do so in educational history.

An examination of elementary school readers used in late nineteenth century Württemberg highlights some of the ironies and paradoxes of history and national identity in modern Germany. Despite political fragmentation, provincialism and strong regional identity, there was much cultural uniformity throughout the German-speaking lands, centered mainly in literary life, long before unification. Although people spoke a variety of dialects, books have been published in the standard *Hochdeutsch* since Luther translated the Bible and the printing press disseminated it widely. Moreover, the great *Dichter und Denker*—including Kant, Goethe, Schiller—were always considered products of *German* culture. Although these humble little schoolbooks used in late nineteenth-century *Volksschulen* did not include the works of the great writers, compilers of schoolbooks throughout Germany drew from a standard body of fables, poems and stories. Thus even in the 1850s and 1860s the compilers of readers did their part to create in the minds of children a sense of a unified German fatherland. Ironically, the books began to teach more about the local region *after* 1871. Several decades after unification, when even the formerly zealous opponents of the *kleindeutsch* solution had come to accept the status quo, the changes brought to the textbooks primarily involved the inclusion of passages emphasizing *local* identity.¹ A focus on the locality, or *Heimat*, was used to indirectly instill a love of the fatherland in children.

An examination of schoolbooks in Württemberg—rather than Prussia or Austria—promises to be fruitful for a number of reasons. First of all, the ratio of Protestants to Catholics was similar to that of the Reich as a whole, with two-thirds of the

¹ Katharine D. Kennedy, "Lessons and Learners: Elementary Education in Southern Germany, 1871-1914," Diss. Stanford University 1982, p. 129.

population being Protestant and the other third Catholic.² Because confessional conflict was quite bitter at times in Imperial Germany, it is instructive to observe how the differences played out in this region where the confessional mix nearly mirrored that of the Reich's. However, unlike the more cosmopolitan areas of Berlin and Vienna, the Jewish population of Württemberg was tiny. From the Middle Ages until Napoleon's emancipation, Jews had been banned from living in much of Württemberg. In the late nineteenth century, the Jewish population in the area began to grow.

Württemberg is also a profitable object of study because it is an area where we find strong regional particularism, with great pride being taken in local traditions and the dialect, *Schwäbisch*. However, the region also produced and educated some of the great thinkers proudly claimed by the entire German Volk. The philosopher, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, for example, was born in Stuttgart. And the astronomer Kepler and the poet Schiller are further examples of great men who were born or educated in Württemberg and who have been a source of pride in the region. But it is not only in the realm of culture that the historical region of Swabia (which is to a large extent coterminous with Württemberg) was viewed as relevant to the whole of an idealized Germany. The political connections are also strong, with the ruling Prussian dynastic house, the Hohenzollerns, having originated in Württemberg in the Middle Ages, with continued holdings in the area. In fact, after 1871 it was quite common for Swabians to point out that the Hohenzollerns originated in their region.³

² Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), p. 22.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Württemberg is also of interest because according to Mack Walker's enduringly significant study, *German Home Towns*, it is the area in the "individualized country" which had the highest concentration of home towns, those pre-modern, walled-in towns which produced a certain mentality of strong local pride and exclusion of outsiders. Thus Württemberg is the cradle of what can be seen as some of the best and worst of German traits and traditions, from a joyful celebration of home and family to a deep philistinism and a cruel exclusion of outsiders. It was also nostalgia for the disappearing home towns in the early twentieth century which helped generate support for National Socialism. The nostalgia for a lost wholeness, seen to exist in the hometown, was a strong theme in both the *Heimat* movement and the blood-and-soil ideology of the Nazis.

Identifying oneself primarily as a member of a nation, as opposed to a village or region, is a historical phenomenon of the modern era. National consciousness did not overcome all hearts, suddenly and uniformly. Instead, it developed unevenly, a process of shifting loyalties that occurred at different speeds and to different degrees in various political and social groups. Of course, there were major events which brought radical and rapid change to how people identified themselves. Dramatic events such as the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon's forces, marking the birth of widespread German nationalism, and the Franco-Prussian War, are commonly viewed as significant turning points which altered widely-held notions of political belonging. Germans, who were mostly uninterested in the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 and were initially fascinated by Napoleon, reacted enthusiastically to his defeat in Russia only a few years

later.⁴ This “astounding shift of mood in Germany”⁵ was not the only time that the public’s opinion shifted suddenly. Bismarck so thoroughly convinced Germans throughout what was to become the Second Reich that France had instigated the war in 1870 that he was able to generate a strong sense of unity among groups that had previously seen themselves as foes. The subsequent military victories then solidified the freshly stimulated national feelings.

Although the Franco-Prussian war was a brilliant act of *Realpolitik* on Bismarck’s part, achieving a common sense of mission, this did not turn Württembergers into Germans overnight. Württembergers in the late nineteenth century identified contemporaneously with many groups: religion, town, region, kingdom, nation. With political unification, these concentric allegiances shift subtly. As one scholar has written, Württembergers, who were one kind of German, became in the decades after unification a different kind of German.⁶ Not only was the personal relationship to the German fatherland intensified, but other loyalties had to be rejected. In 1866 Württemberg fought alongside Austria *against* Prussia; most of the Catholics and many of the Protestants living in the kingdom favored a *großdeutsch* solution to the nation question, that is, a Germany made up of all ethnic Germans, including Austrians. As it turned out, however, Württembergers had to renounce political brotherhood with Austrians. Many sympathies, however, remained, and continue to do so until today.

The changes occurring in this era bring to mind what is happening in our own day: with the further growth and penetration of the European Union into spheres of life

⁴ Hagen Schulze, *Germany: A New History*, trans. Deborah Lucas Schneider (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), p.106.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Confino, p. 16.

once under the jurisdiction of individual nations, we find that many Europeans are slowly developing a sense of identity as Europeans. It is not surprising these days to see a car on the Autobahn bearing a sticker of the European flag alongside one with the D for Deutschland. Identifying oneself as European has become an additional layer in a concentric system of loyalties; it is capable of growing larger without completely eliminating regional and local loyalties, but certainly not leaving them unchanged. Certain strata of society in particular are developing a strong sense of European identity: EU bureaucrats who make their careers in the new institutions, students who receive EU-funded scholarships to study in other European nations. In contrast, certain other strata of society have no reason to feel any affection for the EU, or even have good reason to resent it: farmers who feel EU agricultural policies hurt them, manufacturers of goods which become less competitive in a more open and transparent market, money launderers who will find it much more difficult to hide their money when the single currency, the euro, finally comes into existence. While the conditions were different in nineteenth century Germany, today's EU perhaps helps one think about the enormous differences of speed and conviction in the development of new political and cultural loyalties. There are nearly always winners and losers as political, economic and cultural systems change, and this is bound to determine to what extent people identify with new political states.

To return fully to nineteenth century Germany and to sum up, when Bismarck's three wars for German unification came to an end in 1871, completing a *kleindeutsch* unification which gave the liberals their long-desired nation and a unified market but

deprived them of many of the political liberties they had sought,⁷ the southern German Kingdom of Württemberg joined a Prussian-dominated state against which it had waged war only five years previously in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. In the years following unification, the liberals in Württemberg supported the new *kleindeutsch* solution, while others--democrats, Catholics, particularists, and the king--continued to oppose it.⁸ Although Germany was now a unified nation, it remained highly decentralized, leaving many areas of jurisdiction, including education, in the hands of the *Länder*. Regional dynastic leaders continued to effectively serve as a symbol with which common people identified.

Despite the initial degree of contention over the issue of unification, the curriculum in primary text books did not immediately change, except in very minor ways, in response to the new political reality instituted in 1871. Furthermore, with education being in the hands of the individual states, the Prussian government did not manipulate the curriculum in order to garner support for the new nation. Yet in the decades following unification, texts began to be slowly altered in ways that indicate a growing acceptance of the new state and a deepening of national sentiment, reflected mainly in a greater emphasis on *Heimat*, that is regional and local studies. The curriculum remained largely unchanged because the religious messages were certainly consistent with the needs of the new state. The Prussian founders of the nation viewed the union as "a network of dynastic communities," and therefore had no need to appeal to popular sentiment.⁹

⁷ Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Imperial Germany 1867-1918: Politics, Culture, and Society in an Authoritarian State*, trans. Richard Deveson, (London: Arnold, 1995), passim.

⁸ Confino, p. 53.

⁹ Ibid., p. 32.

Section Two—Theoretical Issues

Because of the atrocities Germans committed in the twentieth century, it is certainly worth examining the educational indoctrination of the generations that cheered on the advent of war in 1914 and that later either supported or tolerated Hitler in unbearably large numbers. Were those who glorified militarism and violence simply naïve and stupid? Do the shame and outrage caused by massive defeat in 1918, the widespread feeling of not having really lost the war, economic depression and the social chaos of the 1920s and 1930s account for Hitler's rise to power? Or was there something sick in the culture itself that made Germans in this period especially susceptible to authoritarian thinking and right-winged fascism? These questions will probably never be answered to satisfaction. One cannot carry out a laboratory experiment, putting Germans, French, and Spaniards into separate cages to see whether they react differently to the same social and economic stimuli. This difficulty, however, has not stopped important thinkers from venturing answers which are still influential to historiographical debates today.

Ralf Dahrendorf, for instance, argues in a classic work of the *Sonderweg* school that Germany took a long-delayed and distorted path to an inevitable modernity. Dahrendorf assumes that industrialization necessitated a move towards modernity, which, for him, involves dynastic subjects becoming citizens of a nation who enjoy equality of opportunity as well as and political and economic freedoms. While French and English men developed the rights and the mentality of equal citizens as society went through

these vast economic and technological changes, Germans remained subjects in an authoritarian and hierarchical state.

