

JOSEPH MARIA VON RADOWITZ
AND GERMAN UNIFICATION

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PREFACE

In the fall of 1967, I attended Schiller College in Kleiningersheim, Germany. The school was located in a castle high above the Neckar which was once owned by the Radowitz family. Several years later, while studying the early life of Otto von Bismarck, I once again encountered the name Radowitz in the person of his contemporary, Joseph Maria von Radowitz. I became interested in his identity and role in German history and soon discovered that very little work had been done on him by American scholars. This led to further research and eventually to this thesis.

In spite of his relative obscurity, the importance of Radowitz to German history is great. His career stretched from the Napoleonic era to the Revolution of 1848. Through a study of his work for German unification one covers such significant events as the Frankfurt National Assembly and, most important, the Prussian Plan of Union and the conference at Olmüt^z.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the help and patience of Dr. Douglas D. Hale, who was always willing to give of his time in order to help me complete this thesis. I also would like to thank Dr. George F. Jewsbury for his encouragement and understanding. Further credit is due to Dr. W. A. Owings, Dr. James G. Caster, Dr. Lloyd K. Musselman, Professor Virgil D. Medlin, and Professor Willis O. Sadler for urging me to enter graduate studies. I would also like to thank Dr. Homer L. Knight, Dr. James Henderson, and Dr. Norbert R.

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CHAPTER I

RADOWITZ'S ORIGINS

Before 1871, Germany did not exist as a political entity. Instead, some thirty-nine separate German states were organized in a loose Confederation. In 1848, the winds of revolution swept across the states and resulted in the demand by many Germans for the erection of a united nation state to replace this Confederation. During this revolution and for several years afterwards, one of the leaders in the movement for German unification was Joseph Maria von Radowitz. As the Prussian delegate to the Military Committee of the German Confederation, he observed firsthand the ineffectiveness, impotence, and disunity of the organization. Even before 1848, he made a strong effort to persuade Frederick William IV of Prussia and Prince Metternich to agree to take measures to reform the structure of the Confederation. When this first endeavor toward German unification met with failure owing to the outbreak of the revolution, he continued his work through the Frankfurt National Assembly. After this too ended in vain, Radowitz refused to give up his fight and sought to unify Germany on the basis of a union headed by Prussia. The purpose of this study is to analyze these efforts and draw conclusions from them concerning the role of Radowitz in German history.

Since the Middle Ages, at a time when other areas were developing into modern nation states, the old Holy Roman Empire was in the process

of disintegration. After the conclusion of the wars of religion, what had been the Empire was divided into over 300 semi-independent states. This process of disunion was accompanied by the rise of a new power, Prussia, to challenge the traditional hegemony held by the Habsburg dynasty. Under the leadership of such men as Frederick William, the Great Elector, Frederick William I, the Soldier King, and Frederick the Great, Prussia rose from an insignificant electorate to become one of the most important kingdoms in Europe and a major rival to the Habsburg rulers in Vienna.

The outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 proved a major turning point in German history. In 1792 war broke out between the revolutionary government in Paris and the German states led by Austria. In 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte rose to power as the leader of the French cause. Through his military brilliance, he was able to inflict a series of major defeats on his German enemies. After he had conquered the Habsburg lands, he reorganized the subject German states into the Confederation of the Rhine and thus dealt the death blow to the Holy Roman Empire. In the French-dominated confederation, many of the smaller German states and ecclesiastical states were eliminated, thus reducing substantially the number of independent states. Simultaneously, Bavaria and Württemberg were elevated to the level of kingdoms. In 1806, Napoleon completed his subjection of Germany through his defeat of Prussia at the battle of Jena.

The defeat of Germany by the French contributed to the awakening of German nationalism. Such men as the author Heinrich von Kleist in his "Catechism of the Germans," and the philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte in his Fourteen Addresses to the German Nation helped spread

the new gospel of German nationalism to all elements of the society. This movement was furthered by the reforms in Prussia undertaken by Karl Heinrich Reichsfreiherr von und zum Stein. Finally the process of driving the French out of Germany and Napoleon's defeat at Leipzig in 1813 added to the development of a national sentiment among the German people.

At the end of the War of Liberation, the advocates of German unification were dealt a major disappointment when they received from the powers of Europe assembled at Vienna not the German nation state for which they had fought, but a loose Confederation of thirty-nine sovereign German states. The German Confederation was formalized in the Treaty of Vienna signed on June 9, 1815. The major policymaking body of the German Confederation was the Federal Diet, which met at Frankfurt am Main. The membership of this body consisted of delegates of the member states. Though the Diet possessed the authority to approve laws for the Confederation, each act of legislation required the approval of two-thirds of the membership, while any change in the constitution could not go into effect without the unanimous consent of the member states.¹

Moreover, the Federal Diet failed to meet on a regular basis. Instead, the Select Council, under the presidency of the Emperor of Austria, carried on the day-to-day business of the Confederation. All actions required the consent of a simple majority of the membership. Each of the larger states had one vote, while the smaller German states were combined in seven "curias" for representation. In 1821, the

¹Hajo Holborn, A History of Modern Germany (3 vols., New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), II, 445.

powers of the Council were complemented by the formation of a Federal Military Committee.² This Confederation was a far cry from the united German nation state hoped for by so many during the War of Liberation. Actually, it was a "united nations" formed by the German states. Although the number of German states had been decreased from over 300 to but thirty-nine, real German unification had not been achieved. This was the Germany in which Joseph Maria von Radowitz began his first efforts toward real and lasting German unification.

The early life of Joseph Maria von Radowitz was known to very few during his lifetime. Veit Valentin, the Weimar historian, wrote that no one knew for sure who he really was or from where he had come.³ Yet his origins are quite clear, and a knowledge of his background is essential to an understanding of his role in German history. His immediate ancestry can be traced to Hungary, where in 1460 there is a record of the participation of Libaf de Radovvicz in the Congress of Brunn. His grandfather, Demetrius von Radowitz, fought as a soldier on the Austrian side during the Seven Years' war. After his capture at the Battle of Lowosits in 1757, the elder Radowitz decided to remain in the German state of Saxony. Joseph Maria von Radowitz, the father of the subject of this study, was born in Hungary, studied law at the University of Göttingen, and moved to Blankenburg, where the Duke of Brunswick granted him the right to practice his profession. Here, Joseph Maria Ernst Christian Wilhelm von Radowitz was born on

²Ibid., 446.

³Veit Valentin, Geschichte der deutschen Revolution (2 vols., Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1968), I, 320.

February 6, 1797.⁴

At the behest of his father, young Radowitz was trained for a military career, a vocation appropriate enough for the Napoleonic era in which he came of age. As a young boy, he attended elementary and secondary schools at Albenburg, and in 1808 his father sent him to enter the military school at Mainz. He continued his education through the study of military science and artillery at the Polytechnic School at Paris. On January 1, 1812, Radowitz entered the Artillery and Engineering school at Kassel. On December 23, 1812, he was commissioned lieutenant in the Second Infantry of Hesse-Kassel, at that time a component of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Westphalia, and was assigned to the Headquarters of the Second Army Corps under Marshal MacDonald. At the Battle of Leipzig, Radowitz led the Thirty-First Division of Westphalian Infantry and received a minor wound in the chest. After Leipzig, like so many of his contemporaries, he turned against Napoleon, joined the newly organized Hessian Army, and fought the forces of the French Emperor in France. After Napoleon's defeat, Radowitz was appointed instructor of mathematics and military science at the Military Academy in Kassel.⁵

The accession of Elector William II to the throne of Hesse-Kassel proved to be a turning point in Radowitz's career. His old commander was made head of the War Department of the small Electorate and promoted him to a position on the General Staff. In his new position, he

⁴Rochus von Liliencron, et al., eds., Allgemeine deutsche Biographie (56 vols., Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1875-1912), XXVII, 141.

⁵Joseph Maria von Radowitz, Zur Geschichte meines Lebens, in Paul Hassel, Joseph Maria von Radowitz 1797-1848 (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1905), 4-6; Hassel, Radowitz, 144.

was sent to Prussia, where on October 14, 1821, Radowitz first met the man who would play such an important role in his work for German unification, the Prussian Crown Prince and future Frederick William IV.⁶ He was highly impressed with what he saw and developed a great respect for Prussia and the Crown Prince.

Radowitz would have continued to serve the small German Electorate of Hesse-Kassel and might have died in relative obscurity had not fate intervened to force him to leave his comfortable position and seek a new homeland. In 1823, a major crisis shook the calm of the small German state. The new Elector insisted in bringing his mistress, Emilie Ortlöpp, from Berlin to his capital. Naturally, the Electoress Augusta, the sister of King Frederick William III of Prussia, had strong objections to her presence at Court. To add insult to injury, he invited her and her children to move into the palace and gave her the title of Countess Reichenbach. The Electoress refused to accept this and made several appeals to her brother in Berlin.⁷

Through his open support of the Electoress and his criticism of William II, Radowitz became involved in the dispute. This earned him the displeasure of the Elector. On June 13, 1823, he ordered the garrison to assemble at the Friedrichplatz and announced the demotion of several important officers, including Radowitz, who had supported the Electoress. The young officer was informed that he had been reassigned to Marburg and that he was not to leave his new post.

⁶Radowitz, Meines Lebens, 13-20.

⁷Heinrich von Treitschke, History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century (6 vols., trans. by Eden & Cedar Paul, London: Jarrold & Sons, 1918), IV, 352-354.

Realizing the gravity of the situation, he began immediate correspondence with Prussian officials in an effort to obtain a new position. Exiled on June 25, he used his contacts in Berlin to obtain a position at the rank of captain on the Prussian General Staff. After making arrangements for the care of his mother, he arrived in the Prussian capital to assume his new post on December 8, 1823.⁸

In Berlin, Radowitz renewed his acquaintance with the Crown Prince and strengthened his ties with the court through his position as tutor to Prince Albrecht, the youngest son of King Frederick William III. Owing to his friendship with the Crown Prince and through their mutual interest in mystical religion, Radowitz was promoted to the position of Chief of the General Staff of the Artillery on February 14, 1830. He was then introduced into high court circles through his friend. In the summer of 1830, Radowitz was to accompany the Crown Prince on a proposed journey to Paris, but because of the outbreak of the Revolution of 1830, plans were changed and they traveled to England instead. The revolution deeply impressed the Prussian officer and had a profound impact on the development of his political philosophy. He also developed respect for Great Britain and the institutions he observed during his sojourn in that country. Again in 1832 he traveled with the Crown Prince, this time to Italy. On the way, Radowitz was introduced into the courts of several German states, thus making contacts which would be useful when he began his work for German unification.⁹

Radowitz strengthened his contacts with high society in his

⁸Radowitz, Meines Lebens, 13-20.

⁹Ibid.

adopted land through his marriage into an old Prussian aristocratic family. In 1826, he met the Countess Marie von Voss during a visit to the home of Gustaf von Rochow. He fell deeply in love with her and proposed on February 13, 1828, during a ball at the palace of Duke Carl von Mecklenburg-Strelitz. After gaining the approval of her parents, they were married later that year.¹⁰ Thus, through his marriage to a member of an old respected Prussian family, Radowitz strengthened his ties with the ruling classes.

The growing influence of Radowitz on the Crown Prince caused serious concern among some members of the established aristocracy, who mistrusted him because of his non-Prussian origin and membership in the Roman Catholic Church. The Minister of War even suggested the expediency of his removal from Berlin. Frederick William III agreed to this suggestion, but rather than exile Radowitz he appointed him Prussian representative to the Military Committee of the German Confederation in Frankfurt, thus separating him from the Crown Prince. Radowitz's experiences in Frankfurt were the major reason for his desire to reform the German Confederation. Here he saw firsthand the complete ineffectiveness of the organization and realized that as long as the various German states worked against each other out of jealousy, nothing of merit could be accomplished. This became most apparent in 1841, when he tried in vain to develop a strong military organization to meet the threat of a possible French invasion.¹¹

The obscurity of Radowitz's origins was enhanced by the air of

¹⁰Ibid., 33-35.

¹¹Ibid., 49-90.

mystery conveyed by his personal appearance and actions in public. He was tall and well built with fiery deep set eyes, a high brow and a mustache that gave him a decidedly non-Prussian look. He was also something of an introvert. At social functions, he had the habit of sitting alone reading a book, occasionally glancing up and interjecting an opinion into the discussion carried on about him. He was very abstemious in his eating habits, consumed no alcoholic beverages, and drank only water.¹²

One of the most important factors in Radowitz's life was his religion. During the years in service to Hesse-Kassel, he found time to pause from the storm and stress of the Napoleonic era and to consider matters of the mind and spirit. During these "quiet years" he developed an interest in art, literature, music, and most important, religion. As a young boy he had been educated in the Protestantism of his mother, but found little inspiration in this religion. In a search for something deeper, he turned to science and philosophy. However, he found little comfort in natural religion. He next began a serious study of history in a search for the true religion. This led him to adopt Roman Catholicism, the faith of his father, in 1816.¹³

His new found religious belief soon became the most important thing in his life. He developed an interest in religious mysticism. Radowitz believed that the only valid source of truth was through reaching an understanding of the divinity. He also wrote a series of articles to explain his adopted faith. Significantly enough, most of

¹²Treitschke, History of Germany, VI, 314.

¹³Radowitz, Meines Lebens, 9-10.

these are presented in the romantic form of "fragments". His most important work on religion was his The Iconography of the Saints. Here he applied the results of his historical research to describe the various symbols of the saints from the beginning of Christianity. The contents of this book reveal Radowitz as a dedicated researcher and well developed scholar.¹⁴

The importance of Radowitz's religion transcended purely spiritual matters and became a part of his political career. It has already been mentioned that his mystical Catholicism strengthened his ties with Frederick William IV, who although a Protestant, was also something of a religious mystic. In his writings, Radowitz consistently argued that the Church should concern itself solely with religious matters and leave political affairs to the jurisdiction of the state. In "The Church and Political Freedom," he stated that the Roman Catholic Church in Germany had made a major mistake by linking Catholic interests with the destinies of Bavaria and Austria. The Prussian officer declared it a cardinal error to tie the welfare of the Church to a particular political system.¹⁵ This position was important, since one of the things that had helped divide Germany into factions was the matter of religion.

In addition to his religious development, Radowitz also became concerned with political matters. During his first excursion with the

¹⁴Radowitz, "Wahrheit," Gesammelte Schriften (5 vols., Berlin: Verlag von Georg Reimer, 1853), V, 69; Iconographie der Heiligen, *ibid.*, I, 1-283.

¹⁵Radowitz, "Die Provisoren und die Allianzen," "Kirchliche und politischen Freiheit," "Die europäische Politik und die Juli-Revolution," "Idealismus-Materialismus in der Politik," and "Die Provisoren," in Gesammelte Schriften, IV, 43, 81-84, 168, 192.

Crown Prince, Radowitz had been afforded an opportunity to view closely the outbreak of the Revolution of 1830. This proved to be a turning point in his political development. In his "European Politics and the July Revolution," a discussion of the Revolution and its importance to European history, he advanced the theory that once a revolution had begun it could not be stopped in mid-development, but would continue until it had run its course. In his assessment of the monarchy of Louis Philippe, Radowitz saw a dangerous emphasis on materialistic concerns, which he believed should be secondary to spiritual matters. However, Radowitz was not a supporter of absolutism: this he felt to be as reprehensible as the materialism of the French state. From impressions gained during his journey to England, he considered the settlement reached by the Glorious Revolution of 1688 to be the best alternative to the extremes of absolutism and the excesses reached by the French after 1789.¹⁶ This position reveals Radowitz as a moderate who refused to support either extreme and also places him closer in the political spectrum to the German liberal reformers than to the Prussian Junker class.

