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James I. Martin. FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES: PRINCE PHILIPP ZU EULENBURG AND WILLIAM II OF GERMANY. (Under the direction of Loren Campion) Department of History, December 1980.

Philipp zu Eulenburg and Emperor William II of Germany shared a relationship of both a personal and political nature. From their initial meeting in 1886 for two decades both men derived important benefits from their association. On the one hand, Eulenburg provided William with a companionship which had never been afforded him previously by those around him. Simultaneously the Emperor provided the politically ambitious Eulenburg with opportunities for increasing the influence of himself and his friends, particularly Baron Friedrich von Holstein of the German Foreign Office. It was in this second area that the true historical significance of the relationship lay.

Eulenburg's influence did not really come into its own until the Bismarck chancellorship crisis of 1888-1890. In this situation Eulenburg established himself as the intermediary between William and Friedrich von Holstein. Holstein, by enlisting Eulenburg on opposing Bismarck's anti-Socialist and anti-labor legislation, and concessions to Russia, helped to create an environment in which only a minor impetus, in this case Bismarck's use of the Prussian Cabinet Order of 1852, which required officials of the Ministry of State on official business to consult with the Prussian Minister

President before confronting the Prussian King, could sever the ties between Kaiser and Chancellor.

Eulenburg continued his intermediary's role during the regimes of Chancellors Leo von Caprivi and Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst. Personal ambition and political expediency caused him to forego his conservative ideological concerns and usually cooperate with Holstein in maintaining the Kaiser's support for the chancellors' governments. Accomplishing this latter goal often proved difficult, for William possessed adamant conservative convictions and it required constant persuasion from Eulenburg as well as Holstein to lead him to modify his stance on such Reichstag issues as the Big Army Bill (1891-1893), the Zedlitz School Bill (1892), and the military courts-martial controversy (1896-1897). Similarly, William's desire to establish a "personal regime" led him into conflict with his chancellors. Finally, Eulenburg occasionally collaborated with William in contravention of Holstein's aims--towards the end of better serving the interests of family and friends.

The appointment of Bernhard von Bülow as German Foreign Secretary in 1897 marked the apex of Eulenburg's influence at the Imperial court. Bülow obtained his post through Eulenburg's assistance, but once appointed, however, the flattering, conniving intriguist proceeded to usurp Eulenburg's position as the Kaiser's chief confidant. Also, as advancing middle-age and increasing illnesses set in, Eulenburg grew



increasingly critical of the Emperor, causing the latter to depend more than ever on Bülow and to steer his own course. Holstein received his death blow in 1906, when he was caused to leave the Foreign Office because of his supposed concessions to France during the Moroccan crisis of 1905. Almost psychotically paranoid, Holstein, rather than allying himself with a similarly rejected Eulenburg, chose to blame the latter for his own fall, and out of revenge inaugurated a press campaign, the Zukunft affair, which eventually resulted in Eulenburg's total ouster from the Imperial circle. The Kaiser never again associated with his older friend, demonstrating most thoroughly the true nature of the relationship--an opportunistic association which had lost its reason for existing after one party failed to continue fulfilling his role in the association.

X FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES:  
PRINCE PHILIPP ZU EULENBURG AND  
WILLIAM II OF GERMANY X

A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Department of History  
East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in History

by  
James I. Martin  
II  
December 1980

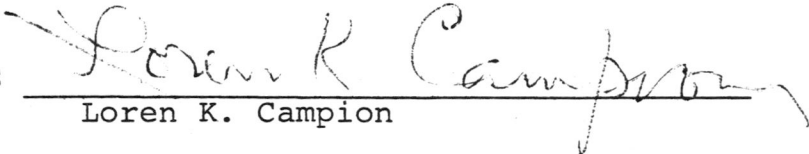
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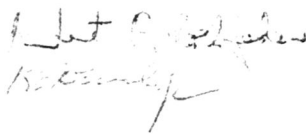
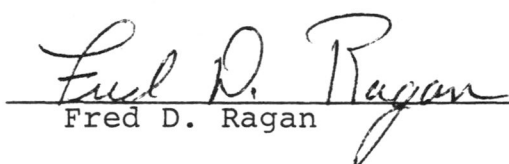
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my adviser, Dr. Loren Campion, for his efforts in overseeing the successful completion of the thesis. Dr. Carolyn Bolt, Dr. Kathleen Dunlop, and Dr. Herbert Rothfeder also deserve my gratitude, as each contributed suggestions which significantly improved the quality of my writing. I would like to extend my appreciation also to Dr. Joseph Steelman. It was he who first acquainted me with the History Department at East Carolina University and subsequently helped further my academic career.

Several other individuals assisted me. Mrs. Agnes W. Jones uncomplainingly typed my term papers, as well as this thesis, and always did an outstanding job. My parents, Mr. and Mrs. Roger E. Martin, gave me generous support, financial and otherwise, during my years at Duke University and East Carolina. Finally, my wife Linda sacrificed much during our courtship in order that I might complete my master's degree. To all of the people who encouraged me, God bless you.

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## INTRODUCTION

In May of 1886, two men began a friendship which influenced the course of German history for the next twenty years. The older man, Count Philipp zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld, was a sentimental, artistically-inclined Prussian diplomat of thirty-nine. The younger was twenty-seven-year-old Prince William, the future Kaiser William II, grandson of the still living and reigning William I of Germany, and the possessor of a nervous, erratic, arrogant personality which contrasted with that of his new boon companion. Meeting at a hunting party, the two had little reason to imagine that their shooting forays and fireside fraternization during its course would lead to a relationship of great political significance --one which would steer the destinies of a decade. Although in the company of others, the new friends set themselves apart from them, and from this initial meeting of souls, Philipp emerged as William's chief confidant for many years to come. So great became Eulenburg's impact, that from 1886 to 1897 he undoubtedly exercised greater influence over William's decision-making processes than any other figure of the same era.

A large part of Eulenburg's rise can be attributed to the historical framework in which his friendship with William developed. From being a conglomerate of divided principalities, Germany had recently become a unified power, the major

one on the continent of Europe by 1914. Even with unification, however, there were many in Germany who still opposed the idea of the nation-state, especially with Prussia at its helm. The governmental structure of the Empire, an uneasy compromise between absolutism and constitutionalism, caused dissension. When, in 1886, the future Emperor and Eulenburg went beyond the basis of nodding acquaintanceship they already had had for many years, Germany was a union of eighteen states and one administrative territory, the "Reichsland" of conquered Alsace and Lorraine. The federal government possessed an executive branch comprising the Emperor and his Chancellor and their staffs; also a legislative Federal Council, the Bundesrat, composed of delegates from the separate states; and a national popular representative body with legislative powers, the Reichstag. To the detriment of the democratic process, the aristocratic Bundesrat could veto legislation passed by the Reichstag. The Reichstag, however, possessed some power, as the Chancellor, by constitutional provision, needed the approval of the lower house to carry out his legislative programs.<sup>1</sup>

The key figure of the Empire, in keeping with Germany's

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<sup>1</sup>Ernst Deuerlein, ed., Die Gründung des Deutschen Reiches 1870/71 in Augenzeugenberichten (Düsseldorf: Karl Rauch, 1970), 386-392; C.G. Bruns, "Hohenzollern, Preussen, Deutschland, Berlin," in Hans Joachim Schoeps, Der Weg ins Deutsche Kaiserreich (Berlin: Propyläen, 1970), 230; Ernest J. Passant, A Short History of Germany, 1815-1945 (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1959), 88-90.

monarchical traditions, was the Kaiser or Emperor, and it was because of this that Eulenburg could emerge as such a significant figure in German politics. The Kaiser dominated foreign policy, commanded all armed forces in wartime, and could hire and fire all federal ("Imperial") officials at will. With him lay the final interpretation of the Constitution.<sup>2</sup> The Chancellor, buttressed by a closely-knit, entrenched ruling class, acted as the Emperor's chief agent. Under the aged William I, Chancellor Otto von Bismarck of course dominated the scene. With the accession of William II, however, Bismarck assumed a position of lesser significance in the face of a dynamic, aggressive, young monarch, and future Reichskanzlers did likewise.

As previously mentioned, the Chancellor required the backing of the Reichstag in order to govern effectively. This support had to be garnered among the six major Reichstag parties. The Conservatives, made up primarily of anti-revolutionary, agrarian Junkers (the Prussian equivalent of England's landed gentry) usually supported Bismarck. The Free Conservatives, who represented both agrarian and industrial interests, gave undeviating support to Bismarck's national policies, and provided many officials for his ministries. Less dependable, from Bismarck's point of view,

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<sup>2</sup>Franz Herre, Anno 70/71: Ein Krieg, ein Reich, ein Kaiser (Berlin: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1970), 254; Gordon Craig, Germany, 1866-1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 39-40, hereinafter cited as Craig, Germany.



were the National Liberals, bourgeois businessmen for the most part, who shared the characteristics of liberal party members in other nations, favoring centralization, laissez-faire economics, and secularized education. The Center or Catholic party, founded in 1870 to guarantee the rights of Catholics in predominantly Protestant Prussia, reflected a large cross-section of interests.<sup>3</sup> Because of the party's size, members of the Center were courted ardently by both conservatives and liberals in their attempts to swing the Reichstag vote their way. To the political left of the Center were the Progressives, who until 1866 had been one with the National Liberals as the Prussian Progressive Party. While sharing most of the National Liberals' economic views, the Progressives, mainly middle-class businessmen, more fervently advocated strong parliamentary government. Unlike their sister party, the Progressives also vociferously criticized the Bismarck government and the influence of the military.<sup>4</sup> Of the five parties mentioned, the National

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<sup>3</sup>Rudolf Lill, "Die deutschen Katholiken und Bismarcks Reichsgründung," Reichsgründung 1870/71: Tatsachen, Kategorien, Interpretationen, ed. Theodor Schuler and Ernst Deuerlein (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1970), 309, hereinafter cited as Schuler, Reichsgründung 1870/71.

<sup>4</sup>Oswald Hauser, "Pole und Polen im Deutschen Reich," Schuler, Reichsgründung 1870/71, 29; Arthur Rosenberg, Die Entstehung der deutschen Republik, 1871-1918 (Berlin: Ernst Rowohlt Verlag, 1928), 23-27; Michael Balfour, The Kaiser and His Times (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964), 31-38, hereinafter cited as Balfour, Kaiser.

Liberals had the largest number of seats in the Reichstag during most of the Bismarck period (1871-1890).

There existed a sixth party in the Reichstag, much to the chagrin of the Prussian aristocracy in particular and the German nobility in general. This was the Social Democratic Party, which until after 1890 remained more or less doctrinaire Marxist in orientation. Originally die-hard advocates of the "workers' revolution," the Social Democrats, with the advent of Edward Bernstein's revisionism during the 1890's, became increasingly pragmatic, concerned more with improving the working conditions of the petty bourgeoisie and artisans than with revolutionary dogma. Marxist ideology soon assumed a negligible position in the Social Democratic political philosophy. In addition to the Social Democrats, there were the parties of the Poles, Danes, French, and even anti-Semites, none of whom ever exercised a marked influence over the Reichstag. In the Reichstag one could thus observe a number of dichotomies--Protestant and Catholic, Teuton and Slav, Junker and industrialist. Nowhere more than in this body was the diversity of "the Germans" so apparent.

Materialism and industrial expansion characterized the period following the war of 1870-1871 with France, molding the attitudes of government and people. The concession by France of mineral-rich Alsace-Lorraine, the five-billion-franc French war indemnity, expanding transportation system--all contributed to an economic boom during the early 1870's,

a decade before Eulenburg came to matter in Germany. When the bubble burst in 1873, a conservative commercial policy came into being, emphasizing high tariffs and lessened speculation. The economic depression encouraged anti-Semitism, an attitude somewhat reflected in the correspondence that grew between Eulenburg and William. Chancellor von Bismarck also took advantage of growing anti-liberal sentiment to renew his old battles with the Catholic Center and Socialists. Such conflicts, needless to say, left their legacy to the reign of William II as well.<sup>5</sup>

The short-lived depression of the 1870's did not keep Germany from asserting herself in foreign affairs and helping to create the international political environment in which Eulenburg and William II would be actors. Bismarck, the quintessential diplomat, abandoned his "blood and iron" imperialism and began to pursue a more peaceful policy abroad. The Iron Chancellor sought a union of Europe's conservative monarchs against the forces of social subversion. To this end, he helped formulate an alliance between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia in 1873, and sponsored the Congress of Berlin in 1878 in order to maintain a power balance between these three nations. The Chancellor found the Russians difficult collaborators, however, and, by 1879, the three-power

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<sup>5</sup>Fritz Fischer, Griff nach der Weltmacht: Die Kriegszielpolitik des kaiserlichen Deutschland 1914/18 (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1962), 16-17, hereinafter cited as Fischer, Griff . . . Welt.

alliance had ceased to exist. Then, in 1882, in response to the French seizure of Tunis, Bismarck arranged the so-called Triple Alliance between Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Germany.<sup>6</sup> In order further to contain the French, especially under the revenge-minded Boulanger government, Bismarck in 1887 sponsored a military bill to increase the number of German troops by 41,000, while simultaneously concluding a secret treaty with Russia in order to prevent that nation from courting Germany's restless western neighbor. An Anglo-Italian agreement of the same year indirectly made England a party in the Triple Alliance and consequently prevented Russia from expanding her influence into Eastern Europe.<sup>7</sup> Only Bismarck could have successfully administered such a conglomerate of treaties.

A brilliant manipulator of foreign policy, he encountered less success in politics at home, and the controversies existing during his tenure continued afterwards during the association between William and Eulenburg. The Social Democrats, a thorn in Bismarck's side, involuntarily contributed to his policy-making decisions. Following an unsuccessful assassination attempt on the life of Kaiser

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<sup>6</sup>George W.F. Hallgarten, Imperialismus vor 1914: Die sozialologischen Grundlagen der Aussenpolitik europäischer Grossmächte vor dem ersten Weltkrieg (München: C.H. Beck, 1963), I, 201-206, hereinafter cited as Hallgarten, Imperialismus; George P. Gooch, Germany (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), 39.

<sup>7</sup>Hallgarten, Imperialismus, I, 262-263.

William I in June 1878, it became increasingly popular to blame society's ills on the Socialists. Thus Bismarck's anti-Socialist law of 1878 received widespread acceptance and simultaneously stifled the trade union movement for a decade. Yet Bismarck also wished to demonstrate that the Reich could offer the people more than could the Social Democrats, and to this end initiated plans for social legislation, including sickness and disability insurance. Nevertheless, the Socialist movement continued to grow until by 1912 the Social Democrats held the largest number of seats in the Reichstag.<sup>8</sup>

Other areas of controversy also existed during Bismarck's chancellorship, and specifically in the early years of Eulenburg's and Prince William's friendship. During the administration of the Chancellor's reactionary Minister of the Interior, Robert von Puttkamer, various members of the civil service sympathetic toward liberal movements were demoted or expelled, including such notables as War Ministers A.K.G. Kameke and Albrecht von Stosch. Such actions led to the formation of such groups as the German Free Thought party, a liberal organization which counted among its adherents the son of William I, Crown Prince Frederick. On the other hand, the National Liberals, eager to stay in the Chancellor's good graces, moved to the right and Bismarck

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<sup>8</sup>Fischer, Griff . . . Welt, 17; Geoffrey Barraclough, The Origins of Modern Germany (Oxford: Blackwell, 1957), 426.

was able to keep a hold on the Reichstag only through a coalition of Conservatives, Free Conservatives, and National Liberals. German unity, already precarious at the Empire's founding, would never exist in a cohesive form until the outbreak of the First World War.

Within this complex, uncertain society, however, in terms of socio-political ideology there existed a stable group, the Prussian Junker aristocracy, the class to which Eulenburg and Bismarck both belonged. Not necessarily wealthy, the stereotype Junker was a large landowner. At the beginning of the 1870's, this group comprised a considerable portion of the German diplomatic corps, and although their influence in this area was declining, they remained the dominant class from which the Emperor made his appointments and found his political associates.<sup>9</sup> Had Eulenburg not been a Junker, he would probably never have had the opportunity to associate with the Kaiser on the level that came to be the case. Yet the foundations of the relationship between Eulenburg and William involved far more complex factors than mere class compatibility, and it is consequently the purpose of this study to examine the relationship between the two men--their backgrounds, mutual personal friendship, political actions--and to illuminate the

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<sup>9</sup>For a study of the German diplomatic corps, see Lamar Cecil, The German Diplomatic Service, 1871-1914 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), hereinafter cited as Cecil, German Diplomatic Service.

influence of Philipp zu Eulenburg upon the social and political scene in Wilhelmine Germany.

## CHAPTER I

### THE INCEPTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF EULENBURG'S FRIENDSHIP WITH WILLIAM II

The early, formative experiences of Philipp zu Eulenburg and William contrasted markedly. Eulenburg, the older of the two, matured in the traditional manner of the Prussian aristocracy, having a youth without undue challenge or intensive competition with his age peers. William, by contrast, developed in an extremely pressured environment, one dominated by his mother and oppressive tutors. The respective childhoods of the two men would not but have fostered many of the traits which could later characterize their personalities, and thus determine the character of their relationship.

Philipp Alexander Carl Botho zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld was born in Königsberg, East Prussia, the son of Philipp Conrad zu Eulenburg, a lieutenant in the Third Prussian Curassiers. The Eulenburg lineage extended back to 1170, when the knight Conrad of Hilburg (the name later evolved into Ileburg, Eilenburg, and finally Eulenburg) acquired his manorial estates. The family possessed a strong military tradition. Eulenburgs had fought at Tannenberg in 1410, served as officers in seventeenth-century Brandenburg, and soldiered in the Seven Years' War and in the Napoleonic campaigns. Philipp Conrad, heir to this tradition, figured as the very embodiment of the militaristic Junker. After completing his



education, he joined the Prussian infantry, distinguishing himself by aiding in the suppression of the Königsberg uprisings of 1848. In 1846 Philipp Conrad married Alexandrine von Rothkirch, a Silesian lady of considerable artistic talents and a grandniece of the Hertefelds, whose estate, Liebenberg, would eventually come into her possession. A year after their marriage, Philipp zu Eulenburg came into the world, on February 22, 1847.<sup>1</sup>

Contrasting influences shaped Eulenburg's character as he grew up. The father, a harsh disciplinarian, permitted his son to have only a select group of companions, mainly the children of other East Elbian nobles. The boy cultivated relationships with his cousins, and also counted the scions of the Dohna family among his friends. The latter possessed an estate at Prökelwitz which Eulenburg frequented during his youth and later, when he became William's companion. By contrast, Eulenburg's mother, a gentle person of diversified interests, imbued her son with an appreciation of the esthetic. Alexandrine von Rothkirch, an accomplished painter and pianist, especially encouraged those talents in her son. Like her husband, the mother came from a military tradition, while her people's affinity for the arts was atypical of the nineteenth-century Prussian aristocracy. Eulenburg's

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<sup>1</sup>Reinhold Conrad Muschler, Philipp zu Eulenburg, sein Leben und seine Zeit (Leipzig: Wilhelm Grunow, 1930), 1-25. Hereinafter cited as Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben.

maternal grandfather, a volunteer rifleman during the Napoleonic campaigns, had received both the Iron Cross and the Russian Cross of St. George for his accomplishments. Nonetheless he possessed a pacific temperament, preferring the life of a gentleman farmer to that of a soldier.<sup>2</sup> Young Philipp enjoyed the old man's company immensely, mainly because of the great freedom that the latter allowed him when the boy visited his Silesian estate.<sup>3</sup> Thus, having this escape from his father's authoritarianism, Eulenburg seems to have emerged relatively unscathed by adverse parental influences--in sharp contrast to his future friend Prince William.

In 1853, Philipp Conrad moved his family to Berlin, where the father assumed the position of personal adjutant to Field Marshal General Friedrich von Wrangel (1784-1877) who later won fame in the Danish War of 1864. The younger Eulenburg made friends with the Field Marshal's son, Gustav, whom he characterized as a loquacious fellow and a practical joker.<sup>4</sup> Young Philipp also made close acquaintanceship with Eberhard zu Dohna-Schlobitten, a Junker like himself. He

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<sup>2</sup>Johannes Haller, Aus dem Leben des Fürsten Philipp zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld, 1st ed., (Berlin: Gebrüder Paetel, 1924), 5, hereinafter cited as Haller, Aus dem Leben; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 35; Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 3.

<sup>3</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 35.

<sup>4</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 26; Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 13-23.

developed into a rangy, delicate child, often stricken with various lung and nervous disorders. The city environment did not appeal to him. Nevertheless, there were happy times during this period. The Eulenburgs joined the intellectual circles of Berlin society, thus allowing young Philipp to come into contact with notables such as the painter Gustav Richer.<sup>5</sup> Also, his mother's talented relatives often visited Berlin. Alexandrine and her brother, an especially versatile pair, often entertained their families by playing the piano duettes.<sup>6</sup> Such activity, however, apparently created rifts in the Eulenburg household. Philipp Conrad saw little purpose in these frivolous entertainments and frowned upon his son's love of the arts. Young Philipp, it appears, came to resent strongly his father's lack of cultural appreciation. Looking back, he saw him as a man without feeling, asserting that, "Just as unflinchingly as he stood in this Prussianism, so unflinchingly should it have developed in me, in whose manner so much emotion lay hidden."<sup>7</sup>

Despite this contumaciousness, however, Philipp zu Eulenburg still sought to win the old soldier's approval. The future course of his life, oriented around a technical military education, would demonstrate this desire.

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<sup>5</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 30.

<sup>6</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 30.

<sup>7</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 35.

In October 1859, the twelve-year-old Eulenburg entered the French Gymnasium in Berlin, where he endured a year of rigorous military training before leaving on account of illness. While convalescing at home, the boy began to develop his interest in diplomatic affairs. His uncle, Friedrich (Fritz) zu Eulenburg served as a Prussian emissary in the Far East and Philipp read government dispatches dealing with his activities in China and Japan.<sup>8</sup> The youth also studied with interest the various reports his father received from the military. Through such sources, Philipp became increasingly aware of Prussia's emergence as a major power--a nation which would come to dominate the German states. The boy, like so many of his contemporaries, developed an acute sense of patriotism, and his prejudices against the military lessened. At the age of sixteen, Philipp enrolled at the Vitzthumsches Gymnasium at Dresden. A popular and academically competent student, he remained there until 1866, when the Austrian War gave him the opportunity to demonstrate his military skills.

Eulenburg's military career, though hardly heroic, deserves mention from the perspective that this man, raised by a gentle mother and despising the Prussian affinity for war, could shackle his prejudices and perform quite well as a soldier. At the age of nineteen, Eulenburg enlisted in

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<sup>8</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 41; Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 6.

the Prussian forces against Austria. Though he participated in little, if any, actual fighting during the seven-weeks' conflict, he emerged from this experience a far more robust and confident individual than when he entered. More important, the youth felt that he was beginning to win his father's approval, as he told the older man that military life made him feel "fit as a fish in water." He also confessed his pride in being a Prussian when corresponding with Philipp Conrad.<sup>9</sup> The further activities of the young Eulenburg would continue to demonstrate a desire to win his father's pride.

In 1867, Philipp zu Eulenburg, not content to remain a mere foot soldier, passed the Fähnrichsexamen (qualifying examinations for officers' training) and entered the elite Garde du Corps. Later that year he enrolled at the War Academy at Cassel. Here he met Kuno von Moltke, future City Commandant of Berlin. Like Eulenburg, Moltke was an esthete, a romantic sharing the other young officer's fondness for musical composition and performance. The two developed a close friendship, spending their free hours at local beer taverns, flirting with girls, conversing, and writing ballads.<sup>10</sup> The friendship continued for the next forty years. Eulenburg and Moltke would accompany Emperor

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<sup>9</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 52.

<sup>10</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 56; Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 49.

William II on his North Sea pleasure voyages, and both one day would be targets of allegations of homosexuality during the notorious Zukunft Affair.

In spite of this affinity for beer halls, Eulenburg performed well at Cassel, passed his examinations with ease, and was commissioned in the "Emperor's favorite" company of the Garde du Corps at the age of twenty. After receiving his commission, Eulenburg continued his military training. Apparently the future diplomat found the instruction boring and unchallenging as he confided to his mother that he spent every free moment at the piano or at the easel.<sup>11</sup> Eulenburg also attended balls and other social events during his years in the military, meeting such celebrities as Vincent Benedetti, French minister to Berlin, and Alfred von Waldersee, later Chief of the German General Staff. Eulenburg and the latter shared an interest in music, and the two on occasion sang in a quartet.<sup>12</sup> And Eulenburg always had time for charming young ladies.

In the summer of 1869, an event occurred which would later bring a measure of stability to Eulenburg's existence. The young soldier, vacationing at Kreuznach, had spent most of his time at the gaming table until August of that year, when he met Countess Augusta Sandels at the resort. This

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<sup>11</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 60.

<sup>12</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 62.

beautiful and intelligent woman, the daughter of the Swedish Count August Sandels, High Court Marshal to King Oscar II, immediately captivated the young Eulenburg. Augusta, unlike Philipp, did not come from a predominantly military background. Although her grandfather had been one of Sweden's foremost Napoleonic-era generals, her lineage also included clergymen and professors.<sup>13</sup> The young countess took after her more intellectual forebears, possessing talents in the arts, especially painting.<sup>14</sup> Her esthetic interests, combined with a charming appearance and attractive personality, made Augusta Sandels seem an ideal match to Philipp. During the month of September, 1869, the two dined frequently together and shared their common love of Nordic balladry. The initial summer romance, however, was cut short by Eulenburg's recall to Berlin in the fall of 1869.

With the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in July 1870, Eulenburg again sought the opportunity to demonstrate his military capabilities. After passing a series of examinations and receiving a recommendation from his Uncle "Fritz," the young guardsman went to France, where he participated in the march on Paris.<sup>15</sup> After the capitulation of

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<sup>13</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 64; Haller, Aus dem Leben, 6.

<sup>14</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 6.