In this analysis, Adolf Hitler was not an accident of history who can be explained by the Versailles Treaty or the Great Depression, but was rather “a German phenomenon” and the “supreme proof of any diagnosis.”¹⁰ Dahrendorf’s central argument is that Hitler’s “revolution” ironically paved the way for Germany to finally modernize: the National Socialists were able to come to power in 1933 through a temporary alliance with traditional conservative forces, but once in power, through the *Gleichschaltung* (the centralization of the state and alignment of all organizations to the Nazi party), partially destroyed traditional regional and class allegiances, a painful step necessary in the transition of any society to modernity. Once the *Volksgenosse* had entered the stage, the emergence of the citizen was made much easier, he writes; “National Socialism completed for Germany the social revolution that was lost in the faultings of Imperial German and again held up by the contradictions of the Weimar Republic.”¹¹ Modernization was an unintended by-product of Hitler’s revolution, and its effects were profoundly tragic because of Germany’s long delay in finally entering the modern age.¹²

Dahrendorf might be faulted for holding up an idealized notion of liberal democracy against which he compares German society, without acknowledging that liberal societies too in practice tend to possess pockets of oppression and injustice, and often much inequality of opportunity. In fact, many other thinkers have developed different views of Imperial Germany. The historian Wolfgang Mommsen, for instance,

¹⁰ Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1965, 1967), p. 385.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 402.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 403.

has described the changes occurring after German unification as “modernization without democratization,” and maintains that the Empire certainly had the potential to become more democratic, as other Western nations did, with there being nothing inherently aberrant in Imperial Germany.¹³ Mommsen focuses on the positive developments made under Bismarck, including the establishment of a liberal judicial system and a democratically-elected parliament. Mommsen argues that Germany became more modern under Bismarck by developing into an “an integral nation-state.” German society in the 1890s was “inexorably becoming more democratic,” he writes.¹⁴

Mack Walker views Germany’s inability to fully modernize as holding a key to the rise of National Socialism. Walker believes that National Socialism’s popularity derived in part from a yearning for an organic wholeness which many Germans believed was to be found in the home town:

similarities between the home town and the theory and practice of National Socialism are obvious, and they often serve to distinguish the latter form the other modern political movements to which it is readily compared. The pogroms and political persecutions of the Third Reich are quite on the pattern of hometown drives after groundrabbits and outsiders, now elevated into national state policy.¹⁵

Walker describes National Socialism as containing both modern elements and traditional values. It writes that it was “a revolutionary effort to accommodate community with modernity on a national scale” whose “political success came from the conversion of hometown bigotries into national virtues.”¹⁶

¹³ Mommsen, p. 5.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁵ Mack Walker, *German Home Towns: Community, State, and General Estate 1648-1871* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1971, 1998), pp. 427-8.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 428.

Dahrendorf does not provide the only way of looking at the problem. And certainly an examination of school books in one region of the Reich will certainly not prove or disprove his *Sonderweg* thesis. Making judgments about what effect school lessons had on the later rise of the Third Reich is absurd. This would require an in-depth study of books across various cultures, as well as evidence of how the books were received by pupils, a task far beyond the reaches of this paper. Whether the textbooks under examination here had any effect on the development of the minds of people who cheered, or did not sufficiently reject, Hitler's hateful rantings, remains unanswered. One can, however, argue that the authoritarian and chauvinistic tone of the books under review here appears to be consistent with the development of authoritarian personalities. And the simple fact that the people who followed Hitler were opening these books and reading from them as young children gives us reason to pause and to look further at what image of history and society they transmitted. Dahrendorf is significant in that he poses a controversial question that can perhaps never be answered, but nonetheless invites us to reflect and debate.

The importance of history lessons on the larger society is stressed in the work of Marc Ferro, who has studied history lessons throughout many cultures. According to his argument, people across all societies tend to maintain throughout adult life the mental image of the world conveyed to them in childhood. This image we have of ourselves and others is "connected to historical images that were conveyed to us when we were children."¹⁷ Historical knowledge more than anything else shapes the "collective

¹⁷ Marc Ferro, *Geschichtsbilder: Wie die Vergangenheit vermittelt wird. Beispiele aus aller Welt*, trans. Annette Böltau, (Frankfurt and New York: Campus Verlag, 1981, 1991), p. 11.

consciousness” of each society.¹⁸ In the case of Germany, he notes that the heroic medieval Rhineland myths depicted in Richard Wagner’s operatic works served the function of uniting Germans around a heroic self-image.¹⁹

Another scholar who studies textbooks, Frances Fitzgerald, has examined history textbooks used in United States in the second half of the twentieth century. Fitzgerald has identified a number of features which bear great resemblance to nineteenth-century German textbooks (and very likely to textbooks across a number of societies). For example, she describes American schoolbooks of the 1950s and 1960s as having “the demeanor and trappings of authority”: they present information in such a way as to suggest that that they offer an unquestionable and holistic truth of the world.²⁰

Fitzgerald also points out that the American textbooks are “humorless,” a point which she unfortunately does not analyze in any depth. However, certainly there is a connection between the authoritative tone and lack of humor. Humor and irony derive from looking at a situation from two perspectives simultaneously. Any degree of playfulness or humor would imply that the truth of the subject could not be grasped completely or that it is possible to see an object from two perspectives at once. Those who laugh perceive the gap between literal meaning and ironic meaning; the space between the two is to be revealed in. Just as Muslims are not taught to find anything funny in the Koran or Christians in the New Testament, children are not usually asked to laugh at schoolbooks. Only when you loosen your grip on the truth can you begin to chuckle at

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 124.

²⁰ Frances FitzGerald, *America Revised: History Schoolbooks in the Twentieth Century* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), p. 7.

textual absurdities and discrepancies. This is certainly not the tone used by those conveying the truth of the world to succeeding generations.

Fitzgerald makes the useful observation, certainly true, that students forget much of the detail of what they read in schoolbooks, stressing that facts alone do not affect worldviews profoundly: "What sticks to the memory from those textbooks is not any particular series of facts, but an atmosphere, an impression, a tone."²¹ Thus the content of school lessons transmitted to children greatly influences the development of personalities throughout any given society. A certain feeling for the truth works deeply to form individual character. This may provide some clue to understanding how the chauvinistic and authoritarian tone in Württemberg's textbooks could have subtly seeped into those young, not yet fully formed minds, creating a widespread susceptibility to a nationalism even more chauvinistic than the one they had grown up on.

Fitzgerald also provides useful justification for studying textbooks as historical documents:

No matter what degree of influence the texts actually have on children, they have their own intrinsic interest as historical documents. For they are not, like other books, works of single authors. Many people have a hand in writing them, and they are tailored to please a public that extends even beyond the vast educational establishment. Consensus documents, they are themselves a part of history, in that they reflect the consensus, the conventional wisdom, and even the fads of the age that produced them.²²

²¹ Ibid., p. 18.

²² Ibid., p. 20.

Section Three – The Schools

The historiography on Germany which has developed in the post-World War II period has often emphasized the authoritarian nature of society during the Second Empire in an attempt to find in that era the origins of Nazism. Seeing the roots of Hitler's dictatorship in the German Empire, many such scholars depicted schools as the breeding ground for increasingly strident *völkish* views. A number of scholars have stressed that teachers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in numbers disproportionate with the rest of society, were members of various nationalist organizations such as the Pan Germans. George Mosse, for instance, argues that education played a greater role than any other force in institutionalizing *völkish* ideology.²³ He describes the years leading up to World War I as an age in which racist and xenophobic thinking became more prominent in Germany and developed greater influence through a number of institutions such as fraternities and youth organizations. Mosse writes: "Before 1918 the Volk-centered ideology penetrated one of the most important of such institutions, the educational establishment."²⁴

More recently, however, some scholars have described teleological explanations, ones which find that all dominant historical currents led to Hitler, as too simplistic. Historians of late have been finding that political indoctrination was not as heavy-handed as had previously been believed, and that the extent to which education was used as a tool

²³ George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1964, 1998), p. 5, 152.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

of indoctrination varied from region to region.²⁵ Stephen Harp has shown that even in Alsace-Lorraine—which required especially vigorous efforts at integration into the Reich because it had been part of France until 1871—overt patriotic instruction did not dominate the curriculum, but rather existed side-by-side with moral education and the three Rs.

Harp, however, describes many instances in which educators in Alsace Lorraine consciously used educational institutions to generate a deeper sense of nationalism. He quotes one director of a normal school, a teacher training college, who said in the years after German unification:

Love of the fatherland is best cared for when students learn it as young Christians, that is, when it is planted in religious ground and cared for with supernatural means. . . .The most important means that I know of is to teach our young Lorrainers to love their emperor and honor him, just as I have led them every day since the opening of the normal school to pray for the emperor. . . .²⁶

It was a broadly-held belief amongst educators of the time that loyalty to God had to be encouraged in order to create subjects loyal to the emperor. As Harp explains, “the link between loyalty to God and loyalty to the emperor was a strong one, with the former presumably lending legitimacy to the latter.”²⁷ Thus religion and national feeling were stressed in school in Alsace-Lorraine beginning in the 1870s, and were seen as necessary to each other.

School directives imposed in Alsace-Lorraine in the years after annexation are useful guides to understanding what was generally assumed to be the norm in schools

²⁵ Stephen L. Harp, *Learning to be Loyal: Primary Schooling as Nation Building in Alsace and Lorraine, 1850-1940* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998), p. 106.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 137.

²⁷ Ibid.

throughout Germany. Since Prussia had long been a model of superior education in German lands many *Länder* modeled their books and schools on Prussia's achievements. In the case of Alsace-Lorraine, the general assumptions of how an ideal school lesson should be were made explicit by the Prussian government. For example, a regulation of 1874 in Alsace-Lorraine stated that history lessons must be used "to convince teaching candidates that Alsace and Lorraine had shared in the grand cultural and religious movements that had shaped Germany."²⁸ Clearly, at least in Alsace Lorraine, much of the indoctrination began in the normal schools, where teachers themselves were formed, in order that they themselves would inculcate the proper ideas to children when they became teachers. The regulation of 1874 said:

Because the implanting and care of national convictions is one of the most important tasks of the elementary school, history must take such a form as to teach students what they will strive for as teachers of the people. Therefore, in the instruction of the important events in the history of the German fatherland . . . we must get students to believe in the German spirit and in German strength as well as to have them learn to feel . . . as though they are members of the larger whole. [They must] remain loyal to the Emperor and empire with love and honesty, respecting the laws and rights . . . of the fatherland.²⁹

Alsace-Lorraine had special needs, unlike other areas of Germany, where 1871 brought no immediate school reforms. Furthermore, Prussia had power over education in Alsace-Lorraine that it did not have in other *Länder*. The constitution of the North German Confederation in 1867, which was extended to the entire Reich in 1871, provided for the continued control over education by the individual states. And yet in the years that followed, Prussian influence over the states in many areas, including education,

²⁸ Ibid., p. 138. Harp's words.

²⁹ Ibid.

grew stronger because Prussian schools were imitated throughout non-Prussian lands.³⁰

The Reich's leaders, Bismarck and Wilhelm I, did not aim to impose central authority onto the regions.³¹ Bismarck employed repression against Catholics and Socialists.

However, it was not until 1889, when Emperor Wilhelm II decreed that schools indoctrinate children against Social Democracy, that Prussian rulers targeted the schools.³²

The *Volksschule* was an extremely important institution of social control because almost all members of society spent at least some time there. Schools attendance had been common throughout Pietist areas of Württemberg since the seventeenth century. In 1808 King Friedrich of Württemberg decreed that education be mandatory for all boys and girls throughout the kingdom; he was in particular attempting to target Catholic regions, where school attendance was much sparser, in an attempt to better integrate into the kingdom those Catholics in areas newly obtained from Napoleon. Schools, in Württemberg and elsewhere, were conceived from the beginning as a way to indoctrinate children to a specific set of political beliefs and worldview and to integrate them into a political unit.³³

In the nineteenth century, children were legally obligated to attend the *Volksschule* for six to eight years. The *Volksschule* was a very powerful institution because it, more than any other, touched the lives of nearly every member of society,

³⁰ James Albisetti, "Education," in *Imperial Germany*, ed. Roger Chickering (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1996), pp. 144-5.

³¹ Harp, p. 123-4.