His most important political work during the pre-March period was his Colloquies upon State and Church, published anonymously in 1846. In this book, the form used is a discussion between a Prussian officer, a liberal, a bureaucrat, and a socialist. Each states his political position, and Waldheim, the central character and a personification of the author, intervenes to condemn political factionalism and the divisions it can cause in society. Waldheim's arguments are

¹⁶ Ibid.

couched in diplomatic terms and reveal the moderation of the author. Not only is democracy criticized as a source of partisan division, but absolute monarchy is also condemned as a relic of the past; it was no longer viable as a form of government. The disdain for political parties as divisive forces in society is a very important part of Radowitz's political philosophy. In 1847, he elaborated on this argument through a series of "Speeches not Delivered in the United Diet."¹⁷

In his political system, Radowitz placed great emphasis on German nationalism. He wrote that the highest form of statehood was nationalism based on "family, . . . origin, and folk traditions." He saw the history of Europe since the Middle Ages as the process of the destruction of the multinational state and the creation of new nations based on common origins and culture. He cited the examples of France and Spain as models for Germans to emulate. In his writings, Radowitz traced the awakening of German nationalism back to such men as Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, who in his Letters Concerning the Newest Literature, called for an end to blind imitation of French literary trends and for the creation of a German literature based on the English model of Shakespeare. According to Radowitz, the German poets and thinkers spread this nationalism from the Eider to the Alps and from the Mosel to the Pregel.¹⁸

In the year before the Revolution of 1848, Radowitz made his first efforts to secure a revision of the Confederation toward the

¹⁷Hassel, Radowitz, 418-419; Radowitz, "Reden welche in den Stände-Salle zu Berlin nicht gehalten worden," Gesammelte Schriften, III, 195-253.

¹⁸Radowitz, "Frankfurt am Main, Erste Abschnitt vor 1848," *ibid.*, II, 8-19.

unification of Germany. On October 12, 1847, he sent to King Frederick William IV, who had ascended the Prussian throne in 1840, a proposal for changes in the Confederation. In this document, he pointed out the faults of the old organization and argued that Prussia, by being tied to Austrian interests, was prevented from taking any actions to protect herself in the event of a serious crisis. He asked the King to use his influence to call a congress of the princes to discuss a set of proposed changes in the composition of the Confederation. Radowitz proposed that a majority of two-thirds of the Diet be granted the power to change the constitution of the Confederation instead of the absolute unanimity required by the Treaty of Vienna. In the place of the old Confederation, he recommended the formation of a new structure based on the Customs Union which had been created between 1818 and 1846 under Prussian auspices. Austrian control over Prussian interests would thus be eliminated. To settle any dispute between member states, he suggested the establishment of a Supreme Court. Important aspects of his plan called for common criminal and commercial law codes, emigration regulations, and a unified postal and military system.¹⁹

Radowitz elaborated his proposals in "Thoughts on the Pressing Needs of the German Confederation," published on November 20, 1847. In this work, he pronounced the German Confederation a complete failure. To support this contention, he cited its inability to face the threat posed by the July Revolution of 1830, the lack of agreement

¹⁹"Radowitz to Frederick William IV, Frankfurt am Main, October 12, 1847," Radowitz, Nachgelassene Briefe und Aufzeichnungen zur Geschichte der Jahre 1848-1853 [Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Deutsche Geschichtsquellen des 19. Jahrhunderts] (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1967), 1-4.

concerning military precautions in response to the possibility of French attack in 1841, and the rivalry among the small states and between Austria and Prussia. Radowitz maintained that it was very important that the old divisions cease and that Prussia remain a strong state.²⁰

The King reacted favorably to his advisor's proposals, and on the same day of the publication of his "Thoughts," Radowitz received approval to carry out his plans. After some delay, he undertook a trip to Vienna to discuss his ideas with Prince Klemens von Metternich, Austrian Foreign Minister, and arrived in the Austrian capital on March 4, 1848. Metternich received Radowitz and his proposals with unusual cordiality, since the Revolution of 1848 had just broken out, and the Prince was anxious to come to an accord with the Prussians. It was agreed that a congress consisting of either the German princes or their representatives would be summoned to meet in Dresden. The ministers also reached agreement on a proposed military congress to meet on March 30.²¹

But the outbreak of the revolution in Vienna, which Radowitz witnessed, and the flight of Metternich on March 14 rendered his first efforts at achieving the reform of the German Confederation and German unification futile. Although these efforts of 1847 and early 1848 were unsuccessful, they are still very important in showing that certain German officials realized the faults of the Confederation

²⁰Radowitz, "Denkschrift über die vom deutsche Bunde zu ergreifenden Massregeln," Deutschland und Friedrich Wilhelm IV, in Gesammelte Schriften, III, 334-337.

²¹"Radowitz to Frederick William IV, Vienna, March 4, 6, and 13, 1848," Nachgelassene Briefe, 11, 12, 24-25.

and the need for unification. Radowitz's proposals, however, contained one important flaw in that they envisioned reform from above and made no attempt to enlist the support of the German people. With the uprising of the people in March, 1848, Radowitz's proposals had been outpaced by events.

The fall of King Louis Philippe of France on February 23, 1848, soon triggered the outbreak of revolution in Germany. From France the revolutionary fervor spread to the south German states. Public meetings in Mannheim and Heidelberg issued demands for freedom of the press, trial by jury, the introduction of constitutional government in all German states, and the calling of a national parliament to discuss the revision of the German Confederation. In these states, well-known progressives, or "March Ministers," were appointed to high positions in the governments. In Baden, Karl Mathy became the Prime Minister, and Karl Theodor Welcker was appointed the new minister to the Federal Diet. In Württemberg, Paul Pfizer was elevated to a cabinet position. In Hesse-Darmstadt, Heinrich von Gagern, who later became the President of the Frankfurt National Assembly, was appointed Prime Minister. In Munich, King Ludwig I was forced to abdicate as a result of his affair with Lola Montez. From the south the revolution spread to other German states. In Hanover, King Ernst August appointed liberal ministers, thus undoing the authoritarian coup of 1837.²²

From southern Germany, the revolution then found its way to Austria. On March 13, after a series of disturbances centered around the City Hall, Metternich was forced to resign, thus causing the failure of

²²Holborn, A History of Modern Germany, III, 48.

Radowitz's first attempts at German unification.²³

Radowitz reacted to the revolution by first pressing for the calling of his proposed Congress at Dresden which he believed would revise the Confederation, unify Germany, and thus solve the problems posed by the revolution. On March 17, he realized that things had progressed to such a point as to make this idea impossible. In a letter to his wife, the Prussian statesman expressed the fear that the result of the revolution would be the end of the Prussian monarchy and also his service. On the same day, he informed the King of the refusal of the south German states to participate in the proposed meeting at Dresden. On March 16, Radowitz sent his friend a letter advising the appointment of several ministers dedicated to constitutionalism and open discussion in the cabinet. He further suggested the end of censorship and the calling of the Prussian United Diet to prepare a new constitutional system based on representative government. In the event of an uprising in Berlin, Radowitz advised Frederick William IV to call the troops back to their barracks at Spandau, since a prolonged battle in the city would only serve to demoralize the troops and their leadership.²⁴

Radowitz's ideas represented the thoughts of a progressive realist. He knew that once the forces of revolution had been unleashed, a return to the old order would be impossible. He had witnessed the fall of Charles X in 1830, and more recently that of

²³Valentin, Deutsche Revolution, I, 402-405.

²⁴"Radowitz to Canitz, Vienna, March 16, 1848," and "Radowitz to Frederick William IV, Vienna, March 17, 1848," Nachgelassene Briefe, 31, 36; "Radowitz to Frederick William IV, Vienna, March 16, 1848;" Hassel, Radowitz, 572-574.

Metternich, and did not want to see the same thing happen to his King. He was also progressive in the sense that he supported changes that would remove some of the causes of discontent. Even before the revolution, he had realized that the existing Confederation had to be revised in order to enable it to meet the demands of the modern world.

As Radowitz feared, the revolution which had swept the rest of Germany soon reached Berlin. The center of revolutionary activity in the Prussian Capital was a park along the Spree, called the Zelte after the tents which had once stood on the location. On March 7, the King issued a decree announcing the regular meeting of the full United Diet and called upon his people to stand behind him rather than revolt as the people of other German states had done. The crowd at the Zelte replied by drafting a petition demanding the immediate calling of the United Diet and the freedom of the press. It is significant that the leadership in the crowd decided to mail this document to their sovereign rather than march on the Palace.

This initial protest was followed by a series of clashes between the troops guarding the city and the people. These reached a climax on March 16, when a company of soldiers attempting to clear a square killed two persons. On the evening of March 17, Frederick William IV signed a patent announcing the opening of the Diet on April 2, conceding to it the authority to control finances and granting it the right to meet regularly, as the first United Diet had demanded in 1847. The King also ordered soldiers from as far away as Magdeburg into the city to quell any possible trouble. At 10:00 on the morning of March 18, a crowd assembled in front of the Palace, and the monarch presented himself to it. Because of an insult either to the King or his troops,

an officer commanding a cavalry regiment ordered his men to open fire. The soldiers fired two shots, causing the people to disperse and begin the erection of barricades throughout the city. The troops began the reduction of the barricades late in the afternoon, and during the night the fighting continued, but little was actually accomplished by either side.²⁵

The sight of his subjects involved in fratricidal combat greatly distressed Frederick William IV. During that night, he drafted a proclamation, "To the Inhabitants of my Beloved Father City," which promised to withdraw all troops from Berlin if the people would in turn demolish all barricades and send him men of "the pure old spirit of Berlin." He also promised to devote himself to the creation of a new Prussia and through it, a new Germany. The people formed a procession bearing the bodies of those killed defending the barricades and marched to the Palace. The King was forced to receive this demonstration and remove his hat in its honor.²⁶ While it would be an oversimplification to suggest that the letter of Radowitz on March 16 was the sole reason for these actions of the King, it is indicative of the influence wielded by the King's friend that the course he suggested was that taken in the end.

At first the news from Berlin greatly distressed Radowitz, but

²⁵ Priscilla Robertson, The Revolutions of 1848: A Social History (Princeton: The Princeton University Press, 1967), 116-117; Andrew Jackson Donelson, "The American Minister in Berlin on the Revolution of March, 1848," American Historical Review, XXIII, No. 2 (January 26, 1918), 360.

²⁶ "Berlin 16 März," Deutsche Zeitung, March 23, 1848, 659; Hans Blum, Die deutsche Revolution, 1848-1849 (Leipzig: Eugen, Diederichs, 1897), 190.

after the full details of what had taken place reached him, he began to approve of what the King had done. He believed that through his statements to the people, Frederick William had placed himself at the head of Germany and finally separated the destiny of Prussia from that of Austria. He felt that the King should now steer a middle course between the extremes of radicalism and reaction, depending upon his leadership of the army in time of war as a basis for his restoration to power. He believed that the monarch should remain above the petty fighting among parties, gain support from the monarchists in the liberal-constitutional party, and most important, show his concern for the plight of the working class. To Radowitz, the workers were not opposed to monarchy and would support their King if he advocated reform in their favor. From Vienna, the Prussian emissary advised the King to support the adoption of a constitution similar to that of the English. He also suggested that he remain aloof from the arguments over the constitution; when the combatants of the various factions were numb from the struggle, he should intervene as a leader and thus restore his power. Radowitz's proposals caused no little discussion among the more intimate members of the court. Indeed, after a session in the Queen's tea room during which Radowitz's ideas formed a large part of the topic for conversation, General Leopold von Gerlach concluded that the King's friend was crazy.²⁷

While revolution and confusion reigned at Berlin, Radowitz joined

²⁷"Radowitz to his wife, Vienna, March 24, 1848," Nachgelassene Briefe, 42; "Denkschrift, March 28, 1848," and "Radowitz to King Frederick William IV, April 2, 1848," Hassel, Radowitz, 577; 580; Leopold von Gerlach, Denkwürdigkeiten (6 vols., Berlin: Verlag von Wilhelm Hertz, 1891), VI, 153.

his family at Giewitz and busied himself with the completion of the manuscript of his work, Germany and Federick William IV, which was published on April 13. In this tract, the King's friend summed up his attitude toward the revolution and his hopes for the future. He developed the idea of the Prussian King as the future leader and unifier of Germany. The advocate of German unification wrote:

King Frederick William IV will unite himself and Prussia as well as the German Princes and their people to the greatest and holiest work that lies before us. He places this as the goal of all, for all, and to which all sacrifices must be made.²⁸

On April 26, 1848, Radowitz asked to be relieved of his position in the Prussian service. He believed that this action was necessitated by the new strength of the republican forces and also wanted more time to devote to his writings.²⁹ It may seem that he failed to live up to his obligations to his King by this decision, but this is far from the truth. Radowitz continued to advise his friend in his customary manner through letters. He also believed, as has been discussed earlier, that once the forces of revolution had been unleashed little could be done to stop them. He further believed that with the revolution, the time for younger men to assume positions of responsibility had come.

Radowitz had begun his career as an army officer. Through his natural ability and because of the promotion of his immediate superior, he had assumed an important position in his native state of Hesse-

²⁸Radowitz, Deutschland und Friedrich Wilhelm IV, Gesammelte Schriften, III, 277.

²⁹"Radowitz to King Frederick William IV," Hassel, Radowitz, 590.

Kassel. When he fell out of favor, he was able to find a position in the Prussian service and continued to rise in positions of responsibility in his adopted land owing to his friendship with the Crown Prince. Through his experiences in 1830 and as Prussian representative on the Military Committee of the German Confederation, Radowitz began to study political affairs and to develop a political theory. He also became well known through his talents as an author. Finally, in 1847, he made his first attempt to reform the German Confederation and to bring about unification. However, he met with failure because of the outbreak of the Revolution of 1848. When the revolution reached his adopted homeland, he was at first seized by doubts as to which course of action to take, and because of his belief in the power of a revolution once it had begun, he resigned his post. However, events soon opened to him a new platform from which to continue his work toward German unification, the Frankfurt National Assembly.

CHAPTER II

RADOWITZ AT FRANKFURT

Although Radowitz believed that the revolution had ended his career, it was actually only beginning. The revolution gave rise to the Frankfurt National Assembly, and this made it possible for him to continue and enlarge his work for a reform of the German Confederation. On March 5, 1848, a gathering of fifty-one men at Heidelberg issued a proclamation demanding the calling of a German National Assembly. On March 31, 574 delegates met in Frankfurt am Main as a Preparliament to make preparations for the election of the National Assembly. Most of those there assembled represented small south German states. Austria had sent only two men, while little Hesse-Darmstadt had sent eighty-four.

The previous appointment of the March ministers had also included the naming of replacements for the supporters of Metternich and his ideas in the Diet of the Confederation. These new men included Friedrich Christoph Dahlmann, a historian and one of the "Göttingen Seven" dismissed from their positions at the university because of their refusal to support the coup of King Ernst August of Hanover in 1837. Others were the poet Ludwig Uhland, Friedrich Daniel Bassermann, a leading supporter of German unification in the assembly of the Grand Duchy of Baden, and Georg Gervinus, editor of the liberal Deutsche Zeitung. The new, more progressive composition of the Diet made it

possible for the supporters of the proposed National Assembly to obtain its official approval of the project, thus giving the Assembly a legal mandate from the supreme organ of the old order.¹

On May 16, Radowitz was informed of his election to the National Assembly by the voters of Arnsberg-Ruthen, a Westphalian constituency. In the election, his support had come from Catholics, who approved of him because of his religious attitudes, and from Protestants, who voted for Radowitz due to his well-known friendship with Frederick William IV.² When he heard that he had been elected to the Assembly by a mixed population, the elated delegate wrote to the King of his hopes to use this as a vehicle for a furtherance of his work for German unification.³

After several false starts, the National Assembly convened on May 18, 1848, in St. Paul's Lutheran Church at Frankfurt.⁴ Before the men assembled in this first freely elected German parliament were placed all the problems that had arisen as a result of the revolution. The old German Confederation had for all practical purposes been destroyed; now the men at Frankfurt had to create a new Germany to replace it. This meant first that they had to decide who were to be

¹Frank Eyck, The Frankfurt Parliament (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 36-41.

²Friedrich Meinecke, Radowitz und die deutsche Revolution (Berlin: Ernst Siegfried Mittler und Sohn, 1913), 79.

³"Radowitz to Frederick William IV, Giewitz, May 17, 1848," Nachgelassene Briefe, 45.

⁴Franz Wigard, ed., Stenographischer Bericht über die Verhandlungen der deutschen constituirenden Nationalversammlung zu Frankfurt am Main (9 vols., Frankfurt: Johann David Sauerlander, 1848-1849) I, 4.

considered "Germans" and what areas should be included in the new state. They also had to define the roles of the old states and to decide whether or not they were even to remain in existence. Once this had been accomplished, the most important task before the National Assembly was the erection of a new central government and a decision concerning the form this government was to take: republican or monarchial. Perhaps the most serious matter to be considered at Frankfurt was that of determining which of the two leading German states would lead the new Germany, Austria or Prussia. In short, the Frankfurt National Assembly was faced with the task of the creation of a new nation state on the ruins of the old discredited Confederation.