<sup>15</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 69-71.

that city on January 27, 1871, Eulenburg reaped the fruits of victory, receiving both an Iron Cross and appointment as adjutant to the Governor-General of Alsace-Lorraine. Yet these accomplishments stood as nothing compared to the satisfaction Eulenburg received from knowing that his father now looked favorably upon him because he had continued the family's supposedly glorious military tradition. Reflecting on his good fortune, Eulenburg recalled the past conflicts between his artistic mother, his soldier father, and himself. His winning the Iron Cross gave the father new hope that the son might come to amount to something, and it became the elder Eulenburg's wish that his son should now enter the diplomatic service.<sup>16</sup> Philipp, however, while he shared this latter desire, decided to postpone seeking a foreign-service post for a few years. In the fall of 1871, he resigned his army commission and began travelling extensively throughout Europe and the Middle East.<sup>17</sup>

Eulenburg lived an interesting though hardly productive life during the years 1871-1877. His Near East sojourn included stops at Constantinople, Beirut, Damascus, and Jerusalem. At Damascus Eulenburg met Abd el Kadr, who would later lead Algeria against France during the closing decades

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<sup>16</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 75; Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 49.

<sup>17</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 75; Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 49.



of the nineteenth century. Eulenburg also spent a month in Cairo with his friend Count Eberhard zu Dohna; from there the two travelled to Egypt, spending time in Alexandria. Returning to Germany in March 1872, Eulenburg settled in Leipzig, where he spent much time visiting museums and engaging in other cultural pursuits. In March 1873, he journeyed to Italy, on the way visiting Vienna, and then in Italy, lingered in Bologna, Florence, Rome, and Naples. The museums of the last city fascinated the young Prussian nobleman. After touring Italy, Eulenburg then returned to Germany by way of Switzerland and then back to Liebenberg, where a typhoid attack laid him low soon after his return.<sup>18</sup>

After two years of this seemingly directionless existence, Eulenburg decided to study law. He enrolled at the University of Strasbourg, where, under the tutelage of the jurist Paul Kayser, he acquired a considerable knowledge of jurisprudence. One of Eulenburg's associates at Strasbourg was Alfred von Bülow, the brother of the future Reichskanzler.<sup>19</sup> Eulenburg completed his legal studies with ease, passed his examinations, and graduated magna cum laude in 1875. Immediately after finishing his legal training, Eulenburg travelled to Stockholm, where he managed to win the hand of Augusta Sandels, whom he had been seeing periodically

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<sup>18</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 81-85.

<sup>19</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 88.

ever since they became acquainted. On November 26, 1875, the two were married in St. James Church in the Swedish capital.<sup>20</sup>

During the early years of their marriage, the Eulenburgs lived a life without serious restrictions, travelling as they pleased, and drawing upon an independent income. After their wedding, the couple journeyed to Dresden, Weimar, Heidelberg, and Frankfurt, terminating their honeymoon trip in Strasbourg. They spent many hours painting and making music. Unlike other members of Eulenburg's family, Augusta appreciated her husband's esthetic talents and encouraged him to pursue his activities. During 1876, the couple travelled to Naples and Rome, where they attended the annual carnivals. Returning home to Germany, Eulenburg took a government post as a clerk for local military operations, a relatively undemanding position which offered ample opportunity for leisure.<sup>21</sup> In November 1876, Augusta gave birth to a "young Nero"--Philipp Karl Botho Wend zu Eulenburg.

This leisurely existence ended in 1877, when Uncle "Fritz" zu Eulenburg, who had influence with the Bismarcks, secured a minor position in the German diplomatic service for his nephew. Philipp, Augusta, and their small son

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<sup>20</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 91-97; Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 49.

<sup>21</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 100.

therefore moved to Berlin late in that year.<sup>22</sup>

The Eulenburgs adapted easily to the social whirl of the growing metropolis. One of the first people whose acquaintance they made in Berlin, Alexander von Schleinitz, Minister of the Imperial Household, organized "salons" where prominent artists, among them Anton von Werner, Gustav Richter, and Marianne Burg would come and discuss their works. Eulenburg, always an amateur in the arts, intensified his own esthetic interests during this time. He grew increasingly appreciative of French art and began to attend the theater regularly. He prepared a number of amateur musical works, of which Rosenlieder ("Rose Songs") and Skädelgesänge ("Ballads from Nordic Sagas") received particular acclaim. The young diplomat also found time to demonstrate his architectural talents by designing a waterside pavilion at Liebenberg.<sup>23</sup> Eulenburg also possessed a gift for writing children's stories. Both his Erik und Erika and Abendserzählungen ("Tales of the Evening") won widespread appreciation. Later, in the 1880's, Eulenburg's play Margot would appear at the Prussian Embassy Theater while his Seestern ("Star of the Sea"), a passionate love story, played for ten years at various locations.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 101.

<sup>23</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 7.

<sup>24</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 8, 16; Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 54-62.

During the late seventies, Eulenburg visited various royal courts as a Prussian emissary. In 1878, he travelled to Stockholm. In August of the next year he went to Dresden as an aide to the Prussian ambassador to Saxony, Otto von Dönhoff.<sup>25</sup> During these years in the diplomatic service, Eulenburg renewed his friendship with Kuno von Moltke, his companion from Cassel. Writing to Moltke, Eulenburg admitted that his position was a difficult though honorable one. He enjoyed the company of his associates, though it appears that his musical proclivities hampered his effectiveness as a diplomat to some degree because of the time he devoted to them.<sup>26</sup>

Eulenburg's charm and talents did not go unnoticed in major political circles. The first major advancement of his diplomatic career took place in January 1881, when, through the influences of the Bismarcks, he was appointed Third Secretary at the German Embassy in Paris. Here he came into contact with Bernhard von Bülow, the Second Secretary of the same establishment. From their initial meeting, the two developed a respect for each other's political capabilities. After six months Eulenburg transferred to Munich, where he served under the highly cultivated Count Georg von Werthern-Berchlingen. Eulenburg ingratiated himself with Werthern,

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<sup>25</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 115.

<sup>26</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 117.

who allowed him to assume many of his duties as Prussian ambassador to Munich during his own summer vacations.<sup>27</sup> The young diplomat also blended well with his social environment. Both the Bavarian aristocracy and intelligentsia found him a delightful companion. Eulenburg's domestic life added to his enjoyment. Although his first son died in 1878, Eulenburg rejoiced three years later at the birth of another boy, eventually followed by two additional sons and two daughters.

While Eulenburg enjoyed his stay in Munich, he did not find his diplomatic position without challenges. The particularistic sentiments of the Bavarians posed a constant problem for Prussia in her attempts to unite the German nation. The residents of Bavaria gave their primary loyalties to their own king, Ludwig of Wittelsbach, rather than to the German emperor. Eulenburg also encountered the problem of religious sympathies. A Lutheran, he now found himself in a state where ultramontane political and court parties held sway. Eulenburg's ultimate challenge at Munich, however, involved the deposition and death of Bavarian King Ludwig II in 1886. The diplomat, serving as de facto mediator between the Prussian Embassy and the Bavarian regent after Ludwig's fall, worked to prevent the development of a separatist movement within the South German state. He performed this task competently, supplying the Foreign Office

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<sup>27</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 14; Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 111-112.

in Berlin with necessary information and winning a name for himself among those in positions of influence, namely Baron Friedrich von Holstein.<sup>28</sup> It was Philipp zu Eulenburg, the maturing diplomat, then, who met William at Prökelwitz in May 1886.

The early life of Prince William of Prussia paralleled Eulenburg's in several respects. Like his future friend, William suffered from physical ailments. In addition to his withered arm, incurred at birth in 1859, the future Kaiser possessed poor hearing and a chronic nervous condition. William, of course, also came from a military tradition extending back to the seventeenth century, though his family already had produced some "soldier-poets," particularly Frederick the Great and his own father, the future tragic Emperor Frederick III. Like Eulenburg, William felt somewhat alienated from his father, though for different reasons. Crown Prince Frederick, as Williams's father was until 1888, a gentle, pliable individual with liberal political views, contrasted sharply with the domineering Philipp Conrad zu Eulenburg. William saw little of his father, and their rare shared activities consisted mostly of walks through the Brandenburg woods, expeditions to various spas, i.e., Johannisbad, or visits to ships.<sup>29</sup> Princess Victoria,

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<sup>28</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 16-17.

<sup>29</sup>Kaiser Wilhelm II, Meine Vorfahren (Berlin: Verlag für Kulturpolitik, 1929), 188; cf. Balfour, Kaiser, 75;

William's mother, exercised a far greater influence over him, and it was probably in the area of mother-son relations that the contrast between William's and Eulenburg's development appeared most pronounced.

Philipp zu Eulenburg loved his mother deeply, sharing her artistic and intellectual interests. William, by contrast, resented the domineering Englishwoman who attempted to shield him from the Prussian "barbarians." Actually, mother and son possessed rather similar personalities. Both had an appreciation of art, acute intelligence, and, probably most important, indomitable wills. This last shared trait caused most of their differences, for the two disagreed on many things. In the realm of music, Victoria despised Wagnerian pieces with their nationalistic implications, while William enjoyed all of Wagner's works. The Crown Princess disdained the authoritarian, militaristic nature of Prussian society, and asserted on many occasions that she was grateful that such a social environment did not exist in England. Her son, by contrast, from his initiation into the Potsdam Regiment at age ten, possessed a love of the military which endured throughout his lifetime. Victoria, an aggressive woman, often meddled in her husband Frederick's affairs. William, repelled by such behavior, determined that his spouse

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Virginia Cowles, The Kaiser (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 40, hereinafter cited as Cowles, The Kaiser.

would be of the Kinder, Küche, Kirche type.<sup>30</sup> Like Eulenburg, William found escape from his oppressive parental home environment in the company of his grandparents. As a youth, the future Kaiser had a particular fondness for his maternal grandmother, Queen Victoria of England, who allowed him to play relatively unrestricted, and encouraged him to associate with children of all classes.<sup>31</sup> The Prince also greatly enjoyed the company of his paternal grandfather, Emperor William I, who nurtured his interest in the military. Prince William's defensive, compulsively masculine personality, then, almost certainly resulted from a negative reaction to his mother's dominance and as a positive response to his grandfather's affection. Other forces, however, shaped William's character.

William's education also played an integral role in molding his temperament. While Eulenburg received the typical military education of the Prussian Junker aristocracy, the Prince studied a variety of subjects, both in classical and technical areas. William's grim Calvinist tutor, Georg Hinzpeter, taught him history and mathematics, while he learned French and English from native instructors. Hinzpeter, a severe disciplinarian, forced the young Prince

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<sup>30</sup> Balfour, Kaiser, 84-85; Kaiser Wilhelm II, Aus meinem Leben, 1859-1888 (Berlin and Leipzig: K.F. Koehler, 1927), 20-22, 44-46, hereinafter cited as Wilhelm II, Aus meinem Leben.

<sup>31</sup> Balfour, Kaiser, 76.



to study, sometimes as long as twelve hours a day. The tutor sought to imbue him with a strong sense of duty, and reminded him constantly of his future role as king of Prussia.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, such indoctrination accompanied every activity of Prince William's. He learned to ride and shoot like an expert, but the grueling training process, coupled with his infirmity, left him emotionally calloused and embittered. During his early childhood, mother and tutor restricted his associations to the sons of noble military officers and court officials.<sup>33</sup> These circumstances surely also contributed to William's developing the assertive, supercilious personality which endured throughout his lifetime.

William's atypical educational process continued throughout his adolescence. At the age of sixteen, he entered the Lyceum at Cassel. Here, in the company of predominantly middle-class boys, he received further instruction in the arts and sciences. The future monarch, a diligent, if not outstanding, student, graduated tenth in a class of seventeen. William continued his studies at Bonn University, matriculating at the age of eighteen. At Bonn,

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<sup>32</sup> Joachim von Kürenberg, War Alles Falsch? Das Leben Kaiser Wilhelms II (Bonn: Athenäum Verlag, 1951), 90-91, hereinafter cited as Kürenberg, War Alles Falsch?; Balfour Kaiser, 78; Wilhelm II, Aus meinem Leben, 23-33.

<sup>33</sup> Kürenberg, War Alles Falsch?, 91; Balfour, Kaiser, 78; Wilhelm, Aus meinem Leben, 32-33.

he broadened his curriculum to include politics, economics, government, and science, yet never came to excel in any of these areas. William apparently enjoyed life at Bonn, and cultivated the members of Borussia, a militarily inspired student fraternity whose standard emphasized physical prowess over academic accomplishments. Membership in the Borussia heavily reinforced William's masculine ego. In summary, then, the future Kaiser's education, a formidable contrast to his eventual friend Eulenburg's, played a role in developing a personality considerably different from that of the more balanced older man.<sup>34</sup>

William's marriage and domestic life contrasted sharply with that of the scion of the Eulenburgs. Augusta zu Eulenburg, née Sandels, possessed charm, pulchritude, and a strong will. Well-travelled and cultivated, she presented a perfect match for her talented husband. By contrast, Augusta Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg epitomized the Hausfrau--plain, unimaginative, possessing few intellectual interests outside of the home. Augusta Victoria's exclusive company bored William after he became her husband in 1881, and it appears to have been primarily her ability to satisfy his sexual needs that kept him faithful. William's correspondence, when he bothered to write, did not convey the same affectionate feelings which

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<sup>34</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 23; Balfour, Kaiser, 86; Wilhelm II, Aus meinem Leben, 157-172.

characterized Eulenburg's letters to his wife. It was only after many years of marriage, when a number of his favorite cronies had deserted him, that William began truly to appreciate his spouse.<sup>35</sup>

Like Eulenburg, William experienced a respectable, though hardly distinguished, military career. He enlisted in the Life Guard Hussars during the first years of his marriage, then transferred to the cavalry in 1882. Army life for William consisted of many social activities such as "beer evenings" and stag parties. At these gatherings, he made a number of friends, most of whom belonged to the conservative Prussian aristocracy which his mother so despised. As time passed, William advanced steadily through the ranks. In 1885, he assumed command of his regiment, proving to be a strict administrator who forbade heavy drinking and gambling among his troops.<sup>36</sup> He remained at this post until January 1888.

William's close association with the military widened the already existing rift between himself and his parents. Crown Prince Frederick disliked the influence that his son's cronies, especially Herbert von Bismarck, exercised over him. Frederick was considerably annoyed when Herbert's father, the Chancellor, suggested that William be allowed to work in the

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<sup>35</sup>Balfour, Kaiser, 88.

<sup>36</sup>Kürenberg, War Alles Falsch?, 60-62; Wilhelm II, Aus meinem Leben, 187-211.

Foreign Office in order to gain some knowledge in the area of diplomatic affairs. The Crown Prince begged him to reconsider, asserting that William possessed too immature, inexperienced, and conceited a personality to be placed in a position of influence.<sup>37</sup> His urgings went unheeded, however, and from September 1886 onward, under the guidance of Herbert von Bismarck, the Prince served in the department, mainly in clerical capacities, having little to do with the actual formulation of policy.<sup>38</sup> William's mother also came to criticize her son's independent nature, roundly declaring to her mother in 1881 that "the son has never been mine."<sup>39</sup> By the middle 1880's the Crown Princess saw William as her "clumsy, loutish son" when comparing him to the more handsome and suave Crown Prince Rudolf of Austria-Hungary.<sup>40</sup> William's mother had hoped that her son's marriage to Augusta Victoria would make William more docile and considerate. Such hopes proved futile, for the young wife had little desire to attempt to govern and so risk angering the future Kaiser. In

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<sup>37</sup> Balfour, Kaiser, 94.

<sup>38</sup> Kürenberg, War Alles Falsch?, 64; Kaiser Wilhelm II, Ereignisse und Gestalten aus den Jahren 1878-1918 (Leipzig and Berlin: K.F. Koehler, 1922), 6-11; hereinafter cited as Wilhelm II, Ereignisse.

<sup>39</sup> Egon Cesar, Count Corti, The English Empress, a Study in the Relations Between Queen Victoria and Her Eldest Daughter, intro. by Wolfgang, Prince of Hesse, tr. by M.R. Hodgson (London: Cassel, 1957), 213; cf. Balfour, Kaiser, 82.

<sup>40</sup> Kürenberg, War Alles Falsch?, 65.

further defiance to his parents' admonitions about his conduct, William grew increasingly close to his "soldier-king" grandfather, the bastion of political and social reaction, and sought to pattern his own life after that of the old Emperor.

William's discontent resulted from other than just parental pressures. As a young adult the Prince grew increasingly disenchanted with his English relatives. He possessed little love for his "Uncle Bertie" (the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII), while he had long found the company of his grandmother, Queen Victoria, congenial. After 1885, however, Victoria grew progressively colder toward this particular grandson. In part this could be attributed to William's by-now arrogant personality, which the Queen found distasteful. Even more important, she was put off specifically by the Prince's supercilious attitude toward her daughter Beatrice upon marriage to Prince Henry of Battenberg.<sup>41</sup> William's visit to the coming-of-age ceremonies of his distant cousin, Grand Duke (the future Tsar) Nicholas of Russia, engendered further difficulties. William attempted to become friendly with the sixteen-year-old Romanov heir by sending him letters which blatantly attacked the views of Frederick and Victoria, and also expressed William's disdain for the English parliamentary system. Apparently the future

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<sup>41</sup>Corti, Empress, 226-227; cf. Balfour, Kaiser, 101; Wilhelm II, Aus meinem Leben, 251-259.

Kaiser hoped to find common ground with the young Russian prince, whose conservative attitudes reflected his own.<sup>42</sup> Crown Prince Frederick and his wife, of course, did not respond kindly to such oblique attacks, and the tension between the two generations increased. Finally, William's objection to the engagement of his sister Victoria to the opportunistic Prince Alexander of Battenberg caused several of his relatives to turn against him. One can envision, then, how by the time William met Eulenburg in 1886, he figured as a lonely, confused individual, searching for a confidant, for escape from his unhappy environment. This, to a degree, Eulenburg could provide.

William's relationship with Eulenburg began under purely apolitical circumstances. When the two met on a hunting party at Prökelwitz, the hunting lodge of Count Richard zu Dohna-Schlobitten, Eulenburg belonged to the Prussian legation at Munich, while William functioned as a commander of the first batallion of the Prussian Light Hussars. The diplomatic emissary's personal characteristics attracted William from the beginning--the broad forehead, carefully trimmed beard, and large stature impressed the Prince.<sup>43</sup> Their mutual interest in music served as a second basis for

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<sup>42</sup>Balfour, Kaiser, 100.

<sup>43</sup>Karl Friedrich Nowak, Kaizer and Chancellor: The Opening Years of the Reign of William II (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 110, hereinafter cited as Nowak, Kaiser and Chancellor.

developing the friendship, as they shared a common interest in Bavarian ballads and Wagnerian operas. William also admired Eulenburg's own musical abilities. During the evenings at Prökelwitz, the future Kaiser would sit next to the versatile diplomat while the latter played the piano, begging him to perform his Skädelgesänge so that he, William, could sing the melodies. Never had Eulenburg encountered someone with so much enthusiasm for his work.<sup>44</sup>

The actual hunting expeditions afforded Eulenburg the opportunity to experience the force of William's personality. He was amazed by what he considered the Prince's indomitable will and desire to overcome his physical infirmities. Eulenburg remarked on William's riding ability when writing in his diary, and though Eulenburg personally detested the sport of hunting, he could not help but admire his new friend's talent for stalking, noting that he pursued nine bucks for an entire day and managed to bring down several in the same time period--no small feat for a man with only one good arm.<sup>45</sup> From this initial meeting, then, Eulenburg sensed future greatness in William, and sought to build the friendship.

Soon after the Prökelwitz meeting, Eulenburg enhanced his standing with William by sending him a copy of his Skädelgesänge. The Prince gratefully accepted the gift and

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<sup>44</sup>Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 135.

<sup>45</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 153.

responded with an autographed photo.<sup>46</sup> The two men began to correspond regularly, praising each other's talents in their letters. William later asserted that "Eulenburg's poetic imagination was capable of anything."<sup>47</sup> Eulenburg praised the Prince's "spontaneous, energetic character," and found William "congenial to my artistic soul" and a flatterer.<sup>48</sup> Eulenburg's letters to his wife also contained words of praise--William's convictions, clearness of comprehension, and sharpness of judgment all impressed his friend.<sup>49</sup>

During the initial years of the friendship, Eulenburg served as a "father-confessor" figure to the young Prince. The terminal throat cancer of William's father, developed during the first year of their acquaintance. The young man assured Eulenburg of his confidence in his father's German physicians, while expressing disdain for Morrell MacKenzie, the English specialist whom his mother, Victoria, had employed. Like the majority of their countrymen, William and Eulenburg disliked Crown Prince Frederick's wife, considering her unsympathetic to the people of her adopted land.<sup>50</sup> William

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<sup>46</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 152.

<sup>47</sup>Balfour, Kaiser, 90.

<sup>48</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 24; c.f. Cowles, The Kaiser, 80.

<sup>49</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 152.

<sup>50</sup>Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 136.



and his friend spent many hours together during Frederick's illness, playing cards, attending concerts, riding, singing, gambling--anything to divert William from his depressed environment. When Eulenburg could not be present, he would send encouraging messages to the future Kaiser:

God preserve you in this indescribably difficult time, which must make so many adversities yet a thousand times harder.

I see much that is pleasant in the future as do many hundred thousands who do not know Your Highness; because I know of the strength and sense of duty in you which will be our defense.<sup>51</sup>

Despite these glowing encouragements, Eulenburg possessed little optimism concerning the fate of the monarchy. When corresponding with others or writing in his diary, he emphasized the problems of the succession and possible intrigues of the Berlin Court. As William I and Frederick moved closer to death, Eulenburg's letters expressed an increasing concern that should young Prince William be thrust into the position of Emperor, he would not be prepared nor possess the abilities demanded of that post. In essence, the diplomat considered his friend too immature to rule and believed that under William, the office of emperor would lose a great deal of its prestige.<sup>52</sup>

In March 1888, the worst came to pass. William I ("the old angel" as Eulenburg called him) died in his ninety-first

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<sup>51</sup>Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 145.

<sup>52</sup>Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 140.

year and it became apparent that Prince William would be ascending the Imperial throne within a few months. His father, the direct heir, could no longer talk, and after the famous interlude of the ninety-nine days, he too passed away. The second new German emperor of the year, shakily confronting unprecedented responsibilities, now besought Eulenburg to continue his role as friend and confidant, emphasizing his political abilities. Eulenburg of course assented, simultaneously accepting appointment as Prussian ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg. From June 1888, Eulenburg continued for the next ten years as the Kaiser's most influential advisor.<sup>53</sup>

During the early years of William's reign, he and Eulenburg developed their personal relationship in several areas. The Kaiser worked hard to have his friend assimilated into the ranks of the Imperial entourage. William and Eulenburg dined frequently with various notables. When Eulenburg met Hinzpeter, the Emperor's ex-tutor, William II, perhaps in order to spite Hinzpeter at this meeting, called Eulenburg "my bosom friend, the only one I have."<sup>54</sup> The two began to travel frequently, and Eulenburg, despite his nervous condition, ignored his physician and joined William in 1889 on the first of thirteen Nordlandsreisen ("Scandinavian voyages").

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<sup>53</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 90-91; Haller, Aus dem Leben, 38-39.

<sup>54</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 46.

Eulenburg also went with his chief to the Imperial hunting lodges at Prökelwitz and Rominten, where he served both as William's secretary and to entertain the Kaiser's friends. Serving in the latter capacity included acting as master of ceremonies during mealtimes, moderating conversation in such a way that it should be "spiced with merriment without becoming noisy."<sup>55</sup> Eulenburg would also perform his ballads and play the piano, often until one o'clock in the morning. The Kaiser's friend helped in coordinating birthday parties, talent contests, and other special events. Eulenburg seemed to enjoy his role, though it often wearied him to serve as William's entertainer.<sup>56</sup>

There were, moreover, certain aspects of his outings with William which disgusted Eulenburg. He complained of the disorderly company that would strew their cigar ashes and assorted trash all over the lounge areas.<sup>57</sup> Eulenburg did not approve of his master's practical jokes (i.e., kicking his comrades in the posterior and turning waterhoses on them), although he himself enjoyed immunity from these abuses. He freely criticized his chief for uniforming his visitors in

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<sup>55</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 48.

<sup>56</sup>Philipp zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld, Mit dem Kaiser als Staatsmann und Freund auf Nordlandreisen (Leipzig: Carl Reissner Verlag, 1931), I, 181, hereinafter cited as Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser.

<sup>57</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 124.

"un-Prussian fiddle-faddle of dress for hunting and shooting"--i.e., the likes of tan riding boots with spurs.<sup>58</sup>

Eulenburg would go as far as he dared in reprimanding William for neglecting his political duties during these trips, bemoaning his horseplay in the presence of such burning political issues as the Boxer Rebellion.<sup>59</sup> Privately Eulenburg complained of the Kaiser's seeming hyperactivity, which often left him exhausted after a day of trying to keep up with His Majesty. Although the Kaiser's friend enjoyed displaying his musical talents, the constant repetition of "Ich muss" in his diary suggested that he often performed against his wishes, especially late at night when he sought sleep rather than companionship. Finally, Eulenburg often regarded William's chorts from a critical perspective:

Count Hochberg: sings. Lieutenant von Chelius: plays. Captain Count Moltke: plays. Lieutenant von Hülßen: does conjuring tricks. Count Herbert Bismarck: drinks . . . . Brother-in-law Count Kalnein: makes bad puns . . . . My brother, Count Kessel, Keszycki, Cousin Karl Eulenburg, Cousin Walter Eisebeck: can do nothing whatsoever.<sup>60</sup>

William readily acknowledged the correctness of his friend's criticisms, and rarely admonished him for his insubordination.<sup>61</sup> He needed Eulenburg; the latter was

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<sup>58</sup> Kürenberg, War Alles Falsch?, 156.

<sup>59</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 235.

<sup>60</sup> Haller, Aus dem Leben, 49.