³² Marjorie Lamberti, "Elementary School Teachers and the Struggle against Social Democracy in Wilhelmine Germany," in *History of Education Quarterly* (1992), p. 73.

³³ Kennedy, "Lessons and Learners," p. 4.

male and female, rich and poor.³⁴ Although the sexes were separated in some conservative and Catholic areas in Germany, boys and girls attended school together in Württemberg.³⁵ It was also an institution where the children of the bourgeoisie and the lower social classes sometimes mixed briefly. It was not uncommon for the children of the middle and lower classes to attend the first few years of school together. Middle class children, however, usually left the Volksschule after only a few years in order to begin attending the humanistic Gymnasium.³⁶ Gordon Craig has written that the educational system at this time "was structured in a way that effectively kept the masses in their place."³⁷ The system also effectively kept the Protestants and Catholics segregated. In Württemberg separate confessional schools existed into the twentieth century. At the turn of the century, the Jewish population in Württemberg was very small. There were 27 Jewish schools, but only a tiny number, 500 children, attended them at this time.³⁸

³⁴ Ibid., p. 8.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 72.

³⁶ Harp, p. 157.

³⁷ Gordon A. Craig, *Germany: 1866-1945*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 192.

³⁸ Kennedy, "Lessons and Learners," p. 12-3.

Section Four—The Textbooks

The elementary reader, a anthology of moral and religious lessons, history, geography and science, was first used in Württemberg in the 1850s and 1860s: the first Protestant reader was published in 1854 and the first Catholic reader in 1862. Until the late eighteenth century, the basic educational formula throughout German lands was “*Von der Fibel in die Bibel*” (From the primer to the Bible). That is, after gaining basic literacy from a primer, children began to read the Bible, which was initially the sole purpose of teaching the lower classes to read. In 1776 the Prussian Junker Eberhard von Rochow, recognizing a need for stories which would bridge the gap between simple primers and the more complex Biblical writings, wrote a collection of stories for poor rural children, the *Kinderfreund*. The bulk of this book consisted of moralistic stories that taught what good and proper behavior should be. Kennedy puts it thus:

The *Kinderfreund*, with its depiction of a harmonious society that functioned smoothly if people diligently and intelligently performed the duties appropriate to their station, remained popular throughout Germany during the early nineteenth century. The tradition it began remained a powerful influence on books published during the second half of the century.³⁹

That there was a perceived need for special stories written specifically for children at this time is consistent with the Philippe Aries’ work, *Centuries of Childhood*. Aries shows that the concept of childhood as we know it did not exist in the Middle Ages. Throughout the medieval period children were treated with a large degree of indifference, largely because people were reluctant to invest emotionally in children when so few of them

³⁹ Ibid., p. 127.

survived their first years of life. After a short childhood, children became integrated into normal adult life sometime around the age of seven. We find this changing, however, in the seventeenth century, when portraits of children became “numerous and commonplace.” This change marks an important moment in the slow discovery of childhood, which began slowly in the Middle Ages and continued until the nineteenth century.⁴⁰ This change, seen for example in the development of special children’s clothing, also resulted in the development of schools and great importance placed on children’s education.⁴¹ The change from the “von der Fibel in die Bibel” methodology to the establishment of children’s stories in Germany is consistent with the discovery of special childhood needs described by Aries.

In 1836 Württemberg’s state diet urged the Ministry of Education to compile a teaching and reading book for elementary schools. It took many years before the books were successfully compiled and published. Many Pietists protested the notion of a secular reader, fearing it would introduce dangerous ideas to children. It was only when the state agreed to Pietist demands to produce a book dominated by Christian morality that an appointed committee began its work. This, however was interrupted by the Revolution of 1848. During a conservative backlash following the failed revolutions, a new committee, made up largely of clergymen, began to compile the reader. The new committee, however, was more conservative than the earlier committee had been, with two men who had been active in the revolution being removed from the decision-making committee. The group eliminated about half of the selections that had been chosen by the *Vormärz*

⁴⁰ Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 46-7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 413.

committee, removing specifically stories which they said would serve to entertain rather than teach Christian morality. The king approved this reader, the product of a conservative age, in 1854 and it went to press soon after.⁴² The book, however, faced protest from even more conservative Pietists, who called the reader a “godless” book, claiming it would eliminate the primacy of the Bible.⁴³ However, in spite of the fact that the book created controversy when it was first introduced, the obedient subjects of this land eventually gave in and allowed their children to be instructed by it. By 1873 school inspectors confirmed that all children in their districts had the reader.⁴⁴

The state also commissioned a committee made up of Catholic clergymen to compile a reader for Catholic schools. It was finally published in 1862, after many years of disagreement among committee members. Catholic schools, however, adopted the book without any protest, largely because Catholic education had never focused exclusively (or very much at all) on Biblical study. It was therefore not considered a dangerous distraction. Both the Protestant and Catholic readers underwent very minor revision until only a few years before World War I. The Protestant reader was rewritten in 1910, and the Catholic reader was rewritten in 1907. Only minor changes were made every few years as new editions went to press, in part because compiling the books initially had taken so long. School administrators also showed some consideration for parents who had to bear the cost of each additional book.⁴⁵

⁴² Kennedy, “Lessons and Learners,” p. 131.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 132

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 133.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 134, p. 125.

The reader was the most important book used in schoolrooms and it was often times the only one, especially in rural areas.⁴⁶ City schools were more likely to supplement the reader with additional texts.⁴⁷ Despite some subtle differences between Catholic and Protestant readers, which will be discussed below, the organization, content and moral tone of the books produced by the two confessions were extremely similar.

The Catholic *Lesebücher* under investigation, written for the older pupils, those in their fourth to seventh year of school, transmit a holistic sense of life, in which morality, history, religion, and even health regulations are all part of a whole, and in which all the parts cannot be neatly separated.⁴⁸ The reader is outwardly organized into three main parts: The first, "God and Man," includes moral lessons, fables, and religious poems. The second part, "The Universe," includes geography lessons, a description of nature, with individual sections on the moon, the four seasons, bees, oak trees, etc. It also includes a description of the local region ("The Swabian Jura", "The Black Forest"), descriptions of other German-speaking lands ("The Kingdom of Austria", "The Kingdom of Prussia"), as well as descriptions of the rest of the world, China, Jerusalem, Australia, etc. Part two ends with a section on natural science, with subsections on wind, water, light, electricity and the magnet, among other things. The third section, "History," begins with a statement on the dignity and worth of man, a summary of the Biblical rendition of God's creation of man and Jesus Christ's redemption of mankind.

⁴⁶ Katharine D. Kennedy, "Regionalism and Nationalism in South German History Lessons," in *German Studies Review*, 1989, p. 12.

⁴⁷ Harp, p. 109.

⁴⁸ *Lesebuch für die Katholischen Volksschulen Württembergs* (Stuttgart: Rümelin Verlag, 1862).

The Protestant readers are very similar in style, organization, and spirit to the Catholic readers. As one would imagine, sections on Martin Luther are present in the Protestant readers, while the Catholic books include idealized descriptions of various popes throughout history. But overall, in the books published by both confessions, history lessons consist primarily of moral lessons, a mix of history, Biblical, and folk morality, pre-modern in style and tone. In both versions, the history lessons are an anthology of separate lessons arranged chronologically.

Section Five – The First Three Years of School

The readers used in the early years of school do not include history lessons, but are instead replete with religious lessons and poems, moral tales and fables, proverbs, and poems. The Protestant reader, for example, begins with a short religious poem about God, “Alles mit Gott,” a reminder that God is the starting point and backbone of all other learning:

Mit dem Herrn fang alles an!
Mut wird dir dein Helfer senden.
Froh wirst du dein Werk vollenden,
denn es ist mit Gott getan.
Mit dem Herrn fang alles an!⁴⁹

A typical lesson is “Contentment” (*Zufriedenheit*), which teaches children to be thankful for what they have in life, no matter how little that might be. It recounts the story of a man who was so poor that he was forced to go barefoot. He felt deeply ashamed that he didn’t have enough money to buy shoes until he met another even more unfortunate than himself: “I went very sadly into a temple and met a man there who had no feet. When I saw him, I felt very satisfied with my bare feet and I thanked my God very sincerely that I, though without shoes, could still walk. The unfortunate man would have gladly gone barefoot if he had just had feet.”⁵⁰

With such lessons, the readers attempted to indoctrinate society’s members to be thankful for what they had, no matter how little it might be. Children were told to always compare themselves to those who have less, not more. Lessons like these encouraged

⁴⁹ *Lesebuch für die Evangelischen Volksschulen Württembergs. Erster Teil, Für die Mittelstufe.* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1908), p.1.

⁵⁰ *Lesebuch für die Evangelischen Volksschulen Württembergs. Erster Teil – für die Mittelstufe,* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1905), p. 5.

children, primarily poorer children, to accept the status quo, not to question social inequalities, and not to expect any of the privileges enjoyed by the more fortunate. Such lessons very often use religion to instill a sense of social passivity and obedience.

In "The Grateful Son" (*Der Dankbare Sohn*), a poor, ten-year-old boy, Martin, goes to a farmer looking for work. When the farmer agrees to pay him 12 marks to watch over his cattle all summer long, Martin has a special request:

I want to work very hard, Martin said. But I beg of you, give me what I earn every Saturday. At home I have a poor, old father and I want to give my earnings to him every week. The farmer took great pleasure at such filial love and gladly agreed; he even increased the wages of this good boy. And every Saturday, with great joy, Martin took home his earnings and the bread that he could spare his own mouth.⁵¹

Patriarchal principles, self-sacrifice and diligence are clearly encouraged here. Both farmer and boy are models of proper morality, each person carrying out the duties of his position in the proper way. Martin, likely of good Pietist stock, wants to work hard; the labor itself and the satisfaction derived from providing for his father are all the reward he needs. He certainly seeks no pleasure for himself. In this idealized situation, the person without power has the duty to work, sacrifice, and care for the sick father at home, while the person in authority—the farmer—has the moral duty to reward diligence and filial obedience. It was a typical Pietist belief that members of each of station in life must fulfill their proper duties to others in an attempt to serve the common weal. Although the powerless are required to work and do what is expected of their low position, we see here and elsewhere that those with power over others are expected to use it properly and fairly. (Poor little Martin's wage hike certainly could not have been very substantial, however, if

⁵¹ Ibid.

he still had to put aside a part of his own meals to feed his decrepit father.) Such lessons suggest that there would be reason to trust that superiors will treat their workers with fairness and generosity. This story takes on a disturbing tone if we remember how much exploitation of the poor and powerless occurred, and that it was probably often unrealistic to expect benevolent treatment from one's superiors. Nonetheless, here we see an idealized image of those in inferior and superior positions.

Many of the moral lessons are set in natural surroundings, often with animals as the protagonists. Swallows, in particular, are frequently found in stories and poems, praised for their duty and hard work: swallows in the Protestant reader aimed at small children are said to devote all of their energy to building nests and gathering food for their young.