When men gather to discuss political matters, they usually divide into factions or parties. The men in Frankfurt in the spring of 1848 were no different; they formed political factions which were named according to their meeting places. The left wing, which emphasized the power of the people and had republican tendencies, met at the Deutscher Hof under the leadership of Robert Blum. However, as a result of internal quarrels, the Left split on May 28, when Franz Raveaux led his followers out of the Deutscher Hof to form the Donnersberg Club, or extreme Left. Both factions of the Left believed in the absolute right of the National Assembly to construct the new constitution. They differed in that the Deutscher Hof was willing to court the support of the Right center, or Casino party, through a less dogmatic interpretation of the importance of popular sovereignty, while the extreme Left refused to compromise with its principles. The Casino party consisted of men like Dahlmann, who desired the modifica-

tion of existing German institutions rather than their destruction.⁵

Radowitz, who had arrived in Frankfurt on June 20, was the leader of the right wing faction, or Steinernes Haus. The Prussian statesman did not approve of the formation of parties at the Assembly, but felt it necessary to associate with men in agreement with his ideas, since the Left had already organized.⁶ On June 6, a group of his followers formed a conservative society at the restaurant Steinernes Haus am Markte.⁷ The use of the term "society" (Verein), instead of "party" is an indication of its leader's opposition to the formation of political parties. The major plank in the platform of the Steinernes Haus was the unification of Germany under a constitutional monarchy in which the states would retain a measure of their old position.⁸

It would be a mistake to consider Radowitz and his friends reactionaries, however. His plan for a revision of the Confederation in 1847 shows that the leader of the Right realized the inadequacies of the old order and the importance of change. On June 23, he spoke on this matter before the Assembly:

I ask you: who is a reactionary? . . . Is there any such party in Germany? It cannot be found in the Assembly; no one here is a reactionary. To be sure, Gentlemen, there are men here who have faithfully and sincerely served the old monarchies. However, they are not blind to their failures and have not attempted to hide all the faults of the police state. They know very well that only

⁵Eyck, Parliament, 137-139.

⁶"Radowitz to his wife, Frankfurt, May 25, 1848," Nachgelassene Briefe, 51.

⁷"Radowitz to his wife, Frankfurt, June 6, 1848," ibid., 53.

⁸Meinecke, Radowitz, 103.

a state based on justice is the true political order and carry this thought constantly in their hearts. They wish that the reorganization might follow the path of legality. They desire evolution, not revolution.⁹

The formation of political parties at Frankfurt is much more important than it may seem at first glance. The National Assembly was the first truly free all-German parliament, and the division into parties laid the foundations for the parties of the Bismarckian era and even for those of the present German Federal Republic.

In addition to his role as leader of the Right, Radowitz also became the chief spokesman for the Roman Catholics. On June 14, he met with Melchior von Diepenbrock and August Reichensperger to organize a society of Roman Catholic members of the National Assembly. Radowitz was elected president of the newly formed body.¹⁰ Because he refused to support the conversion of the Catholic society into a political party, Radowitz was bitterly criticized. Wilhelm von Ketteler, who later as Bishop of Mainz became Bismarck's chief opponent during the Kulturkampf, accused the Prussian Catholic of harming the interests of the Church by tying it to those of Berlin.¹¹

One of the most important issues to be decided at Frankfurt was the position of the church in the new Germany. In Prussia and several other states, the Protestant Church was the established state religion, while the Roman Catholic Church occupied a similar position in Austria and Bavaria. On August 24, the Assembly began discussions on Article III of the Basic Rights, provisions designed to establish religious

⁹Wigard, Bericht, I, 478.

¹⁰Meinecke, Radowitz, 156.

¹¹Eyck, Parliament, 145.

freedom. Some members, such as Hermann von Beisler, opposed the article as being too vague; indeed, it was supported by both foes and friends of the Church. A few Protestants were afraid that a separation of church and state would weaken their religion. Wilhelm Weissborn answered this contention by arguing that religious compulsion was a part of the past and that the time had come for the church to make adjustments. Radowitz deplored the division between Catholics and Protestants on the article, and pleaded that freedom of religion be considered in the same light as freedom of the press and other basic rights. In response to those who maintained that the church required state support in order to exist, he declared that no power on earth had the strength to destroy either the Protestant or Roman Catholic Churches. He also assured the Protestants that the followers of his faith had no desire to use religious freedom as a pretext to introduce the hated Jesuit Order. The leader of the Catholic Society argued that the division of Germany into rival Protestant and Catholic states as a result of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 was no longer valid. He ended his speech with a plea for freedom for every religious group no matter how large or small. The debate ended with the passage of the article.¹²

In order to create a new Germany, the men at Frankfurt had to define what territories were to be included in the new state. One of the problems involved in this was the fate of the minorities living under German governments. One such minority was the Czech population living under the Habsburg Empire in the Kingdom of Bohemia. Bohemia

¹²Wigard, Bericht, III, 1662-1772.

had become a Habsburg possession in the sixteenth century and was populated by both the Slavic Czechs and the Germans living in the Sudetenland. Czech nationalism, growing out of the religious reforms of John Huss, was very strong. The attempts of the Czechs to achieve a greater degree of independence had been one of the chief causes of the Thirty Years' War. After the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, the Czechs were defeated and forced to accept German rule.¹³ In the nineteenth century, this nationalism experienced a rebirth, thus leading to a conflict between the German and Czech Bohemians.

Instead of responding to the call to elect delegates to the National Assembly in Frankfurt, the Czech nationalists held a Slavic Congress at Prague. Its organizers issued a decree on May 1 calling for the unification of all Slavic peoples into a state of their own. The Slavic Congress opened on June 2, and passed a resolution demanding that the nationalities problem be submitted to a general European conference for solution. It also issued a demand that the Slavs living in German states be granted self-determination. An uprising in Prague on June 12, which many Germans believed was an outgrowth of the passions aroused by the Congress, temporarily halted its proceedings.¹⁴ Since Bohemia was under the rule of a German prince and had a substantial German population, the problems posed by the Slavic Congress were of prime importance to the men at Frankfurt. The nationalist element among the delegates saw the question in terms of German versus Slav. They believed that the granting of the Czech

¹³ Arthur J. May, The Habsburg Monarchy 1867-1914 (New York: The Norton Library, 1951), 6-16.

¹⁴ Eyck, Parliament, 70, 160-161.

demands would result in the persecution of the Sudetenland Germans.

The debate at Frankfurt began on July 1, with Radowitz arguing that the Germans should not allow the six hundred-year association of Bohemia with the German Reich to be destroyed. He believed that the Assembly should wait for the Austrian officials to indicate their positions towards the Slavic Congress before taking any independent action. The leader of the Right stated, however, that the Habsburg government had a duty to see to it that the elections for the Assembly were held in Bohemia, and that if Austria should request help from other German states, the Assembly should give it without hesitation. After the debate ended, the men at St. Paul's Church voted to approve the plan suggested by Radowitz.¹⁵

The next national question to be considered at Frankfurt was the Polish problem as it related to the mixed German-Polish Duchy of Posen. During the partitions of Poland by Austria, Prussia, and Russia from 1772 to 1795, Posen had been awarded to the Hohenzollern Kingdom. However, it was not included in the German Confederation of 1815. On March 24, 1848, Frederick William IV appointed a German-Polish commission to reorganize the government of the Duchy. The Germans, feeling threatened by the possibility of Polish domination, demanded the inclusion of Posen in the German Confederation. The Prussian King decided to compromise between the Poles and German inhabitants of the territory by dividing it into several areas. Those sections with a German majority would become members of the Confederation. However, this measure failed to meet the demands of the Poles, who felt that

¹⁵Wigard, Bericht, I, 666-667.

Posen should be treated as a completely Polish area. They also objected when the German National Assembly assigned twelve delegates to represent the contested territory.¹⁶

Naturally, the controversy found its way into the discussions at Frankfurt. On May 22, the Polish National Committee sent a formal protest against the proposed elections of delegates to Frankfurt on the grounds that Posen had not been a part of the German Confederation prior to 1848. Jacob Venedey, of the Left, presented a motion denying the right of the representatives of the Duchy to participate in the Assembly. After a series of debates and conflicting motions, the Assembly approved the recommendations of the President, Heinrich von Gagern, to refer the matter to the credentials committee for further consideration.¹⁷ On June 24, the committee reported its recommendations. The report charged that the Polish nationalists sought to restore Poland to its pre-1772 boundaries, thus placing about two million Germans under Polish domination. To avoid this, the committee proposed the division of the Duchy into counties (Kreisen). Those counties with a German majority would become a part of the German Reich.¹⁸ The Committee's report was followed with a long debate on the subject.

On the second day of the debate, Radowitz rose to speak on the issue. He first deplored the attempts of some members of the Assembly to introduce the religious controversy into the issue, thus turning it into a quarrel between Catholics and Protestants. The leader of the

¹⁶Eyck, Parliament, 269.

¹⁷Wigard, Bericht, I, 196-229.

¹⁸Ibid., II, 1127.

Right demanded that the Posen question be considered solely in legal terms and not as a confessional matter. He stated that the separation of Posen from Germany would force many Germans to live under Polish domination, thus giving rise to a serious injustice. He also opposed the reestablishment of a Polish state as being against Germany's best interests. However, he also felt that it would be equally unjust to force Poles to live under German domination. He concluded his speech with a statement in support of the recommendations of the committee,¹⁹ Thus, Radowitz took a moderate position on the Posen question and refused to support the extreme views of either the German or Polish nationalists.

The debate ended with a series of votes on the issue. The Assembly rejected a motion by Robert Blum to send a special commission to Posen to investigate the matter further. Radowitz voted with a majority of 333 against 139. Next, they voted 342 to 31 to recognize the incorporation into the German Reich of those areas proposed for inclusion by the Prussian government. Radowitz voted with the majority on the measure. They also approved the demarcation line between the Polish and German sections of Posen as drawn by Berlin with a stipulation that a final investigation take place before implementation. Next, a motion by Prince Felix Lichnowsky calling for Berlin to agree to protect the rights of her Polish subjects was approved. Finally, the Assembly rejected by a vote of 331 to 101 a resolution to the effect that it was "the holy duty of Germans to work for the re-creation of Poland." Naturally, Radowitz voted against this proposal.²⁰

¹⁹Ibid., 1155-1156.

²⁰Ibid., 1228-1247.

The final minority group living under a German ruler to be considered at Frankfurt were the Italians of South Tyrol. At first, the Italian population of this Habsburg territory refused to elect representatives to the National Assembly, though Baron Giovanni, a Roman Catholic priest, conducted a campaign in support of the Assembly. After the defeat of an uprising in Tione, the people of Trent realized that Vienna would never relinquish control of South Tyrol without a fight, which the Italians realized they could not win. So they elected four men to go to Frankfurt.²¹ However, other areas of Habsburg Italy were not so cooperative. In Lombardy and Venetia, under Austrian rule since the Congress of Vienna, the people rose in revolt on March 18. Five days later, King Charles Albert of Sardinia-Piedmont marched his army into Lombardy, thus beginning a war between his small state and the Habsburg Empire.²²

The National Assembly began discussions on the Italian question on August 12. After some debate, they voted against a separation of Trent and Roveredo from the German Reich. Radowitz proposed that the German Provisional Government, which had been established by the Assembly, offer its services to mediate between the belligerent powers. He believed that the war in Italy was of national importance and that if Austria lost control over northern Italy, it would open the way for French hegemony in Italy, thus posing a serious threat to Germany's southern boundaries. He also stated that a loss of Venice would endanger the Dalmation coast and Trieste, both areas necessary for Ger-

²¹Eyck, Parliament, 74.

²²Robinson, Revolutions, 346.

man security. For these reasons, he advocated the retention of the German hold on northern Italy. His speech was loudly applauded by the Right and Center. After the conclusion of the debate, the Assembly voted to pass these motions to the Provisional Government for consideration.²³

After disposing of the problems posed by non-Germans living under a German ruler, the Assembly found itself faced with the problem of a German majority under a non-German ruler, the Schleswig-Holstein question. Owing to claims dating as far back as the Middle Ages, the Danish King was also Duke of Schleswig. During the territorial settlements following the Napoleonic wars, Holstein was awarded to the King of Denmark as partial compensation for the loss of Norway and Sweden. Since Holstein had a completely German population, it became a part of the German Confederation, while Schleswig, with its mixed Danish-German population remained outside this body.²⁴ On March 24, 1848, the Germans in the Duchies revolted and formed a provisional government in response to the announcement from Copenhagen of the incorporation of Schleswig into the Danish state. Heinrich von Arnim, the Prussian Foreign Minister, recognized the provisional government and sent General Friedrich von Wrangel with troops in support. This led to a war between Prussia and the Nordic kingdom. Because of the intervention of Sweden, the effectiveness of the Danish blockade, and the protests of Russia and England, Prussia was forced to sue for peace and conclude an armistice at Malmö, Sweden, on August 26. In the truce,

²³Wigard, Bericht, II, 1560-1568.

²⁴Lawrence D. Steefel, The Schleswig-Holstein Question (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), 4.

Prussia agreed to end its recognition of the provisional government and to place the Duchies under a mixed commission dominated by the Danes.²⁵

Radowitz was well aware of the Schleswig-Holstein problem. In 1846, he had written an article entitled, "Who Succeeds in Schleswig?" In this, he traced the claims of the Danish royal family to the Duchy back to 1110, but cited historical evidence to prove the unification of Schleswig with Holstein rather than Denmark. He also stated that the Schleswig succession, along with that of Holstein, was rightfully through the male line rather than through the female line as recognized in the Danish law of succession.²⁶

On September 4, the Frankfurt National Assembly began its discussion on the Schleswig-Holstein question. The Reichsminister Johann Gustav Heckscher read the provisions of the Malmö agreement. After a fiery debate, the matter was referred to a special committee with instructions to report the next day. However, the committee was unable to reach agreement. The majority, speaking through Friedrich Christoph Dahlmann, opposed the endorsement of the truce. He was supported by the Left, which believed that Germany had an obligation to fight for the rights of the Germans in the Duchies. The Right, led by Radowitz, favored the armistice. The leader of the conservative forces stated that the question was of European importance and that a failure at negotiations could lead to a general war which would do great harm to Germany. In his arguments, he cited the strength of the

²⁵Holborn, Modern Germany, III, 55, 65-67.

²⁶Radowitz, "Wer Ebt in Schleswig?," Gesammelte Schriften, III, 167-194.

Danish fleet and the fact that the provisions of the final peace were still to be decided. His speech was greeted with cheers from the Right and hisses from the Left and galleries. The leader of the Steinernes Haus faction supported a motion calling for a postponement of action by the Assembly until agreement could be reached on the final terms of peace. This failed, and a motion by Dahlmann against the Malmö armistice passed by a vote of 238 to 221. Radowitz voted with the minority. However, this action did not stand. After a serious crisis caused by the resignation of the Ministry and the failure of attempts to form a new one, the Assembly reversed its decision by a vote on September 16.²⁷

The Assembly's ratification provoked violent opposition. Riots broke out in Frankfurt, where the people erected barricades to protest the decision. With the approval of the Assembly, and the Frankfurt Senate, Anton von Schmerling, Minister of the Interior, sent for troops from the federal fortress at Mainz to protect St. Paul's Church.²⁸ However, a group of protestors was able to break through the military cordon and storm the church. After they had gotten through one of the doors, Heinrich von Gagern shouted, "I declare every transgressor against this holy place a traitor to the Fatherland," and the startled mob turned back.²⁹ The unrest continued and reached a climax with the mob murder of Prince Felix Lichnowsky, who had been mistaken by some members of the crowd for Radowitz.³⁰ The violence

²⁷Wigard, Bericht, III, 1857-2149.

²⁸Ibid., 2163-2027.

²⁹Eyck, Parliament, 312.

³⁰Robinson, Revolutions, 160.

made a deep impression on the leader of the Right. He witnessed from his window the storming of a barricade by some Prussian troops and wrote his wife of his strong desire to join them.³¹ When the National Assembly, itself a product of the revolution, was forced to call upon the troops of the old order to protect it from the very people it claimed to represent, its weaknesses became quite apparent.

In addition to the nationalities question, Assembly was faced with the important task of creating a provisional government to rule Germany while it completed its work of writing the new constitution. The debate over this issue is very important to an understanding of Radowitz's political philosophy. During this discussion, the men at Frankfurt decided upon the position of the old German states in the new order. They began debate on June 19. The representatives of the Left took the position that the revolution had destroyed the importance of the states, and therefore the power to create a new government for Germany rested solely in the hands of the National Assembly.³²

On the first day of the debate, Radowitz defined his ideas on the future of Germany. He stated that the German people would not allow the destruction of their states. He believed that Germany had two sets of interests: regional and local matters, represented by the states, and national concerns. The leader of the Right advocated that in the future Germany the national interests should be served by a House of Commons and those of local importance by a House of the States. Since

³¹Meinecke, Radowitz, 149.