<sup>61</sup> Kürenberg, War Alles Falsch?, 156.

indispensible as a morale booster. The older man recognized the Kaiser's insecurities--and he praised his accomplishments. Eulenburg also shielded William from any disappointments, carefully scrutinizing the messages which his chief received and exercising caution in his own conversation with William. Thus, by devoting a large part of his life to William's needs, Eulenburg created the basis for a friendship that would endure twenty years.

Nothing did more to bond the closeness between William and Eulenburg than their activities while travelling together. Eulenburg frequently accompanied his master to various places. During the Nordlandreisen, for instance, the Imperial yacht Hohenzollern would dock for days at Scandinavian ports, and William and his friends would visit prominent officials during these interludes. One emissary at Oslo, a man named Jensen, was a welcome host. In July 1890, Eulenburg accompanied his chief to the Jensen residence, where he found the hospitality "a mixture of Roman gaiety and Northern sentiment."<sup>62</sup>

William enjoyed such visits at least as much, receiving flowers from the Jensen children as they gathered about him and in return giving them gifts.<sup>63</sup> Little Erika Jensen was the imp of the litter, and on a later visit, she demonstrated her mischievousness by riffling the Kaiser's writing desk and

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<sup>62</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg... Leben, 249.

<sup>63</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 76.

appropriating her father's cigars.<sup>64</sup> The food in the Jensen home apparently fluctuated in quality. Eulenburg had no complaint during the 1890 excursion but later likened the cuisine to that found in a pot de chambre.<sup>65</sup> For the most part, however, the Jensen household remained a favorite spot for the Northern travellers and they stopped there during a number of visits to the Scandinavian regions.

Eulenburg also accompanied his master to Cowes on the Isle of Wight (England). William enjoyed the regattas there, attending them annually from 1889 to 1895. A visit to England in 1891 seems typical--a chilly reception at Queen Victoria's court, a tour of the London art museums, a festival, a drive in the country. Eulenburg played a minimal role on this trip. He also accompanied William to England including Cowes in 1893.

As previously mentioned, there was little love lost between the Kaiser and his English relatives, especially "Uncle Bertie," Prince of Wales. Their personalities clashed. Edward, the soigné, indolent man of the world, contrasted sharply with the hyperactive, self-righteous William. The latter distrusted his English uncle because of the latter's affinity for France. William even came to believe that Edward constantly weaved plots against Germany in hopes of precipitating an

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<sup>64</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 363.

<sup>65</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, I, 294.

international crisis.<sup>66</sup> Political difficulties between England and France, both in Siam and in the Middle East, added to the tension of the general situation, making the atmosphere at Cowes extremely uncomfortable at times.

Eulenburg served as a kind of social intermediary for William during the visit. The older man enjoyed some aspects of the Victorian court, commenting on the charm of various ladies and the admirable formality of the British. The royal family, however, did not impress him. Eulenburg found Queen Victoria friendly but generally dull and unattractive.<sup>67</sup> He disliked her maternal pampering of William during the visit and thought the Kaiser behaved like a child in her presence. The Kaiser's friend also found Victoria's disapproving glare annoying when he conversed with the charming Lady Ormonde.<sup>68</sup> In general, Eulenburg felt the court atmosphere pretentious, typifying the British affinity for pageantry.

Eulenburg had occasion to spend time with the Prince of Wales during the visit. The two became well-acquainted during the Queen's Cup Race. William those days took exceptional

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<sup>66</sup> Cowles, The Kaiser, 123-126.

<sup>67</sup> Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 313.

<sup>68</sup> Philipp zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld, Das Ende König Ludwigs II und andere Erlebnisse, ed. Augusta zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld (Leipzig: Wilhelm Grunow, 1934), 223, hereinafter cited as Eulenburg, Das Ende König Ludwigs.

pride in his sailing ability and in this contest challenged "Uncle Bertie's" ship, the Britannia, with a craft of his own, the Meteor I. Determined to demonstrate his prowess as a navigator, the Kaiser stayed aboard his ship during the entire event, steering and supervising various activities.<sup>69</sup> Eulenburg, for his part, took it upon himself to entertain Edward in his liege's stead. He and "Bertie" discussed a variety of subjects--the Franco-Russian alliance, and German colonial expansion and the Far East. Eulenburg ultimately found Edward a distasteful person, especially when the latter made a condescending remark concerning William's bad arm.<sup>70</sup> The Kaiser, meanwhile, defeated the Britannia in the Queen's Cup Race. Needless to say, both he and Eulenburg took great delight in the victory, knowing how it disappointed Prince Edward. From this time forward, Eulenburg cautioned his chief to be wary of his uncle, warning that "He is not our friend."<sup>71</sup> In view of William's own Anglophobia, such an exhortation was hardly necessary. The older man merely reinforced his master's prejudices, an act which later influenced William's own political behavior.

William and Eulenburg also made journeys to the Mediterranean. In 1894, the pair travelled to Venice. During this

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<sup>69</sup> Eulenburg, Das Ende König Ludwigs, 223.

<sup>70</sup> Haller, Aus dem Leben, 86.

<sup>71</sup> Haller, Aus dem Leben, 85-86.



trip, Eulenburg's major concern seems to have been the Kaiser's safety, and the impression remains that he did not enjoy himself. In one instance, as the two approached a bridge in a gondola, a swarm of filthy street urchins jammed the bridge, extending their hands to within a hair's breadth of the Kaiser's head. Eulenburg found the sight appalling.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, though he found the Morosini family, whose ancestors had contributed doges since the eleventh century, entertaining and their women beautiful, the Kaiser's friend appears to have been more at ease in the company of Kaiserin Augusta and her young sons.<sup>73</sup> Given Eulenburg's nature, such an attitude seemed out of character for him. Whether it could be attributed to health problems, homesickness, or his unfamiliarity with Mediterranean customs that made him shy away from the city emotionally--or to unknown factors--he apparently did not enjoy his stay. Nevertheless, he dutifully accompanied his chief back to Venice in 1896.

When the Kaiser and Eulenburg travelled to Vienna that same year, the latter enjoyed himself in what had become his adopted city since his becoming German ambassador there two

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<sup>72</sup>Philipp zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld, Erlebnisse an deutschen und fremden Höfen, ed. Augusta zu Eulenburg-Hertefeld (Leipzig: Wilhelm Grunow, 1934), 23-24, hereinafter cited as Eulenburg, Erlebnisse an deutschen und fremden Höfen.

<sup>73</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 113; Eulenburg, Erlebnisse an deutschen und fremden Höfen, 24.

years earlier.<sup>74</sup> Eulenburg, being familiar with the Austro-Hungarian court, acquainted William with the various facets of its composition. They attended court balls, gala events where, during an 1897 visit, Eulenburg joined members of the German and Austro-Hungarian royal parties in serenading the Kaiser and Emperor Francis Joseph.<sup>75</sup> Both William and Eulenburg made distinguished acquaintances of both sexes during their stays in Vienna. Eulenburg enjoyed the company of one of the Esterhazy princes and Count Constantino Nigra, the Italian diplomatic emissary, who shared Eulenburg's passion for songwriting.<sup>76</sup> Nigra's work, "Canti popolari del Piemonte" received Eulenburg's praise.<sup>77</sup> Countess Pauline Metternich in 1895 swept William off his feet with her charm, tact, and social ability.<sup>78</sup> Katherina "Kathi" Schratt, the "official" mistress of Emperor Francis Joseph, also demonstrated the qualities of a charming hostess. Naturally, the Kaiser and Eulenburg visited with the Austrian emperor. Like large numbers of contemporaries, the two men found Francis Joseph somewhat dull. That notwithstanding, Eulenburg

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<sup>74</sup>For his lyrical description of the lower Danube Valley, see Eulenburg, Das Ende König Ludwigs, 268.

<sup>75</sup>Eulenburg, Das Ende König Ludwigs, 120-128.

<sup>76</sup>Eulenburg, Erlebnisse an deutschen und fremden Höfen, 167; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 383.

<sup>77</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 383.

<sup>78</sup>Eulenburg, Erlebnisse an deutschen und fremden Höfen, 142.

succeeded in delighting him and William with some amusing anecdotes.<sup>79</sup>

The Vienna sojourns involved more than social gatherings, however. For example, the Franco-Russian alliance generated considerable concern among officialdom in the German-speaking empires. William also experienced personal frictions, including some that extended outside the imperial circle. His tendency to be rude to policemen and military officers precipitated admonitions from Eulenburg and perhaps for that reason were not compounded.<sup>80</sup> Finally, it appears that William secretly felt guilty about making such journeys unaccompanied by his wife. Eulenburg believed that he saw this feeling reflected in the nature of the Kaiser's gift-buying. William seemed to purchase out of guilt rather than true affection. The Kaiser's friend remarked cynically on this occasion that William would spend thirty or forty thousand francs on a diamond for a woman who already had access to the Prussian crown jewels.<sup>81</sup> Yet, until the advent of the First World War, the Kaiser usually travelled unaccompanied by Augusta Victoria preferring the company of his cronies to hers.

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<sup>79</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 137; Eulenburg, Erlebnisse an deutschen und fremden Höfen, 114-116.

<sup>80</sup>Eulenburg, Erlebnisse an deutschen und fremden Höfen, 34.

<sup>81</sup>Eulenburg, Erlebnisse an deutschen und fremden Höfen, 27.

Eulenburg and William paid a memorable visit to Sweden in 1895. The former, for obvious reasons, thought quite highly of the Swedes and King Oscar II. One of the amusing highlights of the trip concerned a liquor purchase. The Kaiser's friend, whose command of Swedish apparently left something to be desired, almost received a bottle of perfume in response to his ill-expressed request for a flask of spirits.<sup>82</sup> In his memoirs Eulenburg often satirized the Swedish "bumpkins," but one feels that he indeed had a great deal of affection for this Scandinavian people. He long recalled traversing the countryside, meeting farmers and their families, and giving them gifts.<sup>83</sup> There seems little doubt that the Kaiser's friend found considerable contentment in his wife's homeland.

In 1898 the Kaiser and Eulenburg passed through the Mediterranean area enroute to the Middle East. Their itinerary included a visit to the Italian royal family. William treated its members graciously though he secretly mocked the "dwarf" Victor Emmanuel and his wife from "the wild mountains of Cernagora."<sup>84</sup>

Eulenburg and his chief shared a number of intellectual

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<sup>82</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, I, 328-335.

<sup>83</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, I, 328-335.

<sup>84</sup>Bernhard von Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, ed. Franz von Stockhammern (Berlin: Verlag Ullstein 1930), I, 543, hereinafter cited as Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten. Cernagora refers, of course, to the Balkan state of Montenegro.

pursuits during their friendship. When Eulenburg first made William's acquaintance, the royal prince, while possessing a number of talents, still held only a limited appreciation of the esthetic. Within a few years, however, William's interests blossomed in several areas. Both men, as previously mentioned, enjoyed playing instrumental music. Often the Kaiser would accompany Eulenburg on the piano. In 1894 the two collaborated on Poem to Aegir, which was released on December 11 of that year.<sup>85</sup> Ragtime and sacred songs also interested William though Eulenburg found ragtime distasteful.<sup>86</sup> William, of course, never became a "serious musician." Volume rather than quality characterized the Kaiser's style. William loved loud orchestra music, much to Eulenburg's chagrin, and the latter once complained of such "noise" rattling the china in an adjacent room.<sup>87</sup>

The Kaiser and Eulenburg shared an interest in art and related fields. The latter, a frustrated architect, often visited historical edifices with his master during their walks.<sup>88</sup> When the two travelled in the Mediterranean lands, they examined Greek, Roman, and Egyptian ruins. Eulenburg

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<sup>85</sup> S. Hammer, William the Second as Seen in Contemporary Documents and Judged on Evidence of His Own Speeches (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1917), 164.

<sup>86</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 194-95, 345.

<sup>87</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, I, 295.

<sup>88</sup> For Eulenburg's ability to appraise an edifice, see his Mit dem Kaiser, I, 336.

and William shared an interest in the theater. During the Nordlandreisen, they often joined their comrades in putting on amateur productions. Finally, the Kaiser and Eulenburg could intelligently share their views on painting, believing that modern artists sought truth in "smut and pessimism" and possessed too great a concern with "realism."<sup>89</sup>

Eulenburg also admired William's knowledge of ancient art and civilization. It seems, however, that much of Eulenburg's praise had a superficial tone, as, according to other sources, William's esthetic capabilities left something to be desired. To be sure, the Kaiser read widely and was particularly fond of Dickens, Scott, Bernard Shaw, and Kipling.<sup>90</sup> (The last was a rather ironic literary choice, considering Kipling's anti-German sentiment.) William did not, however, appreciate those who criticized German society from within, and considered authors such as Gerhard Hauptmann subversive.<sup>91</sup> In the realm of painting, the Kaiser, as previously mentioned, preferred traditional artists. Painters such as Max Liebermann he found hard to interpret. William's architectural tastes, as evidenced by the statuary erected during his reign, bordered on the flamboyant and grotesque. To the Kaiser, art had to glorify culture; therein

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<sup>89</sup> Balfour, Kaiser, 161.

<sup>90</sup> Balfour, Kaiser, 161-162.

<sup>91</sup> Balfour, Kaiser, 162.

lay the root of his conservative artistic tastes.<sup>92</sup>

William, by general agreement, possessed excellent conversational abilities though he tended to dominating discussion. Eulenburg appreciated his patrons conversational ability and confided to Friedrich von Holstein that William's "disinterested friendliness gives him quite a peculiarly fascinating charm . . . he is one of those people who by their nature arouse spontaneous sympathy."<sup>93</sup> Eulenburg remarked on his companion's knowledge of Mideast politics, and his capacity to write and speak several languages, especially English and French.<sup>94</sup> Such talents, however, were not exceptional among monarchs of this period, contrary to Eulenburg's implications, and it appears he was again flattering William.

Religion played an important role in the relationship between the Kaiser and Eulenburg. The latter saw his chief as a study in ironic contrasts. During the Nordlandreisen, for example, William joined in the buffoonery, ribaldry, and telling of lewd stories of his cohorts. Yet at the same time he evidenced an almost fatalistic trust in God which

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<sup>92</sup>Balfour, Kaiser, 162.

<sup>93</sup>Norman Rich and M.H. Fisher, eds., Die geheimen Papiere Friedrich von Holsteins (Göttingen: Musterschmidt-Verlag, 1957), III, hereinafter cited as D.g.P. with volume and page no.; cf. Balfour, Kaiser, 140.

<sup>94</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 117.

especially manifested itself on the Sabbath.<sup>95</sup> Thus Eulenburg sought to portray the Kaiser as an accomplished Sunday preacher, holding that his chief's speaking ability surpassed that of the ship's chaplain. The Kaiser preached humble and unpretentious messages, and he once confided to the Archbishop of Canterbury that he had no use for "dogmatic trash."<sup>96</sup> The guests on the Nordlandreisen appreciated such simplicity and agreed with Eulenburg's assertions.<sup>97</sup> The Kaiser's friend lauded William's knowledge of the Old and New Testaments. Pope Leo XIII himself, perhaps not merely for diplomatic reasons, commented on William's ability as an exegecist, and discussed with him the feasibility of producing a Bible made especially for circulation in Asia Minor.<sup>98</sup>

One can, however, seriously challenge the veracity of Eulenburg's laudatory correspondence. Most of his letters concerning travel activities went to the Kaiserin. Eulenburg may well have been trying to appeal to her well-known religious affinities. He realized that if he presented his friend as a pious figure to Augusta, such action would

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<sup>95</sup> Jacques Chamier, Fabulous Monster (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1934), 91.

<sup>96</sup> Edward F. Benson, The Kaiser and English Relations (New York: Longsmans, Green, and Co., 1936), 97.

<sup>97</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 280.

<sup>98</sup> See Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 337.



enhance William's standing with his spouse, making her less resentful of his long sojourns away from home. Other sources challenge Eulenburg's contentions. Judging from his behavior during the week, one would assume that William did not possess Augusta's moralizing fervor. Bernhard von Bülow in his memoirs also undermined Eulenburg's portrayal by asserting that the Kaiser never wrote a sermon nor spoke extemporaneously on a religious subject. Rather, he merely reiterated those sermons composed by the ship's chaplain.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that William possessed speaking abilities and religious convictions far superior to those of many of his contemporary monarchs, and that had he been called upon to preach extemporaneously, the Kaiser would have performed well in this capacity. Thus, Eulenburg, in his desire to glorify his master, may have exaggerated the latter's abilities, but his basic contentions rang true.

The practice of mysticism attracted the interests of both Eulenburg and Prince William during the initial years of their relationship. Though both men were unflinching Protestants, they shared a curiosity about the spiritual world, mainly as a diversionary activity. Eulenburg during the 1880's had become convinced of the existence of transcendental souls which one could reach through a variety of

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<sup>99</sup> Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, 582.

mediums.<sup>100</sup> William, on the other hand, seemed to place little weight on the revelations produced by such activity:

Kaiser: Well, what have the mediums told you?

Eulenburg: Amazing landscapes! Women in gorgeous raiment! Flowers, a wealth of flowers.

Kaiser: All this we have on this earth! I don't need any mediums or spiritual wrestlings for that! I can arrange all that myself; nothing supernatural in it.<sup>101</sup>

When William ascended the throne, Eulenburg apparently promised to refrain from his spiritualistic practices.<sup>102</sup>

Whether or not he carried out his word, brings up a point of contention. Bülow, in spite of his misanthropic tendencies, implied in his memoirs that Eulenburg never used his alleged conjuring powers to influence his master once the latter became Emperor.<sup>103</sup> Count Alfred von Waldersee, head of the General Staff during the initial years of Williams's reign, held a different opinion, contending that Eulenburg continued his spiritualistic practices with William as late as 1894.<sup>104</sup> One may take the General's assertions with a grain of salt, however, as Waldersee, writing in 1894, indubitably wished

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<sup>100</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 29.

<sup>101</sup>Nowak, Kaiser and Chancellor, 111.

<sup>102</sup>Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, 451.

<sup>103</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 29.

<sup>104</sup>Alfred von Waldersee, Aus dem Briefwechsel des Generalfeldmarschalls Alfred Grafen von Waldersee, ed. Heinrich Otto Meisner (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlag Anstalt, 1928), II, 300, hereinafter cited as Waldersee, Briefwechsel.

to defame Eulenburg for personal reasons. First, the Kaiser's friend had helped secure Waldersee's departure from the office of Chief of the General Staff in 1891.<sup>105</sup> Second, Waldersee wrote in the midst of the Kladderadatsch affair (see below) when suspicions against Eulenburg and his influence over the Kaiser precipitated extensive gossip among those close to William. Thus it appears that the practice of mysticism rather served as a mere diversion for William and Eulenburg, something they took lightly during the initial years of their relationship, and had no use for once William assumed his imperial role.

Philipp zu Eulenburg remained a close confidant of William during his twenty years at the imperial court and had the Kaiser's undying gratitude. Others members of the Imperial family, particularly the Kaiser's mother and wife, were not so easily charmed by the cultivated diplomat. The Empress Frederick disliked Eulenburg's carefree ways while he in turn condemned her for placing her English loyalties above those of her adopted land.<sup>106</sup> Eulenburg's relationship with Kaiserin Augusta possessed somewhat ambivalent characteristics. When corresponding, Eulenburg and the Empress

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<sup>105</sup> Cowles, The Kaiser, 109.

<sup>106</sup> Alfred von Waldersee, Denkwürdigkeiten des Generalfeldmarschalls Alfred Grafen von Waldersee, ed. Heinrich Otto Meisner (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags Anstalt, 1922), I, 240, hereinafter cited as Waldersee, Denkwürdigkeiten.

always maintained a cordial air, as the latter's letters to her husband's friend indicated. (See below.) Nevertheless, some aspects of William's relationship with Eulenburg disturbed the Kaiserin greatly. She confided to associates that her husband should cultivate persons who worked steadily rather than wasted their time dabbling in music.<sup>107</sup> Eulenburg's journeys with William sometimes aggravated her possessive nature, especially when they caused her husband to miss a birthday or other special event. The Kaiser sometimes treated her rudely in Eulenburg's presence. Whenever William and his friend performed in the music room of the Imperial Palace, the former gave orders that the Kaiserin not be permitted to enter the sanctuary.<sup>108</sup> For a woman who clung to her husband at every opportunity, such aloofness generated resentment. Nevertheless, Eulenburg eventually managed to win her affection through a variety of means. One practice involved his making constant mention of his wife, mother, and children when corresponding with the Kaiserin, keeping her up to date on their various accomplishments, illnesses, and birthdays.<sup>109</sup> The Prussian nobleman also

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<sup>107</sup> Augusta Victoria, Königin von Preussen: Bekenntnisse an eine Freundin (Dresden, 1935); cf. Friedrich Kracke, Prinz und Kaiser--Wilhelm II im Urteil seiner Zeit (München: Günter Olzog, 1960), 50, hereinafter cited as Kracke, Prinz und Kaiser.

<sup>108</sup> Kürenberg, War Alles Falsch?, 117.

<sup>109</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, I, 269.

appealed to the Kaiserin's maternal and altruistic instincts, presenting William and himself as gentle, sympathetic figures in his correspondence. Several examples demonstrated this situation. If William and Eulenburg encountered a comely maiden on one of their walks, they would sometimes give her a gift such as a brooch or other trinket.<sup>110</sup> Youths would receive gold pieces from His Majesty.<sup>111</sup> Eulenburg waxed sentimental about all this when writing Empress Augusta:

The Kaiser went somewhat late with me alone through the countryside. After about two hours we returned. Along the way a young girl (a Norwegian with flaxen hair and a wry mouth) came travelling on her bicycle, jumped off of it twenty paces ahead of us and photographed us at close range without a word or even a friendly smile. Then she got back on her bicycle and rode off. This she repeated audaciously three times, without even showing a faint sign of embarrassment or friendliness. I was enraged and bade His Majesty to allow me to say something rude since I can not only speak Norwegian but am able to scold in the language as well.<sup>112</sup> But the Kaiser was so good as to merely laugh.

Such a description typified Eulenburg's portrayals where he also made much of a child's beauty, piety, or innocent sentiment.

Eulenburg designed other ways for appealing to the Kaiserin. He emphasized William's love of animals, especially Dachshunds. The Kaiser coddled them and even allowed himself

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<sup>110</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, I, 365.

<sup>111</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, I, 189.

<sup>112</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 212.

to be photographed engaged in such activity.<sup>113</sup> Eulenburg above all informed the Empress of William's chivalry toward women, even those whom he disliked. One of the latter, Frau von König, visited the Imperial yacht during one of its mooring periods. Though William and Eulenburg thought little of the noblewoman, they willingly escorted her aboard ship and gave her a tour of the vessel.<sup>114</sup> Finally, the Kaiser's companion brought out William's generosity to various causes. In one instance the Emperor offered an autographed menu to an auction, where it sold for 3500 Marks.<sup>115</sup> Reports of such altruism apparently pleased the Kaiserin and she responded with praise for her husband's friend, commenting on the sedative effect that his presence seemed to have on the Kaiser's nerves.<sup>116</sup>

Eulenburg sometimes enhanced his prestige and William's integrity by acting as a mediator in the latter's domestic disagreements. In September 1900, William sent his wife a note from Rominten, ordering that three of their sons, Oscar, Auwi (August William) and Joachim be sent to school at Plön. The Kaiserin, a possessive mother, would not hear of the idea. Bülow claims that she went into "paroxysms of rage" over her

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<sup>113</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, I, 170.

<sup>114</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 281.

<sup>115</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 282.

<sup>116</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, I, 343.

husband's dictates.<sup>117</sup>

These difficulties compelled William to consult his friend. Eulenburg suggested that the Kaiser send Oscar and Auwi away to Plön while allowing Joachim, a frail lad, to stay at home. The diplomat also advised his friend to surround the Empress with more educated ladies and that, if she continued to "carry on" in the future, the Kaiser must go to his chamber, lock the door, and lie down. Although William may have followed Eulenburg's advice, he experienced little success in dealing with his spouse on the matter. The Empress continued to display bad temper after the incident, much to her husband's chagrin.<sup>118</sup>

William and Eulenburg showed considerable affection for each other's children. The Kaiser enjoyed his visits to Liebenberg castle, where the Eulenburg children found him a delightful companion. The artistic talents of Eulenburg's daughter, Augusta, impressed William. On one occasion he gave her two thousand marks for two of her paintings.<sup>119</sup> The Kaiser became godfather to young Victoria (Tora) Eulenburg, and her father kept him informed of her activities.<sup>120</sup> The Emperor also held Countess Sandels, Eulenburg's

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<sup>117</sup>Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, 331.

<sup>118</sup>Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, 331.

<sup>119</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 507.

<sup>120</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 58.

mother-in-law, in high regard. During his own mother's illness, in 1901, William did not neglect to question his friend concerning the health of the Swedish noblewoman.<sup>121</sup>

Eulenburg enjoyed good relations with the scions of the Imperial family. He pampered the Kaiser's children, buying them gifts, playing tennis with them, or entertaining them with tales of "Mad Ludwig."<sup>122</sup> Thus he earned their affection as "der netteste aller Herren."<sup>123</sup> The diplomat discussed children freely with the Kaiser and his wife, giving them advice on how to deal with the challenges that all parents face. He remembered the children's birthdays and exaggerated the significance of such events as confirmations or tooth-cuttings.<sup>124</sup> On the other hand, in his diary, Eulenburg criticized William in his role as a father. He saw him as a chameleon-like figure--a genial Vati one moment, a rigorous drill sergeant the next. The Kaiser expected great things of his sons, and indoctrinated them with masculine ideals based on Prussian militarism. He demanded that his sons obey him and at all times required them to be meticulous in dress and flawless in behavior.<sup>125</sup> In view of these

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<sup>121</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 241.

<sup>122</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 327.

<sup>123</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 218.

<sup>124</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 126.