The swallow is a good little bird. It flies around all day, builds its nest and looks for food for its young. In the autumn it leaves, returning in the spring. This cheerful little animal flies through the air all day long and is thankful to be alive. It catches flies for itself and its young, and this is quite proper. But it also eats bees, and we think it could do without this.⁵²

The author of this passage was likely frustrated that his powers were limited to instilling a sense of propriety in small children.

Moral tales are not limited to the lower classes. Even in the higher grades, the readers books remain largely composed of moral lessons. For example, the Catholic reader for the higher classes ends with a list of proverbs, most of which transmit ethical and religious values. Here is a sampling:

⁵² *Lesbuch für die Evangelischen Volksschulen Württembergs. Erster Teil, Für die Mittelstufe* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1908), p.7-8.

"It is better to suffer a wrong than commit a wrong."

"Too much is unhealthy." (You can have too much of a good thing.)

"It is better to be poor in honor than rich in shame."

"One man, one word."

"A clear conscience, a soft pillow." (One can sleep more easily with a clear conscience.)

"Opportunity makes the thief."

"Diligence brings bread, laziness poverty." (In German, "Fleiß bringt Brot, Faulheit Noth." Many of these proverbs rhyme in the original.)

"It is better to lose possessions and blood than to swear a false oath."

"Borrowing brings worries." ("Borgen macht Sorgen.")

"A sheep with mange infects the entire herd."

"Tell me with whom you associate, and I will tell you who you are."

Certainly Americans today would recognize much that is familiar, even "true," in some of these proverbs because we are heir to many of the intellectual and religious currents that produced such thinking. For example, who would disagree that borrowing a lot of money will bring only worries? Shakespeare also immortalized this notion in *Hamlet*. One could certainly imagine many harmless applications of such ideas. However, taking the last two proverbs to heart could easily provide justifying the exclusion of those labeled undesirable or dirty by the larger society. In this sense, many of the messages here are somewhat ambiguous. We find here a number of other sayings

that praise the value of faithfulness to one's word, simplicity, and hard work.⁵³ Certainly nineteenth-century artisans and peasants has a number of proverbs and sayings which were irreverent, sexual, disrespectful of ruling authorities. But no such sayings make it to the pages of our moralistic schoolbooks. Instead, the message here is aimed at creating honest, hardworking, obedient *Untertanen*. Children are told: work hard, don't ask for too much from superiors, don't enjoy yourself too much, honor your parents, accept your station in life.

James Van Horn Melton sheds much light on the purpose of education by looking at the roots of schooling in Prussia and Austria, particularly as they developed into absolutist states. He argues that as the Austrian and Prussian state bureaucracies grew more powerful in the eighteenth century, they sought methods of coercion which would involve people controlling themselves from the inside rather than them being coerced from the outside.⁵⁴ He writes: "It is my contention that this search for more subjective and effective modes of coercion was a defining feature of absolutist social policy in eighteenth-century Prussia and Austria." In his study he identifies a "shift in the technology of social discipline, whereby the locus of coercions was to be transferred from outside to inside the individual."⁵⁵

Van Horn Melton writes that some cultural theorists, most notably Michel Foucault and Norbert Elias, believe that absolutism brought about the transformation from external control mechanisms to internalized regulation of social behavior; for both of these thinkers, this process itself defines the very essence of modernity. However, Van Horn Melton also

⁵³ *Lesebuch für die Katholischen Volksschulen* (1862), p. 396-7.

⁵⁴ James Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xix.

stresses that one should not exaggerate the importance we give to internal controls, arguing that these existed in the Middle Ages and that force and violence continued to be important tools of control, as evidenced by the expansion of standing armies in eighteenth-century Prussia and Austria.⁵⁶ But enlightened rulers wanted subjects to render obedience out of love for the state, not because they were forced to do so. This is where schools entered the picture. Van Horn Melton argues that absolutist states in this era increasingly took control of schools, previously controlled by church leaders, in order to create obedient subjects. Literacy was crucial to the development of the "moral autonomy of the subject."⁵⁷

The origins of schools go ever further back, however. In the sixteenth century, Martin Luther viewed education as critical to the success of the Protestant Reformation. He urged the rulers of Protestant territories throughout the Holy Roman Empire to provide religious and catechistic instruction to children. Protestant princes dutifully responded by requiring pastors in their territories to establish and maintain parish schools. In an act of counter-Reformation, Catholic princes followed suit, instructing priests to offer religious instruction in their parishes.⁵⁸ The schools founded on Luther's principles did not teach children to read and write, however, because Luther himself perceived lay readership of the Bible as dangerous. Instead, they taught singing, prayers and the catechism. However, after the Thirty Years War, two powerful forces further influenced the development of schools in important ways.

The first force, Pietism, strongly encouraged lay reading of the Bible. Pietists, in fact, worked very actively to establish schools and printing presses. "Pietist pedagogy, like

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. xx.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. xxii.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 5.

Pietist theology, blended devotional inwardness with an emphasis on the individual's social obligations. One of the most important of these duties was obedience to authority."⁵⁹

Pietistic pedagogical principles were later very appealing to absolutist rulers, who essentially shared the same goals for their subjects: to instill moral autonomy, obedience and diligent work habits.

The appeal of Pietist pedagogy to absolutist reformers lay in its simultaneous promotion of submission and autonomy. Pietism provided a pedagogy that encouraged both activity and passivity, entrepreneurial enterprise and an acceptance of existing social and political structures. It represented, in short, a pedagogical compromise between the demands of state-building and a hierarchical social and political order.⁶⁰

In Württemberg, the state required children to attend school in 1649, as a way of restoring order at the end of the Thirty Years War. Attendance, however was irregular and many villages were unable or unwilling to meet requirements to set up schools. It was indeed only under the influence of Pietists that elementary education expanded dramatically in the eighteenth century.⁶¹ Thus a long tradition of mass education already existed in Protestant areas of Württemberg when the King Friedrich declared in the early nineteenth century that school attendance be mandatory for all boys and girls between the ages of six and fourteen.⁶²

The second force in the seventeenth century which would influence the development of schooling was the baroque political science of cameralism. The practitioners of this science, cameralists, claimed that every social group should receive a different kind of education, the lower orders requiring enough indoctrination to become

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 40.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 59.

⁶¹ Kennedy, "Lessons and Learners," p. 3.

⁶² Ibid.

obedient and diligent subjects without encouraging them to want to study further.⁶³ Since these thinkers played an active role in the growing state bureaucracy, many of these ideas became institutionalized. Van Horn Melton sums up by saying that school reform in eighteenth-century Prussia and Austria “created a foundation on which the rapid expansion of public education in the nineteenth century could build.”⁶⁴ Pietism established the goal of universal literacy, and rulers began to assume direct financial responsibility and control over education. Absolutist states also established compulsory schooling as the norm. The author ends with a look at the ironies involved: over the long run absolutist school reforms did not succeed in eliminating social disorder, but seemed to add to it. Ultimately, literacy in the Habsburg realm sped up the development of nationalistic, anti-Habsburg sentiment and other forms of chaos, such as the liberalism that sparked the revolutions of 1848.⁶⁵ “The legacy of absolutism’s promotion of rural industry was not the disciplined cottage laborer, but the pauperized spinners and weavers in Silesia and Bohemia who revolted in the 1840s. And the heritage of school reform was less the docile pupil than it was the defiant schoolmaster,” he writes, referring to the fact that teachers, highly educated but rather poorly paid civil servants in the *Vormärz* period, revolted in large numbers in 1848.⁶⁶

⁶³ Van Horn Melton., p. 114.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 234.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 235.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 239.

Section Six – History Lessons in the Higher Grades

History lessons, introduced to the readers used in the fourth to seventh years of schools, can most accurately be described as moral lessons in the guise of history. In any case, all history lessons contained a religious maxim, and did not serve to analytically and critically examine the past. The moralistic nature of the history selections, and even the lack of separation between moral lesson and historical account, can be seen in the first history lesson in the Catholic readers, on the ancient Romans. The early Romans are viewed as worthy of admiration because of their simple, but honorable, customs and morals. Here is part of the passage on the Romans:

In the 510th year after the building of the city of Rome, the Romans already ruled over all of Italy, and little by little they made such large conquests in Europe, Asia and Africa that almost all of what was then known of the earth fell under their dominion. This was the result of their bravery that defined them above all else, their simple, strict habits and their perseverance with which they bore every pain inflicted in war. Their bodies were hardened, their clothing and their food were simple, their homes and palaces built only from clay, the city streets still unpaved. This is how the Romans were in the first centuries of their free state.

But many families enriched themselves on the enormous booty that they later brought home from conquered lands. They established sumptuous palaces, possessed country estates and held hundred of slaves. Greed, opulence and extravagant wastefulness got the upper hand and the good old customs disappeared. The rich now used their wealth to bribe the poor in order to obtain public offices and took all the power for themselves. Parties and bloody civil wars emerged that brought misery to the people. The republic came to an end.

Finally the most powerful of the powerful, Augustus, succeeded in becoming sole ruler of the Roman Empire. During the reign of the powerful Roman ruler, Jesus Christ our Savior was born in Bethlehem. Under Augustus's successors, the power of the Romans disintegrated again...⁶⁷

Here military greatness and conquest, as well as Spartan-like traditions, are described as admirable. It is described as a sin to enjoy wealth and leisure, but a mark of virtue to engage in military conquests. The positive physical image of the hardened

⁶⁷ *Lesebuch für die Katholischen Volksschulen Württembergs*, (1862), p. 317.

bodies of the Romans and the praise of military conquests clash oddly with the reference to "Jesus Christ our Savior." There are many other instances where conquest and military virtues are held up as admirable and the idle rich are treated as negative examples. The section on Charlemagne, "a true German man," tells us what kind of moral values were expected of children in the late nineteenth century.⁶⁸ Charlemagne is praised for his temperance in food and drink, for wielding the sword to bring Christianity to the Saxons, and for his love of learning and knowledge. In one anecdote Charlemagne shows up unannounced at one of the court schools he had established for the children of the nobility and the bourgeoisie. He finds that the rich children are idle and lazy, while the poorer ones are hard at work. He praises the poor but diligent students, telling them they have fulfilled all his wishes, and scolds the others. Perhaps this is merely a lesson to encourage poor children to be diligent. But here, as in other places, one finds the idea that the central authority figure (emperor, king, or pope) deserves loyalty and obedience, while the rich and idle ruling class corrupts with its pursuit of pleasure. Pleasure and idleness are the worst of sins, even in the Catholic textbooks, an indication that the Pietist ethic had set the tone throughout the region. In this passage we also find monarchical conservatism existing side-by-side with the educated middle class ethos of rising through the ranks. This is not surprising since these books were anthologies and products of consensus between religious thinkers and civil servants. The books themselves resulted from negotiations between various elements of society.