³²Eyck, Parliament, 174.

the present structure of Germany failed to provide for this, he believed that the state governments should be given the power to name the provisional government. Radowitz argued that this would not mean that all power would be given to the princes instead of the people; it would simply provide that control would be in the hands of the individual states instead of the national government.³³ His position on the issue reveals Radowitz as a moderate. He supported the formation of a national government, but he also realized the importance of the old German states.

After Radowitz had completed his speech, the debate continued. On June 21, George von Vincke proposed that a Federal Director be named by the states and that this officer govern Germany while the drafting of the constitution was underway. The next day Radowitz spoke in favor of this proposal. He opposed the creation of an executive committee as advocated by Ludwig Simon and the Left. Instead, the leader of the Right favored naming one man as head of state. On June 27, Heinrich von Gagern intervened in the debate with a bold affirmation of the authority of the Assembly to create the provisional government. His statement was met with loud shouts of approval. He also recommended that the head of the provisional government should be a prince who would serve as Imperial Regent.³⁴ This would mean that the National Assembly would take upon itself full authority to govern Germany without any interference from the states. It would also mean that the Assembly would commit itself to a monarchy, since Gagern

³³Wigard, Bericht, I, 375-376.

³⁴Ibid., 444, 479, 521-522.

wanted a prince to become Regent and thus eliminate the possibility of a republican solution to the German problem. Most important, Gagern's suggestion ended a deadlock that might have lasted for weeks or even months.

The Assembly then began to vote on the issue. The forces of the Right, including Radowitz, attempted to soften the blow to the traditional power of the States through a motion that would have made the Assembly's actions on the provisional government subject to the approval of the states. This was defeated by a vote of 31 to 577, a division which showed the relative strength of the Right in St. Paul's Church. Later, Radowitz voted with the majority against an attempt by the Left to abolish the National Assembly after the creation of the provisional government. This was followed by a motion granting the provisional government the authority to declare war and peace and negotiate treaties with foreign powers with the approval of the National Assembly, thus depriving the states of one of the major symbols of sovereignty. Radowitz, acting in his role as leader of the Right, rose to object to the consideration of this motion on the grounds that the members of his party had not been given prior notice of its consideration at that time. He was overruled, and the proposal was approved by a vote of 408 to 143. True to his strong belief in German unification, Radowitz voted with the majority.³⁵

Radowitz remained a strong supporter of the rights of the German states, however, and opposed a motion which would have empowered the head of the provisional government to name a prime minister. This

³⁵Ibid., 576-602.

passed by a vote of 408 to 143. He also dissented when the Assembly gave itself the right to elect an Imperial Regent by a vote of 403 to 135. Division over the issue continued the next day with the passage of a measure making the Regent independent of the Assembly. This had the effect of not only rendering the Regent independent but curtailed the Assembly's powers as well. It also meant that the provisional government would not become a parliamentary democracy; it would remain a monarchy with the Imperial Regent in the position of sovereign. In the next vote, the Assembly dissolved the Diet of the German Confederation by a vote of 510 to 35, thus eradicating the last remains of the old order. True to his position as leader of the Right, Radowitz opposed this action. However, when the division on the creation of a central authority began, in a grand effort to preserve the unity of the Assembly, he rose to call for its passage. The law passed by a vote of 450 to 100. On June 20, Archduke John of Austria was elected Imperial Regent, and his elevation to this position was greeted with cheers, the ringing of church bells, and the firing of a cannon.³⁶

After dealing with the nationalities problem and erecting a provisional government, the men at Frankfurt had before them the decision on the role of the Habsburg Empire in the new German state. The lands ruled from Vienna included a number of non-German areas, such as Hungary, Slovenia, Galicia, and Croatia. It was necessary to reach an agreement on the relationship between these non-German territories and the new German state. One faction favored a greater Germany which would include most if not all of the Habsburg lands. This was the

³⁶Ibid., 576-638.

Grossdeutsch Party. The other, or Kleindeutsch Party, favored the exclusion of the Danubian Monarchy from Germany, thus making it possible for Prussia to assume German leadership.

Radowitz, as his work before the Frankfurt National Assembly indicates, was a strong supporter of Prussian leadership over Germany. He believed that the Hohenzollern Kingdom, as a true German state and a European power, was the natural head of the German nation, rather than the multinational Habsburg Empire.³⁷ After a long debate, the Assembly voted 340 to 76 to prohibit the union under one government of a part of the German nation with a non-German area. They also accepted by a large majority a proposal which provided a German state under the same ruler as a non-German one could only be united in personal union.³⁸ Radowitz did not participate in the debate or the vote, however, since he had left Frankfurt on September 23 for Mecklenburg in order to assist his family's move to Wetzlar.³⁹

The decision of the National Assembly to ban the inclusion of non-German areas in the new German Reich placed it on the side of the advocates of Prussian hegemony and automatically ruled out any further Austrian support of its activities. After playing a major role in German affairs for several hundred years, the Habsburgs refused to acquiesce to their exclusion from Germany. After the victory of the counterrevolutionary forces in Austria during the fall of 1848, Prince Felix von Schwarzenberg had been appointed Prime Minister. On Novem-

³⁷"Privataufzeichnung von Radowitz, Sept. 11, 1848," Nachgelassene Briefe, 60-63.

³⁸Wigard, Bericht, II, 2918-2936.

³⁹Meinecke, Radowitz, 166-167.

ber 27, he announced to a meeting of the Austrian Diet at Kremsier that the unification of the Habsburg lands was a matter of both German and European necessity.⁴⁰

With this decision on the future of Austria, the National Assembly could now turn to its most important work, the drafting of a constitution. On January 17, 1849, the Constitutional Committee submitted its report, but owing to its inability to agree, the membership was divided into two groups. One favored a hereditary emperor, while the other wanted government by an Imperial Directory. The Directory was to consist of five members, including the Austrian Emperor, the Kings of Prussia and Bavaria, a member chosen by the Kings of Hanover, Saxony and Württemberg and the Grand Duke of Baden, and a representative of the remaining German princes.⁴¹ The Hereditary Emperor Party supported the candidacy of Frederick William IV of Prussia as head of the German Reich. Naturally, Radowitz sided with this group. He had advanced this idea to his friend as early as six months previously. On January 5, he wrote the King, "When Germany's princes and people call you to this throne, I will pull your carriage on my shoulders to old St. Bartholomew's Cathedral," the former coronation site of the Holy Roman Emperors.⁴² The Assembly debated the issue from January 17 until March 27, when it voted 267 to 263 in favor of the establishment of

⁴⁰ Heinrich von Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire By William I (trans. by Marshall Livingston Perrin and Gamaliel Bradford, Jr., 6 vols., New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1890), I, 301.

⁴¹ Wigard, Bericht, VI, 4675.

⁴² "Radowitz to Frederick William IV, Frankfurt, Jan. 5, 1849," Nachgelassene Briefe, 72.

the office of hereditary Emperor. The next day they elected Frederick William IV to this position; Radowitz voted for his friend. A delegation of twenty-four was sent to inform the King of his selection, and the Assembly turned to the drafting of the constitution.⁴³

The constitution adopted at Frankfurt created a unified German state under the leadership of the Emperor and a bicameral Parliament. The Emperor was to have the authority to appoint the ministry and all diplomatic personnel, to call the Parliament into session, and to order its dissolution. He was also head of the armed forces and had the power to proclaim and enforce laws. The upper house of the Parliament was called the House of States. Half of its membership was to be appointed by the state governments, and the remainder by the state parliaments. Elections for half of the membership would be held every three years, and the delegates would serve for six-year terms. The lower house, or House of the People, would be elected to three-year terms by universal manhood suffrage and secret ballot. Legislation had to receive the approval of both houses, and the Emperor had the right to veto, but this could be overridden by three successive sessions of the Parliament. The constitution also established a supreme court.⁴⁴ Thus, the National Assembly had created a unified German state in which the interests of the states were protected by the House of the States and those of the people by the lower house.

However, events outside Frankfurt determined the fate of the new constitution. On March 7, the Austrian Diet at Kremsier created a

⁴³Wigard, Bericht, IX, 6084-6096.

⁴⁴Eyck, Parliament, 378-380.

united Habsburg state instead of the personal union demanded by the National Assembly. The Habsburg Court refused to recognize the authority of the men at St. Paul's Church to expel it from German affairs. The government sent a note to Frankfurt rejecting the constitution and demanding its amendment in accordance with its demands. The Austrians also refused to recognize the election of Frederick William as the head of the German Empire. Instead, they proposed that Germany be ruled by a seven-member directory under a Habsburg president. In the Austrian plan, the Parliament was to be replaced by a chamber of seventy members elected by the state governments.⁴⁵

Since Austria refused to accept the constitution, its fate was placed in the hands of King Frederick William IV. The Prussian King had several alternatives. He could accept the crown and risk a major war with Austria and her supporters among the German states; he could reject it outright; or he could temporize and wait for a solution to present itself. He chose the last possibility. Radowitz, like his friend, was beset by doubts concerning his position. He could have rushed to Berlin to be at the King's side, but he preferred to remain at his post in Frankfurt and put his recommendations in writing as he had done in the past and would continue to do throughout his years of service to the Prussian monarch. On March 13, 1849, he outlined his thoughts on the subject in a letter to the King. He realized that an open break with Austria might lead to war but maintained that the Habsburg Monarchy had isolated herself from Germany. The King's

⁴⁵Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, I, 340-341.

friend refrained from advising him on what course to take, explaining that he was not fully informed on the attitudes of the Austrian government.⁴⁶

Like Radowitz, the King was confused as to which alternative to choose. In spite of his friend's uncertain advice, Frederick William needed him in Berlin.⁴⁷ The Hohenzollern monarch questioned seriously the right of the men at Frankfurt to grant him the imperial crown; he would have preferred to receive it from the hands of the German princes. On April 3, he met with the representatives of the Assembly. He did not actually reject the crown, but informed them that before he could accept it, the constitution must be approved by the German states.⁴⁸ This apparent refusal was not really unreasonable. It should be remembered that even in the United States the constitution required the ratification of the states before it could go into effect. Nevertheless, the King's statement was interpreted by the delegation as a rejection. After this, the Assembly went into a swift decline. Many members, including Radowitz, left Frankfurt, and finally a Rump Parliament convened at Stuttgart was dissolved by troops on June 18.⁴⁹

The reasons for the failure of the Frankfurt National Assembly were manifold and varied. The men at St. Paul's Church had no real power to force the adoption of their constitution. The Assembly could

⁴⁶"Radowitz to Frederick William IV, Frankfurt, March 13, 1849," Nachgelassene Briefe, 75.

⁴⁷Meinecke, Radowitz, 216-217.

⁴⁸Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, I, 350-353.

⁴⁹Eyck, Parliament, 383-386.

debate and adopt motions as much as it wished, but it had no army. In Germany in 1848, he who controlled the army controlled the nation. The states possessed the troops and refused to use them to support their own destruction as semi-independent entities. The Assembly had also alienated the German revolutionaries by its decision to support the Malmö Armistice; it could not now call upon them for support against the states. In reality, the National Assembly had adopted a moderate solution to the German problem, and in doing so had alienated both the German states and the revolutionaries.

Likewise, from a study of his work at Frankfurt, Radowitz emerges as a moderate. He was the leader of the Right, but refused to support a reaction that would reinstate the old order and its ineffective Confederation. He fought for the establishment of a monarchy and the retention of the position of the states, but at the same time he was willing to work for the erection of a freely elected Parliament as a voice for the German people. On April 23, he received a letter from the Prussian Prime Minister, Count Friedrich Wilhelm von Brandenburg,⁵⁰ recalling him to Berlin.

Radowitz viewed the results of the National Assembly with mixed emotions. He was deeply disturbed by the factionalism and long arguments at Frankfurt which had delayed the decisions on the constitution until the time for effective action had passed.⁵¹ He did not feel that the Assembly had been a total failure, however. He was pleased with the foundations for unification laid by the constitution and incor-

⁵⁰Meinecke, Radowitz, 229.

⁵¹Wigard, Bericht, VIII, 5807.

porated a revised version of this document in his own work in 1849 and 1850. It is clear that he would have preferred the acceptance of the constitution and of Frederick William IV as Emperor, but was too realistic to expect such a thing in the face of such strong Austrian opposition. In the next chapter of his career, Radowitz carried on his fight for German unification through other channels.

CHAPTER III

THE ERFURT PARLIAMENT

The failure of the Frankfurt National Assembly left a political vacuum in Germany. The revolution had destroyed the old German Confederation of 1815, and the attempts at Frankfurt to replace it with a unified German constitutional state had been in vain. To the question as to what would replace the old order, three alternatives presented themselves: the reestablishment of the defunct Confederation; the creation of a republic, as advanced by the radical elements; or the unification of Germany under Prussian leadership. This third option was that which Radowitz favored, and for his efforts to achieve this goal he has been criticized from several sides. Bismarck, a representative of the reactionary Junker class, accused him of deliberately trying to lead the Hohenzollern Kingdom to humiliation either from a desire to harm the Protestant cause or else as a result of his selfish determination to curry the favor of Frederick William IV regardless of the consequences. Others, such as the historian Veit Valentin, have charged that Radowitz was wholly out of touch with reality owing to his strong romantic leanings.¹ These judgments lead one to seek the real motivations of Radowitz and explain why his actions were inde-

¹Otto von Bismarck, Gedanken und Erinnerungen (2 vols., Berlin: J. S. Cottaxche Buchhandlung, 1915), I, 84; Valentin, Deutsche Revolution, I, 320-321.

cisive and ultimately unsuccessful. This chapter represents an attempt to analyze his actions from the conclusion of the Frankfurt National Assembly until the end of the Erfurt Parliament in order to determine the answer to these questions.

After his participation in the unsuccessful meeting at Frankfurt, Radowitz returned to Berlin disillusioned and chastened. He wrote his wife that he felt like a soldier who had gone into battle with the foreknowledge of certain defeat.² He had seen his high hopes in the possibilities of the Assembly crumble into dust. He had also met with defeat in his earlier efforts to bring about a reform in the Confederation in 1847. Thus, in April, 1849, without any idea of what lay before him, he returned to the Prussian capital.

Upon his arrival in Berlin, he made one final effort to save the fruits of the National Assembly. On April 26, he met with Count Brandenburg, the Prime Minister, and Frederick William IV. Radowitz proposed three possible solutions to the conflict between Berlin and Frankfurt. First, Prussia could break completely with the Assembly and dictate a German constitution from above. Secondly, the Hohenzollern Kingdom could appeal directly to the German people. And finally, Berlin could reach an understanding with the middle German states while coming to some sort of separate agreement with Austria. Both Brandenburg and the King entertained serious doubts as to which alternatives to choose. Four days later, the ministry met to discuss the issue. In the debate over the problem, Radowitz championed the last alternative, arguing that since the men at Frankfurt had taken

²"Radowitz to his wife, Eisenach, April 24, 1849," Nachgelassene Briefe, 81.

the initiative and drafted a constitution, the ministry should act to unite Germany on the basis of a strong executive power with a legislature consisting of a House of States and a House of the People. He also emphasized the importance of reaching an accord with the Habsburg Empire.³ Because the King and his ministers considered other matters, such as the revolts in the Rhineland, more pressing, action was deferred, however.

Emboldened by this delay, the champion of German unification decided on the necessity of immediate action. On May 5, he met with the King, who proposed the restoration of the defunct Holy Roman Empire with the Habsburg Emperor as Kaiser and the Prussian King as chief of the military.⁴ This plan was most impractical. The revolution had unleashed forces that would never settle for this solution. The men of 1848 had fought to create a strong unified nation and would never accept the linkage of German fortunes with those of the multinational Habsburg Empire. Also, the possibility of Austrian approval of the King's program was most remote.

The idea of the resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire did not even win acceptance from the Prussian ministry. Instead, the ministry instructed Radowitz to draft a proposed plan of union. He based his proposal on the constitution created at Frankfurt and upon his consultations with members of the ministry and the King. On May 13, the fruits of his work were presented to the ministry. After two days of

³"Diary," April 26 and 30, 1849, *ibid.*, 83-84.

⁴*Ibid.*

discussion it was accepted.⁵ The proposed constitution was to be submitted to a conference of representatives of the German states which had been called to assemble at Potsdam. This approach was very realistic. The real power in Germany was held by the states, and any solution to the German problem would have to meet with their approval.