<sup>125</sup>Cowles, The Kaiser, 243; Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 221.



factors, then, it hardly seems strange that the princes would find the mild-mannered, cultured Eulenburg preferable to their forceful father. William, however, apparently raised no objection to this situation. As German Emperor, he could not have possibly engendered the same warm relationship with his sons that Eulenburg developed, and apparently he did not wish to do so.

One of the keys to Eulenburg's success lay in his ability to endow William with a sense of power. Neither Emperor Frederick nor his wife had considered their son William a desirable heir. They found his physical deformity and arrogant personality revolting. Courtiers as well considered William an immature princeling, incapable of ruling an empire. Eulenburg, however, from the outset of his relationship with the future Kaiser, lauded, though not always with sincerity, his friend's accomplishments at every opportunity. Such treatment bolstered William's self-confidence while simultaneously winning for Eulenburg the gratitude of his master.

Eulenburg employed a number of methods when attempting to reinforce the Kaiser's self-image. He exaggerated the importance of William's accomplishments, making them appear as gargantuan challenges which the Kaiser successfully overcame. For example, during the 1890 Nordlandreisen the Emperor landed an eight-point fish. Eulenburg described in

extensive detail how William accomplished the feat.<sup>126</sup> Although he disliked hunting, Eulenburg lauded his friend's ability with a rifle. The Kaiser's confidant wrote in a similar manner when describing a whale hunt, contrasting William's bravery when pursuing the behemoth with his own self-proclaimed cowardice.<sup>127</sup> The Kaiser hiked with enthusiasm, and Eulenburg, though finding such activity fatiguing and demoralizing, praised his friend's endurance capacities. The Kaiser's health was of primary concern to Eulenburg, and he mentioned William's robustness and slim physique on a number of occasions.<sup>128</sup>

Eulenburg also admired William's ability to withstand pain; at least he conveyed this impression when writing the Kaiserin. The Emperor bore eye and knee injuries unflinchingly during the Nordlandreisen.<sup>129</sup> Eulenburg's view, however, contrasted sharply with accounts of other close associates, who saw William as a complainer. In one instance, the Kaiser, when his physician informed him that he had a small cold, replied, "No, it is a big cold! Everything about me must be big!"<sup>130</sup> Nevertheless, for Eulenburg the Emperor

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<sup>126</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, I, 93.

<sup>127</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, I, 244.

<sup>128</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 141.

<sup>129</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, I. 182; II, 18.

<sup>130</sup> Robert Zedlitz-Trütschler, Zwölf Jahre am deutschen Kaiserhof (Stuttgart: Deutsches Verlag-Anstalt, 1924), 199, hereinafter cited as Zedlitz, Zwölf Jahre.

retained a rugged facade.

Eulenburg found some aspects of William's "compulsive masculinity" annoying, however, and he frequently admonished his chief for these weaknesses. The Kaiser's passion for the military particularly disturbed Eulenburg. The latter often criticized William's love of uniforms, considering such garments foppish and superficial.<sup>131</sup> Eulenburg also disdained the Kaiser's military field maneuvers, with ample justification as those conducting the events always made sure that William's side would emerge victorious. The Kaiser's friend felt such practices to be detrimental on two accounts. They inflated the Emperor's ego to dangerous proportions, while simultaneously causing the military to lose face in the eyes of other nations. As Hans Bernd Gisevius observes, William had no idea of the realities of warfare, and himself became a victim of Prussian militarism and self-hypnosis.<sup>132</sup> The Kaiser's eventual subservience to members of the General Staff during the First World War alone demonstrated the veracity of this statement.

The Kaiser's speeches figured as another manifestation of William's masculinity which thwarted Eulenburg's attempts

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<sup>131</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, I, 50; Eulenburg, upon seeing William outfitted as a Grand Admiral of the British Fleet, said that his master "acted like a child."

<sup>132</sup>Hans Bernd Gisevius, Der Anfang vom Ende, wie es ist mit Wilhelm II (Zurich: Droener, Knauer Verlag Scholler, 1971), 104, hereinafter cited as Gisevius, Der Anfang vom Ende.

to improve his friend's public image. In an 1891 speech to the Brandenburg Provincial Parliament, William likened himself to one of the Margraves of Bradenburg, comparing the latter's military abilities with his own. This "saber-rattling" disturbed Eulenburg greatly. In 1892, the Kaiser, in response to the denunciations of pro-Bismarckian forces and the ex-Chancellor's own attacks, spoke of subduing "a spirit of insubordination in the land." Eulenburg admonished William for his allusion, saying frankly that the latter made too free use of his gift of eloquence.<sup>133</sup> To further enlighten the Emperor as to the influence of this speech, Eulenburg collected negative press comments and sent them to Foreign Secretary Adolf Marschall von Bieberstein, who in turn sent the releases to William--all to little avail.<sup>134</sup>

William achieved notoriety for inscribing "regis voluntas suprema lex" (the king's will is the highest law) in the City of Munich's Golden Book. Eulenburg sent the Kaiser no less than a reprimand concerning this action, which he considered an affront to the particularist Bavarian government:

In the first place the phrase has given much offense in the highest quarters and to the Government, because here regis voluntas is--insanity! (the insanity of two kings). And also because the people, quite apart from this, thought to perceive as it were an Imperial will predominant over the Bavarian will, All parties without exception have been offended by Your Majesty's inscription; it was

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<sup>133</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 118.

<sup>134</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 118.

liable to be exploited in a manner most injurious to Your Majesty.<sup>135</sup>

A militaristic speech in which William promised to lead the Germans to "days of glory" evoked a similar response from Eulenburg.<sup>136</sup>

William reacted unpredictably to his friend's admonitions. Once, after Eulenburg had reprimanded him for his attitude toward the South Germans, William implored him not to lose "his head over those idiotic Bavarian loyalists, who fall into every trap laid for them by the Berlin free-thinkers."<sup>137</sup> Sometimes the Kaiser would take offense at Eulenburg's remarks, refusing to speak to his friend for a few days.<sup>138</sup> In other instances William would promise to mend his speech, to use his mouth solely for "eating, drinking, and smoking."<sup>139</sup> William rarely kept such promises, however, and continued to repeat his mistakes. Eulenburg's guidance could not cure his master's indiscriminate loquaciousness.

Eulenburg and William shared, among other traits, an ethnocentric world view. The Kaiser's conviction of Germany's superiority, demonstrated by his famous "Hun speech"

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<sup>135</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 119.

<sup>136</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 120.

<sup>137</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 121.

<sup>138</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 124.

<sup>139</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 251.

and other addresses, hardly needs further elaboration. His wife likewise possessed deep-seated prejudices, considering the Russians barbaric, the French immoral, and the English selfish and hypocritical.<sup>140</sup> Eulenburg did little to discourage this intolerance and occasionally even reinforced the convictions of the Emperor and his spouse.

The Kaiser and Eulenburg possessed mixed feelings about Great Britain. William, in his early years, at least, considered himself something of an Anglophobe. Eulenburg considered this situation a response to the influence of his grandfather, William I, combined with a distrust of his English mother, Victoria, and of his father Frederick. The old Emperor, known as "Grapeshot" in his soldiering days, composed a one-man bastion of reaction, having little use for representative governments and related institutions. His son Frederick, however, considered his father's attitudes outmoded. The younger man's personal inclinations, in large part stemming from the influence of his wife, were widely believed to be toward the liberal tenets of the English parliamentary system. As Crown Prince, Frederick hoped, upon his accession, to initiate some governmental reforms in this direction. A chasm developed between father and son. William I dreaded the day when his heir would rule Germany; the nation's military influence would diminish under

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<sup>140</sup> Cowles, The Kaiser, 183.

Frederick's liberal reign.<sup>141</sup> Dismissing the Crown Prince as hopelessly idealistic, the old man focused his attention on Prince William, whom he called "his son."<sup>142</sup> The future Kaiser apparently felt destined to execute his grandfather's wishes. This factor, then, coupled with the poor relationship existing between William and his mother and the chilly receptions at Cowes (see above, p.32), fostered the development of an Anglophobic attitude in William.

Eulenburg did little to discourage William's prejudices, though he recognized some redeeming qualities of Englishmen. Both men satirized constantly the English affectations of Prince Albert (Abby) von Holstein.<sup>143</sup> In Eulenburg's opinion, English tourists were hateful people. The Kaiser's friend spoke of the "dirty English cities" in his writings. At the same time Eulenburg could laud the technological development, extensive museums, and the polished etiquette of the ruling classes.<sup>144</sup>

Eulenburg and William also shared similar views of Americans. On the positive side, the two men enjoyed reading American literature (William especially liked Bret Harte) and felt some sense of awe for the nation's mushrooming

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<sup>141</sup>Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 187.

<sup>142</sup>Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 187.

<sup>143</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 103.

<sup>144</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, I, 141, 148.

development.<sup>145</sup> Still, like many of their European contemporaries, both men considered the more opulent American citizenry to be uncultivated "Yankees" frantically in pursuit of the almighty dollar. For instance, Eulenburg, upon meeting a scion of the Jay Gould dynasty, characterized the man as a nervous wreck with bitten fingernails.<sup>146</sup> Snobbery showed itself here, of course. As the heir to an established and noble fortune, Eulenburg's code allowed him to disdain a family such as the Goulds, whose founder began as a gimcrack peddler in upstate New York. The Emperor's associate also possessed little respect for American tourists:

A small, stocky woman with gray poodlelocks and an impertinent nose wore a dark blue skirt, a canary yellow satin blouse and a yachting hat with a brim. A woman of truly gigantic girth, clothed in white like a vestal virgin, was being pushed up the steps by her shoulders and arms by three gentlemen-- apparently her sons.<sup>147</sup>

Circumstances sometimes influenced the attitude of the Kaiser and Eulenburg toward various ethnic groups. Eulenburg complained during the 1894 Nordlandreisen of having to ride in a crowded coach with "Englishmen, Hollanders, and Frenchmen."<sup>148</sup> Yet the two enjoyed greatly meeting the passengers on board the ships of other nations. When, in the summer of

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<sup>145</sup> Balfour, The Kaiser, 89, 165.

<sup>146</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 160.

<sup>147</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 271.

<sup>148</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, I, 317.



1899, the Hohenzollern sighted the French Iphigenie at sea, the latter obligingly raised the German flag on her mast, much to Eulenburg's delight. On this occasion he wrote lovingly of the French people and their hospitality.<sup>149</sup>

A meeting with the wife of the French diplomat Louis-Maurice Fenélon produced a similar impression. Eulenburg considered both her and the daughter of the Duke de Bassano very beautiful and charming. Similarly, William took this opportunity to discuss shipping, canals, and trade unions with the Duke.<sup>150</sup> When the Hohenzollern came upon an English vessel, Eulenburg could similarly dispel his Anglophobic sentiments. On one occasion he portrayed the royal yacht's encounter with one of Her Majesty's ships as a delightful occasion. The crews of the two vessels mixed freely, consuming 1500 rolls and 115 liters of beer between them. The Kaiser, of course, joined in with his usual vigor.<sup>151</sup>

William and Eulenburg shared an ambivalent attitude toward Jews. Both possessed friends of that faith (such as Albert Ballin, chairman of the Hamburg-American steamship line). Both the Kaiser and his friend could, however, express anti-Semitic feelings in the right environment. William had been involved in Albert Stöcker's Christian

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<sup>149</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 128.

<sup>150</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 260-261.

<sup>151</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 133.

Social movement as a young man and likened the anti-Semitic preacher to Luther.<sup>152</sup> Eulenburg also found Stöcker a capable pastor but discouraged his friend from participating in Stöcker's movement, one imagines, out of political expediency.<sup>153</sup> (William's opponents had enough to criticize without the future Kaiser branding himself a "Jew-baiter"!) Yet Eulenburg himself occasionally made a bigoted comment, complaining implicitly, for instance, about the number of Jews at an English theatrical performance.<sup>154</sup>

William and Eulenburg, in keeping with their ethnocentric tendencies, counted among their acquaintances Houston Stewart Chamberlain, noted anti-Semitic philosopher and the progenitor of some of Nazism's ideological foundations. The Kaiser and Eulenburg both corresponded extensively with Chamberlain and supported the latter's assertions concerning the superiority of the Teutons. William especially commended the English expatriate for "singing the high song of the

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<sup>152</sup> Otto von Bismarck, Gedanken und Erinnerungen (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1922), 584; cf. Balfour, Kaiser, 114.

<sup>153</sup> Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 178; Hans Wilhelm Burmeister, "Prince Philipp Eulenburg-Hertefeld (1847-1921): His Influence on Kaiser Wilhelm II and His Role in the German Government," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 1972), 50, hereinafter cited as Burmeister "Philipp Eulenburg-Hertefeld."

<sup>154</sup> Eulenburg, Das Ende Königs Ludwigs, 253.

Germans."<sup>155</sup> Neither Eulenburg nor the Kaiser raised objections to Chamberlain's often irrational opinions, such as his contention that "Abraham, far from being a historical figure was a distant memory in the moon worship of Harar."<sup>156</sup> One doubts, however, that either of the men took such assertions seriously.

In spite of adversities, the relationship between William and Eulenburg continued, reaching its peak in 1897, when, on Eulenburg's recommendation, William appointed Bernhard von Bülow Foreign Secretary. From this point onward, a series of factors led to a loosening of ties between the two men. Health reasons contributed to this situation. Eulenburg in 1897 had a bout with influenza and a recurrence of his chronic gout condition. Always a nervous individual, the Kaiser's friend experienced increased disorders of this nature, often resorting to morphine in order to calm himself. Eulenburg carried on uncomplainingly as a courtier for about three more years, but by 1900 he was experiencing constant tremors and fainting spells, necessitating his decision to retire from public life. Other factors also added to Eulenburg's unhappy situation. The Kaiser had made him his

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<sup>155</sup> Houston, Stewart Chamberlain, Briefe, 1882-1924, und Briefwechsel mit Kaiser Wilhelm II (München: F. Brückmann, 1928), III, 200; cf. Balfour, Kaiser, 164.

<sup>156</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 273; Balfour, Kaiser, 160.

unofficial secretary during the Scandinavian journeys, and the older man complained bitterly of his workload.<sup>157</sup> His disdain for the buffoonery of William's other comrades had not diminished. He became increasingly critical of their personalities, dismissing, for example, General von Hülsen-Haeseler as a hypochondriac and Kiderlen-Wächter as being indecisive and overly loquacious.<sup>158</sup> The rowdiness of the Norwegian sailors who periodically visited the Hohenzollern also disturbed Eulenburg.<sup>159</sup> Family problems, such as the illnesses of his mother and his children added to his displeasure.<sup>160</sup>

Eulenburg, responding to this combination of factors, approached the Kaiser in 1900, asking to be relieved of his official duties. William refused him and granted his friend the title of Prince, one suspects, in order to give Eulenburg an inducement to remain at court. The older man endured his lot for two more years, but in the summer of 1902, having suffered excessive headaches, stomach disorders, and heart trouble, he again went to William. This time, the Kaiser, after considerable reflection, granted his friend three months' temporary leave. After that time span had

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<sup>157</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 38.

<sup>158</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 52.

<sup>159</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 210.

<sup>160</sup> Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 173.

passed, William formally allowed Eulenburg to resign, giving him the Grand Cross of the Red Eagle with Oakleaves, the highest award a Prussian ruler could bestow on a subject.<sup>161</sup> Save for the 1903 Nordlandreisen, and a few visits by William to Liebenberg, the personal relationship became dormant.

While health appears to have been the chief reason behind the relationship's decline, other factors contributed materially to this development. Eulenburg's increased disenchantment with his role as the Emperor's principal friend weighed heavily too, especially during the summer of 1899. Political difficulties abounded. The parties of the Reichstag were bickering over the House of Correction Bill (protection for non-strikers) and German policy in the Far East, and Eulenburg as William's political mediator experienced tremendous strain. Also, Bismarck's scathing memoirs, recently published posthumously, offended the Kaiser deeply.<sup>162</sup> With Bülow as his Foreign Secretary, William increasingly ignored Eulenburg's political advice.<sup>163</sup> Like many on board, the Kaiser's friend became a victim of typhoid. Finally, William's negative disposition, reflecting the cares of his present position, complicated matters.<sup>164</sup> Thus the 1899

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<sup>161</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 291.

<sup>162</sup>Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, 449.

<sup>163</sup>Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, 343-349.

<sup>164</sup>Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, 351.

Norlandreisen held few pleasures for Eulenburg.

The advent of China's Boxer Rebellion placed an additional strain on the relationship. William became increasingly irritable, decrying his European allies in China. He also suspected that the Conservatives in the Reichstag were favoring the prolongation of the conflict out of their own, rather than Germany's, self-interest.<sup>165</sup> Eulenburg shared the Kaiser's displeasure but found it difficult to sympathize with him on several occasions. The older man complained freely in his correspondence of the enforced physical exercises and other activities aboard the Hohenzollern. He contended that the Kaiser, in all his youthful enthusiasm, could not realize that he, Eulenburg, had become too old (fifty-three) to participate in such fatiguing pursuits as the Nordlandreisen. Rarely, however, did Eulenburg complain to the Emperor.

The Nordlandreisen of 1901 appears to have been another "floating hell" for Eulenburg, judging from his correspondence with his wife Augusta. He fought another bout with typhoid fever, suffered from gout, and confronted further political difficulties. Eulenburg's own mother lay near death at this time, while William's bereavement over the death of the Empress Frederick, his mother, further complicated matters.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 304.

<sup>166</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 237.

It stands out from Eulenburg's correspondence that the Kaiser's feelings of guilt and sorrow made him extremely difficult to live with during this time, as the latter, clothed in a dressing gown, would pace the deck of the Hohenzollern. He urged Eulenburg to prattle with him and dispel his anxieties through his jokes. The pressure of the situation, in Eulenburg's opinion, was indescribable.<sup>167</sup>

After Eulenburg resigned from his ambassadorial post at Vienna, William initially clung to his friend, asking him to attend on the 1903 Nordlandreisen. This final trip, judging from Eulenburg's writings, was the last straw. The Kaiser's friend now abandoned his inhibitions when corresponding with his wife and harped on his desire to be relieved of his courtier's obligations to His Majesty. Eulenburg complained of the parties, told of how he refused to attend them, and related unpleasant events. The man who for so long had pretended an interest in regattas now frankly admitted that he had no understanding of ships and that he found sailing contests boring. More than ever, Eulenburg emphasized the petty annoyances of ship life--the piped-in music, the uncomfortable beds, the bad food and coffee.<sup>168</sup> William continued to utilize his friend's skills as a secretary, which Eulenburg found irksome. In the Kaiser's presence he suffered in

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<sup>167</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 309.

<sup>168</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 325.

silence, but his pen expressed extreme resentment. He had come to feel himself a relic, unhappy and out of place during the trips.<sup>169</sup>

William, during this last year of their close association, not insensitive to his friend's discontent, became increasingly quiet around Eulenburg. Definitely the rollicking conversation diminished. Showing the considerateness of which he was capable, the Kaiser granted his companion a flexible schedule, permitting him to come and go at his leisure. This availed little, however, if it concerned restoring Eulenburg's spirits. The Prince would withdraw from the Imperial entourage, preferring the company of his friend, Kuno von Moltke (see above, p. 16.) or some other individual.<sup>170</sup> As indicated above, the 1903 trip remained Eulenburg's last extensive sojourn with the Kaiser. Until 1906 he would stay out of the limelight of the Imperial court, a voluntary recluse from the rambunctious crowd that once cherished his company.

In retrospect, it stands out that the personal relationship between William and Eulenburg derived its sustenance from several sources. The two long enjoyed their European travels, though the Kaiser's friend often disguised certain of his feelings about these journeys when in his master's

<sup>169</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 354-355.

<sup>170</sup>Eulenburg, Mit dem Kaiser, II, 351.



presence. In the area of esthetic and intellectual pursuits, Eulenburg helped to develop William's interests, though they never became as cultivated as his own. The older man perceived the Kaiser as a religiously inclined person, though he may have exaggerated the Kaiser's preaching abilities to the Empress Augusta. Both men found themselves at ease with each other's families, however much the Kaiserin resented her husband's neglect of herself during Eulenburg's visits.

A critical side to the relationship also existed, one that sometimes generated minor schisms between Eulenburg and his chief. Eulenburg reinforced William's ego by praising the latter's masculine prowess; at the same time, however, he remained astute enough to deprecate the Kaiser's expressing this macho trait in his speeches and general behavior. The two men shared similar ethnocentric tendencies, being firmly convinced of Germany's greatness and sometimes expressing these feelings in prejudice-laden statements. Thus Eulenburg obviously would not be one to discourage William from voicing his own opinions in this direction. Finally, certain insurmountable difficulties existed in the relationship. Eulenburg's health, combined with political strains, William's hyperactivity, and the older man's increasing isolation from the Kaiser's chosen circle, eventually caused the friendship to wane. The once-powerful bond which had manifested itself in so many facets of both men's existence, twenty years after its initiation had ceased to function meaningfully.

## CHAPTER II

### EULENBURG AND BISMARCK'S DISMISSAL, 1886-1890

Philipp zu Eulenburg's role as a political intermediary formed an integral part of his relationship with William. The year 1886 became a crucial one for Eulenburg in this regard. In addition to making the acquaintance of Prince William in that year, thanks to Herbert von Bismarck, the aspiring diplomat also met Friedrich von Holstein, Senior Councillor at the German Foreign Office. Born in the East Elbian region of Prussia, not far from Frankfurt am Oder, Holstein had been a philanderer in his youth while serving in London and Washington, D. C., in minor diplomatic posts. It is well known how Bismarck then used him as a spy in Paris in order to discredit the German Ambassador there, Count Harry von Arnim. Arnim's friends soon discovered the incident and Holstein emerged with a tainted reputation, one which caused him to become a recluse. Yet his shunning of society apparently only intensified a ruthless power mania. From his post in the German Foreign Office, Holstein continued to manipulate officials, especially those on his private blacklists. He considered all of his associates political foils, and it appears that he found in Eulenburg yet another individual through whom he could execute his political maneuvers. Though Holstein never met William until well into the Emperor's reign, he early

realized that Philipp zu Eulenburg could be used as a conduit for insinuating the proper ideas in the imperial mind. From the time of their initial acquaintance until 1894, Holstein influenced Eulenburg's dealings with William more than any other individual.<sup>1</sup>

A number of controversies soon demonstrated the effectiveness of the bond that developed between Eulenburg and Holstein. There was the Septennate Bill laid before the German Reichstag in 1887, which called for large increases in military manpower and appropriations for the seven-year span, 1887-1893. The liberal parties of the Reichstag disapproved of such long-term bills, claiming that they prevented the parliament from controlling much of the government budget. Chancellor Otto von Bismarck nevertheless supported the proposal, and his allies--the Free Conservatives, Conservatives, and National Liberals, stood behind it. By themselves, these parties could not obtain a majority in the Reichstag; the success of the Septennate depended upon the support of the Catholic Center party. Bismarck, whose anti-Catholic views, manifested ten years before in the Kulturkampf,

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<sup>1</sup>Michael Tyler-Whittle, The Last Kaiser: A Biography of Wilhelm II, German Emperor and King of Prussia (New York: New York Times, 1977), 134-36, hereinafter cited as Tyler-Whittle, The Last Kaiser; Norman Rich, Friedrich von Holstein: Politics and Diplomacy in the Era of Bismarck and William II (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1965), I, 229-233, hereinafter cited as Rich, Holstein; Cecil, German Diplomatic Service, 267.

had mellowed considerably, now catered to his former opponents. He promised the Catholic Church special concessions if they would support the Bill.<sup>2</sup>

Eulenburg entered the picture when Pope Leo XIII, having gotten wind of the seven-year proposal, sent a letter to Bismarck in which he expressed his support for the Bill. The Chancellor, seeing in the letter material for wooing the Center, published and circulated the document. Prince William found this situation suspicious and consulted Eulenburg concerning the significance of Bismarck's actions. The diplomat contended that the circulation of such a missive damaged the Bill's chances for passage. The Bavarian ultramontanes, the core of the Center, usually stood behind the Pope. At this time, however, so Eulenburg asserted, the same group would feel it necessary to limit the powers of the Holy See in the realm of Bavarian political affairs. They would oppose the Septennate proposal in spite of the papacy.<sup>3</sup> In this instance Eulenburg's contentions proved incorrect. The Center, rather than opposing Leo's stance, abstained entirely from voting on the issue, allowing its passage by default.<sup>4</sup>

Eulenburg played a far more significant role in the

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<sup>2</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 226.

<sup>3</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 27.

<sup>4</sup>Balfour, Kaiser, 106.

events which eventually climaxed in Bismarck's dismissal. He served both as an intermediary between William and the opponents of Bismarck (headed by Friedrich von Holstein and Alfred von Waldersee, Chief of the General Staff), and as a confidant to the Kaiser during the latter's conflict with the aged Chancellor. To be sure, it is difficult to determine the precise extent to which Eulenburg actually influenced William's final decision to dismiss Bismarck. From their initial contact, the Chancellor and Eulenburg found few redeeming qualities in one another. The two met formally during the 1880's, and while Princess Johanna von Bismarck found Eulenburg a charming conversationalist and accomplished pianist, her husband made out the aspiring diplomat to be a mere hack, a fop--a flatterer whose talk centered around French cuisine and other inconsequential subjects.<sup>5</sup> In fact the Chancellor once likened Eulenburg to an eel with "eyes that could spoil the best breakfast."<sup>6</sup> He looked upon William's relationship with the young Prussian nobleman with considerable disdain:

This type is quite dangerous for the dramatic temperament of the Kaiser . . . When(ever) Eulenburg is near His Royal Highness, he takes on the posture of flattery, in my opinion quite openly. As soon as the Kaiser glances up he is sure to find

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<sup>5</sup> Maurice Baumont, L'Affaire Eulenburg et les origines de la guerre mondiale (Paris: Payot, 1933), 41, hereinafter cited as Baumont, Eulenburg.