Passages on the ancient Germans convey the nineteenth-century conception of the roots of German ethnicity. The ancient Germans were described as idolaters who

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 334.

worshipped the sun, moon, fire and thunder, and who sacrificed human beings to a God of whom they had no true knowledge. The virtues of the ancient Germans had not yet been perfected because they were still pagans, yet they were virtuous in many ways, despite their brutal practice of human sacrifice. The text praises them not only for their courage, but also for being very loyal to their prince. For example, they felt it to be a disgrace to survive if their prince had fallen in battle, and would continue fighting even when there was no hope for victory until the last man lost his life. The main thrust of this section is to praise the ancient Germans for their many virtues. Although lacking culture and true religion they displayed many honorable tendencies, including a belief in life after death. More than anything else, they were paragons of physical superiority, described in a chauvinistic tone which brings to mind the later Nazi myth of Aryan superiority:

The inhabitants of this still harsh land, the old Germans, stood out from all other peoples by their size and beauty. Since they all originated from the same tribe, an admirable similarity in their facial features prevailed. They were all radiant and rosy in the face, had beautiful blond hair and light blue eyes. They were slender in stature and nearly a head taller than the inhabitants of other lands. The men dressed themselves in animal skins, though their neck and chest remained bare. The women and maidens (*die Weiber und Jungfrauen*) also wore furs during the winter, but in the summer they wore white cloth dresses adorned with crimson ribbons.⁶⁹

This particular passage, which bears similarities with Tacitus' description of ancient Germans in *Germania*, was authored by a certain Christoph Schmid, who lived from 1768 to 1854 and earned renown for writing children's stories, including many legends and stories which took place in the world of chivalry.⁷⁰ The fairy tale element of these so-called history lessons can be found in many other passages. In any case, it is

⁶⁹ *Lesebuch für die Katholischen Volksschulen* (1862), p. 318-9.

⁷⁰ "Schmid, Christoph" in *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie* (Wiesbaden: F. A. Brockhaus, 1973), p. 758.

very tempting to argue that there is a clear line from this provincial and chauvinistic passage to the Nazi glorification of "Aryans." Mosse in fact argues that the growth of *völkish* thought in the decades before Hitler came to power created an easy acceptance of Hitler's revolutionary message.⁷¹

There is probably much truth to the fact that some ideas fed into National Socialism, even paved its way. But it is too simple to speak of direct causality, because there are other ideas here which would have been rejected by Nazis. For example, in some cases other peoples are also described in positive terms. For example, a passage called "Muhammad and the Arabs," says of Arabs: "most of them are physically attractive, good-natured, especially hospitable, of lively spirit and receptive to education."⁷² Considering the "Turks at the gates" mentality that had long reigned, this passage strikes one as fairly tolerant. Alongside references to Germanic superiority we also find passages praising other peoples. Although there is a chauvinistic tone in these books, there is also something ambiguous and contradictory, suggesting that the distorted path that Germany eventually took was not yet foreordained in the late nineteenth century.

Turning to the Protestant reader used in the same higher grades of the *Volksschule*, we find a passage entitled "A good son who, in good fortune, was not ashamed of his poor parents" (*Ein guter Sohn, der im Glück sich nicht seiner geringen Eltern schämt*), which tells the story of captain Kurzhagen, the son of poor farmers, who achieved success serving in Frederick the Great's army. After Kurzhagen returned home

⁷¹ Mosse, *Crisis of German Ideology*, p. 292, 310.

⁷² *Lesebuch für die Katholischen Volksschulen* (1862), p. 329.

at the conclusion of the Seven Years War, his parents moved into his home. Kurzhagen allowed his parents to be present when he invited high-ranking guests to dinner. On one occasion one of his guests, an officer, mocked him for sitting at the same table with his parents, who were but simple farmers. Kurzhagen defended himself, stating, "Before I became the King's cavalry captain, I was their child."⁷³ Eventually, the good general under whom the captain had fought was also a guest of Kurzhagen's after having heard of the incident. When he did not find the parents, who had hidden away because they felt too ashamed to sit at the table with distinguished guests, the general called for them, asking them to sit next to him, one on each of his sides. Eventually the general relates the story to the king himself:

At a later time, the general had the opportunity to tell the king about the respect the cavalry captain showed to his parents, and Friedrich II was very happy about it. When Kurzhagen went to Berlin one day he was brought to the king's table. To find out about his[Kurzhagen's]feelings the king said to him: listen, captain, from which house do you come? Who are your parents? Eternal majesty, answered Kurzhagen with no embarrassment. I come from a farmer's hut and my parents are farmers, with whom I share my good fortune that I have your majesty to thank for. The king took pleasure in this and said this is how it should be: whoever respects his parents is an honorable man. Whoever does not hold his parents in high regard does not deserve to be born.⁷⁴

The passage concludes with the biblical injunction to honor father and mother. Similar to many other passages in the readers, historical analysis is completely absent here. There is no account or analysis of Frederick II's military campaigns or territorial expansion. There is no explanation for, or results of, either the Seven Years War or other Prussian military campaigns. Rather than instill in pupils a broad historical understanding

⁷³ *Lesebuch für die Evangelischen Volksschulen Württembergs*, (Stuttgart: Druck und Verlag von Eduard Hallberger, 1874), pp. 371.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 371-2.

of German and world history, the lessons clearly serve to reinforce traditional religious values. In this case children are taught to respect their parents, and by extension, veneration for all authority and hierarchy. Such principles must be reinforced at all levels, beginning in the family. Obedient sons grow up to become obedient soldiers or subjects, simply transferring their obedience from father to ruler. This philosophy is stated very explicitly in a passage by Martin Luther entitled "The Household is the Foundation of the State" (*Der Hausstand ist die Grundlage des Staats*): "Where obedience is not respected in households, one will never manage to rule over a city, land, principality or kingdom; for that is the first regiment which provides the origin for other regiments and powers."⁷⁵

The dynastic principle is also strongly reinforced here. Frederick II's most prominent features are fairness and benevolence. The story indicates that it is certainly possible for a person of low birth to rise to a certain level in the king's army. Furthermore, although a man of low birth might rise to a higher position, another implied message here seems to be that he should never forget where he came from; he shouldn't reject his former status, but remain ever cognizant of it. The last point worth noting is that this lesson, taught in Württemberg long before Germany was unified, involves both a Prussian captain, general, and king as embodiments of moral virtue.

Benedict Anderson, in his influential and oft-quoted work on nationalism, has written that monarchical societies lie "transverse to all modern conceptions of political life. Kingship organizes everything around a high centre. Its legitimacy derives from

⁷⁵ *Lesebuch für die Evangelischen Volksschulen Württembergs*, (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1893), p.181.

divinity, not from populations, who after all, are subjects, not citizens.”⁷⁶ Applying Anderson’s principle, we see that the ethos of the readers is pre-modern and lies counter to modern, popular nationalism. It is therefore consistent and expected that in this pre-bourgeois world, where “solidarities were the products of kinship, clientship, and personal loyalties” children would be encouraged to honor and respect all blood ties, beginning with father and mother and extending through the whole chain of command up to the dynastic leader.⁷⁷

Frequent stories whose main characters hail from beyond Württemberg reflect the prevailing cultural unity that existed long before political unification. It certainly made sense for the compilers of these readers to draw from available texts written in German. Basing readers solely on writings which originated in Württemberg would have meant that the compilers would have had a small pool of literature on which to draw. And as mentioned above, the model for these late nineteenth century readers was a collection of stories written by a Prussian Junker. The cultural and literary uniformity of German lands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did not correspond to the Germany which resulted in 1871. However, the tradition of treating Germany as an idealized whole, despite its disunity, established a pattern of thinking about the whole.

In a manner very typical for these readers, the story on Friedrich II and the captain of peasant stock is immediately followed by a four-page section on the French Revolution. There is no narrative which describes the evolution of European politics from the time of Frederick the Great to the French Revolution. The chronological principle is

⁷⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London and New York: Verso, 1983), pp. 25-6.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

strictly observed, whereas causality is ignored. The fact that these readers are anthologies explains why the historical lessons are discontinuous, even disjointed. The strategy of anthologizing makes less conspicuous that which is absent.

Section Seven – Issues of National Consciousness

An attempt was made to convey the idea that Württembergers had two fatherlands, the state of Württemberg and Germany. Thus the authors propose: "In the same way the state in which we live is our fatherland in the close sense, so too is Germany in the broader sense our fatherland."⁷⁸ Württemberg is often referred to as "das enge Vaterland," suggesting both a geographic as well as a spiritual, emotional nearness. It is taken for granted that the pupils will view Württemberg as their fatherland; the authors of this passage hope that a similar feeling would be transferred to the larger unit of Germany. The reader stresses that even though the inhabitants of Germany are divided into different states, they are united by common customs, laws, and language, that they are "united with each other and are creating in this alliance one people, or to use a foreign word, a nation."⁷⁹ The term nations is still described as foreign because the concept had not yet become reality. Most references to German unity refer to cultural connections, but the political institution of the German Confederation, which met in Frankfurt, was also praised:

The inhabitants of this magnificent land have nothing better to rely on against the envy and arrogance of neighboring peoples than their own strength. Their security rests solely in their cohesion, in their unity, in their moral education. And more than once the inhabitants of Germany have experienced the truth of the old saying: "Concord makes one strong." Therefore, all the states of Germany are building one confederation, the German Confederation, whose purpose is "the maintenance of the foreign and domestic peace of Germany and the inviolability of its individual states." Each of these states sends ambassadors to Frankfurt am Main to the assembly of the Confederation, which concerns itself with the common affairs of Germany.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ *Lesebuch für die Katholischen Volksschulen* (1862), p. 183.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

This passage hints at the complexity of what is meant by Germany, the subtle interplay of the whole with its many “inviolable” parts. It is perhaps the strife between these individual states that led nationalists to use the “aggression” of foreign countries as the main vehicle for creating internal unity. Perhaps many of the textbook compilers harbored hopes of eventual national unity, or perhaps they were merely attempting to generate allegiance to the status quo, the German Confederation. The sense of identity which was encouraged involved multiple allegiances, both to the state of Württemberg, as well as to the larger cultural unit of “Germany.” What is meant by Germany in this textbook is ambiguous, at times referring to the German Confederation, thus excluding Switzerland, and in other passages referring to a *Volk* spread throughout the world. The above-quoted passage refers more to a politically-unified Germany, excluding Switzerland. The following passage, however, implies that Germany is a cultural unity excluding political realities:

It is not only the inhabitants of the German Confederation who are members of the German Volk, but also all those who speak the German language and who follow German customs, whether they live in Switzerland, in Alsace, in Schleswig, in Hungary, or in America.⁸¹

Here being German involves more than anything else belonging to a cultural group. However, we have also seen in the section on ancient Germans that racial attributes are the mark of belong to the *Volk*: blond hair, blue eyes, tall build. In the mid-nineteenth century when these books were being compiled, the definition of what it meant to be German was fluid and unresolved. One finds an overlap of definitions that

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 183-4.

sometimes contradict one another. In any event, once national unification was established by Bismarck in 1871, the step necessary to feel German would have been a fairly small one indeed for people who grew up learning from such books. The result of 1871 introduced a new political reality different from how people had been used to conceiving of Germany, but not radically different, especially since the Second Reich was a federalist system where a large degree of authority remained with the *Länder*.