The plenipotentiaries gathered under Radowitz's leadership on May 17, but only Hanover, represented by Johann Stüve, Saxony, represented by von Beust, and Bavaria, represented by Gustav Lerchenfeld, responded to the Prussian invitation. The other twenty-nine German states replied that events no longer justified the convening of a conference. Anton von Prokesch, the Austrian Minister to the Hohenzollern court, attended the first meeting but at the second informed Radowitz that his country could not participate. Yet Radowitz persevered. The Prussian representative proposed that a German Union be founded on the basis of an executive power consisting of a council of sovereigns and a bicameral diet.⁶ The deliberations lasted for nine sessions, and on May 26, after an all-night session, Prussia, Hanover, and Saxony agreed to the Prussian proposals and formed the league of Three Kings. Bavaria, which had participated in the consultations, announced that she would reserve judgment on her decision concerning joining the League.⁷

Four days later, the proposed constitution of the League was made public. The Imperial Government was to consist of a Council of Princes

⁵"Diary," May 4, 5, and 6, 1849, *ibid.*, 90, 92.

⁶"Prussia and Saxony," *The Times*, (London) May 15, 1849; "Diary," May 17-18, 1849, *Nachgelassene Briefe*, 98-99.

⁷Sybel, *The Founding of the German Empire*, I, 382.

and a bicameral diet. Executive power would rest in the hands of the Council of Princes under the presidency of the King of Prussia or, in his absence, the King of Bavaria. The membership of this body was to consist of six voting members. Prussia and Bavaria each had one vote. Württemberg, Baden, and the two Hohenzollern principalities would share a vote, while Saxony, the Saxon Duchies, Reuss, Anhalt, and Schwarzburg would also share a voting member. Hanover, Brunswick, Oldenburg, Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Holstein were combined for the purpose of representation. The Hansa towns shared a vote, and finally Hesse-Kassel, Hesse-Darmstadt, Nassau, Hesse-Homburg, Limburg, Waldeck, Lippe, Schaumburg-Lippe and Frankfurt am Main divided a voting member between them. The Council would have the power to conduct all diplomatic correspondence, declare war, negotiate treaties, and to prepare legislation for submission to the Diet.⁸

The legislative power was to be invested in the Federal Diet, consisting of a House of the People and a House of the States. The House of the people was to be elected by all males over the age of twenty-five, and delegates represented districts having a population of 100,000 as determined by the latest census. The method of election was indirect. The House of States, or Senate, was to consist of 160 members. Prussia was entitled to forty representatives, Bavaria twenty, Saxony, Hanover, and Württemberg twelve, Baden ten, Hesse-Kassel and Hesse-Darmstadt seven, Luxemburg three, Nassau four, Oldenburg, Brunswick, Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach two, and the remaining states each had one. One-half of the membership of the House of States was to be

⁸"Prussia," The Times (London), June 4, 1849, 6.

elected by the state governments and the other half by the state diets. Those states sending one man to the House would choose their delegate by having the state government select one of three candidates nominated by the state diet. Members of the Federal Diet were required to be at least thirty years old.⁹

After Radowitz had supported the election of Frederick William IV as Emperor of Germany at the Frankfurt National Assembly, it may seem strange that he made no substantial attempt to preserve this feature of the Frankfurt Constitution during the negotiations of the League of Three Kings. The reason for this change lies in the fact that he was realistic enough to realize that the other German states would never accept giving this much power to the Hohenzollern King. In fact, Saxony and Hanover had reservations about even placing Frederick William IV in the presidency of the Council of Princes.¹⁰

In accord with Radowitz's views of their importance, the power of the states was protected by several features of the proposed constitution. The House of the States, through the election of its membership by the state governments, was the major source of this protection. The power of the states was also protected by the representation of their governments in the Council of Princes. However, the states were also limited by Radowitz's constitution. The most important symbol of sovereignty, the right to carry on diplomatic relations with foreign powers, was reserved to the Federal Government. Thus, the League would create a unified Germany while preserving the position of the German

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, I, 382.

states.

The limited grants of power to the people also reveal Radowitz's political philosophy. While universal manhood suffrage was a part of the constitution, the method of indirect election and the position of the House of the People combined to limit the actual force of the German people in the League. Radowitz and his fellow ministers were willing to allow the electorate to get its foot in the door but stopped short of giving it full entrance to the governance of Germany.

A very important aspect of the League which was eventually to contribute to its failure was the omission of a role for the Habsburg Empire. Even at Frankfurt, the way had been opened for Austrian participation in German affairs, albeit in a very limited fashion. In the League of Three Kings, Austria was assigned the position of a foreign state. This would place Germany under Prussian leadership, end several hundred years of Habsburg dominance over German affairs, and alienate the Danubian Monarchy.

At first, the League seemed to be a success. On June 6, the King of Saxony announced its acceptance by his kingdom. The same day the Bavarian monarch indicated that he would seriously consider the proposal, if Prussia would agree to assist in the suppression of the rebellion in Saxony. On June 28, Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach sent its representative to Berlin to announce its adherence to the League. By July 20, the two Mecklenburgs, Oldenburg, the Saxon duchies, the Hessian states, Anhalt, and Anhalt-Dessau-Köthen had joined. On September 6, the Prussian Government announced that the remaining German states had fourteen days to reply to the invitation to become a part of the

League.¹¹

During this time, Radowitz was working in Berlin for the success of his program. The single most crucial matter to be taken into consideration was the position of the Habsburg Empire toward the League. In an effort to reach an agreement with the other German power, Foreign Minister Karl von Canitz was sent to Vienna. Here he discovered that Austria refused to consider herself outside of German affairs and that the Habsburg Court still regarded Archduke John the Imperial Vicar. Austrian insistence on the retention of power by the Archduke was a method of gaining time in order to keep Prussia from seizing control of Germany while the Habsburgs were occupied with internal problems. The government at Vienna took the position that before any discussion on the German question could take place, the last remnants of the revolution must be crushed. General Leopold von Gerlach, who had been sent to Munich, found a similar attitude at the Wittelsbach Court. He attributed this to influence exercised by agents of the Austrian government. Accordingly, he reported to Radowitz that Bavaria could be considered in agreement with Vienna. From Warsaw, August von Rochow reported that the Austrian position had received the support of Tsar Nicholas I.¹²

In spite of her internal problems, Austria did make some effort to reach an understanding with the Prussians. On September 6, Vienna proposed that the two German powers join in the formation of a new

¹¹"Prussia," The Times (London), June 6, 28, July 20, and September 6, 1849, 6.

¹²"Canitz to Radowitz, Vienna, May 22, 1849," and "Diary" May 31, 1849, Nachgelassene Briefe, 181, 108; Gerlach, Denkwürdigkeiten, VI, 329.

confederation consisting of the former members of the defunct German Confederation. The Habsburg overture prompted a secret meeting between the heads of the two states at Troepnitz, Bohemia, which, however, had no tangible results. On September 17, Canitz reported to his superiors that his mission had been a failure. Among the sources of friction between the two German powers was a difference in the text of the constitution published at Berlin and that presented to the Habsburg authorities. This caused some Austrian newspapers to charge the Prussians with acting in bad faith. On September 18 Austria sent a note to Berlin officially rejecting the League.¹³

In addition to opposition from outside Prussia, Radowitz found that his program had powerful foes within his own country, especially among the Junker class. Their mouthpiece, the Kreuzzeitung, denounced the King's friend as an agent of the revolution and a spy from St. Paul's Church. In his diary, Radowitz recorded that even his friend, Frederick William himself, had begun to entertain serious doubts about his ideas as a result of the opposition of the Junkers.¹⁴ The fact that the major enemies of the League and its author were reactionary Junkers is enough to discredit any attempt to paint Radowitz as an agent of reaction. Had he been a reactionary, he would have gained the support of the Junkers; but as a major spokesman for those who realized that the old order had outlived its usefulness and had to be replaced by a new and united Germany, he was the very antithesis of the reaction.

Junker animosity toward the League was expressed in the Prussian

¹³"Prussia," The Times (London), September 13, 17, and 18, 1849, 6.

¹⁴"Diary," May 19 and 31, 1849, Nachgelassene Briefe, 100, 108.

Diet even prior to the Austrian rejection of the plan. On August 25, Radowitz presented his program in a speech before the assembly in which he summoned all his talents as an orator. Urging support for his program, Radowitz cited the growth of German nationalism during the War of Liberation and the need for a united German foreign policy.¹⁵ The effect of his impassioned speech was such that Bismarck reported scornfully that by its conclusion there was hardly a dry eye in the house. In spite of this enthusiastic reception, the League still had many foes. Typical of the opposition was that of Bismarck, who argued that "The Prussian people do not want to see their Prussian Kingdom dissolved in the rotten fermentation of south German indiscipline. Their loyalty is not based on a paper presidency of the Reich."¹⁶

By October, the plan was all but dead. The pressure of Austria on those states which had originally supported the League and the opposition of Bavaria and Württemberg caused some member states to reconsider their position. On October 24, Saxony and Hanover both recalled their ministers to the Hohenzollern Court. Because this signified the withdrawal of two of the largest members from the League, Radowitz rushed to the Prussian Diet that same day with a new program and a reaffirmation of the government's dedication to its success. The King's friend admitted that his efforts to achieve a new Germany had met with initial failure and that a new approach was necessary. He now proposed that Germany consist of two unions, the Confederation

¹⁵"Rede in der zweiten Kammer der preussischen Stände am 25sten August 1849," Gesammelte Schriften, II, 388-420.

¹⁶F. Darmstaedter, Bismarck and the Creation of the Second Reich (London: Methuen and Co., 1948), 96.

of 1815 and within this body a smaller organization. This limited confederation would adopt the constitution proposed for the League of Three Kings but would not separate itself from the larger German alliance. He concluded his statement by claiming that this proposal was in agreement with the terms of the Treaty of Vienna of 1815 and that every attempt would be made to gain the agreement of Austria.¹⁷

Radowitz's new program was in reality a recasting of his original plan for the revision of the German Confederation, first brought forth in 1847. It also represented a serious attempt to avoid antagonizing Austria by allowing her to remain in a position of authority in Germany. Also calculated to please the Habsburg power was the appeal to the Treaty of Vienna. In their opposition to the League, the Austrians had maintained that it was in violation of this agreement. In this section of his program, the champion of German unification had a precedent upon which to base his arguments, since a number of the smaller German principalities had combined to form single states on several occasions.

On November 18, in accordance with the Constitution of the League of Three Kings, the Prussian Government announced elections for the Parliament of the Union at Erfurt. This action brought protests from Hanover and Saxony. The north German power replied that the proposed smaller confederation was only a beginning and not a final solution of the question. The calling of the Parliament was justified on the grounds that the movement for German unification must move forward. On November 23, Austria joined the two kingdoms in issuing a formal protest. This caused Frederick William IV to call a cabinet meeting

¹⁷"Prussia," The Times (London), October 29 and 30, 1849, 6.

which issued a reply defending the right of the Prussians to take action to solve the problem of German unity.¹⁸

Although the new Prussian plan of union represented an attempt at compromise with the Austrian demands, the Danubian Monarchy continued its protests. On December 12, another official note of objection was issued by the Habsburg court. This document consisted of three parts. In the first section, it was argued that the decision of Prussia to call the Parliament was in violation of the Treaty of Vienna, the same treaty that Radowitz cited as evidence of the legality of his program. The second section objected in advance to any action taken by the Parliament. Finally, Austria challenged the right of Prussia to create a union of German states without prior consultation with the Emperor and his officials and hinted at the possibility of armed intervention should the north German kingdom continue her efforts to unite Germany under her leadership. The Prussian reply defended the legality of her actions as being in full accord with the provisions of the treaty of Vienna. The Berlin note also charged that by her combination with non-German territories, the Danubian monarchy had vacated her position as the leader of Germany destiny. As evidence of this contention, the Prussian statement cited the decision of the Frankfurt National Assembly to place the Hohenzollern sovereign rather than his Habsburg counterpart at the head of Germany.¹⁹

Before Radowitz could turn his full attention to the Parliament, he was required to concern himself with another matter. Since the end

¹⁸"Prussia," The Illustrated London News, November 24, 1849, 338; "Prussia," The Times (London), November 24, and 26, 1849, 3, 6.

¹⁹"Prussia and Austria," The Times (London), December 24, 1849, 6.

of the Frankfurt National Assembly, the German Confederation, if it was still worthy of such a title, had been headed by Archduke John. On September 30, the two German powers had signed an agreement to rule Germany by a joint commission.²⁰ Radowitz was named by Frederick William IV to represent him on this body,²¹ and he left Berlin for Frankfurt on December 12 to assume his new position.²² The meetings of the commission accomplished nothing toward solving the differences between the two states contending for German leadership, however, and on December 20, Archduke John surrendered his office to the Prussian and Austrian representatives. Finally, on January 28, 1850, Radowitz was recalled to Berlin to make preparations for the opening of the Parliament.²³

Discussions concerning the problems presented by the Austrian objections to Radowitz's proposals in Berlin reached a high point in February, 1850. On February 14, Radowitz wrote Foreign Minister von Schleinitz to request his support. Two days later, the King wrote his friend of his doubts concerning the wisdom of pressing the matter. He was very concerned about the possibility of war with Austria. Radowitz, realizing the importance of maintaining the King's support, wrote an immediate reply in which he repeated his arguments of the past several months concerning the union. He also wrote Count Branden-

²⁰ Meinecke, Radowitz, 357.

²¹ "Prussia," The Times (London), November 21, 1849, 6.

²² "Radowitz to Frederick William IV, Berlin, December 11, 1849," Nachgelassene Briefe, 144.

²³ "Prussia and Austria," and "Germany," The Times (London), December 24, 1849, and January 12, 1850, 6.

burg to discount the possibility of war on the grounds that the guarantees of other European states to Berlin would act as a deterrent to any aggressive intent on the part of the Habsburg Court.²⁴ The result of his series of letters was the decision of the King and his advisors to instruct Schleinitz to send a note to his Austrian counterpart defending the Prussian plan of union in very clear terms.²⁵ Thus Radowitz was able to calm his king and save his program for at least the moment.

Radowitz realized that Austria would never voluntarily vacate her position in Germany. He hoped that his idea of a "wider and narrower union" would provide a middle ground between German unification without Austria and continued German disunion with the Habsburg Empire. He also knew that the constitution produced at Frankfurt would never gain the approval of the Danubian Monarchy and thus sought to effect a compromise between Vienna and the advocates of German unity.²⁶ His willingness to give up part of his work at Frankfurt in order to save as much as possible reveals the King's friend as a realistic and moderate statesman.

In the meantime, plans were being made for the opening of the Parliament provided for in the Constitution of the League of the Three Kings. Prussia and the Mecklenburgs, the remaining states in

²⁴"Radowitz to Schleinitz, Frankfurt, February 14, 1850," Frederick William IV to Radowitz, Charlottenburg, February 16, 1850," "Radowitz to Frederick William IV, Frankfurt, February 18, 1850," and "Radowitz to Count Brandenburg, Frankfurt, February 20, 1850," Nachgelassene Briefe, 161, 165, 167, and 170.

²⁵"Prussia," The Times, (London), March 5, 1850, 6.

²⁶"Private Notes of Radowitz, March 2, 1850," Nachgelassene Briefe, 174.

the League, held elections as scheduled on January 31, 1850, but the democratic parties refused to participate in protest against the indirect method of election. On January 12, Radowitz had accepted the nomination of Arnsberg for the House of the People. However, on February 9, he was informed of his election to that body by the city of Erfurt instead.²⁷ Some members of the Prussian Ministry became concerned over the possibility of a serious split developing in the Parliament were it to enter into a controversy during the discussion on the adoption of the Constitution of the League. In an effort to avoid this eventuality, the Ministry voted on March 9 to lay it before the Parliament as a whole rather than article by article.²⁸

On March 20, the Parliament held its first session in St. Augustine's Church at Erfurt. In a somewhat dry, legalistic statement, Radowitz formally declared the meeting in official session. He informed the delegates that they had before them two important matters, the ratification of the constitution and the drafting of an election law for elections to the House of the People. After this, the two houses divided for their organizational sessions. The House of the States elected Alfred von Auerswald of Prussia President by a vote of sixty-three to fifty, and then adopted a set of rules. Radowitz himself presided over the opening of the House of the People. The next day the popular house busied itself with the report of the Credentials

²⁷"Prussia," The Illustrated London News, February 2, 1850, 66; "Prussia," The Times, (London), January 12, and February 9, 1850, 6.