<sup>6</sup> Kürenberg, War Alles Falsch?, 68; Bismarck, Gedanken und Erinnerungen, III, 142-143; Cowles, The Kaiser, 82.

the admiring eye of the Count directed toward him.<sup>7</sup>

In return, according to Baumont, Eulenburg considered the Chancellor an uncultured and inhospitable individual.<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand, Eulenburg's friendship with Herbert von Bismarck more than compensated for the Chancellor's unpleasantness. The younger Bismarck had known Eulenburg since 1879, and had found him a delightful companion and confidant. Unlike his father, Herbert thought it splendid that Eulenburg should cultivate the future Kaiser's friendship, believing that Eulenburg would have a settling influence on the restless Prince William. Herbert considered Eulenburg a trustworthy personal confidant as well, and freely confessed to him such problems as the Chancellor's disapproval of Elizabeth von Carolath-Beuthen, a Catholic divorcee whom Herbert longed to marry. Even during the Chancellor crisis of 1886-1890, Eulenburg constantly flattered Herbert while asking him to influence his father on issues which divided William and the old man. Likewise, Eulenburg expressed sincere regret when Herbert resigned his position as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and joined his father in retirement.<sup>9</sup> Thus Eulenburg's ambivalent

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<sup>7</sup>Hugo von Lerchenfeld-Koefering, Erinnerungen und Denkwürdigkeiten, comp. and ed. by Hugo von Lerchenfeld Koefering (Berlin: E. S. Mittler, 1935), 513; cf. Kracke, Prinz und Kaiser, 51.

<sup>8</sup>Baumont, Eulenburg, 42.

<sup>9</sup>Baumont, Eulenburg, 43; see Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 290-91.

relationship with the Bismarck dynasty makes it difficult to draw a simple conclusion regarding his role in the actual conflict. The fact remains, however, that Eulenburg gave much advice to the Kaiser before the dismissal, and the consideration must be entertained that when he did give his approval to William's action, he did so only after a long period of soul-searching and consideration of the political consequences.

Bismarck's dismissal resulted from a series of events which served to alienate him from William and Eulenburg. As early as 1886, William had opposed the Chancellor's "rail-roading" of the appointment of his son-in-law, Kuno von Rantzau, as Prussian ambassador to Bavaria. Eulenburg and his new confederate, Friedrich von Holstein, also opposed Rantzau. In addition to this situation, Bismarck's conclusion of a secret alliance with Russia, the Reinsurance Treaty, made him enemies in military circles. The representatives of the army in turn conveyed their dissent to William, over whom they exercised a powerful influence. Bismarck's uncompromising attitude toward the political left, manifested in the expulsion paragraphs of the 1889 anti-Socialist bill (see below) alienated many of his more moderate contemporaries, and also the Kaiser more than ever. William's support of labor legislation, encouraged in part by Eulenburg, evoked little sympathy from the Chancellor, whose own social programs had not checked the growth of German socialism.

Finally, the personalities of William and Bismarck, each marked by arrogance and an inability to compromise, intensified the conflict between the two men. In the midst of their two-year struggle, Eulenburg played an important role as the intermediary between William and the parties which contributed to the Chancellor's fall.

Eulenburg, both in the interest of himself and others, wished to prevent Count Rantzau from taking over the Prussian ambassadorship at Munich. Since 1886, Rantzau had been engaged in a campaign to remove Count Georg Werthern-Berchlingen, Eulenburg's beloved chief during his previous years in Munich, from his position as ambassador to Bavaria. Friedrich von Holstein, however, led the opposition against Rantzau, considering the latter's caustic personality and ties with the Bismarck family a detriment to Prussia's relationship with the South German states. It stands out that the cooperation of Eulenburg with Holstein during this crisis enhanced their association greatly, and that it was from this point that the role of both men in influencing the policies of Emperor William II actually began.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> John G. C. Röhl, ed., Philipp Eulenburg's politische Korrespondenz (Boppard am Rhein: Boldt Verlag, 1976-1978), I, 184, hereinafter cited as E. p. K., with volume and page no.; D. g. P., III, 243-247; Burmeister, in "Philipp Eulenburg-Hertefeld," 66, erroneously holds that primarily William II and Eulenburg wanted Eulenburg's one-time superior, Werthern-Berchlingen, to remain at the Munich post, and thus expressed opposition to the Chancellor's intentions of



In keeping with his plans to prevent Rantzau's appointment, Holstein wrote to Eulenburg, who seemed to have obtained the trust of influential parties at the Bavarian court. Holstein asked him to inform Herbert von Bismarck of Count Werthern's high political competence. Additionally he requested that the young diplomat at Munich convince Prince Luitpold, Regent of Bavaria, of the desirability of keeping Werthern at his ambassadorial post. Holstein apparently hoped that Luitpold would convey a message in this desired spirit to Kaiser William II, and that he would comply with the Bavarian ruler's request.<sup>11</sup> Eulenburg, for his part, did as Holstein suggested, only to have Luitpold execute his part of the plan unsuccessfully. Instead of informing Emperor William directly of his desire to keep Werthern in Munich, the Prince Regent asked Werthern to send a personal self-recommendation to Berlin. The Prussian ambassador, of course, could not expediently do this and Holstein's plan fell through.<sup>12</sup>

The struggle over Rantzau's candidature continued for two years. Eulenburg, who at first had supported Werthern, grew increasingly skeptical of Holstein's attempts to prevent

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replacing him with Rantzau. Burmeister makes no mention of Holstein's actual part in the affair, and that it was Holstein not Eulenburg who really led the opposition.

<sup>11</sup>E. p. K., I, 177-183; Rich, Holstein, I, 231.

<sup>12</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 232.

Rantzau's appointment. Eulenburg himself, in fact, had his sights set on the ambassadorial post but did not want to agitate the Bismarcks.<sup>13</sup> After consulting with Holstein, Eulenburg, now the intimate friend of Prince William, decided that rather than continuing to oppose Rantzau's appointment, it would be better merely to postpone the event. Bismarck's son-in-law officially received his ambassadorial position in March 1888; Eulenburg, however, remained as charge d'affaires at Munich until October of the same year. Both Holstein and Eulenburg hoped that the latter's competent performance would influence the soon-to-be Emperor William to appoint Eulenburg to the Bavarian post. (Emperor Frederick's cancerous condition had reached its final stages by this time.) William, however, had little desire to alienate the Bismarcks at the outset of his reign, and therefore allowed Rantzau to take his post at Munich.<sup>14</sup> The new Kaiser assigned Eulenburg as Prussian envoy to the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg, a position which the diplomat, though disappointed, accepted with grace. In a true display of sympathy for Eulenburg's plight, Herbert von Bismarck took this opportunity to write his friend, promising that should Rantzau relinquish the Munich post, the younger Bismarck would

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<sup>13</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 232.

<sup>14</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 234.

recommend Eulenburg as his brother-in-law's successor.<sup>15</sup> Such actions naturally strengthened the relationship between Herbert and Eulenburg, and thus made the latter more willing to tolerate the elder Bismarck's domineering ways.

Bismarck's foreign policy, however, also aggravated William, Eulenburg, and their close associates. In 1887 the Chancellor, as mentioned previously, had formulated the secret Reinsurance Treaty, which stood in direct contradiction to the quasi-anti-Russian coalition of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy which Bismarck had helped institute in 1881. To the designers of that "legitimate" agreement, among them Friedrich von Holstein, Bismarck's dealings with the Russians suggested treachery. Holstein's Russophobic tendencies, shared also by many men in high military positions, thus contributed notably to Bismarck's eventual ouster.<sup>16</sup>

The year 1889 witnessed a number of important events, some of which led directly to the Chancellor's fall. In that year Eulenburg, acting on the advice of Friedrich von Holstein, helped precipitate a controversy in Bavaria by urging William to oppose the re-establishment of the Redemptorist monastic order in that state. Undoubtedly both Eulenburg and Holstein wished to undermine Count von

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<sup>15</sup>E. p. K., I, 315.

<sup>16</sup>Lerchenfeld, Erinnerungen, 336; Rich, Holstein, I, 250.

Rantzau during his Munich tenure and saw this as a method for accomplishing that goal. It was also of paramount importance, in the opinion of both men, that papal domination be kept out of Bavaria.<sup>17</sup>

The Wohlgemuth affair of 1889 further demonstrated Bismarck's desire to appease Russia, and thus further contributed to his enemies' suspicions. Neither Eulenburg nor Holstein, however, attempted to exploit the episode. It commenced in April 1889 when a German police inspector named Wohlgemuth crossed the Swiss border, where authorities arrested him on the charge of acting to enlist Swiss undercover agents against German Socialists. Bismarck seeing in the situation an opportunity to strengthen the common conservative ties between Germany and Russia, accordingly called upon the latter to join him in "asking" Switzerland to put an end to the asylum enjoyed by foreign agitators in that country. Russia agreed to the proposal. Nevertheless, as the German government began to exert pressure on Switzerland by tightening passport and customs regulations on the Swiss frontier, it found that its action also adversely affected the economy and tourist trade of the South German states. These entities grew increasingly unhappy with Bismarck's proposal, and their discontent eventually reached the Kaiser through his Uncle Frederick, Grand Duke of Baden, who urged

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<sup>17</sup>E. p. K., I, 216-270, 360.

him to oppose the Chancellor.<sup>18</sup> Apparently, William seriously considered Frederick's advice, judging from the urgent note which Eulenburg, after consulting with Herbert von Bismarck and Holstein, sent him in June of 1889:

If the Chancellor admonishes caution regarding Russia, and even raises the Cabinet question, justifiably one must also be careful of Switzerland, inasmuch as this matter simultaneously affects the interests of the Reich. For Bavaria, Baden, etc. shall follow us only forcibly, if we exercise reprisals now.<sup>19</sup>

The note suggested that for the most part Eulenburg, always a political pragmatist, could not find a suitable alternative to Bismarck, for the time being.

Bismarck's proposal that Russian railroads market a quantity of their securities on the German stock exchange further strained relations between William and the Chancellor. The Emperor and many others, including Eulenburg, viewed Bismarck's move as another attempt toward a Russian alliance, and a measure that would weaken Germany in the event that the two nations went to war. In such a situation, the vast number of Russian railroad securities in German hands would have given the Slavic nation a means for fostering a harmful outflow of German currency. In June 1889, William demanded

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<sup>18</sup> Waldersee, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, 217; cf. Rich, Holstein I, 251.

<sup>19</sup> Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 284; E. p. K., I, 341; Burmeister in "Philipp Eulenburg-Hertefeld" fails to make any mention of the Wohlgenuth affair, and how it involved Holstein and Eulenburg.

that Bismarck terminate this securities conversion operation. The Chancellor refused to cooperate and again the threat of a political schism emerged.<sup>20</sup> Both General von Waldersee and Holstein entered the picture at this point, wishing to see Bismarck dismissed over the issue. Political expediency, however, made such a move unfeasible, although Waldersee, who distrusted Bismarck intensely, had been advocating the Chancellor's removal for almost a year. (Waldersee himself wanted the Reichskanzler post.) In keeping with this line of action, Holstein wrote to William. He urged that rather than engaging in open controversy with Bismarck over the securities issue, the Kaiser should order a vigorous newspaper campaign against these investments.<sup>21</sup> Holstein also expressed similar views to Eulenburg. He asserted that the Kaiser's direct involvement in the controversy would serve to widen the breach between himself and Bismarck, and that this situation could make Germany vulnerable to war.<sup>22</sup> Apparently Eulenburg heeded Holstein's advice, for William, although he privately opposed his Chancellor's actions, held his tongue through the crisis.

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<sup>20</sup> Waldersee, Briefwechsel, I, 301-304; Rich, Holstein, I, 251.

<sup>21</sup> Waldersee, Briefwechsel, I, 302; Rich, Holstein, I, 252.

<sup>22</sup> E. p. K., I, 341; Rich, Holstein, I, 252; Burmeister, in "Philipp Eulenburg-Hertefeld" ignores the Russian securities question and Eulenburg's and Holstein's involvement.

Bismarck himself eventually sensed William's disapproval. By July 1889, he had begun to question the wisdom of the securities issue, and realized that his resistance could place his own political position in jeopardy. On July 5, 1889, the Kaiser received news that the government, with the Chancellor's approval, would continue to permit the conversion of Russian securities on the German stock exchange. At the same time, however, the Emperor got word from Bismarck that the latter had issued orders to his mouthpiece, the Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, to warn the German public against buying the securities. The Chancellor, then, successfully worked his way out of the securities crisis and retained the Kaiser's toleration.

Eulenburg, having played a small role in the Russian securities question, soon confronted a new Russian crisis. The announcement by Tsar Alexander III in the summer of 1889 that he planned to visit Berlin in October revived old apprehensions. Holstein especially feared that the Kaiser, when confronted by the Russian Emperor's massive physique and forceful personality, would be moved to make dangerous concessions to Germany's eastern neighbor. Holstein conveyed these fears to Eulenburg, informing him of the necessity of keeping the Kaiser firm in his convictions.<sup>23</sup> Holstein's move proved expedient, While the German Emperor

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<sup>23</sup>E. p. K., I, 364; Rich, Holstein, I, 258.

prepared for Alexander's visit, reports of Russian army divisions on that nation's western boundary filtered into Berlin. Eulenburg's influence, combined with this impetus, apparently impressed William, for no premonitions of German concessions or conflicts with Russia came out of his meeting with Alexander on October 11-13.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, the Kaiser's request that he be allowed to visit the 1890 Russian army maneuvers again sent Holstein and his Russo-phobic associates scurrying. Either of his own volition or under Holstein's influence, Eulenburg wrote General von Waldersee requesting that he "enlighten His Majesty about the true state of affairs" so far as Russian armaments were concerned. Waldersee agreed to do so but also asked that he be allowed to inform the Kaiser on other than military affairs.<sup>25</sup> Eulenburg, fearful that the General would perpetuate any disagreements already existing between his master and Bismarck, replied to Waldersee concerning this matter. He emphasized his high regard for the General but simultaneously held that the military were taking too hard a line toward Russia--an approach which could engender extremely negative results. Eulenburg also emphasized the conflict between the military and Foreign Office that such a

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<sup>24</sup>D. g. P., III, 383; Rich, Holstein, I, 258.

<sup>25</sup>Waldersee, Briefwechsel, I, 329.



Russophobic policy could create.<sup>26</sup> Finally Eulenburg, using Holstein as his mouthpiece, also sought to criticize the General for his conduct of military maneuvers, farcical events which gave the Kaiser victory at every turn, and bolstered his ego to dangerous propositions. Holstein too found Waldersee trying his patience when the latter, in response to the question of labor reform, asserted that "only religion and faith could help."<sup>27</sup> Holstein undoubtedly considered the General's naïveté unbecoming for one who aspired to the Chancellor's position. Nevertheless he would be better than Bismarck. Thus Holstein, responding to this circumstance, resolved to keep peace with the General, at least until the Chancellery crisis had run its course.

Conflicting views on social questions also precipitated differences between William and Bismarck. An 1889 coal strike in the Ruhr region aroused the Kaiser's sympathy for the miners, and he sought to bring about labor reform legislation throughout the initial years of his reign, much to Bismarck's chagrin.<sup>28</sup> It was probably because of the Chancellor's intensified anti-Socialist proposals, however, that he and William continued to remain at odds. In October

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<sup>26</sup>Waldersee, Briefwechsel, I, 335.

<sup>27</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 260.

<sup>28</sup>E. p. K., I, 396; Rich, Holstein, I, 200; Alan Palmer, The Kaiser: Warlord of the Second Reich (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, (1978), 43, hereinafter cited as Palmer, Kaiser.

1889 Bismarck asked the Reichstag to alter the anti-Socialist law of 1878 and include in the legislation "expulsion paragraphs" which gave police the right to remove Socialists from their homes and transfer them to other locations throughout Germany.<sup>29</sup> The parties of the pro-Bismarck "cartel" (Free Conservatives, moderate Conservatives, and National Liberals), which dominated the Reichstag, accepted the anti-Socialist Bill in principle but disagreed on the expulsion paragraphs. The two conservative factions favored the Chancellor's alteration of the law while the National Liberals rejected them.<sup>30</sup>

At this point Friedrich von Holstein joined forces with Adolf Marschall von Bieberstein, Baden's Minister to Berlin, and also enlisted Eulenburg in an effort to prevent the "cartel" from violently splitting over the anti-Socialist issue. Marschall and Holstein met with leaders of the Bismarckian parties, urging them to accept the anti-Socialist proposal without the expulsion paragraphs. The Free Conservatives responded favorably to Holstein, and sent their leader, Otto von Helldorf-Bedra, to talk with the Chancellor at Friedrichsruh, his country estate near Hamburg. Failing to convince Bismarck to retract the expulsion clauses, Helldorf then went to Emperor William, hoping that his Majesty would

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<sup>29</sup>Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 226; Rich, Holstein, I, 262.

<sup>30</sup>Wilhelm II, Ereignisse, 32-35; Palmer, Kaiser, 44-45; Rich, Holstein, I, 262.

commit himself to the more moderate anti-Socialist legislation and thus change the Chancellor's opinion.<sup>31</sup> In this instance Eulenburg as well as Helldorf found themselves employed by Holstein in an effort to influence William's stance. The Foreign Office functionary's reaction to a speech made by William at Frankfurt on December 11, 1889 indicates that the henchmen had succeeded with William:

Today, however, I would like to compliment Your Majesty on the speech in Frankfurt and on the toast to Miquel. You are quite a fellow! The speech has been interpreted everywhere as an accentuation of cartel politics.<sup>32</sup>

Holstein's efforts, however, worked to little avail. Bismarck would not retract the expulsion clauses and William refused to give a commitment to support the anti-Socialist law in its modified form. Without William's backing, the moderate bill found no support from the conservative parties when it came up before its respective Reichstag committee.<sup>33</sup> Only political maneuvering by Ludwig Windthorst, a leader of the Reichstag's Center party, secured the acceptance in committee of the bill in its modified form.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Otto von Helldorf-Bedra, "Der Fall des Sozialistengesetzes," Deutsche Revue, 1900, 277, hereinafter cited as Helldorf-Bedra "Der Fall des Sozialistengesetzes"; cf. Rich, Holstein, I. 263.

<sup>32</sup>E. p. K., I, 385; Rich, Holstein, I. 263.

<sup>33</sup>Helldorf-Bedra, "Der Fall des Sozialistengesetzes"; cf. Rich, Holstein, I, 203.

<sup>34</sup>Erich Eyck, Bismarck (Erlenbach-Zürich: Rentsch, 1955), III, 562, hereinafter cited as Eyck, Bismarck.

Eulenburg involved himself in another controversy similar to that surrounding the anti-Socialist Bill, that of labor reform. Beginning in 1889, William, as previously mentioned, had been asserting his views on the labor question with increased frequency. The Kaiser found support from both Holstein and Eulenburg, both of whom agreed that, especially in the areas of Sunday work and employment of women and children, changes had to be made. Their backing apparently gave William confidence in his cause, for he then proceeded to express his opinions to Karl Heinrich von Boetticher, who in turn presented the Kaiser's views to Bismarck. Bismarck, who had been away from Berlin since April 1889, asserted that he would oppose any labor reforms presented to the Reichstag, fearing that they would enhance the power of the Socialists. In expressing this feeling, the old man was expressing the opinion of many of his class that such changes would merely precipitate unrest among the working classes.<sup>35</sup> The Chancellor's response, of course, angered William and those around him. Eulenburg, however, upon hearing of the situation urged William to retain his

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Holstein, I, 263.

<sup>35</sup> Otto von Bismarck, Die gesammelten Werke (Berlin: Hollberg, 1924), XV, 483; hereinafter cited as Bismarck, Die gesammelten Werke; Bismarck, Gedanken und Erinnerungen, III, 50-51; Wilhelm II, Ereignisse, 33; Rich, Holstein, I, 264; Palmer, Kaiser, 45.

composure.<sup>36</sup>

Although unsuccessful in convincing Bismarck to support the modified anti-Socialist proposal, Boetticher had received strong support for labor legislation from party leaders in the Reichstag. It appears that William sensed the power of such backing, for he decided to ignore Bismarck's denunciations and place the labor proposals before Germany's legislative body. Here Eulenburg again entered the picture. Drs. Franz Fischer and Paul Kayser (Eulenburg's preceptor in his Strasbourg days), fervent supporters of labor reform, were engaged in producing a series of memoranda pointing out the necessity for such legislation. Both Fischer and Kayser realized that Eulenburg exercised a special influence over William and those in government, and therefore directed many of their proposals to him through correspondence. Fischer presented theoretical arguments for labor reform, emphasizing among other things that reduced working hours improved workers' attitudes.<sup>37</sup> Kayser took a historical view of the labor question, pointing to the worker discontent which government delays would engender. All revolutions throughout history, according to Kayser, could have been prevented if necessary reforms had been made. These same workers, now well-organized and informed, could

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<sup>36</sup>Waldersee, Briefwechsel, I, 87; cf. Rich, Holstein, I, 264.

<sup>37</sup>E. p. K., I, 410; Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 244.

again start a revolution under the influence of the Socialists.<sup>38</sup> Such statements impressed both Eulenburg and his cohort Holstein. Holstein especially found the statements persuasive, and asserted to Eulenburg that the labor question would not be settled with a curt "no." Holstein also informed his associate that the state of Saxony planned to raise the labor question in the Bundesrat (upper house of parliament), and that William, always the supporter of labor reform, had ordered Interior Minister Boetticher to cast Prussia's votes in favor of such a proposal when it came under discussion.<sup>39</sup> (Each German state was represented in the Bundesrat.) Eulenburg, impressed by both Fischer's and Kayser's writings, as well as by Holstein's announcements, wrote to Baron Freyschlag, the adjutant of Prince Regent Luitpold of Bavaria, and to Bavarian Prime Minister Johann von Lutz. He informed both of William's opinions.<sup>40</sup> After Eulenburg had accomplished this task, Holstein took it upon himself to meet with Herbert von Bismarck on January 23, 1890. The Gray Eminence (Holstein's nickname in court circles) told Herbert that the Chancellor stood virtually alone in his opposition to the labor proposals, and that he hoped the old man would willingly cooperate at a Crown

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<sup>38</sup>E. p. K., I, 415.

<sup>39</sup>E. p. K., I, 411; Rich, Holstein, I, 265.

<sup>40</sup>E. p. K., I, 422; Rich, Holstein, I, 266.

Council meeting which William had scheduled for the following day.<sup>41</sup> Herbert gave no committing reply.

On January 24, the council met with William, Eulenburg, and other officials to discuss labor legislation. Only Bismarck was absent, for William, wishing to dominate the proceedings, had called the Chancellor at the last minute. It appears that he also wanted to prevent Bismarck from influencing any of the Crown Council members.<sup>42</sup> When the Chancellor finally did arrive at the Berlin meeting from Friedrichsruh, the Kaiser commenced with a series of reform proposals which, if initiated, would presumably serve as a safeguard against revolution. (Such phraseology reflected the influence of Kayser's memorandum.) The Kaiser also pressed for the passage of an anti-Socialist law without the expulsion paragraphs. Bismarck for his part refused at first to accept William's proposals, considering his efforts to appease the workers unfeasible. If William still wished to carry out his program, the Chancellor asserted, perhaps he, Bismarck, had outlived his usefulness and should retire.<sup>43</sup> (Bismarck had used resignation threats on numerous

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<sup>41</sup>E. p. K., I, 422; Rich, Holstein, I, 266.

<sup>42</sup>David Burnett King, "Marschall von Bieberstein and the New Course, 1890-1897," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1962); cf. Rich, Holstein, I, 267.

<sup>43</sup>Georg von Eppstein, ed. Fürst Bismarcks Entlassung: Nach den hinterlassenen bisher unveröffentlichten Aufzeichnungen des Staatsekretärs des Innern, Staatsminister Dr. Karl Heinrich von Boetticher und des Chefs der Reichskanzlei

occasions in order to keep himself in power.) Relating the day's activities to Eulenburg, William expressed privately the temptation to fire the Chancellor after his remark. Eulenburg lauded him for resisting this impulse.<sup>44</sup>

Bismarck's presence in Berlin soon made itself felt. When the Reichstag voted on the anti-Socialist proposals (January 25, 1890), the parties of the right refused to support the Emperor. Thus, while the National Liberals backed the modified bill, both the Conservatives and Free Conservatives refused to consider the legislation without the expulsion paragraph. The parties of the Left, of course, opposed anti-Socialist legislation in any form. Consequently the modified anti-Socialist law failed and Bismarck's "cartel" again seemed ready to split apart. It appeared, much to the chagrin of Eulenburg and Holstein, that the Chancellor now possessed the opportunity to emerge as a hero and win the Kaiser's support. If the parties of the right, including the National Liberals, would back his anti-Socialist proposal, and if he could enlist the votes of the Center, Bismarck would then see the enactment of the expulsion paragraphs. Holstein, aware of this possibility, informed Eulenburg of its unfavorable consequences.

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unter dem Fürsten Bismarck Dr. Franz Johannes von Rottenburg (Berlin: A. Scherl, 1920), 46, hereinafter cited as Eppstein, Fürst Bismarcks Entlassung; cf. Rich, Holstein, I, 269.

<sup>44</sup>E. p. K., I, 425.



Bismarck's catering to the Center would bolster that party's influence throughout Germany, especially in Bavaria, where the ultramontanes held sway. The papacy would exert its influence unhampered, something which both Eulenburg and Holstein viewed as catastrophic. As a precaution Holstein urged Eulenburg to have William advise the National Liberals and the Prussian Ministry of State of such possibilities--before the bill again came under consideration.<sup>45</sup> Eulenburg wrote William concerning this matter and the latter called a Crown Council meeting on January 26. Bismarck, as Holstein expected, appeared at this meeting, where he spoke in a conciliatory way to William and asserted that he would yield to the Kaiser's wishes on the labor question.<sup>46</sup> William for all his skepticism believed Bismarck and invited him to his birthday reception the next day.

Neither Eulenburg nor Holstein took an active role in the events following the Council meeting when Bismarck revealed his true intentions. On January 28, 1890, Count Wilhelm von Hohenthal, Saxon emissary to Berlin, informed Interior Minister Boetticher that the Saxon government intended to introduce legislation for the protection of laborers at the

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<sup>45</sup>E. p. K., I. 423; Rich, Holstein, I. 469-470.