The regional royal houses, with all their symbols, for example, were never abolished by Prussia. Nevertheless, the manner in which unification came about under Prussian hegemony created a problem of legitimacy, especially in the southern states where "older regional, confessional, and dynastic particularisms" possessed a certain "disruptive potential."⁸² Yet subsequent editions of the textbooks do not contain disparaging views of Prussians. And the unity of Germans is depicted as having very deep roots. For example, Friedrich Barbarossa was a "German emperor" elected by "German princes" in the twelfth century: "Whoever witnessed his manly, proud stance and glowing youthful strength, with his blue piercing eyes and blond hair, with his serious and noble qualities had to admit that this was a real German."⁸³ The fact that there were many references to Germany, the fatherland, and medieval German unity, provides an explanation for how *Heimat* enthusiasts could celebrate national cohesion without having positive feelings towards Prussia.⁸⁴

⁸² Geoff Eley, "State Formation, Nationalism and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century Germany," in *Culture, Ideology, and Politics: Essays for Eric Hobsbawm*, ed. Raphael Samuel and Gareth Stedman Jones (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), p. 283.

⁸³ *Lesebuch für die Katholischen Volksschulen* (1862), p. 344.

⁸⁴ Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 13.

Published before the unification of Germany, this textbook conveys a sense that Germany is both a whole, as well as a sum of its various parts. All in all, the books describe Germany as a benign, nurturing and beautiful land, frequently stressing that Germany stretches from the North and Baltic Seas in the north, to Switzerland and Italy in the south, from France, Holland and Belgium in the west, to Russia, Poland, Hungary and Galicia in the east. The beauty and fertility of "Deutschland" are frequently praised, along with descriptions of mountains and landscape, tree varieties, and animals. "No rapacious animal frightens us, no poisonous worm threatens, no ugly vermin pesters humans."⁸⁵

The concept of Germany which is conveyed has both political and cultural dimensions, including all those peoples possessing German culture, but excluding the Swiss. The Swiss were excluded from this conception probably because they had enjoyed political independence for so many centuries that it was universally recognized that their separateness from Germany was permanent. One finds an attempt to convey not only the beauty of the land, but also the natural endowments of the German people.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 180-3.

Section Eight—Some Religious Differences

A particularly divisive issue in the 1870s was that of the *Kulturkampf*.

Württemberg, however, was immune to much of the tension generated elsewhere by Bismarck's anti-Catholic policies. Protestants in Württemberg had never felt threatened by Catholics, a result of the fact that Protestants had long been dominant, maintaining strong state control over Catholics. Thus the Protestant population was not inclined to see Catholics as a threat. The *Kulturkampf* was generally viewed in this region as a Prussian affair not consistent with the democratic traditions of Württemberg.⁸⁶ Additionally, many Protestants in Württemberg, which had sided with Austria in 1866, shared *großdeutsch* aspirations, hoping to establish a unified nation including Austria. They had long felt a common bond with Catholics. In sum, it appears that religion was not a source of social division in Württemberg.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, we do find a few differences between the Protestant and Catholic textbooks. Overall, the spirit, tone, organization and content are extremely similar. As can be expected, we find a number of passages in the Protestant textbooks by or about Luther. We also find passages praising various popes in the Catholic readers. For example, in a section on Attila the Hun, we find that after Attila had devastated many cities in Italy, "all the inhabitants of Rome had lost their courage, but Pope Leo the Great did not."⁸⁸ In this narrative and others, it is the pope who heroically comes to the aid of the people.

⁸⁶ Confino, p. 22.

⁸⁷ Confino, pp. 15-6.

⁸⁸ *Lesebuch für die Katholischen Volksschulen* (1862), p. 328.

It will perhaps be instructive to examine how the French Revolution is depicted differently in the Catholic and Protestant readers, for it is a powerful symbol, the interpretation of which is bound to reveal something of the educators' views on aristocracy, church, democratic principles, and of modernity itself. In fact, we find that the manner in which these events are narrated do indeed vary on a number of significant points. It is safe to say that both versions express aversion to the events which took place in France at the end of the eighteenth century. However, the Protestant version offers a more complete account of historical events, distinguishing between the more moderate and radical phases of the revolution, even offering some justification for the social discontent by describing the corruption which set off events. The Catholic interpretation, in contrast, expresses indignation at the Satanic ideas of the Enlightenment thinkers, without explaining them, focusing wholly on the tragic death of King Louis XVI.

The Protestant version, in a section simply called "The French Revolution," begins with a moralistic look at the background of the revolution:

For centuries France had the misfortune of being ruled by selfish and dissolute princes. From 1643 to 1715 Louis XIV reigned. He laid down the groundwork for the later events that shook France with his tyrannical rule and the many wars he waged against half of Europe, which along with the immoral luxury at court consumed the marrow of the land.⁸⁹

The roots of the French Revolution are said to lie in the egotism and dissipation of French rulers, beginning with Louis XIV, who spent the land's money in wars and in the luxury at court. As in other passages, pleasure derived from luxury is condemned and described as sinful. But unlike other passages, military conquest is also condemned, possibly

⁸⁹ *Lesebuch für die Evangelischen Volksschulen* (1874), p. 372.

because the French at this time turned their armies against the Holy Roman Empire. After Louis XIV, things only got worse: "Under his successor, Louis XV, dissipation at court grew to ghastly levels; Paris became a morass of vice." When Louis XV died, the state was spending much more every year than it received, and finally there was a reaction: "An honest minister finally exposed this situation; a cry of horror went out throughout the whole populace. People called for restrictions and improvements, but it was not very easy because the abuses were uncountable and the nobility and the higher Catholic clergy did not want to do away with them."⁹⁰ The reader continues:

At this point there was no lack of men who attacked these abuses with the weapons of wit, mockery and learning. But they didn't stop with dealing with those abuses, no they even ridiculed and laughed at the holiest things, at religion and Christianity, at decency and morals. And while a large part of the French people had sunken into ignorance and superstition, the other part—that is the educated—found it honorable to believe in nothing and to live without God. It is no wonder that from all this evil a storm gradually moved in that erupted destructively over France. For it was not written in vain: do not err, God does not allow himself to be mocked; for what man sows, he will also reap.⁹¹

Although the luxury and dissipation of French kings began the process which led to the French Revolution, the author of this passage puts a large share of the blame on the Enlightenment thinkers who turned their back on religion.

The storm broke out under Louis XVI, who attempted to benevolently and humanely remedy the evil in a legal manner by summoning the old estates of the empire. But it was too late. The deputies of the middle class, dissatisfied with the position they were supposed to take vis-à-vis the nobility and clergy, made sure that instead of consultations of the three estates, these groups convened as a national assembly, which abolished the privileges of the nobility, confiscated the property of the clergy and called into being a constitution, which the king accepted in 1791 although it limited his power. Indeed, it seemed as if times were going to be happy for France and there was much joy throughout

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 372-3.

the land. But soon, in the next assembly, which is called legislative, those members got the upper hand who were trying to abolish the kingdom completely.

The Protestant narrative condemns luxury, hints that the Catholic clergy were corrupt, and condemns enlightenment thought, without explaining it. Although the tone is pre-modern, one finds some understanding for those who tried to bring about small changes. In contrast to the Protestant version, the Catholic passage is entitled "The execution of Louis XVI" and begins with a warning: "As true as it is that fear of God and a people's virtue create happiness, it is also true that godlessness and depravity lead to a plunge ... into an abyss of destruction."⁹² The disaster in France is said to have had its roots in skepticism:

After disbelief took root deeply in neighboring England a century earlier, it was transplanted by willing disciples later to France as well. Soon the land was flooded by bad books that preached the most burning hatred against God and God-ordained order, the most unbounded freedom of all citizens, the freedom of all estates and open revolt against throne and altar. On top of that, it happened that because of the constant wars of conquest and the wastefulness of the former kings, France's debt had reached a dreadful level, while trade and agriculture were in a very depressed state.⁹³

King Louis XVI, a benevolent king, seriously attempted to put an end to the evil, but it was too late. He himself became "the victim for the sins of his predecessors" when "the Revolution, with all its horrors" broke out. In the Catholic version of events, no sympathy is shown for the ideas of the French Enlightenment, which are referred to simply as "burning hatred against God and God-ordained order."⁹⁴ Rather than being either an account of the causes leading to the revolution or an account of its phases, the Catholic

⁹² *Lesebuch für die Katholischen Volksschulen* (1862), p. 376.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

reader tells, with much pathos, the tragic story of how the good king was executed. After being arrested, pious Louis XVI called his priest to his side, after which he went to mass, where he prayed in deep devotion. Later, on the way to being executed, accompanied by the priest, he continued to pray.⁹⁵ He died almost as a martyr, with a priest on his side calling on Jesus. In the rendition offered here, the king is a Christ-like sacrificial figure, the innocent victim of a wild mob:

The confessional priest knelt down next to him and spoke the words to him: 'son of holy Louis, rise to heaven!' Then the guillotine fell and the head of the innocent king rolled over the scaffold. One of the executioner's assistants held it up triumphantly and showed it to the people, while from all sides shouts of 'long live freedom!' rang out.⁹⁶

In the Catholic version of events, no justification is given for the actions of the revolutionaries. The Protestant text, in contrast, offers a slightly more complex reading of the revolution by focusing on the historical reasons for discontent in France, tracing this to Louis XIV's expensive wars and luxury at court, recounting the course of events from Louis XIV to Napoleon, and by offering some critique of French rulers. The Protestant text maintains that the dissipation of French rulers, excessive wars and luxury at court impoverished France. It also stresses that the nobility and Catholic clergy refused to eliminate uncountable abuses, a point the Catholic reader does not make.⁹⁷ Both versions place a large degree of blame on the dangerous ideas of Enlightenment thinkers, and both stress that the victim of events, Louis XVI, was a benevolent ruler whose goal was to reform the land of the many abuses which had gotten out of control under his reign of his predecessors. Thus, both confessions ultimately stress the dynastic principle. Although

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 377.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 376-8; *Lesebuch für die Evangelischen Volksschulen* (1855), pp. 414-8.

the Protestant version is slightly more complex, it remains pre-modern, even anti-modern in spirit. The outrage expressed is a Pietistic anger at wealth, idleness and pleasure, not a modern, democratic indignity directed at inherited privilege and civic inequality. A certain degree of sympathy is expressed for those who opposed the excesses of the French rulers, but not at the purveyors of modern ideas of freedom and equality. In both renditions, the ideal life is lived under a benevolent, efficient and religious dynastic ruler. Essentially, the ethos of both confession's readers was religious, conservative, pro-dynastic, and strongly anti-modern. For confessional reasons, the Catholic reader stresses the religiosity of the Catholic king while the Protestant reader utterly condemns the extravagant luxury and idleness of court life.

Section Nine – Reception of Textbooks

Historians long took for granted that children simply absorbed the school lessons taught to them. However, in the 1960s social historians began questioning whether an empirical correlation really exists between what children are taught and what they actually learn.⁹⁸ They suggested that people are too complex to always passively accept the indoctrination which ruling classes attempt to impose on them and uncovered examples of subaltern resistance to dominant ideologies. Since then, reception of curricular content has been a disputable issue in the history of education.⁹⁹ We certainly cannot make sweeping generalizations about how millions of individuals took to heart what they heard and read in the classroom, but we can point to hints here and there that indicate how some individuals felt about the nationalist and dynastic messages in the *Lesebücher*.