²⁸Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, I, 410.

Committee.²⁹

As was the case at Frankfurt, the membership of the Erfurt Parliament divided into political factions or embryonic parties. The Right was led by such men as Ernst Ludwig, Leopold von Gerlach, Friedrich Julius Stahl, Otto von Bismarck and Hans von Kleist-Retzow. The policy of this group was ultra-royalist in character and favored the formation of a federation of German states rather than the union advocated by Radowitz. Another association called the Catholic-Conservative Party was led by Franz Joseph Buss and August Reichensperger, and took a position similar to that of the Right. Radowitz and his supporters, including Count Brandenburg, Otto von Manteuffel, and Ernst Bodelschwingh, formed the State-Conservative Party.

The Left at Erfurt was known by the collective name of Bahnhofspartei, owing to the fact that they dined together at the railway station. This group was further divided into the Liberal-Conservative Party and the National Liberals. The Liberal Conservatives were led by Alfred and Rudolf von Auerswald and Georg Vincke. The National Liberals were led by Simson, Camphausen, Dahlmann, Durk-witz, Brüggemann and Sybel. The chief difference between the two factions of the Left lay in the participation of the National Liberals in a conference at Gotha in June, 1849, which had endorsed the League of Three Kings. The first demonstration of the relative strengths of these groups was the election of the National Liberal Edward Simson as President of the House of the People with ninety-eight votes against

²⁹"Deutschland," Die deutsche Zeitung, March 22, 1850, 2-4;
"Prussia," The Times (London), March 26, 1850, 6.

a combined total of fifty-four for his four opponents.³⁰

On March 26, the father of the Erfurt Parliament addressed the assembly in behalf of the Executive Council, of which he was President. Pleading his case on the basis of constitutional law, he stated that his country was completely within its rights in seeking German unification on the basis of a closer union of states within the confines of the Confederation of 1815. Radowitz ended this speech, the last he would ever make, with a statement in favor of peace between the two German powers. After he finished, the Parliament voted to recess for Easter.³¹

The reaction to Radowitz's appeal was mixed. The Neue Preussische Zeitung was overwhelming in its praise. It called him the "Father of the League" and stated that he had become the leader of the moderate forces in Germany against the extremes of the Left and Right. Radowitz was pictured as a friend of justice and honor and his program was portrayed as a rational solution to the German problem. Other papers such as the National Zeitung took a somewhat different position. The editors of this organ of the moderate democrats charged that the Prussian league merely added to the already existing confusion in Germany and declared that the Erfurt Parliament lacked the support of the German people.³² The liberal Deutsche Zeitung praised the abilities of the father of the Parliament, but wondered if he had not

³⁰"Prussia," The Times (London), March 29, and April 13, 1850, 6; Ernst Rudolf Huber, Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte seit 1789 (4 vols., Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1957-1960), II, 895-896.

³¹"Rede in dem Parlamente zu Erfurt am 26sten März 1850," Gesammelte Schriften II, 433-449; "Prussia," The Times (London), March 29, 1850, 6.

³²"Prussia," The Times (London), March 29, 1850, 6.

burned his ship out from under him by his own moderation.³³ Upon hearing of the address, Frederick William IV wrote his friend a letter of praise and thanked him for his work.³⁴

Even as the Parliament was in session, however, events in other parts of Germany were working for its destruction. A crisis developed when the King of Württemberg opened the Diet at Stuttgart with a strong denunciation of Prussia and her League. Berlin responded to this by recalling its minister to the south German kingdom. The representative of Hesse-Kassel to the Executive Council at Erfurt informed his fellow ministers that his state considered any actions taken by the Parliament to be but tentative and refused to commit himself to support them.³⁵ These problems caused the Executive Council to decide to present the constitution to the delegates as a whole in an effort to avoid a split in the membership of the Parliament at a time when unity was of the utmost importance.³⁶

However, events outside the control of the men at Erfurt caused a further shift in Prussian policy. On February 27, Austria's chief minister, Prince Felix von Schwarzenberg, used his influence on Bavaria, Württemberg, Saxony, and Hanover to persuade their representatives to form a rival League of Four Kings. Although Hanover declined to sign the constitution of the new League, it did express official

³³"Erfurt," Deutsche Zeitung, March 29, 1850, 2.

³⁴"Frederick William IV to Radowitz, Potsdam, March 27, 1850," Nachgelassene Briefe, 189.

³⁵Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, I, 417; "Radowitz to Schleinitz, Erfurt, March 27, 1850," Nachgelassene Briefe, 186-187.

³⁶"Prussia," The Times (London), April 1 and 3, 1850, 5, 6.

support of the ideas behind the document.³⁷ The success of this Austrian rival to the Prussian League raised increasing doubts on the part of Frederick William IV as to the future of the Radowitz program. On March 26, he warned Radowitz that the decisions reached at Erfurt could only take effect through the agreement of the German princes on the matter. The father of the Erfurt Parliament reacted to the King's letter with anger. On March 30, he attended a meeting of the ministry in Berlin. After some discussion it was decided that the Parliament should be allowed to revise the constitution and that the results of this would be used as a basis for negotiations with the other German states.³⁸

However, when the Erfurt Parliament convened after Easter, the National Liberals refused to accept this recommendation and forced the body to adopt the complete and unamended constitution on April 14. As Leopold von Gerlach observed at the time, the National Liberals had taken a position "al la St. Paul's Church," by their insistence in the authority of the Erfurt Parliament to revise the constitution and force its adoption by the member states. On April 21, the Parliament voted a recess of two days so that consultations could take place in Berlin between Radowitz and his fellow ministers.³⁹

The course of events had placed Radowitz in a difficult position. He had written the constitution adopted by the League and ratified by

³⁷Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, I, 408.

³⁸Gerlach, Denkwürdigkeiten, VI, 463-464.

³⁹"The German Parliament," and "Prussia and the German Parliament," The Times (London), April 18 and 26, 1850, 6; Gerlach, Denkwürdigkeiten, VI, 463.

the Erfurt Parliament, but as a member of the King's circle, he was forced to disavow it. He was realistic enough to realize that without the support of Berlin he could accomplish nothing. The Parliament could take any action it wished, but it lacked the power to put that action into effect. Radowitz also knew that the conservative ministers had enough influence over the King to cause him to consider seriously the abandonment of the whole project. At the same time that his opposition was gaining strength at home, the protests of Schwarzenberg were at their strongest.

After the ratification of the Constitution of the League on April 14, the members of the Parliament began its revision. It was generally assumed that the Prussian Ministry would support the Parliament, but Radowitz refused to commit himself on the issue. The assumption on the part of the public was reinforced by a declaration by the Ministry on April 23 supporting the proceedings of the meeting at Erfurt.⁴⁰ But after gaining a victory in the forced adoption of the constitution, the National Liberals split among themselves. This allowed the ministry to dominate the remaining meetings of the Parliament. An example of this was the debate of April 26 on a proposal to force the diets of the member states to adopt the same election procedures as the national body. After Manteuffel expressed his opposition to this proposal, a statement in agreement from Radowitz was enough to force its rejection. In fact, The Times of London reported that on every controversial question a stand by the father of the Parliament was enough to sway the membership to support his

⁴⁰"Prussia," and "Prussia and the German Parliament," The Times (London), April 22 and 26, 1850, 6.

position. Finally, on April 30, Radowitz communicated to the House of the People a message of adjournment from the Executive Council. In its message the Council promised to submit the Constitution to the governments of the member states and reserved the right to recall the body into session at some unspecified date.⁴¹

Both the Frankfurt National Assembly and the Erfurt Parliament had met to solve the problem of German unity. Both drew up constitutions and developed party structures, but ended without seeing their objectives realized because neither had the power to force the states to accept their recommendations. The major difference between the two bodies was the presence of a group at Erfurt with official power to propose legislation. Another difference was the presentation of a previously written draft constitution to the assembly at Erfurt. At Frankfurt no one had enjoyed this authority, and the result was a full discussion of every aspect of the German question in all its many facets, a feature which was absent from the deliberations at Erfurt. Still another difference between the two meetings was the domination of a representative of one German state over the proceedings at Erfurt. While it is true that Heinrich von Gagern played a most important role in the deliberations at Frankfurt, he did not exercise the influence which Radowitz enjoyed at Erfurt. Finally, the more moderate factions of German political thought were present at both conferences, but the extreme parties at each were different, giving each meeting a radically different character. At Frankfurt, the Bismarck and Gerlach type of political thought was not really

⁴¹"Prussia," and "The Prorogation of the Erfurt Parliament," The Times (London), April 30 and May 4, 1850, 6.

represented. At Erfurt, the reactionary Right was present, but the radical Left refused to participate. In conclusion, the Erfurt Parliament was the creation of the Prussian ruling class, and when the Parliament lost their support it met with failure. But the Frankfurt National Assembly had been at least partially the creation of the German people.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROAD TO OLMÜTZ

Just when it seemed that his work would end in failure with the Erfurt Parliament, an event occurred that provided Radowitz with an opportunity to snatch victory from the situation. On April 13, Duke Ernst of Coburg proposed to the father of the Parliament that the princes of the member states of the Prussian Union meet with their ministers to discuss a solution to the problem. It was hoped that this would provide a middle ground between the position of the National Liberals and their opponents. Radowitz immediately adopted this idea and proposed it to his sovereign.¹ At a meeting of the Ministry, Frederick William decided to call a Congress of Princes immediately to discuss the constitution adopted at Erfurt.²

However, once again the King began to have doubts concerning the wisdom of his friend's plan. Radowitz had hoped that the princes would be able to cope both with the Austrian opposition to the Union and the objections of the south German states, who had formed the rival League of the Four Kings. On April 23, Schleinitz informed him that the King had become concerned about the Habsburg objections and that he saw no value in the proposed Congress of Princes. To his

¹"Radowitz to Frederick William IV, Erfurt, April 13, 1850," Nachgelassene Briefe, 199.

²Gerlach, Denkwürdigkeiten, VI, 465.

objections, Radowitz replied that the princes would be able to revise the constitution in such a fashion as to make it acceptable to all member states and thus provide a basis for true German unity. Persuaded by his friend's earnest conviction, the King finally gave his formal approval of the scheme. The Congress of Princes was to convene in Berlin immediately and consider the reaction of the governments to the amendments adopted at Erfurt, the establishment of a government for the Union, the response to the Austrian objections, and relations between the Union and the other German states.³

Before the Congress could meet, however, Radowitz suffered a deep personal tragedy when his youngest daughter Veronika died. Overcome by grief, he wrote that he felt as if he had buried all his hope with her. Two days later, he asked to be relieved of his official duties in order to care for his sick wife, but Frederick William responded immediately with a letter expressing his personal distress that his friend would leave his side at such an important time. It indicates a great deal about Radowitz's dedication to the cause of German unity and his loyalty to his sovereign that he yielded to the King's request to return to Berlin. To his diary he confided that he considered it a matter of honor and obligation that he continue his work.⁴

In spite of his decision to host the Congress of Princes in

³"Radowitz to Schleinitz, April 22, 1850," "Schleinitz to Radowitz, Berlin, April 24, 1850," "Radowitz to Frederick William IV, Erfurt, April 26, 1850," Telegraphic Dispatch of the King to Radowitz, Potsdam, April 27, 1850, 10:30 A.M.," and "Radowitz to Frederick William IV, Erfurt, April 28, 1850, Midnight," Radowitz, Nachgelassene Briefe, 213, 218-220, 222, 223.

⁴"Radowitz's Notes on the Congress of Princes, Berlin, May 8-16, 1850," "Radowitz to Frederick William IV, Erfurt, May 6, 1850," and "Frederick William IV to Radowitz, Bellevue, May 7, 1850," *ibid.*, 236, 237, 240.

Berlin, Frederick William IV did not cease to entertain serious doubts about the wisdom of the path down which his friend had led him. On May 5, he expressed a strong fear of the possibility of war with Austria,⁵ and he was generally indecisive and without belief in the undertaking.⁶ Nevertheless, the Congress opened on May 9. In attendance were the Elector of Hesse, representing the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt as well as his own state, the Grand Duke of Baden, the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, the Prince of Lippe-Schaumberg, the Prince of Waldeck, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, and the King of Prussia. Frederick William IV opened the Congress with a speech of greeting and an expression of hopes for the future of the Union. The Duke of Coburg replied in the name of the assembled princes and thanked the Hohenzollern monarch for his work toward the unification of Germany. Next, they unanimously adopted a statement to be sent to the Habsburg Court. In this dispatch, they charged that Austria had no right to attempt the revival of the Confederation of 1815 or to demand the attendance of representatives of the German states in Frankfurt by invoking the laws of the Confederation. Though the princes agreed to the right of the Habsburg Monarchy to request privately that the German states voluntarily send representatives to Frankfurt, they denied her the right to force the adoption of anything resulting from such a meeting.⁷

However, the opening session was no indication as to the attitudes of some of the delegates. In the meetings of the ministers, over

⁵"Frederick William IV to Radowitz, Charlottenburg, May 5, 1850," *ibid.*, 235.

⁶Meinecke, Radowitz, 422.

⁷"Prussia," The Times (London), May 13, 1850, 6.

which Radowitz presided, Hans von Hassenpflug of Hesse-Kassel stated that he was only present as an observer and that his state refused to bind itself to accept the decisions of the Congress. In the meetings of the princes, the Elector took the same obstructionist position. A stormy session occurred after the Elector kept the other princes waiting for almost an hour while dining with the Austrian Minister to Berlin. Finally, he objected that others besides princes had been allowed to participate in the proceedings. This elicited a strong reply from Count Brandenburg, and the Elector left the Congress.⁸

After the withdrawal of the Elector and his minister, the Congress came to a swift end. On the following day, Mecklenburg-Strelitz also informed the membership of its decision to cease active participation in the Union. Since it seemed impossible at that time to reach an agreement acceptable to all parties, Prussia proposed that a provisional government in the form of a Council of Princes be formed. Thirteen of the member states accepted this proposal, while Baden, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Nassau, Anhalt-Dessau and the Hansa Cities favored individual action through their governments instead. On May 16, the Congress of Princes adjourned. On Radowitz's suggestion, it was agreed that the member states would send representatives to the Austrian assembly at Frankfurt. The next day Friedrich Wilhelm IV announced his acceptance of the constitution as amended at Erfurt. However, he stated that since the German states had not been able to reach any form of agreement concerning the document, the provisional government proposed by the Congress of Princes would go into effect

⁸ Meinecke, Radowitz, 425; Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, I, 426; "Prussia," The Times (London), May 16, 1850, 6.

until agreement could be reached. He also announced that the delegates of the member states at Frankfurt would act as a unit.⁹ Thus, the League created at Berlin and ratified at Erfurt was set aside until it would be possible to put it into effect.

After the Congress ended, Radowitz requested a leave of absence to recover his health and left Berlin for Baden-Baden. On May 22, Frederick William IV was shot in the arm by a would-be assassin while preparing to board a train for Potsdam.¹⁰ These events had a double effect on the course of German history. For one thing, the attempted assassination strengthened the reactionary forces in Prussia. These persons were also staunch foes of Radowitz and his ideas and would in the end prove as important in his final defeat as the Habsburg Monarchy. Another consequence of the inability of both Radowitz and the King to act at this crucial juncture was the granting of time to Austria. Had they been able to act in a decisive manner to force a solution to the German problem at a time when Austria was still involved in internal problems, perhaps Radowitz's program might not have ended in failure.

Before he was incapacitated by the attacker's bullet, the King had made one important attempt to gain foreign support for the Prussian Union. The Prince of Prussia, the future Emperor William I, was sent to Warsaw to deliver a letter from the King to Tsar Nicholas I. In this communication, the Hohenzollern justified his actions by

⁹"Prussia," The Times (London), May 17, 20, and 21, 1850, 6; Meinecke, Radowitz, 426; Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, I, 427.