<sup>46</sup>Robert Sigmund, Freiherr Lucius von Ballhausen, Bismarck-Erinnerungen des Staatsministers Freiherrn Lucius von Ballhausen (Stuttgart and Berlin: Cotta, 1924), 512-513, hereinafter cited as Lucius, Erinnerungen; cf. Rich, Holstein, I. 270.

next meeting of the Bundesrat. Bismarck upon hearing this news, confronted Hohenthal and forcefully commanded him that Saxony would propose no such bill under any circumstances. Hohenthal reported this incident to his home government and to William. The latter now saw that Bismarck had no intention of going along with his labor improvement programs or the modified anti-Socialist law.<sup>47</sup> Unable to contain himself any longer, William burst into the Chancellor's Office on January 31, 1890, and demanded to know what Bismarck intended to do about the Kaiser's social proposals. The Chancellor responded calmly and explained that he was directing the preparation of two imperial manifestos on the labor question--one concerning the international aspects of the problem, the other dealing with a labor law for the Reich.<sup>48</sup> This explanation temporarily pacified the Kaiser, as he did not seek advice from either Eulenburg or Holstein for almost a week. A conniving move by Bismarck, however, brought them back into the picture.

On February 4, 1890, Bismarck ordered the publication of the two imperial proclamations, without his customary counter-signature. This move thus placed the responsibility for the words exclusively on the Kaiser, whose signature

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<sup>47</sup> Eppstein, Fürst Bismarcks Entlassung, 52; cf. Rich, Holstein, I, 270.

<sup>48</sup> Eppstein, Fürst Bismarcks Entlassung, 52; cf. Rich, Holstein, I. 270.

customarily graced such documents. Additionally, the Chancellor had worded the proclamations so as to make them seem threatening to private enterprise, and thus discredit the Emperor in the eyes of his capitalist subjects.<sup>49</sup>

Bismarck's intriguing shocked Holstein, and on the Foreign Office official's urging, Eulenburg urged William that he appoint a committee to design social proposals more agreeable to those in positions of wealth.<sup>50</sup>

Eulenburg also sought other ways to aid his master in opposing the Chancellor. The imperial proclamations had called for an international labor conference, which the Crown had hoped would meet in Berlin. Bismarck, receiving this news, responded by writing letters to the German ambassadors in France, England, Belgium, and Switzerland, instructing that they instead attend a similar conference sponsored by the Swiss government.<sup>51</sup> This behavior angered William, and he sent Eulenburg to the Swiss ambassador in Berlin, hoping that through Eulenburg's influence, the emissary would be able to persuade his government to cancel the labor conference. The Swiss ambassador accomplished this

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<sup>49</sup> Bismarck, Gedanken und Erinnerungen, III, 77; Eppstein, Fürst Bismarcks Entlassung, 515; D.g.P., III, 289-292; Rich, Holstein, I, 272.

<sup>50</sup> Rich, Holstein, I, 272.

<sup>51</sup> Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 231-232; Bismarck, Die gesammelten Werke, XV, 501; Lucius, Erinnerungen, 515; cf. Rich, Holstein, I, 272.

task most successfully, and the Kaiser's labor meeting materialized.<sup>52</sup>

Bismarck's delinquent actions did not prevent him from meeting with the Kaiser on February 25, 1890, in order to discuss the formation of a new parliamentary "cartel." In view of the outcome of the anti-Socialist controversy and breakup of the three pro-Bismarck parties, it seemed logical to the Chancellor that William would be willing to submit to his demands. On that point Bismarck's confidence seemed justified. When the Kaiser and Bismarck met to plan the formation of a new "cartel," the Chancellor urged that in order to win the support of the National Liberals and Conservative parties, someone had to introduce more potent legislation concerning control of the Socialists and increased military appropriations. After that person or group had achieved these goals, Bismarck said, he would be willing to allow the introduction of a labor reform bill in the Reichstag. At this point the Kaiser approved the Chancellor's plan, mainly because of the last provision. On March 2, 1890, Bismarck presented his ideas to the Ministry of State. Besides proposing a new social legislation bill similar to that supported by William in January, the Chancellor backed a stronger anti-Socialist law, one which would expel the "revolutionaries" from Germany rather than merely moving them

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<sup>52</sup>Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 232-233; Rich, Holstein, I, 272.

within the confines of the nation. Bismarck asserted that the Kaiser had supported this last idea; he obviously believed that William's alleged backing of the bill would increase its popularity.<sup>53</sup>

During this March 2 session, Bismarck also released evidence of a Prussian Cabinet Order of September 8, 1852, which provided that in the course of official business, the members of the Ministry of State could confer with the Prussian King only after having met with the Prussian Prime Minister to discuss the issue.<sup>54</sup> By executing this order, the Chancellor hoped to form a homogeneous ministry which would stand by him when he locked horns with William.

This action, which initiated the last phase of the struggle between Kaiser and Chancellor, precipitated a series of events which involved Eulenburg. For some time Bismarck's enemies had sensed that the Emperor was reaching the end of his patience, and they were now beginning to add fuel to the fire. Friedrich von Holstein contacted Eulenburg and asked him to inform William of Bismarck's dealings at the Ministry of State meeting. Simultaneously,

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<sup>53</sup>Lucius, Erinnerungen, 515; Bismarck, Die gesammelten Werke, XV, 508; Waldersee, Denkwürdigkeiten, II, 100; Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 293-294; Eppstein, Fürst Bismarcks Entlassung, 55; cf. Rich, Holstein, I, 273-274.

<sup>54</sup>Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 233-234; Bismarck, Die gesammelten Werke, XV, 511; cf. Rich, Holstein, I, 277.

he asked him to urge William to appoint a special Council of State to study the Socialist question. By "enlightening" the Kaiser, then, Holstein hoped to prevent the introduction of Bismarck's proposals in the Reichstag. Additionally, Holstein asked Eulenburg to advise his imperial friend to "summon his generals," for he knew they longed for the chance to thwart the Chancellor's legislation. Also, these individuals, led by General von Waldersee, could exercise influence over their conservative civilian allies and counter Bismarck's plans for the reestablishment of any "cartel,"<sup>55</sup> Even more important, the Chancellor's influence over William would diminish if his plans did not succeed.<sup>56</sup> Thus Eulenburg, and later Marschall von Bieberstein and Otto von Helldorf-Bedra, all found themselves essential chessmen in Holstein's game to undermine the Reichskanzler.<sup>57</sup>

Holstein, through Eulenburg, also found other allies, to help execute his plans. Hinzpeter, the Kaiser's one-time tutor, wrote Eulenburg conveying the impression that Bismarck had overstepped his bounds.<sup>58</sup> Such a letter, which under the circumstances Eulenburg assuredly showed to William, must

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<sup>55</sup> Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 235; Rich, Holstein, I, 276.

<sup>56</sup> E. p. K., I, 482.

<sup>57</sup> Bismarck, Die gesammelten Werke, XV, 510; cf. Rich, Holstein, I. 277.

<sup>58</sup> E. p. K., I, 436.

have influenced the latter's decision. To further aid Holstein's cause, Paul Kayser wrote Eulenburg, asserting his belief that Bismarck had lost his mental capabilities.<sup>59</sup> Their opinions, conveyed by Eulenburg, also doubtlessly affected William. During the second week of March, 1890, the Kaiser, in contrast to his former line of action, told Bismarck that he could no longer support his anti-Socialist proposals.<sup>60</sup> Eulenburg and Holstein now proceeded to sit back and wait.

The last three days of Bismarck's chancellorship witnessed the culmination of four years' developments. Unable to obtain William's support through cooperative proposals, the Chancellor now sought to form a coalition against him. He first called on Ludwig Windthorst, then on Empress Frederick. There is evidence also that he may have been planning a military coup d'etat against the Socialists in order to win conservative support, and that Eulenburg reported such information to his master.<sup>61</sup> The Kaiser, upon hearing of the Chancellor's plans, called upon Bismarck at the latter's residence on the morning of March 15, 1890. William demanded that the Chancellor inform him of the

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<sup>59</sup>E. p. K., I, 436.

<sup>60</sup>Bismarck, Die gesammelten Werke, XV, 511; cf. Rich, Holstein, I, 277.

<sup>61</sup>Palmer, Kaiser, 48.

transactions at his meeting with Windthorst, and also that he rescind the Cabinet Order of 1852. Bismarck, responding to William's demands, defended the necessity for the order, but his cause was lost when he showed William a document which contained a reference to William as an "ill-bred and dishonest boy."<sup>62</sup> This statement came from the pen of Tsar Alexander III, and William, shocked by the implications of such messages, left the Chancellery in a huff. He definitely viewed Alexander's statements as congruent with Bismarck's own feelings about him.

On March 16, William received a number of reports from Count Raffauf, the German consul at Kiev, which asserted that the Russian army was again planning troop movements on the Tsarist empire's western frontiers. The Kaiser, stunned by this news, sent off a letter to Bismarck, reprimanding him for not informing his Emperor of this situation. William also sent word, first through General Wilhelm von Hanke, head of the Imperial War Cabinet, and then in the form of his own direct request, that Bismarck cease his use of the Cabinet Order of 1852. Bismarck refused, leading the Kaiser on March 17, 1890, to send Herbert von Lucanus, head of the Civil Cabinet, with a note demanding that the Chancellor

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<sup>62</sup> Bismarck, Gedenken und Erinnerungen, III, 81-87; Bismarck, Die gesammelten Werke, XV, 515; Nowak, Kaiser and Chancellor, 103; Rich, Holstein, I, 278; Palmer, Kaiser, 49; Cowles, The Kaiser, 95.



resign.<sup>63</sup> That evening, the Kaiser and Eulenburg nervously awaited the Chancellor's reply. William was especially irritable; filled with hesitancies, he demanded that Eulenburg entertain him and calm his nerves.<sup>64</sup> The anticipated answer came finally the next morning, when the Chancellor, without objection, acceded to William's request for his resignation.

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<sup>63</sup>Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 237; Bismarck, Die gesammelten Werke, XV, 517-518; Waldersee, Denkwürdigkeiten, 117; cf. Rich, Holstein, I, 278.

<sup>64</sup>Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 236-237; Gisevius, Der Anfang vom Ende, 143-144.

### CHAPTER III

#### EULENBURG AND THE CAPRIVI ERA, 1890-1894

On March 20, 1890, Count Leo Georg von Caprivi assumed the office of German Imperial Chancellor. A firm, upright military man of impressive physical stature, the new Chancellor also possessed an uncompromising nature which, almost from the beginning of his administration, would bring him into conflict with his young sovereign. During the four and a half years of the Caprivi ministry, Eulenburg acted as an intermediary between the two men. The most important aspect of this role of Eulenburg's was the way it cast him as the vehicle through which Friedrich von Holstein, the domineering force of the German Foreign Office, extended his influence over William. In essence, then, the Kaiser's friend occupied a position of political significance second to none during the post-Bismarck period.

Eulenburg's first major political task during the Caprivi era concerned aiding in finding a replacement for Herbert von Bismarck, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who had resigned his own post at the time of his father's dismissal. Chancellor von Caprivi, at this juncture on relatively good terms with Friedrich von Holstein, asked him to suggest someone to fill the vacant position. At first Holstein recommended Count Friedrich Johann von Alvensleben, German Ambassador to Belgium. Alvensleben, when

contacted, refused the Foreign Office post. Baron von Holstein then turned to Adolf Marschall von Bieberstein, Baden's minister to Berlin. Marschall accepted the offer with enthusiasm; however, Holstein needed the Kaiser's approval before the appointment could take effect. For this purpose he enlisted the aid of several individuals. Friedrich, Grand Duke of Baden, acting both of his own volition and the Privy Councillor's influence, recommended Marschall both to Caprivi and the Kaiser. Philipp zu Eulenburg also played a role in securing the appointment. First, he mentioned the erstwhile ambassador as a possible Foreign Secretary to Count Alfred von Waldersee, Chief of the General Staff and the German military's most influential connection with the Imperial Court.<sup>1</sup> Eulenburg also took it upon himself to recommend Marschall directly to Emperor William. He emphasized the Badenese ambassador's South German background, implying that Marschall's appointment would appease the anti-Prussian South. He also praised Marschall's familiarity with both foreign and domestic political arenas and his ability as a worker.<sup>2</sup> In the face of international crises, Marschall could provide the solutions. At Holstein's suggestion, Chancellor von Caprivi also recommended Marschall's appointment.

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<sup>1</sup>Lerchenfeld, Erinnerungen, 368-369; Rich, Holstein, I. 291.

<sup>2</sup>E. p. K., I, 513.

To be sure, the actions of Holstein, Eulenburg, and Caprivi in securing Marschall's appointment met with opposition. A number of government officials such as Count Karl von Wedel, the Kaiser's aide-de-camp, favored a second attempt to secure Alvensleben's candidacy for the Foreign Secretary post. Many conservatives preferred Count Friedrich Wilhelm zu Limburg-Stirum, who had been an interim State Secretary for Foreign Affairs during the Bismarck regime. Bernhard von Bülow, then Prussian Minister to Rumania, also possessed the support of some conservatives.<sup>3</sup> Count von Wedel especially made concerted efforts to prevent Marschall's appointment in view of the Badenese ambassador's limited experience in the realm of foreign affairs (contrary to Eulenburg's allegations), such objections seemed valid. Chancellor von Caprivi and Holstein, however, won the day. Both, by threatening to resign, secured William's approval of their candidate. Undoubtedly Eulenburg's influence had contributed to this final decision.<sup>4</sup>

Eulenburg, after he was appointed Prussian ambassador to Württemberg in March 1890, continued his close collaboration with the Kaiser in the realm of political affairs. Although he got on well with the royal family at Stuttgart, his real interests lay in Berlin. In September 1890 Eulenburg

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<sup>3</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 291.

<sup>4</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 291.

involved himself with the re-election of Max Forckenbeck, the left-wing Lord Mayor of Berlin. Forckenbeck, in order to retain his office, needed to have his re-election ratified by the Prussian Ministry of State. This the Ministry did with little objection. Emperor William, however, opposed such action, mainly because Forckenbeck had spoken out against William's Army Bill in the Reichstag. The Kaiser expressed his views to Hermann von Lucanus, Chief of the Prussian Civil Cabinet, who wrote to Chancellor von Caprivi concerning this matter. The Chancellor responded by informing the Ministry of State that the Kaiser's rejection of Forckenbeck's remaining Lord Mayor of Berlin would undoubtedly alienate the parties of the Center and the Left and prevent the government from effecting any further legislation. In response to Caprivi's pleas, the Ministry voted to oppose the Kaiser's decision. This action did not, however, change the Kaiser's mind. Philipp zu Eulenburg entered the picture at this juncture, and wrote the Emperor on the matter. In his letter he mentioned the threat of a Bismarckian resurgence if the Reichstag did not cooperate with the government. This approach, along with notes from Caprivi, apparently made headway, and the Emperor finally approved the ratification of Forckenbeck's re-election.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 116; John G. C. Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck: The Crisis of Government in the Second Reich, 1890-1900 (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1967), 71, hereinafter cited as Röhl,

Eulenburg played an even more significant role in the events surrounding the dismissal of Alfred von Waldersee from his post as Chief of the German General Staff. Following Bismarck's dismissal, Friedrich von Holstein and other officials in the Foreign Office grew increasingly disenchanted with Waldersee for several reasons, primarily because of the influence which he exercised over his sovereign. It was freely gossiped in court circles that the General had designs upon the Imperial Chancellorship, and the numerous modes of flattery which he employed when dealing with the Kaiser seemed to substantiate these beliefs. One ploy which aggravated Holstein (and Eulenburg) in particular was Waldersee's manipulation of the Emperor's military maneuvers. As previously mentioned, the General bolstered William's ego to dangerous proportions by allowing his constant victory in these unrealistic activities. Holstein, for his part, also thought Waldersee was becoming less of a Russophobe, more willing to compromise with the czarist empire, perhaps to the extent of even negotiating.<sup>6</sup>

Holstein reacted to the state of affairs by employing Eulenburg as his "hatchet man." He urged him to inform the Kaiser that Waldersee was deceiving him through his cajoling. Eulenburg obliged Holstein but to little avail. William

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Germany Without Bismarck.

<sup>6</sup>Tyler-Whittle, The Last Kaiser, 144; Rich, Holstein, I, 259-260.

faced down his friend and informed him that he knew of Waldersee's underlying ambitions and attitude toward Russia. He further asserted that Waldersee neither would assume the chancellorship nor dictate foreign policy. Eulenburg then tried to convince the Kaiser that the General had been deceiving him during various maneuvers. Once again his words proved futile, as William contended that the "sieges" had been conducted fairly.<sup>7</sup> To further his point, the Kaiser went on to say that he only assumed command of his troops when they were in retreat; thus he did not always win.<sup>8</sup> It appears also, judging from this correspondence, that Eulenburg, either out of fear or loyalty to his chief, did not wish to carry the matter further. As far as he was concerned, the situation could rest.

Holstein, however, persisted in his attempts to have Waldersee removed. The Gray Eminence barraged Eulenburg with letters, all aimed at convincing the Kaiser's friend of the need to take action. Holstein appealed to the diplomat's personal feelings, and asserted that the General's removal would make both Caprivi and William independent forces, confident of their abilities.<sup>9</sup> Holstein did not fail to add that Waldersee's dismissal would benefit Eulenburg

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<sup>7</sup>D. g. P., III, 315.

<sup>8</sup>D. g. P., III, 316.

<sup>9</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 303.

politically. Once the General left his post, Caprivi's difficulties would lessen and the Kaiser would possess the prerogative of asking the Chancellor to do a few favors for him. One of these could involve transferring Count von Rantzau, Bismarck's son-in-law, from his Bavarian ambassador's position and appointing Eulenburg to that post. Eulenburg fervently coveted that post and one may say with assurance that despite his assertion that he would never dream of undermining Rantzau, Eulenburg swallowed Holstein's bait. In the autumn of 1890, through a series of intrigues, he and his associates engineered the removal of Bismarck's son-in-law and paved the way for Eulenburg's succession to the Bavarian post.<sup>10</sup>

Rantzau, by virtue of his personal performance, had contributed heavily to his own demise. He lacked the support of the Munich intelligentsia, many of whom found a supposedly uncouth Prussian unappealing. The Bavarian press denounced Rantzau, and called him a tool of the Bismarcks. The Bavarian State Ministry, headed by Christoph von Crailsheim, disliked Bismarck's son-in-law, and believed that he purposefully kept Munich uninformed concerning the actions of the Berlin government. Only the influence of ex-Chancellor von Bismarck could really stand in the way of Rantzau's dismissal.

An outside circumstance afforded Eulenburg the

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<sup>10</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 57-59; Rich, Holstein, I, 304.



opportunity to wrench the Prussian ambassadorial post from Rantzau.<sup>11</sup> Chancellor von Caprivi visited Munich at the beginning of November 1890 and announced to the government there that Kaiser William had intentions of visiting the Bavarian capital during the following month, and wished to inspect the troops of the kingdom. Luitpold, the Prince Regent of Bavaria, loathed riding horseback and found the prospect of having to do so during the Kaiser's visit appalling. The Prince Regent's fears apparently reached formidable proportions, for, by the beginning of December, Luitpold was already beginning to threaten abdication if the inspection ceremony took place. Such a proposal upset the Crailsheim ministry greatly. Its members feared a resurgence of the ultramontanists if the Prince Regent abdicated. In order to help alleviate this difficulty, Crailsheim wrote Eulenburg, begging him for aid in preventing William's visit to the maneuvers. Eulenburg advised the Kaiser concerning this matter, but apparently sensed no immediate danger in the situation. Thus he merely attempted to assure Crailsheim that William would do his utmost to "ride slowly" and refrain from embarrassing the Prince Regent.<sup>12</sup> More important, in his note to William, Eulenburg took the opportunity implicitly to bring out the inadequacies of Prussian ambassador

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<sup>11</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 158.

<sup>12</sup>E. p. K., I, 597.

Rantzau. He emphasized Rantzau's supposed tendency to scheme behind the backs of his associates, and that William's keeping him in his position would be fatal to His Majesty.<sup>13</sup> This note apparently garnered results. On November 27, 1890, Eulenburg learned through Friedrich von Holstein that Emperor William would be assigning him to Munich before the year was out.<sup>14</sup> Eulenburg of course found this prospect appealing, but he also feared Bismarck might seek revenge for his son-in-law's dismissal. Bernhard von Bülow, close to Eulenburg since the latter's early twenties, no doubt played a role in sparking this logical fear, as he himself hinted broadly in his memoirs:

But what Prince Bismarck and his family never forgave was that Philipp Eulenburg, with Holstein's support, did not rest until Prince Bismarck's son-in-law, Count Cuno Rantzau, had been transferred, much against his will, from Munich to the Hague. Eulenburg made a great mistake in taking the post at Munich made vacant by Rantzau's transfer. . . . He should, however, have known that Prince Bismarck, once injured or angered, never forgot, and that the removal of his son-in-law and daughter from the Munich post to which they had become attached would deeply incense the old Chancellor and that he would not forgive it.<sup>15</sup>

Bülow also contended that, in addition to angering Bismarck, Eulenburg's promotion precipitated a number of ugly rumors

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<sup>13</sup>E. p. K., I. 601.

<sup>14</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 59.

<sup>15</sup>Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, 225.

pertaining to the Kaiser's friend's alleged homosexuality. (The future scathing attacks of the journalist Maximilian Harden thus partially had their roots in the attempts of Count Rantzau and his supporters to undermine Emperor William's favorite and their adversary.) Whatever the degree of accuracy contained in Bülow's statements, Eulenburg, soon after he assumed the Bavarian post, found himself one of the "whipping boys" of the pro-Bismarck faction. He had emerged as a national figure and thus stood vulnerable to the criticism likely to be heaped upon any person of influence.<sup>16</sup>

Eulenburg's appointment did not resolve another pressing issue--the attempt by Holstein and others to secure Waldersee's dismissal. The General had retained his position as Chief of the General Staff, and in January 1891 Holstein again called on Eulenburg. This time he held that Eulenburg was damaging William's image by refusing to take a strong stance against Waldersee. To the public it seemed that the Kaiser feared the General; he was a puppet in everyone's eyes but his own. Holstein continued by suggesting to Eulenburg that rather than blatantly working upon William to fire his Chief of Staff, he should urge the Kaiser to make Waldersee a commander of an army corps. Such an appointment, among other things, would keep the General out of the political

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<sup>16</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 57; Rich, Holstein, I, 305.

arena. Judging from the events of the following weeks, Eulenburg, both through his own direct influence and that of others, apparently complied with this request. On January 27, 1891, the Kaiser called Waldersee to his office and asked him to take command of the Ninth Army Corps at Altona (near Hamburg). Waldersee, numbed by this action, at first suspected that Caprivi and Holstein had engineered the act. Only later would he realize that Eulenburg had also contributed to his removal.<sup>17</sup> Unsurprisingly, a friend of Holstein's, General Alfred von Schlieffen, replaced Waldersee as Chief of the General Staff.<sup>18</sup>

The problems of Bismarck and Waldersee aside, Eulenburg soon found other challenges which made his tenure at Munich less pleasant than anticipated. The ultramontanists exercised formidable influence in Bavaria and, though the faction did not control the Crailsheim ministry, Eulenburg, a Prussian Protestant, found himself resented by many in his adopted city. Also the anti-Prussian newspaper, Bayerisches Vaterland, attacked Eulenburg from every corner, causing him to remark on occasion that a united Germany did not exist.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Waldersee, Denkwürdigkeiten, II, 177-188; Rich, Holstein, I., 205; E. p. K., I, 625, 637.

<sup>18</sup> Rich, Holstein, I, 305; Burmeister, "Philipp Eulenburg-Hertefeld," does not indicate that it was above all Holstein's constant belaboring of Eulenburg to do so that virtually drove the Kaiser's friend to prevail upon William II to sack Waldersee.

<sup>19</sup> Haller, Aus dem Leben, 62.

Some aspects of Bavarian court life, however, diverted Eulenburg from the cares of his office. Unlike his predecessor, Eulenburg did enjoy popularity with intellectuals of Munich and impressed them with his knowledge of arts and cultural affairs. In spite of his religious affiliation, he also initiated favorable relations with the Catholic Church hierarchy of that city. The Papal Nuncio, Cardinal Agliardi, one gathers, found Eulenburg a fine host, especially when the latter expressed sympathy for the Catholic's attempt to obtain control of the Christian churches in Jerusalem.<sup>20</sup> Cardinal Hohenlohe, primate of the Bavarian Church, also got on well with Eulenburg. Finally, Eulenburg acted as an intermediary between Pope Leo XIII and William II when the latter visited Rome, emphasizing to his chief the common conservative bond shared by the Catholic Church and the German government.<sup>21</sup> For the most part, then, it may be assumed that Eulenburg found his Munich post satisfying--a difficult position but one which allowed him to demonstrate his social and diplomatic talents to an outstanding degree.

Though Eulenburg may have been officially stationed at Munich during the initial years of the Caprivi regime, this situation did not prevent his continuing to exercise his political influence upon the Kaiser and others back in

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<sup>20</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 63; E. p. K., I, 698; Eulenburg did, however, find Agliardi's network of spies annoying.

<sup>21</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 63.

Berlin. Two major controversies which involved Eulenburg during this time were the Army Bill of 1891 and the Zedlitz School Bill crisis of the following year. Eulenburg, along with Holstein, also played a greater role than anyone else in fostering the superficial reconciliation between William and Bismarck which occurred in January 1894. Finally, Eulenburg influenced the turn of events surrounding the resignation of Chancellor Leo von Caprivi. These and other situations brought Holstein and Eulenburg to the zenith of their influence in the realm of German domestic policy.