For example, we have evidence that some parents who supported Social Democracy during the 1880s and 1890s voiced their opposition to the pro-dynastic and anti-democratic messages being conveyed by the books. Moreover, at least some teachers sympathized with these parents and regretted that they could not better meet the needs of working class children who were being told at home to disregard their books' history lessons.¹⁰⁰ This evidence must serve as a warning that children and parents were not passive receptacles for whatever they read or heard. It is also quite significant to note that teachers themselves were a varied group, including liberals and conservative. As a result,

⁹⁸ Harp, p. 145.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Lamberti, *passim*.

the way in which lessons were transmitted in the classroom was bound to vary somewhat depending on the religious and political traditions of the region, its social and religious makeup, the degree to which it had become industrialized, and the degree to which it embraced democratic principles. It is a fairly well-known and often repeated observation that the southwestern state of Baden had been far more influenced by the French Enlightenment thought than had east Elbian Prussia. Furthermore, Imperial Germany was a society of social disunity, with Liberals pitted against Catholics, Junkers against Poles, Social Democrats against conservative monarchists. Because German society was itself so fragmented, the reactions to conservative school lessons was also quite varied. Regular school inspections by government officials and clergymen, however, limited the degree of divergence from the established curriculum within the individual states.

Württemberg, which had also been more influenced by French democratic principles than had Prussia, Austria or Bavaria, was a fairly poor region which did not see much industrialization in this period, thus making it less receptive to Social Democratic ideas. Much of the historical scholarship on Germany focuses on Prussia at the expense of small, less powerful regions. As a result, scant information is readily available on the reception of textbooks in the various areas of Württemberg. Evidence suggests, however, that some parents and teachers opposed the ideological content of history lessons in schoolbooks in some regions of Germany, mainly industrialized areas. The Prussian authorities may have resisted granting democratic reforms, but many members of society themselves harbored great longing for greater democracy and modernity. Germans were not uniformly enthralled by the emperor or dynastic power. Political parties, such as the SPD and the Center Party, struggled against government repression. And the cultural

vibrancy during the Weimar Republic attests to the variety of opposition to uniform power that flourished in the 1920s.

The scholar Friedrich Meinecke also reminds us of the many liberal voices in the late nineteenth century who expressed horror and shock at the aggressive nationalistic path the German state was taking.¹⁰¹ Meinecke offers a somewhat apologetic interpretation of the German catastrophe, one which other scholars, including Dahrendorf, have criticized. Nevertheless, Meinecke is certainly right to note that a multitude of voices existed side-by-side, even in the heyday of Prussian militarism.

We also have much evidence, however, suggesting that the conservative worldview of our schoolbooks found much resonance. Mosse, for example, refers to an incident in *The Nationalization of the Masses* of schoolchildren contributing money to the construction of the *Hermannsdenkmal* in the Teutoburger Wald. In 1863 a sculptor named Ernst von Bandel, who had been pressing since the 1840s for a monument to commemorate the defeat of the Roman Legions by Hermann (Arminius), encouraged school children to help raise funds for his project. His appeal proved to be a success, and part of the immediate popularity of Bandel's monument can be ascribed to the fact that a large element of German youth had participated in its construction."¹⁰² Mosse's overall purpose is to amass evidence for his thesis that the roots of twentieth-century German fascism can be detected in the mass politics of the nineteenth century. He believes that the mass participation of German youth in the building of the nationalist monument

¹⁰¹ Friedrich Meinecke, *The German Catastrophe: Reflections and Recollections*, trans. Sidney B. Fay, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1950), p. 22.

¹⁰² George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 60.

foreshadowed and inspired the monumentalism and mass activism of the Third Reich. In fact, he notes that Hitler, despite disliking the gothic architectural elements in the *Hermannsdenkmal*, admired Bandel's method for raising money.¹⁰³ For our purposes here, the success of Bandel's appeal indicates that the construction of the monument to national liberation found resonance in the minds of children. Many of the nationalistic lessons in the school books were consistent with views accepted by at least some of the population. Deep fissures characterized Imperial Germany; certainly there was no single Weltanschauung to which all would have readily ascribed. Germans at that time responded to the messages in the books much the way Americans in the past decades would react to the patriotic government narratives of the war in Vietnam, with some being fully convinced believers and others finding something diabolical in the dominant ideology.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Section Ten – Changes over Time

The textbooks changed very slowly over time. After the events of 1870-71, a one page addendum was tacked on to the end of the Catholic reader describing recent historical changes. Without giving any background or explanation of why, a short paragraph states that in 1866 Hannover, Kurhessen, Nassau and the free city of Frankfurt were joined to Prussia; that the German Confederation dissolved, with Austria excluding herself from close ties with Germany; and that the southern states of Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden, and a part of Hessen remained connected to the North German Confederation through the *Zollverein* and *Schutz- und Trutzbündnisse*.¹⁰⁴ One sentence is devoted to describing foreign events: the increasing consolidation of the unity of the Kingdom of Italy and Austria's cession of Lombardy-Venetia. Brief mention is also made of changes concerning "our close fatherland of Württemberg," ("unser engeres, württembergisches Vaterland") including the death of King Wilhelm and the accession to the throne of King Karl in 1864, the establishment of new courts, the growth of railroad lines, and population growth.¹⁰⁵ No explicit mention is made of the opposition on the part of Austria and the small German states to Prussian hegemony; nor is mention made of the fact that in 1866 Württemberg fought on the side of Austria, the defeated power, and no explanation or analysis is given for the many political changes. Perhaps the authors were unwilling to admit that Württemberg fought on the side of the losers. Moreover, it is also conceivable that the authors of this passage saw a *kleindeutsch* solution as the only viable alternative for German unity at this point. In any event, after 1871, it became politically

¹⁰⁴ *Lesebuch für die Katholischen Volksschulen Württembergs*, (Stuttgart: Rupfer Verlag, 1870), p. 398.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 398-9.

expedient for Germans to forget that they had waged civil war against each other only five years previously. As Confino puts it, "Prussians needed to forget the victory, citizens of the small German states to forget the defeat, and all to forget Austria."¹⁰⁶

The next edition, 1873, also underwent only small changes, with a 16-page account of the Franco-Prussian War added to the end. The passage begins by harshly defining France as Germany's enemy: "France has always been a dangerous neighbor of Germany's. For centuries she has disturbed the peace and harmony of our fatherland."¹⁰⁷ The passage states that French rulers in the seventeenth century had crossed the Rhine with their armies and used cunning to steal away Alsace and Lorraine, which rightfully belonged to Germany. France is depicted as the aggressor in the Franco-Prussian war and is said to have destroyed an earlier German unity. Napoleon is guilty of having originally separated and subjugated "the German tribes." The war with France is said to have begun when Prussia began to unify German lands, re-establishing an original unity, destroyed by France. France reacted in fear that "Germany wanted to again become as big and powerful as she once was in history."¹⁰⁸

France brought disunity to Germany in the early nineteenth century and is clearly guilty for having begun the war in 1870, the reader proclaims. Napoleon III let it be known that he would not permit a Hohenzollern on the Spanish throne. In order to keep the peace, Prince Leopold von Hohenzollern withdrew his candidacy to the throne, but this was not enough for France, whose Parliament immediately voted the money for war. Obviously no mention is made in the reader of the active role played by Bismarck in

¹⁰⁶ Confino, p. 15.

¹⁰⁷ *Lesebuch für die Katholischen Volksschulen Württembergs*, (Stuttgart: Rupfer Verlag, 1873), p. 401.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

provoking the French when he altered the Bad Ems telegram. In fact, Bismarck appears as a very minor figure, a mere member of the King's entourage and one of the men who joined the king in establishing headquarters in Mainz when the fighting began. King Wilhelm is depicted as the main agent, who, cleverly able to foresee war with France, just happened to be prepared with an army equipped for war. The king, who had also fought against the French in 1813, stood at the head of the army in a struggle for "Germany's independence, honor, and greatness."¹⁰⁹

The harsh tone used against France is somewhat ironic. During the Napoleonic wars, Württemberg was a French ally and through this alliance increased its territorial holdings and was elevated from a duchy to a kingdom. King Wilhelm (r.1816-1854) even said in early 1860s, "Better to be an ally of France than the vassal of Prussia." King Karl I, who reigned until 1891, agreed with this idea. In fact, one of the first things he did when he came to power was to commission new uniforms for the army modeled on Austrian uniforms.¹¹⁰ Certainly the unanimity that France was guilty for having started the Franco-Prussian war did much to realign loyalties. However, certainly many local loyalties do not find expression in these school readers, which do not provide an accurate account of contemporary realities.

The king holds primacy in this rendition of events, conforming to the spirit of the readers by reaffirming the dynastic principle. The intention was certainly not to accurately relate what took place, but rather to instill feelings in the populace that would

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 403.

¹¹⁰ Confino, p. 17.

have been appropriate to those still living as subjects, rather than citizens.¹¹¹ In this particular case, the myth of 1813, with the Germans struggling against the French for their freedom, was very conveniently interwoven into the narrative, offering proof that Germany was the innocent party in the war and was fulfilling a historic debt. A novelty in this case is that the Germans found themselves fighting against African “barbarians” who were in the French army. Thus the reality of imperialism was beginning to seep into traditional narrative structures. In any case, we find here that German nationalism was promoted by referring to the lost unity of the Holy Roman Empire, and perhaps more significantly by referring to the common hatred of the French. Thus national identity was created in negative and hostile terms, based more on hatred of an outside force than positive definition of what it meant to be German.

Militarism is glorified in passages that describe blood spilled on the battlefield. There are extended accounts of the course of the war, with descriptions of the various battles and the entrance of German troops into Paris. Although Prussians are singled out for being the bravest of Germans, others, such as those from Baden and Bavaria, are also recognized for their valor. The authors stress that a disproportionate number of Württembergers fell in certain battles.¹¹² And there are now and then emotional passages stressing the suffering the war brought: “Oh, how much blood, how many tears, how much parental suffering the war caused!”¹¹³ The focus on the losses suffered by local soldiers would seem to grant more meaning and legitimacy to the political outcome of the

¹¹¹ Dahrendorf, *passim*.

¹¹² *Lesebuch für die Katholischen Volksschulen* (1873), p. 413.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

event. Jubilation and celebration marked the end of the war, and the ceremony at Versailles is depicted as the righting of a historic wrong.

Another important and meaningful event preceded the joyous celebration. At the request of the German princes and the free cities, King Wilhelm of Prussia agreed to accept the imperial crown that was renounced in 1806 by Kaiser Franz of Austria, place it on his own head and become Germany's highest patron. This took place on the 18th of January in the old palace at Versailles, where King Louis XIV had once given the orders to lay waste to the Palatinate and Swabia and to humiliate Germany.¹¹⁴

Here we find the implication that Austria had chosen to exclude itself from Germany, thus providing justification for a *kleindeutsch*, rather than *großdeutsch*, outcome.