¹⁰"Prussia," The Times, (London), June 3 and 27, 1850, 6.

claiming that the smaller German states desired to be under the protection of his kingdom. He condemned Austria for its attempt to revive the Confederation of 1815. In his discussions with William, the Tsar discounted the possibility of an Austro-Prussian War because of Austrian weakness. The Austrian chief minister, Prince Felix von Schwarzenberg was also in the Polish capital and met with the Prussian emissary. He informed William that his country had no objections to Prussia forming a union with other German states but could never accept the application of the constitution produced by Radowitz. He reiterated the peaceful intentions of Vienna and proposed that the differences between the two states be resolved by a joint agreement. On May 29, William reported to Berlin that neither Russia nor Austria would definitely commit themselves on the issue. He also claimed that the chances of Austria carrying her objections to the Prussian Union to the point of armed conflict were remote at that time. Finally, he informed his King that both countries would agree to a Prussian union if Berlin would abandon the constitution.¹¹

Although in Baden-Baden, Radowitz did not cease to take an interest in the future of his work. His representative in Berlin, Baron Rudolf von Sydow, informed him that the Prince's report had intensified the King's doubts regarding the wisdom of continuing the Union. On the other hand, Count Brandenburg, a man with a great deal of influence at Court, supported the Union and believed that Prussia should take advantage of Austria's weakness to force a solution to the German problem. Radowitz replied by asking Sydow to advise the King

¹¹Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, I, 446.

that even if it was necessary to postpone the application of the constitution, the power of the provisional government should continue in effect. On June 14, he wrote the King to plead his cause. He repeated his arguments of the past two years in behalf of the unification of Germany and urged his friend to continue his support of the constitution. He proposed once again that Germany be divided into a wider union to include Austria and a narrow union which would form a middle European empire.¹²

In the meantime negotiations continued between the two contesting German powers. Schwarzenberg informed the Prussian Minister to the Habsburg Court, Count Bernstorff, that his country was willing to recognize Prussian equality in Germany if she would be willing to abandon her plan of union and agree to form a new German confederation at a series of meetings at Frankfurt.¹³ On July 8, he made his last offer. He explained to the Prussian Minister that the only difference between the two German powers was the constitution approved at Erfurt and the claim of the Prussian Union to represent the German Reich. He also stated that his country was willing to recognize the right of Berlin to form a union with any other German state it wished so long as the constitution was dropped.¹⁴

While Radowitz remained away from the Prussian capital, events

¹²"Rudolf von Sydow to Radowitz, Berlin, June 5, 1850," "Radowitz to Rudolf von Sydow, Baden, June 8, 1850," and "Radowitz to Frederick William IV, Erfurt, June 14, 1850," Nachgelassene Briefe, 250, 252, 258-261.

¹³"Sydow to Radowitz, Berlin, June 20, 1850," *ibid.*, 262.

¹⁴Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, I, 458.

were progressing. Manteuffel, who had accompanied Prince William to Warsaw, was sent bearing a personal letter from the Prussian King to Emperor Franz Josef on June 14. This letter, a pledge of Prussian friendship, was designed to conciliate the Austrians. From his conversations in Vienna, the Prussian emissary reported that Russian and Austrian objections to Radowitz and his plan were so great that they would refuse to negotiate seriously as long as the father of the Union was allowed to keep his position. But the King, refusing to harken to this advice, informed Radowitz of the failure of the negotiations and asked for his prompt return to Berlin.¹⁵

Early in July Radowitz returned to the Prussian capital to assume his duties as President of the Council of Princes. At the Council's first meeting on July 5, Hesse-Darmstadt and Hesse-Kassel officially withdrew from the Union.¹⁶ On July 10, this body began discussions on Bernstorff's report from Vienna. It was decided to inform Schwarzenberg that his demands were unacceptable. They also resolved that further negotiations should be postponed. Though the Prussian King continued his doubts about the continuance of the Union, his friend was able to persuade him to continue the fight for German unification. On July 17, the Prussian reply to the Austrian demands was delivered to Schwarzenberg. The Austrian minister replied that his country

¹⁵"Frederick William IV to Franz Josef, Sansouci, June 14, 1850," "Otto von Manteuffel to Radowitz, Vienna, June 20," and "Frederick William IV to Radowitz, Sansouci, June 22, 1850," Nachgelassene Briefe, 255, 263, 265.

¹⁶"Radowitz to his wife, Sansouci, June 4 and 5, 1850," *ibid.*, 272.

would never recognize the Prussian union and its constitution, nor would it agree to abandon its plans to convene the Diet of the German Confederation. That same day the Danubian Monarchy issued a circular to the German courts calling for a meeting of the Diet at Frankfurt. Naturally, Berlin rejected this invitation.¹⁷

The failure of the negotiations with Austria caused a major crisis in the Prussian Ministry. On July 24, Manteuffel, the Minister of the Interior, presented a motion calling for the abandonment of the Union and the constitution. As compensation to the member states, he proposed that they be offered a protective alliance by the north German power.¹⁸ The acceptance of this proposal would mean that all the work of Radowitz had been in vain and that he had been defeated not by Austria but by his foes within his own country. The champion of German unification replied to this challenge with a long memorandum. In this document, he stated that it would represent a major moral defeat if the Hohenzollern Kingdom were to yield to the Habsburg demands. He claimed that in forming the union, Berlin had incurred an obligation both to the member states and the whole German people to fight for its preservation. He concluded with a plea that Prussia not allow the Austrians to destroy the edifice which had been built to replace the ineffective Confederation of 1815.¹⁹

On May 26, the issue was decided. Frederick William IV met with

¹⁷"Prussia," The Times (London), July 15 and 20, 1850, 6; Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, I, 460-461.

¹⁸Ibid., 462-463.

¹⁹"Aufzeichnung zum Ministerrat am 25. Juli, Sansouci, 13 Juli, 1850," Nachgelassene Briefe, 273-275.

the Ministry and informed them that while the differences among them would delay the application of the constitution, the principle upon which it stood must not be allowed to fall. Naturally, the King's pronouncement caused some debate. Finally, it was decided to wait for further action from the Habsburg Empire before taking any drastic steps.²⁰ With the publication of Austrian demands and their rejections by Prussia, Germany was divided into two hostile camps. Neither side would agree to back down, thus opening the way for some sort of conflict which would make it possible for one side to prevail over the other.

During the summer of 1850, the conflict between the two German powers intensified, fed as it was by a series of increasingly bitter confrontations both within Germany and without. A serious crisis almost developed over the question of troop deployment. On May 26, the Grand Duke of Baden had requested that some of his troops be trained by Prussia. At the end of July, Austria ordered its commander at the Federal Fortress at Mainz to resist any attempt to transport troops from Baden to Prussia through his district.²¹ The Austrian protests were accompanied by the massing of 16,700 Bavarian troops at Aschaffenburg and Nuremberg. In a letter to the King and before a session of the Ministry, Radowitz suggested that Berlin answer this move by the mobilization of the three army corps at Erfurt.²² This proposal drew a quick response from his enemies

²⁰ Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, I, 464-465.

²¹ Meinecke, Radowitz, 442.

²² "Radowitz to Frederick William IV, August 4, 1850," Nachgelassene Briefe, 273.

within the Ministry. General Sackenhausen informed them that he could spare no troops at that time. He also advised against the mobilization of the militia, as the men were needed for the upcoming harvest. The fighter for German unification continued to urge a strong reply to the Austrian challenge, until finally the King intervened. Frederick William IV suggested that a message be sent to Schwarzenberg proposing that both sides postpone further action on the matter pending an investigation.²³

During the remainder of the summer, European affairs were dominated by the Schleswig-Holstein question. Since there existed at this time no common German authority to negotiate with Denmark, it was impossible to reach an agreement binding all of Germany. Prussia, acting on its own behalf, signed a treaty on July 2 giving the Duchies to the Danish King. Several small German states immediately objected that the Hohenzollern Kingdom had no authority to take this step and that a peace with the Danes could only be negotiated through the auspices of the Diet of the Confederation. This turn of events greatly upset Tsar Nicholas I, who desired the immediate cession of all hostilities over the Duchies and the destruction of all liberal elements in them. In an effort to persuade Austria to take action similar to that of Prussia, he sent Baron Mayendorff to Bad Ischl to communicate with the Emperor. Even before his arrival however, the Habsburg Court signed an agreement with the Nordic Kingdom similar to that signed by Prussia. This removed one source of difficulty between Austria and Russia and opened the way for Russian intervention in the

²³Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, I, 466.

German question on the side of Vienna.²⁴

The already complex international situation was further complicated by the actions of Prince Louis Napoleon, the President of France. He saw in the dispute between the two German powers an opportunity to strengthen his country. Accordingly, he sent Jean de Persigny to speak with Radowitz. The French diplomat indicated that his country was in sympathy with the Prussian cause, since France was interested in driving the Habsburgs out of Italy. He further hinted that France could consider going to war on the side of Berlin with the provision that should French public opinion warrant it, his country receive either Landau or Savoy as a compensation for the costs of war. Radowitz politely listened to the Frenchman and just as politely refused to consider his offer. Napoleon next made a similar proposal to Austria, which was also rejected.²⁵

The incipient conflict between Austria and Prussia continued to smolder during the month of August. The Danubian Monarchy persisted in its attempts to call a meeting of the Federal Diet, while Prussia replied to the Austrian efforts with a note of protest on August 5.²⁶ In Berlin, the King's friend continued to fight for his proposals. In this he was able to gain two very important allies, Count Brandenburg and the Prince of Prussia.

In the autumn of 1850, the contending interests culminated in a

²⁴Paul Wiegler, William the First, His Life and Times, (trans. by Constance Vasey, New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929) 146; Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, I, 472.

²⁵Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, I, 452.

²⁶"Prussia and Austria," The Times (London), August 21, 1850, 6.

final crisis between Austria and Prussia which sealed the fate of Radowitz's efforts toward German unification. It is ironic that the vehicle for his final defeat was Hesse-Kassel, the state that twenty-seven years earlier had expelled him. The Elector Frederick William had been trying for several months to force the diet of his small state to vote taxes to pay for the expenses of his government. When the members of this body refused to yield, his chief minister, Hassenpflug, attempted to collect taxes illegally. In this effort he was opposed by the entire civil service. On September 12, the Elector fled to Frankfurt. With his sovereign safe, Hassenpflug next tried to use the army to collect the taxes. This resulted in the resignation of nine-tenths of the officer corps, who refused to violate their oaths to the constitution. On September 28, the Elector appealed to the Diet in Frankfurt for help in suppressing the revolt. Dominated by Austria, the Diet voted to order 10,000 Hanoverian and Württembergian troops to march into the small German state.²⁷

These events placed the men in Berlin in a difficult position. Some officials, such as Count Brandenburg, believed that the real reason for the south German intervention in Hesse was a desire to embarrass Prussia.²⁸ Radowitz urged immediate military precautions. He suggested that reinforcements be sent to Wetzlar from Kreuznacher and that a detachment of 15,000 Thurnigian troops be dispatched to Fulda and Eisenach in order to be in position to march on Hersfeld. He further urged that 10,000 Prussian troops be joined by 2,000 men from

²⁷ Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, I, 481; "Electoral Hesse," The London Illustrated News, September 28, 1850, 254.

²⁸ Wiegler, William the First, 147.

Brunswick at Paderborn. Frederick William IV approved of these actions, and the same day named Radowitz Minister of Foreign Affairs.²⁹

The north German kingdom also protested the intervention through a series of diplomatic notes. On September 12 and 21, Count Brandenburg sent notes through Baron Thiele, the Prussian Minister at Kassel, to the Electoral court. These notes stated that the Hohenzollern Kingdom was distressed by the decision of the Elector to depart from the path of constitutional government and called upon him to return to lawful methods. The dispatch also protested strongly the decision of the Diet to intervene in the crisis. On the first day in his new position, Radowitz reinforced Brandenburg's notes with one of his own.³⁰ Schwarzenberg had argued that Prussia had no right to interfere in the actions of the south German states, since Electoral Hesse had withdrawn from the voluntary union. The Prussian Foreign Minister replied to this with a statement that his country had no interest in territorial expansion at the expense of the smaller German state but was only concerned with the protection of the Prussian military roads running through it. He later communicated to his Austrian counterpart the peaceful intentions of the Hohenzollern kingdom.³¹

The Prussian assurances did little to check the intensification of feelings on both sides, however. On October 11, Austria, Bavaria and Württemberg formed a defensive and offensive alliance against

²⁹"Radowitz to the Prince of Prussia, September 26, 1850," and "Privataufzeichnung von Radowitz, 27 September, 1850," Nachgelassene Briefe, 318.

³⁰"Prussia and Electoral Hesse," The Times (London), October 3, 1850, 6.

³¹Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, 487-488.

Prussia and also agreed to raise an army of 200,000 men. On that same day Prussia mobilized three additional regiments. As the crisis intensified, the backing given by Frederick William IV to his friend never wavered. However, the King did make efforts to avoid carrying things to the extremity of armed conflict. One such endeavor was a letter sent on October 19 to Franz Josef expressing his desire to reach a peaceful settlement of the differences between them.³²

At this point it became known in the Prussian capital that Tsar Nicholas IV had decided to visit Warsaw. Immediately, Count Brandenburg was sent to the Polish capital to deliver a note to the Russian monarch. This communication stated that the Hohenzollern kingdom refused to grant recognition to the Diet in Frankfurt. Brandenburg was also instructed to propose to the Tsar that the crisis be settled by a conference of all the German states, during which Prussia would be granted equality with Austria.³³ Nicholas replied that he had no intention of becoming involved in the dispute but that he did favor the efforts of the Frankfurt Diet to suppress liberal elements in Holstein and would even be willing to go to war in its support.

On October 25, Emperor Franz Josef also arrived in Warsaw. Brandenburg took this opportunity to hold a series of meetings with Schwarzenberg, who had accompanied his sovereign. The Austrian official rejected at the outset the Prussian demand of equality with

³²Wiegler, William The First, 148; "Prussia," The Times (London), October 11, 1850, 6; "Frederick William IV to Radowitz, Sansouci, October 14, 1850," and "Frederick William IV to Franz Josef, Sansouci, October 19, 1850," Nachgelassene Briefe, 325, 326.

³³Meinecke, Radowitz, 474.

the Habsburg Empire. He also restated his country's position that Prussia had no right to become involved in the matter of Hesse-Kassel. Brandenburg replied that Austria and her allies were the ones becoming involved in affairs that did not concern them. He informed the Austrian minister that any problems in the Electorate could be handled quite satisfactorily by local troops and that Vienna was really only seeking a way to exert her power.³⁴

In Berlin events were developing at a rapid pace. On October 29, a meeting of the Ministry adopted Radowitz's suggestion that in the event of a Bavarian invasion of Hesse-Kassel, the Ninth Army Corps be mobilized. Two days later, Count Brandenburg returned to the Prussian capital. The next day Bernstorff telegraphed the message that Austria had ordered the mobilization of 100,000 men on the Bohemian border. On November 1, the Ministry met to decide on a course of action in response to the new Austrian threats. Brandenburg's report opened the session. He recommended that every effort should be made to continue negotiations with the Habsburg Monarchy. Next, Radowitz arose to demand that the Hohenzollern kingdom order the immediate activation of all troops and if necessary prepare for war. He based his plea on Schwarzenberg's hostile attitude and his belief that if the Danubian Monarchy and her allies were allowed to intervene in Hesse-Kassel without active opposition, the power of the Frankfurt Diet would be established over Germany. His arguments were supported by Adalbert von Ladenberg and August von der Heydt. He was opposed by Manteuffel, who went so far as to urge that Berlin lend its support to the Austrian

³⁴Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, II, 9-12.

action. The meeting closed with the declaration from Brandenburg that if the Ministry decided to go against his advice, he would resign his position.³⁵

Almost immediately after the end of the meeting, information was received that under the command of the Prince of Thurn and Taxis 8,000 Bavarian troops had occupied Hanau in Hesse and were marching toward Geinhausen. To counter the Bavarian action, Prussian troops under the command of General Gröben promptly entered Electoral territory.³⁶ Now it was no longer merely an issue of discussions and polite diplomatic notes. Radowitz and his fellow Prussians were at a crossroads. They could either continue to support the Union and risk almost certain war with Austria and her allies, or they could back down and lose everything that had been accomplished in order to avoid an armed conflict. As long as there existed a possibility that the Habsburgs were only bluffing, it was possible to postpone the decision on just how far Berlin was willing to go to see the Union take effect. But by November 1, 1850, troops were marching, and a decision had to be made.

The Bavarian action prompted the immediate calling of a Crown Council for that afternoon. At this meeting, Count Brandenburg took the position that Prussia should back down. As justification for this advice he cited the friendly attitude of Schwarzenberg at Warsaw and his belief that in the event of a war between Austria and Prussia,

³⁵Meinecke, Radowitz, 483; "Privataufzeichnung von Radowitz," Nachgelassene Briefe, 344; Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire II, 26-27.

³⁶"Prussia and Germany," and "The Entry of the Prussians into Hesse," The Times (London), November 6, 1850, 5.