The Army Bill emerged from various schemes, some dating from the Bismarck era, to reorganize the German military. A so-called "Little Army Bill," calling for increases in military personnel and the development of artillery, passed the Reichstag in 1890. Emperor William and his General Staff, especially General von Schieffen, however, found the proposal too confining and wished to see a more potent piece of legislation enacted, one which among other things would provide for a compulsory three-year military service period for German youths. William expressed his views to Chancellor von Caprivi, who, despite his military background, considered such a proposal unfeasible and offensive to the Reichstag parties of the Left and Center. The Chancellor wished to retain the present two-year compulsory service, and therefore met with General Hans von Kaltenborn, Prussian Minister of War, to draw up a plan whereby increases

in appropriations for the army could be facilitated only if compulsory military service remained at two years. The Kaiser, upon hearing this news, immediately expressed opposition to this limitation, next acceded to Caprivi's proposal, and then went back to his original stance. The Chancellor apparently did not take William seriously. Refusing to concede to the Kaiser's demands for a three-year service period, Caprivi threatened resignation. Such an action, he calculated, would draw his chief back into the moderates' ranks and prevent his government from losing the support of its more liberal constituents.<sup>22</sup>

Eulenburg and Holstein did not regard William's behavior with Caprivi's casualness. Holstein called Eulenburg to Berlin, where he informed him of the necessity for the Kaiser to agree to the two-year proposal. First Holstein emphasized the need for appeasing the South German states, because they would never approve the "Prussian" three-year plan. The Gray Eminence also saw the Kaiser's approval of the two-year plan as a counter to General von Waldersee and Herbert von Bismarck, both of whom he believed were attempting to foment a Reichstag crisis.<sup>23</sup> Holstein thus urged Eulenburg to influence the Kaiser's decision, a difficult task

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<sup>22</sup>John Alden Nichols, Germany After Bismarck (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), 206-208, hereinafter cited as Nichols, Germany After Bismarck; Rich, Holstein, I, 376.

<sup>23</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 376.

for one who personally favored the three-year proposal but did not wish to see the dissolution of the German parliament over the issue. Holstein's imploring apparently worked wonders, for within a few days after he made his suggestion to Eulenburg news came that William had agreed to Caprivi's Army Bill. Moreover, whereas the Kaiser had previously demanded immediate action on the military proposal, he now agreed to postpone the legislation until a more feasible time.<sup>24</sup>

Eulenburg was to discover that Holstein nevertheless refused to believe, in view of William's erratic nature, that the Kaiser would stand by this commitment. Wishing to prevent the Kaiser from overextending his personal influence, Holstein wrote to Eulenburg on July 17, 1891, and asked that he ensure that William understand his imperial prerogatives under the Constitution of 1871. He also requested that William be advised concerning his influence in the South German states, hoping that through Eulenburg's instruction, William would approve the more politically expedient military proposal, and thereby prevent a resurgence of

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<sup>24</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 376. Burmeister, "Eulenburg," 118-119, barely mentions that Holstein instigated Eulenburg's action in bringing William II to modify his position on the duration period of universal military service. Burmeister also fails to pay adequate attention to the fact that Eulenburg actually shared William's original viewpoint on the matter. Had it not been for Holstein's pressuring him at every turn, it is highly doubtful that Eulenburg would have had any interest in changing the Kaiser's mind.



particularism throughout the south.<sup>25</sup>

Holstein's precautions proved necessary. Soon after Eulenburg received Holstein's request concerning the Kaiser's prerogatives, the Foreign Office functionary got a report from Alfred Kiderlen-Wächter, one of the Imperial circle, asserting that the Kaiser had again placed a large-scale army reorganization plan under consideration. Undoubtedly the three-year plan would again become a subject of controversy. Furthermore, Kiderlen held this time that William planned to overcome the opposition of Chancellor von Caprivi by obtaining the support of individual members of the imperial government. Holstein found this prospect alarming and again contacted Eulenburg, asking him to prevent William from executing this plan. The Gray Eminence, also aware that Eulenburg might be loath to step on the Kaiser's toes, then contacted Chancellor von Caprivi and asked him to align himself with General von Schlieffen in support of the two-year proposal. Judging from Eulenburg's account of his conversation with William regarding the bill, this action constituted a wise move on Holstein's part. The Kaiser apparently would not listen to his friend's imploring, believing that both his three-year "apprenticeship" in government service and divine right of monarchs prevented

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<sup>25</sup>Helmuth von Rogge, ed., Friedrich von Holstein: Lebensbekenntnis in Briefen an eine Frau (Berlin: Ullstein, 1932), 160, hereinafter cited as Rogge, Lebensbekenntnis; Rich, Holstein, I, 378.

him from compromising on the issue. The Reichstag, not he, should change in the event that the legislation failed to pass.<sup>26</sup> Thus Eulenburg proved ineffective in this situation. For that reason, Holstein now decided that only through the combination of Caprivi's and Schlieffen's influence could William be made to see the light.<sup>27</sup>

Holstein's efforts seemed to receive a notable setback, however, at Kiel, where the Altona Commandant, nowadays Waldersee, came to meet with William on the latter's Nordlandreise and halfway persuaded him to oppose the Army Bill. True to his erratic personality, however, the Kaiser changed his mind when he came back to Chancellor von Caprivi's proximity on his return to Berlin, and agreed to an "experimental" two-year service. He also agreed to delay army reorganization until the winter of 1892-93. A month after his return from Kiel, however, William again changed his mind and in a conversation with Eulenburg again confided that he would consider dropping Caprivi if the latter continued his resistance to Imperial proposals. At this point, the Chancellor, apparently informed of the Kaiser's plans by Eulenburg, Holstein, or some other source, began to give ground. Rumors of an impending Franco-Russian alliance during the autumn of 1891 probably contributed in large part

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<sup>26</sup> E. p. K., I. 701.

<sup>27</sup> Rogge, Lebensbekenntnis, 160; Rich, Holstein, I, 378.

to his decision. An event such as this would evoke popular sympathy for increased military appropriations.<sup>28</sup> Eulenburg also perceived this situation, and in a letter of October 1891 urged the Kaiser to be wary concerning a visit of Tsar Alexander III to Germany. All Germany suspected Russian intentions, and it seemed that this issue might unite the parties of the Reichstag on the Army Bill.<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, the beginning of another government crisis in January 1892, on the Prussian state level, hampered Eulenburg's efforts at maintaining peace between the Kaiser, Chancellor, and Reichstag.

Count Robert von Zedlitz-Trütschler, a Silesian aristocrat whom William, contrary to the advice of Holstein and Eulenburg, had appointed Prussian Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, introduced a bill for the implementation of a confessional system into the schools of Prussia. This legislation, first presented to the Prussian Landtag in 1891, stipulated that all schools would be confessional and that children belonging to unrecognized or to no specific religious sects would be compelled to receive either the Catholic or Evangelical religious instruction given at the

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<sup>28</sup>D. g. P., III, 346-348; Johann Werdermann, Der Heeresreform unter Caprivi (Griefswald: E. Hartmann, 1928), 34, hereinafter cited as Werdermann, Heeresreform; Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 138-153; cf. Rich, Holstein, I, 378-379.

<sup>29</sup>See E. p. K., I, 719.

particular school each child happened to attend. Local church officials (usually parish priests or pastors) and all teachers would belong to the denomination which was most heavily represented at the individual school.<sup>30</sup> Such a proposal, which promised to favor the Catholic Church especially, would definitely antagonize the liberal parties and precipitate a parliamentary battle. Chancellor von Caprivi, also Prime Minister of Prussia, favored the Zedlitz proposal, however, and believed that the Centrists and Conservatives would align themselves with his government if he backed the legislation. Eulenburg, nominally of the Conservative persuasion, also favored the proposal. Others in positions of influence, however, among them Friedrich von Holstein, considered the Zedlitz Bill a means for precipitating another government crisis.<sup>31</sup>

Eulenburg found Holstein turning to him when the latter saw no hope in successfully manipulating Caprivi, who stood firm in his convictions. Eulenburg was to bring the Kaiser to accept the School Bill as an unfeasible piece of

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<sup>30</sup> Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 160-162; Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 78; Bogdan von Hutten -Czapski, Sechzig Jahre Politik und Gesellschaft (Berlin: E. S. Mittler, 1936), I, 193, hereinafter cited as Hutten-Czapski, Sechzig Jahre.

<sup>31</sup> Ludwig Raschdau, Unter Bismarck und Caprivi: Erinnerungen eines deutschen Diplomaten aus den Jahren 1885-1894 (Berlin: E. S. Mittler, 1939), 249-250, hereinafter cited as Raschdau, Unter Bismarck und Caprivi; Rich, Holstein, I, 380.

legislation. In a letter to William's good friend, Holstein thus asserted that the German people would never tolerate a government which catered to the interest of a "conservative-clericalist group." He further held that Eulenburg should ask Chancellor von Caprivi to oppose any amendment which the Prussian Landtag Committee (the body which examined a proposal before allowing it to be admitted to the main body of the diet) might make in the School Bill. Finally, Holstein advised Eulenburg that the Kaiser should pressure certain members of both the Landtag Committee and Prussian House of Lords to amend the Bill so as to make it less objectionable to liberals and moderate Conservatives. These actions, Holstein felt, would appease both ends of the political spectrum.<sup>32</sup>

Eulenburg responded to Holstein's request in a way not entirely pleasing to the latter. He asserted that he personally favored the Zedlitz Bill because of his religious affinities, but simultaneously realized that the government possessed primarily political motives in attempting to acquire Conservative and Centrist support for the proposal. The South German states, especially, which favored Austria's plans for an alliance with England and wished to see Germany do likewise, needed to be drawn back into the fold. Nevertheless, Eulenburg did not think that the Zedlitz Bill in

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<sup>32</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 380.

itself could align the Reichstag parties behind the Caprivi government. Rather, the enlisting of Conservative and Centrist support with the motive of reforming the German parliamentary system served as a possible method for indirectly acquiring backing for the proposal.<sup>33</sup> Still, one surmises that Eulenburg, in view of his constant complaining about the Bavarian ultramontanes, loathed granting any concessions to the members of the Center party.

Eulenburg's concept soon fell by the wayside, however. Within a month after sending his memorandum to Holstein, he became convinced that the government possessed no intention of initiating parliamentary changes. He therefore wrote William as Holstein had recommended, encouraging opposition to Zedlitz's proposal, which he now saw as a means merely for enticing the Center.<sup>34</sup> He also held, when writing his master, that a government alliance with the Center would make that group the most powerful party in the Reichstag and shatter the influence of the more moderate groups which had been the Empire's pillars of strength. He urged William to reconsider the modified Zedlitz proposal, and appealed to his patriotic sentiments. In the note Eulenburg also emphasized the importance of the unity of the Reich, and how the Center's opposition to the Crown could tear away the South Germans

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<sup>33</sup>D. g. P., III, 358-359; Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 80-81; Rich, Holstein, I, 381.

<sup>34</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 65; Rich, Holstein, I, 381.

from their nominal support of the Imperial government, but also observed that the dominance of the Center apparently was too great a price to pay for this continued support. He then concluded the note with an implication that Zedlitz lacked an understanding of these pitfalls and needed to be "set straight."<sup>35</sup>

To further his cause, Eulenburg also appealed to Holstein, and warned that the latter must make efforts to convince Chancellor von Caprivi of the modified bill's feasibility. Holstein agreed to this advice, both because of Eulenburg's pleas and also because he had begun to suspect Zedlitz-Trützschler of harboring designs on the Imperial Chancellorship. What, at any rate, could be a better reason for undermining the present government? After careful consideration, the Foreign Office functionary warned both Caprivi and William of Zedlitz's motives while simultaneously urging Eulenburg to persuade the Kaiser to make it clear to the Prussian ecclesiastical minister that His Majesty wanted a "moderate" solution to the School Bill controversy.<sup>36</sup>

Eulenburg, after receiving this suggestion, thereafter got a whole series of letters from Holstein beginning January 30, 1892, when the School Bill came before the

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<sup>35</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 66; E. p. K., II, 796-798.

<sup>36</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 381; Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 83.

Prussian Landtag Committee. Holstein proposed that Eulenburg have William pressure Conservative members of the committee to oppose the original Zedlitz Bill, even though he inferred that the school proposal would engender controversy in its modified form. This newly aroused reservation came in large part from the Privy Councillor's receipt of a communication from Georg von Köller, President of the Prussian Chamber of Deputies, in which Köller asserted that the Zedlitz Bill could not be passed even with amendments. It would be easier to kill the proposal in committee and Köller felt that he could accomplish this task.<sup>37</sup> Holstein wrote Eulenburg about this matter, and asserted that he wished to avoid controversy and thus considered the Reichstag deputy's idea a commendable one. Holstein also added that Köller's suggestion would prevent controversy by not providing the pro-Bismarck parties, who opposed the Zedlitz Bill, an opportunity to precipitate dissension.<sup>38</sup>

Philipp zu Eulenburg, as before, acted for reasons of political expediency rather than out of personal conviction. Secretly, on the margin of Holstein's letter, he wrote that he had no intention to writing the Kaiser and extolling the virtues of Köller's ideas. Nevertheless, he continued to deceive Holstein. In a note dated February 22, 1892.

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<sup>37</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 382.

<sup>38</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 382.



Eulenburg held that he possessed reservations about drawing the Kaiser's attention to the consequences of the School Bill. In his attempt to bring Kaiser and Chancellor to an understanding he might instead heighten the growing rift between them. Eulenburg suggested alternatively that Caprivi appoint a new Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs. This would provide the circumstances for the proposal's withdrawal under the pretext of a change in ministers.<sup>39</sup> Holstein, however, wished to retain Köller's ideas. He found support when William, addressing the Brandenburg Provincial Landtag, asserted that "My course is the right one and I shall continue to steer it." Holstein immediately interpreted the Kaiser's speech as an expression of praise for the original Zedlitz proposal, and held that a "discreet hint to Köller would be necessary to get William back in line."<sup>40</sup> Again the Foreign Office official asked for Eulenburg's help.

Eulenburg, still wary of the Center's opportunities under the original bill, believed that a compromise proposal could evolve out of the controversy. Holstein thus momentarily turned his attention to Konstantin von Rössler, head of the Foreign Ministry's press affairs, and asked him and Otto von Helldorf-Bedra, a leader of the moderate

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<sup>39</sup> D. g. P., III, 363; Rich, Holstein, I, 382.

<sup>40</sup> Rich, Holstein, I. 382.

Conservatives, to support his stance.<sup>41</sup> Such actions, however, as future events would demonstrate, bore little fruit.

After Holstein and Eulenburg had set their crucibles glowing, another party entered the picture. William II apparently found Eulenburg's advice worthy of consideration, for on March 17, 1892, at a meeting of the Prussian Crown Council, the Kaiser expressed the desire for a School Bill that would satisfy Conservatives and the Center as well as the moderate parties. Such a suggestion met with disdain from Caprivi, who asserted that he did not think the Center would be willing to make the required concessions. It followed then that, if the proposal still did not satisfy the Center, he would still not acquire support for his administration.

Rather than arguing with his Chancellor at this time, the Kaiser suggested that the School Bill "be postponed for a while." At the same time he remained adamant in his conviction that regardless of what the future held, the proposal should have the support of the moderate parties.<sup>42</sup> Zedlitz, who had also attended the Crown Council meeting, responded to William's challenge at the end of the session by holding that, since the Kaiser would not support the original School Bill, it was mandatory that the Prussian Ecclesiastical Minister

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<sup>41</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 383.

<sup>42</sup>Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 181; Rich, Holstein, I, 383-384.

resign his post. At this juncture Caprivi, who had always favored Zedlitz's proposal, now demonstrated his loyalty to the legislation by asking that he be relieved of his office as Prussian Minister-President.<sup>43</sup> It appears that the Chancellor feared that the defeat of the School Bill in the Prussian Landtag would cause him to lose the body's support because of his identification with that controversial act.

William refused to accept either resignation and demonstrated his capacity for bad timing by leaving for a hunting trip at Rominten in the midst of the crisis. Fortunately for those in Berlin, Eulenburg accompanied his chief on this expedition. Holstein especially found the situation pleasing, simultaneously keeping in contact with the Emperor while informing Eulenburg of the School Bill's progress in the Reichstag. Holstein continued to advise Eulenburg regarding the legislation, holding that Caprivi's resignation would create an avenue for the resurgence of pro-Bismarck forces. Therefore Eulenburg should work on William to install Zedlitz as Prussian Minister of the Interior, a position formerly held by Botho zu Eulenburg, Philipp's cousin. By giving the Ecclesiastical Minister this new office, so Holstein felt, the Kaiser could satisfy Zedlitz and at the same time retain Caprivi in his dual position as Prussian

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<sup>43</sup>Hans Goldschmidt, Das Reich und Preussen im Kampf um die Führung von Bismarck bis 1918 (Berlin: C. Heymann, 1931), 321-322; Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 84.

Minister-President and German Chancellor.<sup>44</sup>

Caprivi, the uncompromising military man, only grasped the consequences of his resignation after actually taking the step of tendering it. On March 20, 1892, he consulted with William and "reassumed" his post as Chancellor and his membership in the Prussian Ministry of State. Naturally enough Chancellor von Caprivi refused to be reinstated in his former position of Prussian Minister-President. This situation precipitated another crisis--whom would the Kaiser appoint to fill the vacant post? Philipp zu Eulenburg recommended his cousin Botho zu Eulenburg to Holstein as a "good natured fellow" who admittedly might have some difficulty in getting along with Caprivi. Holstein himself seemed to prefer Georg von K  ller for the position. The lot fell to Botho, however, and this former Prussian Minister of the Interior's appointment undoubtedly raised eyebrows throughout the Reich. The new Minister-President possessed reactionary views on most issues and would be the last to compromise on the Zedlitz proposal. Even more important, the appointment focused the Empire's attention on Philipp zu Eulenburg. Was the Kaiser's best friend attempting to "rail-road" the School Bill by his cousin's elevation to the Prussian ministerial post? Or was he merely trying to undermine the Caprivi government by indirectly prolonging the crisis

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<sup>44</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 383-384.

through his kinsman? Attacks began to emanate from various circles.<sup>45</sup>

The appointment of Botho zu Eulenburg made the parties of the Left and Center increasingly hostile toward the Zedlitz proposal. Believing now that the Minister-President would not accept a compromise School Bill and that the liberal parties would not accept the original legislation, the supporters of Zedlitz withdrew the bill. Zedlitz himself resigned and Robert Bosse, an old friend of Botho, replaced him. The controversy, however, left its political scars. Chancellor von Caprivi's support of the School Bill had lowered his standing with moderates and liberals. They saw him as an uncompromising Junker aristocrat who placed his own interests before those of the Reichstag. On the other hand, members of the Conservative and Center parties now viewed Caprivi as weak and vacillating because of his inability to secure the bill's passage. Philipp zu Eulenburg undoubtedly suffered because of his suspected engineering of his cousin's appointment.<sup>46</sup> Friedrich von Holstein, on the other hand, emerged relatively unscathed. Through Eulenburg and others he would attempt to rebuild support for the Caprivi government. Though such a response seemed

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<sup>45</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 68-69; D. g. P., III, 365; Raschdau, Unter Bismarck und Caprivi, 249-250; Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 78-88.

<sup>46</sup>Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 191; Rich, Holstein, I, 385; Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 89.

unusual in view of his opposition to Caprivi's stance on many issues, Holstein still saw the strong-willed Dickkopf as a superior alternative to Bismarck or Waldersee.

After the School Bill fiasco, Eulenburg found Holstein conferring with him to devise a plan whereby Caprivi could obtain both moderate and conservative support for his government. To this end, Holstein suggested to Eulenburg that he "cause" the Kaiser to summon Rauchhaupt, the Conservative leader in the Prussian Landtag. William should then inform Rauchhaupt that he hated extremists, many of whom, because of their alignment with Otto von Hammerstein, publisher of the rightist Kreuzzeitung, found themselves branded as members of the "Kreuzzeitung clique." However, the meeting which came about did not accomplish what Holstein had intended. In the Conservative caucus following the School Bill crisis, moderates such as Rauchhaupt and Friedrich Limburg-Stirum went over to the extreme right and Otto von Helldorf-Bedra, leader of the moderate Conservatives, lost his post as party whip in the Reichstag.<sup>47</sup>

Holstein, however, refused to let this setback thwart his attempts for obtaining support for Caprivi. Once again he appealed to Eulenburg, and asserted that it would be necessary for William publicly to acknowledge his support for the moderates in the Reichstag. The Foreign Office

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<sup>47</sup> Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 188; Rich, Holstein, I, 392.

representative also sought to enlist the aid of Botho zu Eulenburg and Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter to acquire the Kaiser's support for a moderate government. Finally, Holstein asked Eulenburg to use any means possible in order to regain for Helldorf-Bedra his former influence in the Conservative party. These suggestions Eulenburg executed, but to no avail. The Conservatives would not back the Chancellor.<sup>48</sup>

Eulenburg's services again got enlisted when Holstein realized that he could not obtain the support of the conservative parties. Eulenburg was to garner the backing of private individuals who could piece together a coalition to save Caprivi. He urged Eulenburg to influence Botho, who possessed influence in Conservative circles, to obtain support for the Chancellor. The Kaiser's friend apparently carried out Holstein's requests concerning his cousin, for he wrote from the 1892 Nordlandreise that "His Majesty charges Botho to establish the closest possible contact with Caprivi and to stand by him against all press problems."<sup>49</sup> It is also probable that Eulenburg out of self-interest urged Botho to stand by Caprivi. During the year 1892 Caprivi had recommended Eulenburg as the successor to Prince Reuss for the German ambassadorship to Vienna, and one assumes that the

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<sup>48</sup> Rich, Holstein, I, 392.

<sup>49</sup> D. g. P., III, 372; Rich, Holstein, I, 392.

latter put forth an extra effort to obtain backing for the Chancellor when consulting with Botho.<sup>50</sup> In the midst of the chancellorship crisis, however, an old monster again reared its ugly head, and thwarted the attempts of Eulenburg and Holstein to form a pro-Capriivi coalition.

The Army Bill controversy had remained unresolved during the interim School Bill crisis. Shortly after the defeat of the Zedlitz Bill, Capriivi, meeting with Hans von Kaltenborn, Prussian Minister of War, and Alfred von Schlieffen, Chief of the German General Staff, drew up a new military proposal, one that contained a definitive provision for a compulsory two-year service. This bill, when presented to the Reichstag, met with strong opposition from the Conservatives. To make matters worse, William, who for so long had expressed ambivalent feelings about the Army proposal, hurt Capriivi's cause in August 1892, when, in an address to his commanding officers, he criticized the Reichstag's clamor for two-year service and held that he would make any necessary changes in the Army's service requirements. The Kaiser also stated that he would retain the three-year service.<sup>51</sup> Capriivi expected

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<sup>50</sup> Holstein, upon hearing this news, urged the postponement of Eulenburg's appointment so as not to incite public opinion against William for placing his best friend in this post. Rich, Holstein, I, 393.

<sup>51</sup> Raschdau, Unter Bismarck und Capriivi, 271; Rich, Holstein, I, 395.



William to change his mind, however, for he continued to work with Kaltenborn and Schlieffen, finally drawing up a bill which would preserve the three-year service in principle but in practice reduce compulsory conscription time to two years.<sup>52</sup>

Eulenburg and Holstein held mixed attitudes toward Caprivi's new proposal. Eulenburg wrote the Foreign Office functionary and told him that the Chancellor's proposal would pass the Reichstag, but that the Center, the pivotal party, would demand huge concessions in return for their votes. One gathers that Eulenburg, who had supported the three-year military service proposal anyway, considered ultramontane ascendancy a greater threat to the Reich than another skirmish in the national assembly. Holstein agreed that concessions would probably have to be made to the Center party but that they should be kept to a minimum. Like Eulenburg, he believed that it would be better to postpone or shelve Caprivi's military bill than to allow the Center to dominate the Reichstag.<sup>53</sup> Later in 1892, however, as Caprivi's position became increasingly tenuous, Holstein abandoned this stance and decided that, even at the risk of an ultramontane resurgence in Bavaria, every effort should be made to obtain support for Caprivi's Army Bill.

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<sup>52</sup> Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 213; Rich, Holstein, I, 395.

<sup>53</sup> E. p. K., II, 926; Rich, Holstein, I, 396.

To this end Holstein continued to work for the passage of the Chancellor's de facto two-year proposal. Again he called upon Eulenburg to obtain William's support for the Army Bill. Eulenburg responded somewhat half-heartedly. He wrote a long letter to William, appealing to his friend's desire for both popular acclaim and respect in the eyes of his fellow monarchs. He further emphasized that an administration unable to increase its military forces would appear feeble in the eyes of the rest of the world. He held that Bismarck and Waldersee were attempting to defeat the Bill and discredit William. Eulenburg asserted finally that if William attacked the Reichstag's passage of the compromise bill, it would appear to other nations that that body, not the Kaiser, dominated Germany's political arena.<sup>54</sup>

Eulenburg's pleading seemed to succeed. On September 30, 1892, he wrote Holstein and asserted that William had given his oral approval to the legislation, and that the Chancellor could proceed with his preparations as originally intended. In October 1892, the Kaiser formally approved the Army Bill (with its implied two-year service), and on November 23 Chancellor von Caprivi submitted his proposal to the Reichstag.

The Caprivi Army Bill precipitated numerous hours of

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<sup>54</sup> Haller, Aus dem Leben, 89-91; E. p. K., II, 961-963; Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 213-214; Burmeister, "Philipp Eulenburg-Hertefeld," 147.

controversy. That master of intrigue Friedrich von Holstein went from faction to faction trying to rally support for the modified act. He first approached the moderate Conservative Helldorf-Bedra and attempted to convince him of the bill's feasibility, promising a Conservative resurgence in the Reichstag if the proposal were approved. Simultaneously Holstein attacked the reactionary "Conservative Party Congress," a group of Kreuzzeitung and pro-Stöcker (see above) forces which met in Berlin in December 1892 to adopt, among other things, a series of anti-Semitic resolutions. Holstein's objections to this convocation included a letter to Philipp zu Eulenburg in which he asked the diplomat to convince the Kaiser that these rightists, in addition to their prejudicial and militaristic affinities, stood for the elimination of private property. Holstein further extended his opposition to the convocation by contacting Chancellor von Caprivi and asking him to have the Kaiser denounce the demagogic Conservative Party Congress.<sup>55</sup> William, in his usual dynamic, if not to say foolhardy, manner, did not effectively carry out this desire. The Kaiser merely confronted Otto von Manteuffel, a leader of the Conservatives, and told him that he and the other members of his party "should all be hanged"--an ineffectual reprimand.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> D.g.P., III, 378-379; Rich, Holstein, I, 397-398; Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 238.