The next new edition was published in 1886, but the selections included in the section on history were the same as in the 1873 reader. The descriptions of the Franco-Prussian war also remained as they appeared in 1873. The first substantial changes to the Catholic readers since 1862 occurred with the printing of the 1895 textbook. Here one finds much more regional information, and less on foreign lands. There are many more passages on Württemberg and on various cities in this region. Moreover, a section entitled "Heimat" is introduced for the first time in the Catholic readers. Emotional language is used to praise the virtues of the homeland. These changes support the thesis put forward by some scholars that a sense of national identity was developed by encouraging greater love of one's *Heimat* not of the German Reich.

Heimat is an untranslatable concept that should be understood as a home region in which one has spiritual roots. It signifies a psychological loss of childhood but also of place of origin. Although it claimed to be timeless, the concept was actually an invention

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 415-6.

of the late nineteenth century, one of the many invented traditions of this era.¹¹⁵ The introduction of *Heimat* to the readers confirms arguments made by Applegate and Confino that a love of *Heimat* and a love of *Vaterland* were promoted as an organic unity. In a nation which had been fragmented for so many centuries, the most effective way of generating love and identification with the land was by first stressing loyalty to the local area. *Heimat*, a set of images and ideas promoting sentimental attachment to homeland, developed at a time when the home towns of Mack Walker's individualized country were ceasing to exist as they had since the Treaty of Westphalia created fragmentation throughout the Holy Roman Empire. Discussing changes brought to the home town in the late nineteenth century, Walker makes mention of the psychological drive behind *Heimat*: "the hometownsman remained hardly more or less 'philistine' than he had always been. Not his own tissue but his environment had changed, and his national aspiration, when he had one, was to make the national environment fit him."¹¹⁶

We find, for example, that nationalism was activity encouraged in a passage added to the Protestant reader in 1874 by Ernst Moritz Arndt entitled "Fatherland and Freedom," which introduces a very romantic form of nationalism to the readers, ideas formed during the early nineteenth century at the time of the Wars of Liberation.

Heartless men say: "where you are happy, that is your fatherland; where you feel least tormented, there your freedom blooms." However, I say: "Where God's sun first shines, where the stars of the sky first twinkle, where its lightning first reveals its omnipotence and its stormy winds roared with holy terror through your soul, there is your love, there is your fatherland. Where the first human eye lovingly looked over your cradle, where your mother first held you joyfully on her lap and your father impressed the lessons of wisdom and Christianity into your heart, there is your love, there is your fatherland. And be it

¹¹⁵ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), passim.

¹¹⁶ Walker, p. 418.

bald cliffs and desolate islands, even if you experienced poverty and struggle: you must always love the land because you are a human being and should never forget it, the way an animal does, but should keep it in your heart.¹¹⁷

The form of nationalism here bears resemblance to Heimat ideology, which began to take root more deeply a few years later, in the 1880s.¹¹⁸ Just a few lines later Arndt describes freedom as “where you are allowed to live in the traditions and the ways and laws of your father, where no foreign executioners have command over you.”¹¹⁹ The addition of these passages indicate that schoolbook compilers were indeed attempting to nurture nationalist thinking in children. Yet it is a romantically-inspired and vague sense of nationality which could nourish the sentiment of any person living anywhere. Furthermore, the notion of political belonging here is extremely private, with no direct instruction for how one should behave in the political sphere. The implication is that those who love their homes as much as the author of the passage would make great sacrifices to defend it. It in the 1870s and 1880s the ideology of Heimat slowly makes its way to the readers.

As the decades passed, we find more and more references to Heimat. An example of a passage added to the texts in 1910 is the following passage, entitled “Das Vaterunser als Heimatschein” (Literally translated this means, ‘Our Father’ as a certificate of region of origin. It is impossible to translate meaningfully, however). Here is the passage:

In the middle of the last century, a young man from the country went to the German consul in Buenos Aires and asked for a certificate proving that he was the descendent of German parents; this would free him from military service in the foreign country. He spoke Spanish fluently, like the native speakers there.

The consul asked him, “So, dear friend, where is your birth certificate?” “I have none,” the man answered. “Do you have any other certificate?” “No, sir.” “Then bring your

¹¹⁷ *Lesebuch für die Evangelischen Volksschulen* (1874), p. 168.

¹¹⁸ Confino, p. 104.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

parents here!" "My father and mother died long ago." "Speak German with me then, just a few words." But the man remained silent. "I don't know how I'm supposed to help you. How can I give you a certificate saying you are German if you can't prove it to me? Anyone could come to me and say that." "I swear, Mr. Consul, as truly as God lives, I am a German; my parents were Swabians. I am telling you the full truth."

The consul walked back and forth in the room; the young man looked honest, and spoke so openly and freely, but . . . Suddenly the consul had a thought. He walked up to the man and said: "Good friend, didn't you retain anything from your youth? Don't you even know a prayer that your mother taught you?"

If only the reader could have seen the eyes of the man light up! "Yes, sir," he cried out. Like a small child he folded his hands and without prompting recited 'Our Father' from start to finish, and when he got to the end, a couple of big tears filled his eyes and a distant memory of his mother (*Mütterlein*) on whose knees he had learned this prayer, came back to him. The consul was deeply moved. Everything which could prove his German heritage was gone after twenty years; only the first prayer left an indelible mark. "Fellow countryman," the consul said, "now I want to you give you a certificate; because you could have only learned that 'Our Father' from a German mother."¹²⁰

Here membership in a political community is not granted based on universal civil rights and obligations in a society of equal citizens. Instead, political belonging is based on notions of psychological belonging, nurtured most intensively in the mother and father's home. In this case, the memories of sitting on the mother's lap as a young child form a life-long emotional orientation determining political belonging. Political identity is described here in highly private and gendered terms. In the years leading up to World War I, we find an increased number of emotional passages stressing belonging to *Heimat*.

Celia Applegate argues that national integration is not merely a question of power, but also of consciousness. She rejects the modernization hypothesis which states that feelings of national identity arose primarily due to material factors such as greater railway links, newspapers, military conscription, and other factors which gave people the opportunity to interact together and develop a national identity. She explains the very important role played by *Heimat* images and metaphors:

¹²⁰ *Lesebuch für die Evangelischen Volksschulen Württembergs. III. Teil.* (Stuttgart, Berlin, Leipzig: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1910), pp. 15-6.

For the incomplete nation of 1871, the invented traditions of the *Heimat* bridged the gap between the national aspiration and provincial reality. These efforts might be called federalist, in the sense that *Heimat* enthusiasts celebrated German diversity. They supported national cohesion without necessarily showing any enthusiasm for its symbols or for its agents, Prussia and the national government.¹²¹

A case in point, the Prussian education ministry mandated in 1902 that *Lesebücher* contain greater references to the *Heimat*, to the historical and natural uniqueness of the region where the readers were employed. "*Heimatkunde* had become the starting point for studying history and geography, based on the principle that children should begin with the familiar and move toward the more distant and less familiar."¹²² As Applegate argues, *Heimat* has never referred to any political or social reality, but has rather been "a myth about the possibility of a community in the face of fragmentation and alienation."¹²³ Thus the additions to the readers in the late nineteenth century, involving primarily greater focus on the locality and region, most likely indicate that the compilers of the texts were actively working to create a sense of national identity, and a greater identification of the individual to the larger state structure.

¹²¹ Applegate, p. 13.

¹²² Kennedy, "A Nation's Readers," p. 476.

¹²³ Applegate, p. 19.

Section Eleven – Nationalism

Since nationalism was one of the dominant ideologies of the nineteenth century and is a main focus of these readers, albeit fluid and unresolved, it is worth asking whether Benedict Anderson's important theoretical work can bear any light on this issue. Anderson argues that national identity is primarily an imagined community that is both sovereign and limited. It is imagined, he argues, because each member of a nation images the existence of the others and feels a close bond with them even though he will come into contact only with a miniscule number of his compatriots. Judged by this definition, the readers certainly contributed to the burgeoning nation in that they had in the decades before unification treated Germany as if it were a unit that had existed since the times of ancient Rome.

However, Anderson also writes that the development of popular nationalism involves the atrophy of intermediate loyalties and attachments to church, village and kin. As subjects develop into citizens, their bond with fellow countrymen becomes stronger than loyalty to superiors. Anderson argues that print capitalism created the conditions for the development of national identity, which arose first in the Americas and was later transplanted to Europe. Print capitalism, with its mass production of books and newspapers, created "unified fields of exchange and communications below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars."¹²⁴ Anderson examines modern novels, with their descriptions of a world of plurals—of schools, prisons, and other institutions—which assume that there is a society out there of citizens like themselves. By this standard, our

¹²⁴ Anderson, p. 47.

readers fail the test of modernity. They depict a world of cultural unity, but it is a feudal world in which one finds emperors and heroes, but no citizens. The lessons contain moral injunctions and models of ethical and religious behavior, but no examination of modern institutions and no indication that citizens deserve certain rights in society, such as the right to vote. There is a complete absence of the notion that the will of the people provides legitimacy to the institutions which rule over them. Much stress is put on fealty to social superiors, but there is no mention of commonality with compatriots.

Section Twelve – Conclusion

Because of the momentous political changes brought about in 1871 with German unification, one might reasonably expect the Prussian authorities to have used schools as instruments of propaganda to inculcate loyalty to the new political state. Somewhat surprisingly, however, we find that textbooks in the German state of Württemberg underwent only very minor changes for about four decades after German unification. The Protestant and Catholic readers used in elementary schools, compiled in the 1850s and 1860s, were intended to transmit a conservative, religious, and dynastic ethos to children. The Prussian leaders of the Second Empire did not push the state of Württemberg to change its curriculum, in part because they did not want to promote the notion that the state derived its legitimacy from the people. Instead, the Prussian rulers viewed unification as a coming together of various dynastic houses. The message of the schoolbooks used in Württemberg before unification stressed that children should develop into hardworking, obedient and religious subjects in a monarchical state. Because the children attending elementary schools were not expected to have more political power in the new state, the old books were able to continue to serve their same function and were largely left unchanged by state authorities.

The fact that the textbooks continued to transmit a non-democratic ethos attests to the fact the Second Empire was a society undergoing asymmetrical modernization. Industrialization was proceeding rapidly in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the growth of mass political parties and the existence of a certain democratically elected institutions, such as the Reichstag, indicate that many aspects of

German political and social life were becoming more democratic and that German subjects were evolving into citizens who enjoyed a number of political rights. However, Imperial Germany was a deeply-fragmented society which continued to maintain many authoritarian and anti-democratic institutions. The dynastic worldview of the textbooks used in elementary schools in Württemberg clashed with the rapidly changing society children were living in. The gap between the world depicted in the books and the reality of industrialization and mass politics indicates most clearly that state authorities used the books in an attempt to make loyal subjects obedient to their dynastic rulers.

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