Russia would intervene on the side of Austria. Frederick William IV suggested that the constitution be set aside for the moment and that the Bavarians be allowed to occupy the southern part of Hesse-Kassel, while his troops would garrison the military roads in the north. He hoped that this would place his kingdom in a position to play a major role in the solution of the conflict. After the king had spoken, Radowitz took the floor. In a last effort to save his program, he stated that the Hohenzollern troops should occupy as much of the Electorate as possible, thus giving Berlin a strong position from which to begin negotiations. In answer to those who had expressed a fear of war, he maintained that there was an important distinction between mobilization and a declaration of war. Prince William supported Radowitz and urged that the Union not be sacrificed. However, Manteuffel opposed the King's friend with the argument that war was a certainty unless the Union were abandoned and the troops recalled. He took the position that his country had no right to become involved in what he saw as the internal affairs of another German state. Finally, August von Stockhausen, the Minister of War, maintained that a general mobilization as demanded by Radowitz would almost definitely lead to war. With the issue still undecided, the session closed.³⁷

The next day Radowitz lost the support of Frederick William IV. The King had long entertained doubts about continuing down the path which his friend had led him. Now with troops in the field, it was no longer a matter of lending moral support to the champion of German unity as he had done earlier in 1847. He had either to give up the

³⁷Meinecke, Radowitz, 487-490.

whole idea or be willing to lead his people into what could be a major war. The King was no Frederick the Great, and he hesitated to make a decision.

The Ministry met at Bellevue Palace at 10:00 A.M. on November 2. After a few opening remarks on the dangers facing his kingdom, Frederick William IV led his ministers into an adjoining room and left them to discuss the problem. Brandenburg continued to suggest the pulling back of the troops and an immediate attempt to continue the negotiations begun at Warsaw. Faithful to his cause until the last, Radowitz refused to budge from his position of the day before. When the vote finally was held, his position was supported only by those same persons who had supported it the previous day; it was thus defeated. The Ministry suggested to their monarch that all forward movement by Prussian troops in Hesse-Kassel be suspended and that a note be sent to Austria requesting its suspension of all preparations for war. Faced with the decision of his ministers, Frederick William IV yielded to the advice of the majority with a statement in support of his friend and a warning that the Ministry alone would be responsible for any criticism that would arise from their judgment.³⁸

Thus at the moment of decision, Radowitz was abandoned by his fellow ministers. Immediately after the meeting, the man who had fought so long for his cause sent his king a letter of resignation.³⁹ He left the scene of his defeat on November 6 to join his family at

³⁸"Privataufzeichnung von Radowitz," Nachgelassene Briefe, 344-345; Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, II, 36.

³⁹"Radowitz to Frederick William IV, November 2, 1850," Nachgelassene Briefe, 345.

the scene of his greatest moments, Erfurt. The King wrote a letter expressing his regrets at the outcome of events and thanking him for his faithful service.⁴⁰ On the same day that Radowitz left Berlin, Brandenburg died, and Mantteufer was named to the office of Chief Minister.⁴¹

Yet one last effort was made to save the Union. Frederick William momentarily regained his courage and decided to attempt a bold stroke. On November 9, he informed Radowitz that he was sending him to England on the pretext of studying new British developments in artillery and the building of bridges from iron. Seeing in the proposal the chance to regain Prussian honor and perhaps even save his Union, Radowitz immediately agreed. Before approaching the British Government, Radowitz was instructed to find out its attitude toward German affairs through discussions with the Prussian Minister to the Court of St. James, Baron Christian von Bunsen. The King's friend suggested to his monarch that one possible avenue of approach would be to suggest that if Austria won the struggle over Hesse-Kassel, Russian hegemony over Germany would become a possibility. He also suggested that he should hint to the British that an Austrian victory would open the way for French interference in German affairs.⁴² Thus, one last effort was to be made to save all the work of the last

⁴⁰ Meinecke, Radowitz, 499-501.

⁴¹ "Prussia," The Times (London), November 11, 1850, 3.

⁴² "Frederick William IV to Radowitz, Sansouci, November 9, 1850," "Radowitz to Frederick William IV, Erfurt, November 10, 1850," Frederick William IV to Radowitz, Bellevue, November 12, 1850," and "Radowitz to Frederick William IV, Erfurt, November 13, 1850," Nachgelassene Briefe, 354-357.

several years.

In the meantime, the Hessian crisis remained unresolved. General Gröben, finding himself face to face with the Prince of Thurn and Taxis and his men, suggested to his counterpart on the other side that a line of demarcation be drawn between Prussian-occupied territory and that to be held by the southern troops. The Prince communicated this proposal to the Austrian Minister to the Diet in Frankfurt, Count Thun. After some discussion, the Diet voted to order the Prince to continue the occupation of the Electorate, and to demand the immediate withdrawal of all Prussian troops. The news of these demands caused Frederick William IV to order his army to prepare for war.⁴³ At a meeting of the Ministry on November 20, he announced his decision to take up once again the proposals for German unification. It was also decided to avoid any attempts at alliance with the French, who had been massing troops on the border.

The next day the King delivered his address from the throne at the opening of the Prussian Diet. This speech was couched in such strong terms as to cause some to interpret it as a challenge for war. Prokesch, the Austrian Minister to the Hohenzollern court, responded with a note pledging the protection of the Prussian military roads running through the Electorate. The same day, Baron Budberg, the Russian Ambassador, delivered a note from his monarch. This dispatch informed Berlin that the Tsar had ordered the mobilization of the Cossaks for war in support of Austria if events should prove such a step necessary. On November 23, the Prussian Ministry met to discuss

⁴³"The Intervention in Hesse," The Times (London), November 11, 1850, 3.

the issue. As usual, Manteuffel, who had become the head of the Ministry upon the death of Brandenburg, urged reconciliation with the Danubian Monarchy. In this contention, he received the support of Stockhausen and Simon. Ladenberg, whose resignation in support of Radowitz had been rejected, stated that since Prussia had already lost face over the Erfurt Constitution and the Plan of Union, it should not suffer further humiliation on the matter of the military roads. Because the Ministry was unable to reach an agreement it was decided to continue discussion with the King.⁴⁴

While discussions continued in Berlin, the Habsburgs decided to force the matter to a conclusion. On November 27, Prince Thurn and Taxis was ordered to march to Kassel and if necessary to fight the Prussian troops. Two days before the march, Prokesch delivered a demand that Prussia evacuate the Electorate by noon on the day of the Austrian movement. Manteuffel immediately transmitted this information to the King at Potsdam. Frederick William IV instructed his minister to telegraph to Vienna that he was being sent to meet with Schwarzenberg with a "friendly message." At a meeting of the ministry that day, the King ordered Manteuffel to communicate to the Austrian Minister that Prussia would consider no further concessions. He also proposed that the solution to the Hessian affair be reached at a general European congress. Manteuffel was to attempt to persuade Schwarzenberg to agree to the withdrawal of all non-Hessian troops from the Electorate and gain Austrian acceptance of the points brought up in his meeting

⁴⁴Sybel, The Founding of the German Empire, II, 59-60.

with the Tsar in Warsaw.⁴⁵

Before these proposals could go into effect, a telegram was received from Vienna stating that Schwarzenberg would agree to meet with Manteuffel as soon as he received confirmation of the Prussian decision to withdraw from Hesse-Kassel. At this same time, Gröben reported that the southern troops were advancing on his position. These new events prompted the calling of another meeting of the Ministry. Here the decision was reached that Manteuffel would go to the proposed meeting bearing personal letters from Frederick William to Emperor Franz Josef and from the Queen to Archduchess Sophie, her sister and the mother of the Emperor. It was hoped that Schwarzenberg would not refuse to meet with a person carrying private correspondence to the Imperial family. That evening, Bernstorff was told to inform the Austrian Ministry that the Prussian representative was on his way to Olmütz. An hour later confirmation was received in Berlin that the choice of the Bohemian city was acceptable and the meeting would take place.⁴⁶

On November 29, Manteuffel and Schwarzenberg held their fateful confrontation. The two men reached an agreement that the Hesse-Kassel crisis would be solved peacefully by joint Austro-Prussian action. The Prussian minister agreed that his government would allow free passage for the southern troops through the area occupied by Gröben. As an assurance of Austrian good intentions, the north German power would be allowed to station one battalion in the Electorate. The

⁴⁵Ibid., 61-64.

⁴⁶Ibid., 64-67.

German question would be solved at a conference to be held at Dresden in December.⁴⁷ Thus a war between the two German powers was averted.

Some historians have labeled the agreement at Olmütz a "punctation" or "humiliation",⁴⁸ but such designation is not justified. It is true that Prussia formally abandoned the Union and its constitution, but that decision had already been reached on November 2. After that date, the Hohenzollern Kingdom was interested in protecting its roads and maintaining its honor. At Olmütz both conditions were met. Austria recognized the right of Prussia to remain in the Electorate and to garrison the roads. In so doing, the Habsburg Empire had provided an avenue of honorable withdrawal for the north German power. The so-called "humiliation" of Olmütz was in reality a compromise between two opposing sides. If a "humiliation" had occurred it was in Berlin on November 2, not at Olmütz.

In the meantime, Radowitz had arrived in London five days before the meeting at Olmütz.⁴⁹ He traveled to Windsor, where he met with Prince Albert, Consort to Queen Victoria. Albert informed the Prussian emissary that in order to discuss an alliance between the two countries he would have to meet with the ministry, and expressed considerable doubt that it would accept the proposal. Before leaving the castle, Radowitz also had an audience with the Queen. On December 1, Albert

⁴⁷"German States," The Illustrated London News, December 14, 1850, 446.

⁴⁸William Carr, A History of Germany 1815-1945 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969), 73; Gordon A. Craig, The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 132.

⁴⁹Meinecke, Radowitz, 505.

wrote the Prussian King to tell him that on such an important matter as an alliance between the two countries both Houses of Parliament would have to give their approval and for him to interfere in the actions of the ministry would be in violation of his constitutional position. He also stated that in dealing with political matters in England, the feelings of the British public had to be taken into consideration. To soften this disappointing reply, Radowitz assured the King that Lord John Palmerston, the Prime Minister, favored Prussian interests, and in the event of a war between Prussia and Austria, would tend to side with Berlin.⁵⁰

Just when it seemed that things might be going well in London, news of the agreement of Olmütz arrived, thus ending the value of an alliance between London and Berlin. The father of the ill-fated Union wrote his wife that it would be better for King and Country if he were to remain in voluntary exile in England until things cooled off,⁵¹ but on January 28, he returned to his family at Erfurt.

After the failure of the Prussian Union and the resurrection of the German Confederation the following year, Radowitz swiftly faded from the scene. He spent the rest of 1851 and the first part of 1852 recovering his broken health and preparing his writings for publication in a five-volume collection. He remained interested in German politics, but confined his efforts to drafting occasional letters to

⁵⁰"Radowitz to Frederick William IV, London, November 28, 1850," "Prince Albert to Frederick William IV, Windsor Castle, December 1, 1850," and "Radowitz to Frederick William IV, December 3, 1850," Nachgelassene Briefe, 367-369, 371.

⁵¹"Radowitz to his wife, London, December 6, 1850," *ibid.*, 372-373.

Frederick William IV. After the completion of his collected writings, he was appointed to the position of General Inspector for Military Preparedness. He occupied himself with this post and the travels associated with it until his health finally broke in the summer of 1853. He remained active until the very last moments of his life. The day before his death, Radowitz spoke with his wife about his plans to write a book concerning the poetry of marriage, which he intended to dedicate to her. He was unable to begin this work, however, for he died on Christmas Day, 1853.⁵²

⁵²Meinecke, Radowitz, 524-547.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The reasons for Radowitz's defeat are complex. However, the single most important factor in his failure was the strong opposition he faced within his own country. Such men as Manteuffel, Gerlach, Bismarck, and in the end, even Brandenburg refused to support his plans. One reason for this was the suspicion with which he was viewed by the Junkers. In spite of his friendship with the King and his marriage to the Countess Voss, Radowitz was still considered a foreigner. He could not trace his ancestry back to Prussian origins; in fact his forebears were not even German. Another factor that made him seem alien to the Junkers was his religion. Prussia and its ruling classes had strong Protestant traditions. Radowitz, as a devout Roman Catholic, was looked upon with mistrust. Some even wondered if he were not in reality an agent of the Pope.

The anti-Radowitz feeling prominent among the Junkers had much deeper roots than merely his foreign origin and religion. They had lived on their estates for centuries and had a fear of anything that might threaten their position. They considered anything non-Prussian as inferior and even as a source of possible corruption. The unification of the Hohenzollern kingdom with other German states could open the way for a breakdown of the sense of discipline held so dear by the Junkers. Radowitz, as the champion of German unification, was

advancing ideas considered dangerous by Prussian reactionaries.

Because of their reactionary attitude, the Junkers were violently opposed to the revolution and anything that had any association with it. Radowitz had freely participated in the symbol of the revolution, the Frankfurt National Assembly, and as such he was considered a "fellow traveler" of the revolution. He also supported the idea of a constitutional government for Prussia and the other states. This increased his taint of revolution and caused him to be considered a dangerous subversive in the eyes of the conservatives.

The opposition of the Junker class to Radowitz and his ideas was complicated by the weakness of Frederick William IV. The King had encouraged his friend to form the Union, but when effective leadership was called for, the King was unwilling to take the necessary action. He was willing to go along with the wishes of the Ministry out of his own inability to reach a decision, not out of agreement with their position. When he regained his courage, events had progressed at such a pace that it was impossible to make up for lost time.

Another important reason for the failure of the Prussian Union and its designer was the attitude of Russia. Tsar Nicholas I was dedicated to the suppression of the revolution. Once again, the association of Radowitz with the Frankfurt National Assembly and constitutional forms of government made him suspect. In addition to these factors, the posture assumed by the father of the Union toward the crisis over Hesse-Kassel intensified the Tsar's doubts concerning the Prussian leader. Schwarzenberg had posed as the champion of restoration of the old order. The major difficulty which that restoration faced was the Prussian Union and the protests by the Hohenzollern

Kingdom against the unconstitutional actions of the Elector and his minister. This caused the Tsar to side with Austria.

On the other hand, Radowitz was no more popular with the democratic and liberal factions. Oddly enough, they viewed the father of the Erfurt Parliament as the exact opposite of the dangerous subversive feared by the Junkers. Thus he was unable to appeal to the people for support when the Ministry turned against him. Even if this had been possible, his political ideas would have kept him from taking such a step. Radowitz was no democrat; in reality he was a political moderate who avoided association with either extreme.

Radowitz's personality played a major role in his career. He was something of a romantic but at the same time was coldly practical. In fact, he was almost too practical. His letters are full of deeply analytical interpretations of the course of events. He spent so much time studying the situation that he was incapable of the quick action necessary to put his plans in force. Postponing decisive action in the summer of 1849 when his foes were too weak to resist him, he preferred to wait in order to take the most practical course possible. Yet, he was nonetheless dedicated to his cause. Even though grief-stricken by his daughter's death and his wife's illness, he returned to Berlin to continue his work.

Whether his first loyalty was to Germany or to Prussia is a complex question. He was a strong supporter of the Prussian King and wanted to see him the leader of Germany, but he was also dedicated to Germany. His plan of union did not call for the annexation of the rest of Germany by the Hohenzollern kingdom but urged a genuine federation which would allow the other German states to take their rightful

place in the new nation. At all times during his struggle he remained loyal to his adopted land, but he was also concerned with the rest of Germany. In reality, it is impossible to separate the devotion held by Radowitz to his adopted state from that toward Germany as a whole, because he himself never made a serious distinction between the two. To him the interests of Prussia were bound up with those of Germany, and since Prussia was the leading German power, he believed that the interests of Germany were tied to those of the north German kingdom. He dismissed Austria from a leading role in Germany because she had decided to link her fortunes with those of non-German peoples. The majority of those living under rule from Berlin were German; the same could not be said about those living under rule from Vienna.

Although Radowitz seemingly had failed, such was not really the case. Practically everything that he had valiantly fought to achieve eventually materialized. He correctly believed that Germany needed unity to assume a role in the modern world and that Germany's link with the Danubian Monarchy hindered this unification. Both these ideas culminated in the proclamation of the new German Empire by William I in 1871. Emperor William, the man who as Prince of Prussia had supported Radowitz in the struggles of 1850, was to rule over a state with a structure very similar to that proposed by the father of the Erfurt Parliament. Ironically, this Empire was the creation of the very element in Prussia that had considered Radowitz such a dangerous person. Since such men as Bismarck adopted much of the thinking of Radowitz in order to achieve the unification of Germany, his goals and ideas did not fail. Indeed, they lived after him and in the end prevailed over the doubts of the sceptics.

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