<sup>56</sup> Rich, Holstein, I, 398.

Nevertheless, the indefatigable Holstein refused to be daunted by the mishap. Again he urged Eulenburg to make William deliver more effective lines to opponents of the Army Bill.

After a short lull in their correspondence, Eulenburg received another communication, dated December 26, 1892. This time he reminded the diplomat that the Kaiser would be addressing his generals in his annual New Year's Day speech, and that Eulenburg must see that William used that occasion for expressing support for Caprivi's Army Bill. Eulenburg executed the request by appealing once again to William's desire for peer recognition. Like the Reichstag, William's generals needed to know who was in command.<sup>57</sup> Eulenburg's plan consequently worked effectively as the Kaiser took a bullying approach when addressing his generals, and even went so far as to threaten to "sweep away the Reichstag," if the Army Bill did not pass. This performance nevertheless proved a hollow accomplishment in view of what followed when the Army Bill came before the Reichstag.

William's exhortations did not sway the parties of the Right (National Liberals, Conservatives) from their stance regarding the three-year military service. Holstein now reluctantly enlisted, with Eulenburg's assistance, the aid of the Center and eventually the Papacy in order to secure the Army Bill's passage. Early in 1893 he received word that

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<sup>57</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 92; E. p. K., II, 1001.

Pope Leo XIII had recently hinted to the Prussian Minister at the Vatican, Otto von Bülow, that he would appreciate some type of gift from the German government for his jubilee celebration. Holstein reasoned that if William would make the desired donations, perhaps a few thousand marks, the Center would support the Army Bill. He conveyed this idea to Philipp zu Eulenburg. The latter possessed doubts concerning the idea's workability, but nevertheless passed it on to Chancellor von Caprivi. Holstein also contacted Foreign Secretary Marschall about the proposal, and sought to enlist the aid of Bavarian Prince Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, Governor of Alsace and an influential Catholic, and of Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter concerning the "bribe" scheme. Holstein's ploy bore no fruit, however. Neither the Chancellor nor Marschall would support the idea of a Papal bribe, feeling that the proposal degraded the government's integrity. Furthermore, both believed that the Pope's pleasure would not change the attitude of the Center toward the Army Bill.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Helmuth Rogge, Holstein und Hohenlohe: New Beiträge zu Friedrich von Holsteins Tätigkeit als Mitarbeiter Bismarcks und als Ratgeber Hohenlohes (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlag-Anstalt, 1957), 396-398, hereinafter cited as Rogge, Holstein und Hohenlohe; Rich, Holstein, I, 399; Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 107; Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, Denkwürdigkeiten des Chlodwig Fürst zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, ed. K. A. Müller (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlag-Anstalt, 1931), II, 496, hereinafter cited as Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten.

Holstein continued his attempts to woo the Center, advising Eulenburg that the Kaiser might tell leaders of the party that he would not oppose the recall of the Redemptorist monastic order to Germany if the military bill passed the Reichstag. Although the Kaiser's resultant action caused a number of Catholic leaders to declare openly their support for Caprivi's Army Bill, Holstein soon experienced disappointment. William, in one of his public utterances, now openly asserted that he would not concede to the Center and support the modified proposal. With nowhere to turn, Holstein ceased his activities and allowed the government's bill to go to the Reichstag's examining committee, which rejected the proposal on March 17, 1893.<sup>59</sup>

Holstein, at this point forced to leave Berlin in order to have a cataract operation, continued to enlist the services of Eulenburg in spite of this absence. This time Eulenburg served as an informant on Reichstag activity. Holstein had good reason to maintain a watch on that body, for a movement to redesign Caprivi's Army Bill, led by the Chancellor and Karl von Huene, a leader of the conservative Centrists, had gained momentum after the original military proposal had met defeat at the hands of the Reichstag committee. From mid-March until the end of April 1893, these men conferred, finally drawing up a compromise bill that would contain

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<sup>59</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 400.

unprecedented concessions to the Center Party. Paramount among them was a provision increasing the total peacetime strength of the Army to sixth-sevenths of that suggested by the original Army Bill.<sup>60</sup> Other parties appeared to support the new proposal's passage. The Kaiser and his wife paid a courtesy call at the Vatican, thus unintentionally garnering support for a bill which granted the Center increased influence in the Reichstag.<sup>61</sup> This gesture, generally beneficial to the proposal, nevertheless alienated many Centrists, especially the Bavarian ultramontanes, who found the Papacy's affinity for France disturbing and therefore refused to cooperate with the Huene-Caprivi proposal.<sup>62</sup> Eulenburg, for his part, had accompanied the Kaiser on his visit to Rome and assisted in obtaining the Pope's support for the new bill.<sup>63</sup> This time, it seemed the measure would have a chance.

On May 3, 1893, Huene, full of optimism, presented his bill to the Reichstag. His feelings soon changed when after three days the majority of the assembly (including the Center) rejected the proposal. Chancellor von Caprivi at this point dissolved the Reichstag and called for new elections to be held on June 15. Obviously he hoped for the removal of the

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<sup>60</sup> Werdermann, Heeresreform, 98-100; cf. Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 252.

<sup>61</sup> Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 252.

<sup>62</sup> Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 252.

<sup>63</sup> Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 252; Rich, Holstein,

die-hard conservatives who would not compromise on the new bill. At the same time he and others used this opportunity on election day, when the parties of the Right brought a number of supporters of the modified Army Bill into the Reichstag. When the third reading of the Huene-Caprivi Bill took place on July 4, 1893, fate smiled on Caprivi and his proposal passed by a vote of 201 to 185.<sup>64</sup> The two-year military service remained and the Center party now found itself more influential than any previous administration. Eulenburg's ability to persuade Emperor William to modify his stance undoubtedly contributed to this success.

Philipp zu Eulenburg, in the midst of the Army and Zedlitz School Bill controversies, also found himself confronting yet another challenge looming over the Caprivi administration. Otto von Bismarck, living in retirement at Friedrichsruh, consistently lashed out against his successor's government during its initial years. The ex-Chancellor vehemently attacked, through his mouthpiece the Hamburger Nachrichten, Caprivi's moderate stance toward labor, his advocacy of limiting diplomatic relations with Russia, and the misunderstandings with the Kaiser. The government could endure this demoralizing treatment for only a limited time. Thus a number of parties, almost from the day of Bismarck's

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I, 400.

<sup>64</sup>Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 254-257.



dismissal, wished to facilitate a reconciliation between William II and Bismarck. Here Eulenburg entered the picture, this time as one of the major persons involved in formulating a truce between the Emperor and ex-Chancellor.

Eulenburg had passively accepted William's dismissal of Chancellor von Bismarck in March 1890. At the same time, however, he had refrained from encouraging further animosity between the two men. In a message to the Kaiser soon after Bismarck's departure, Eulenburg asserted that under no circumstances would he "discredit the name of Bismarck," and begged for William's cooperation concerning this matter.<sup>65</sup> Eulenburg also attempted to maintain his personal ties with the Bismarcks, especially with Herbert, whom he had known since childhood. Shortly after the old Chancellor's resignation, he wrote Herbert, and urged that he retain his post as Foreign Secretary, although he personally suspected the younger Bismarck of having designs on the Imperial Chancellery.<sup>66</sup> In this instance Eulenburg even went so far as to enlist William's aid in keeping Herbert in office:

I really regret what I hear from Berlin about our friend Herbert. He seems to have lost his head and Your Majesty will have a difficult time holding him. I am very sorry to have to say this.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 95.

<sup>66</sup>Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 238.

<sup>67</sup>E. p. K., I. 511.

Several factors seemed to make opportunities for reconciliation few and far between. Only William could initiate a truce between himself and the ex-Chancellor. Bismarck, a national hero, possessed no real reason for extending himself to the Emperor. Both the military (represented by General von Waldersee) and Foreign Office (especially Friedrich von Holstein) resented the old man and wished to perpetuate the animosity between him and the Kaiser. Finally, Bismarck's own behavior, characterized by such actions as granting interviews to anti-Prussian journalists and implicitly attacking Emperor William in the Hamburger Nachrichten, further lessened the possibilities for reaching an understanding between himself and the Kaiser.<sup>68</sup>

In the spring of 1891, after having unsuccessfully attempted to persuade William to send birthday and Christmas greetings to the Bismarcks, Eulenburg finally saw a new opportunity for engineering a peace between the Kaiser and ex-Chancellor. Obviously attempting to form a coalition against the Caprivi government, Bismarck announced in February that he planned to run as a National Liberal for a seat in the Reichstag. Eulenburg, undoubtedly aware of the ex-Chancellor's motives, nevertheless wrote Friedrich von Holstein and expressed the opinion that in the event that Bismarck took a seat in the German Reichstag, the Kaiser

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<sup>68</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 96.

could offer Bellevue Palace in Berlin as a residence for the new deputy. Holstein refused to cooperate in this gambit. Maybe in part because William now appeared also to support reconciliation, Eulenburg, then, uncharacteristically, acted against the wishes of the Foreign Office functionary. He wrote William, implying that a political rapprochement between himself and Bismarck would promote the growth of Russian hegemony in East Europe, and simultaneously alienate Austria, Italy, and the South German states from the Second Reich. Simultaneously, a personal "handshake" and a superficial meeting with the old man could do much to improve the Kaiser's public image:

Your Majesty's personal posture in the Empire has not improved because of the severe accentuation of your personal regime on the most diverse occasions. A great resentment against Your Majesty exists in the nation. We must get out of this situation. With such a negative atmosphere in the country, experiments of such a dangerous nature can lead to catastrophes, the character of which we are unable to foresee. But, on the other hand, precisely because Your Majesty has stressed the personal element so strongly, the arm's distance from Bismarck means the most horrible fiasco.<sup>69</sup>

At the same time, however, Eulenburg shrewdly informed Holstein that he saw no hope of reconciliation between William and Bismarck in the near future. In this way he allayed Holstein's suspicions concerning his stance on the ex-Chancellor's

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<sup>69</sup> Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 284; cf. Burmeister "Philipp Eulenburg-Hertefeld," 152.

relationship with the Emperor.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, these actions had little immediate effect on William's decisions in dealing with Bismarck, as he told Eulenburg "not to lose himself in such foolishness" by designing a reconciliation between himself and Bismarck.<sup>71</sup> Eulenburg's planned rapprochement, in the Kaiser's opinion, seemed a mere dream.

The year 1892, however, witnessed softening in William's view of reconciliation. Eulenburg's influence, combined with that of the Hamburger Nachrichten, had apparently moved the Kaiser, for, on April 24, he paid a visit to Baron Carl von Stumm, a wealthy industrialist and outspoken partisan of ex-Chancellor Bismarck. Negotiations between the Kaiser and Stumm resulted in the latter obtaining William's permission to negotiate with Bismarck. This action in turn encouraged others to join in fostering an "understanding." Reichstag Deputy Wilhelm von Kardorff, for instance, visited Friedrichsrueh and reported the "Kaiser's favorable disposition" to the Chancellor and his son.<sup>72</sup> William himself went so far as to send a congratulatory telegram to Herbert von Bismarck on the occasion of his engagement to Countess Marguerite Hoyos (May 4, 1892). For two years previously William had neglected even to send birthday greetings to members of the Bismarck clan--

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<sup>70</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 103-104.

<sup>71</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 285.

<sup>72</sup>Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 193-194.

now he wanted to make peace with the family.

Holstein re-entered the picture at this juncture, attempting to thwart these reconciliation measures. He wrote Eulenburg and asserted that William's actions would undoubtedly undermine Germany's ascendancy in Europe. The nation would witness, with the renewal of the Bismarck influence, the dissolution of the Triple Alliance. Eventually Germany would fall subject to Russia, so Holstein held. Eulenburg handled this situation with his usual dexterity. He wrote reassuringly to Holstein on May 18, 1892, holding that "His Majesty doesn't wish to hear of a reconciliation."<sup>73</sup> In further correspondence from a Rominten hunting trip, Eulenburg, while in reality attempting to foster reconciliation, deceitfully conveyed to Holstein the impression that he was doing his best to discourage the "shake hands."<sup>74</sup>

Holstein in fact did not find Eulenburg's alleged efforts to harness William satisfying, and thus sought other allies in his struggle against Bismarck. One of these, Chancellor von Caprivi, agreed to involve himself in the sending of what was to become known as the "Uriah telegram," and thus seriously undermine efforts at reconciliation. The Chancellor, who himself feared usurpation by the Bismarcks, consulted with Holstein shortly after Herbert von Bismarck announced his

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<sup>73</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 295-296; Rich, Holstein, I, 387; Rogge, Holstein und Hohenlohe, 387.

<sup>74</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 387.

engagement to Countess Hoyos (see above). Holstein urged Caprivi to send a telegram to Vienna, where Herbert had planned to hold the wedding festivities. The message would request Prince Reuss, German Ambassador at the Austrian capital, to restrict his relations with the Bismarcks during the wedding celebrations.<sup>75</sup> Caprivi agreed to the proposal, and unknowingly contributed to his own political demise.

Holstein's plan, when discovered, generated formidable opposition. Count von Waldersee, recently deposed from his General Staff chieftaincy and undoubtedly attributing his misfortune in part to Holstein, visited Emperor William and impressed upon him once again the need for reconciliation between himself and Bismarck. Holstein, hearing of Waldersee's activities, sought to counter his influence by writing Eulenburg. This he did, urging him to inform William that Bismarck had designs for stirring up support in Saxony and Austria. Thus it was the Kaiser's duty, Holstein held, to write the rulers of these states and urge them to resist Bismarck's influence.<sup>76</sup> William, after listening to Eulenburg, agreed to execute Holstein's urgings. On June 13, 1892, he wrote a letter to Emperor Francis Joseph, reminding him of the ex-Chancellor's secret dealings with Russia and his undermining of the Triple Alliance. The Kaiser concluded by

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<sup>75</sup>Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 197-199.

<sup>76</sup>E. p. K., I, 889; Rich, Holstein, I, 387.

asking his fellow monarch not to receive the contumacious vassal when he came to Vienna for Herbert's wedding. On June 14, 1892, William wrote a similar note to the Saxon military attache in Berlin.<sup>77</sup> The Vienna recipients complied with these requests but the plan did not fulfill Holstein's expectations. Bismarck, angered by the rebuff, continued his attacks. At the same time, when word of the "Uriah incident" reached the press, the Caprivi government found itself an object of public indignation. Simultaneously, Bismarck returned from Vienna a hero, denouncing the Chancellor amidst the cheers of the multitudes.<sup>78</sup>

At this point Eulenburg and others realized that a reconciliation between William and Bismarck, whatever Holstein's objections, would have to be engendered. An opportunity for such action came in September 1893, when the ex-Chancellor fell ill with a lung inflammation. At first only Bismarck's physician, Dr. Schweninger and the old man's family knew of the infirmity--Eulenburg apparently received the news of the illness through secret means. Having obtained the information, Eulenburg then implored the Kaiser to telegraph a message in which the latter would express a hope for the ex-Chancellor's recovery. At first William refused to listen, but his friend's persistence finally led him to send a note

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<sup>77</sup> Rich, Holstein, I, 387.

<sup>78</sup> Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 203.

to Schweninger in which he inquired as to the state of Prince Bismarck's health. Chancellor von Caprivi also indirectly aided Eulenburg by suggesting to the Kaiser that he offer one of the imperial palaces to Bismarck as a winter abode. Even Holstein, much as he feared a reconciliation, found the Chancellor's proposal agreeable, for it seemed that by this method Caprivi could pacify the pro-Bismarckian forces without sacrificing the authority of his position. Holstein warned Eulenburg, however, that further attempts at reconciliation would produce unfortunate consequences, especially in regard to the Russian question, and should be avoided.<sup>79</sup>

The good intentions of Eulenburg and Caprivi accomplished little. Bismarck politely refused the palace offer, causing William to renew his bitterness toward the ex-Chancellor. Those surrounding the Kaiser, however, refused to see their efforts at reconciliation fail. On January 21, 1894, various court parties sent a message to Herbert von Bismarck, asking him to attend an official function in Berlin. The move failed, however, because the Kaiser, upon seeing Herbert, deliberately ignored him during the entire affair. At this juncture William again displayed his erratic nature. Less than twenty-four hours after the court festivity, the Kaiser sent his aide-de-camp, Count Kuno von Moltke, to Friedrichsruh

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<sup>79</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 106; Rich, Holstein, I, 407; Raschdau, Unter Bismarck und Caprivi, 301-303.



with a choice bottle of Steinberger Kabinett wine. Moltke also put forth an inquiry concerning Bismarck's health and extended him an invitation to attend the January 27 celebration of William's thirty-fifth birthday.<sup>80</sup> Eulenburg, for his part, found these moves toward reconciliation pleasing. At the same time, however, he urged the Kaiser to exercise discretion when dealing with Bismarck:

It is now, as ever, the intention of the collected fronde to ruin Your Majesty's present government and place Your Majesty personally in a [position of] dependence similar to that which one uses for a recalcitrant child. . . . With satisfaction, I recognize in both dispatches the finesse with which Your Majesty has operated. Your Majesty has "overlooked" Herbert--but has sent personally a greeting to the old Prince. Only by the continuation of such a tactic will Your Majesty's dignity not suffer.<sup>81</sup>

This letter contrasted formidably with the pleadings of Holstein, Kiderlen-Wächter, and Marschall, who between them sent five telegrams and six letters urging Eulenburg to prevent Bismarck from coming to Berlin. Undoubtedly Eulenburg realized that a full-fledged reconciliation between Kaiser and Chancellor could lead to dangerous political repercussions. Yet if the Caprivi regime and William were to regain the confidence of the public, the parties would have to foster at least a superficial peace-making gesture. The Kaiser's friend thus sought to sponsor such a development, and

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<sup>80</sup>Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 199.

<sup>81</sup>Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 258.

therefore encouraged his chief to go through with the meeting.<sup>82</sup>

Events turned out favorably. Bismarck entered Berlin in triumph and received embraces and kisses from William and his cohort when he visited the Imperial Palace. The old man spent the afternoon of January 26 receiving callers, including his opponent Botho zu Eulenburg. Caprivi and Marschall, also political enemies of Bismarck, sent their calling cards to the ex-Chancellor's abode. Meanwhile, William and Bismarck spent their time together discussing the mundane, and avoided political topics. On February 19, 1894, the Kaiser returned Bismarck's call at Friedrichsruh. In the eyes of the populace, the two had made peace.<sup>83</sup>

Yet all was not well for the Caprivi regime. The Chancellor undoubtedly felt threatened by Bismarck's return.

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<sup>82</sup>Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 207; Erich Eyck, Das persönliche Regiment Wilhelms II: politische Geschichte des deutschen Kaiserreiches von 1890 bis 1914 (Erlenbach-Zürich: Rentsch, 1948), 82-83, hereinafter cited as Eyck, Wilhelm II; Raschdau, Unter Bismarck und Caprivi, 331; cf. Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 300.

<sup>83</sup>Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 301. Burmeister, "Philipp Eulenburg-Hertefeld," in general seriously de-emphasizes Holstein's role in the William II-Bismarck reconciliation affair. He gives little consideration to the fact that Holstein attempted to prevent Eulenburg from achieving a reconciliation between the Kaiser and Prince Bismarck while Eulenburg himself was trying to formulate such an accommodation. It was Holstein who urged the Caprivi government to send the "Uriah Letter" to Vienna (cf. Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 197-199; E. p. K., II, 889; Rich, Holstein, I, 387). When Bismarck became ill in 1893, Holstein, who had softened to the point of favoring Caprivi's idea of offering one of the imperial palaces to Bismarck as a winter abode, nevertheless, still urged Eulenburg against any further concessions to the

Was William attempting to tell him that his predecessor stood next in line for the Reich's second office? The scribblings of an unknown journalist in the satirical weekly Kladderadatsch, however, did even more to suggest public dissatisfaction with the Caprivi administration. On December 24, 1893, Kladderadatsch published an article entitled "A Fourth at Skat" in which three card players discussed the need for an additional party to complete their foursome. The participants--Oyster-Lover (Friedrich von Holstein), the slovenly backstabbing Spätzle (Alfred von Kiderlen-Wächter, whose Swabian background the journal satirized), and Count Troubador (Philipp zu Eulenburg)--had been exercising considerable influence in Imperial circles, slandering "many of the truest knights so that they had lost their positions and had been sent away from the palace."<sup>84</sup> The writer found Oyster-Lover and Spätzle especially despicable, whereas he depicted Eulenburg as a mere clown whose major intrigues concerned his own appointment to Vienna and his engineering the appointment of his friend Baron Axel Varnbüler as Württemberg's Minister to Berlin. The journal also accused Eulenburg of usurping the Vienna post of the Bismarckian Prince Reuss.<sup>85</sup>

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Bismarcks. (cf. Haller, Aus dem Leben, 106; Rich, Holstein, I, 407). Eulenburg's disregard of Holstein's "instructions" eventually precipitated a split between the two men.

<sup>84</sup>Rogge, Holstein und Hohenlohe, 401; Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 325.

<sup>85</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 403-405; Burmeister, "Philipp

While Kiderlen found the journal's satire amusing and hardly offensive, both Eulenburg and Holstein considered the Kladderadatsch's attacks subversive and a threat to their influence. Holstein instantly focused on safeguarding his own personal reputation, and thus fervently sought to counter the weekly's attacks. He wrote Eulenburg, requesting that he approach Emperor William and ask him to order a search for the author of the Kladderadatsch article. Eulenburg executed Holstein's request, and, when addressing William, emphasized the shame that a man of "Holstein's good nature" and indispensibility experienced because of the journal's attacks. The Kaiser, however, at that time more concerned with the Bismarck reconciliation, let the matter slide. Undaunted by his master's lack of cooperation, Eulenburg then attempted to find the culprit on his own, and to this end consulted with Ludwig Raschdau, an editor of the Kladderadatsch. Immediately after their meeting the periodical ceased defaming "Troubador" and directed its allegations solely at Kiderlen and Holstein.<sup>86</sup>

Eulenburg found no repose, however, for Holstein, still determined to find his detractor, again sought to enlist the former's help in accomplishing this task. After considering legal and governmental intervention, Holstein decided that the only way to terminate the attacks in Kladderadatsch

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Eulenburg-Hertefeld," 175.

<sup>86</sup>Raschdau, Unter Bismarck und Caprivi, 320; Rich, Holstein, I, 405.

would be to challenge the author of the articles to a duel. In January 1894, Holstein received word that Herbert von Bismarck had written "A Fourth at Skat." On questioning the ex-Chancellor's son, Holstein however received a flat denial of any affiliation with the journal's satirical work. This statement did not satisfy Holstein though, and he sent his seconds (one of whom, Count Kuno von Moltke, had served with Eulenburg in the Franco-Prussian conflict) to demand that Herbert issue a formal statement in the Hamburger Nachrichten substantiating his assertions of non-complicity. If the ex-Foreign Secretary refused, Holstein added, the two men would face each other on the field of honor. Remarkably, Herbert complied with this request, presenting the required statement on March 6, 1894.<sup>87</sup>

Holstein's search for his detractors became so obsessive at this point that even Eulenburg seriously began to question the rationality of his actions. Holstein now enlisted the aid of Kiderlen-Wächter (alias Spätzle), who in turn took it upon himself to challenge another editor of the Kladderadatsch, one Doctor Polstorff, to a duel. In the ensuing confrontation, Polstorff suffered an armpit wound, enough to convince Holstein that the publisher did not write the libelous "A Fourth at Skat." With little place to turn, Holstein sent a challenge to Guido von Henckel-Donnersmarck,

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<sup>87</sup> Rich, Holstein, I, 408; Rich seems to question the integrity of Herbert's statements.

editor of the Berliner Neueste Nachrichten. The latter had previously maintained close ties with the Foreign Office official's nemesis, Count Harry von Arnim, whom long ago in his Paris embassy days Holstein had spied upon at Chancellor von Bismarck's behest. Holstein was attempting to pressure Henckel into revealing the Kladderadatsch author's name, which, in view of Henckel's pro-Bismarck affinities, may have constituted a logical action on Holstein's part. Nevertheless, many individuals, including Eulenburg, held that both Kiderlen and Holstein had treated Henckel unjustly, and that the matter had reached the point of "senselessness."<sup>88</sup> Holstein refused to listen to his colleagues, however, and sent a duel challenge to Henckel through the journalist Moritz von Busch, an intimate associate of the Bismarcks. Henckel responded to Holstein through the former's mediator, of all people, Alfred von Waldersee, with a flat denial of participation in the Kladderadatsch affair. Later he conveyed the same denial of guilt in the April 2, 1894 edition of the Berliner Neueste Nachrichten.<sup>89</sup>

Eulenburg entered the picture when Holstein, finally realizing that his search for his attacker had reached ridiculous extremes, turned to the diplomat and asked that he convince Emperor William of the justifiability of his

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<sup>88</sup> Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 339; Raschdau, Unter Bismarck und Caprivi, 328.

<sup>89</sup> Haller, Aus dem Leben, 168; Rich, Holstein, I, 411.

challenge to Henckel. While Eulenburg promised to convey such a sentiment to William, no evidence suggests that he did anything to influence the Kaiser in this regard. This rebuff pushed Holstein past the limits of his endurance. The hapless official now vented his frustrations on Eulenburg, threatening that "As I perceive that you are working . . . against me, I shall be obliged to show my claws in some way."<sup>90</sup> Eulenburg received this message and reacted sharply. The note now confirmed the opinion of both himself and the Kaiser that Holstein's behavior bordered on the pathological. At the same time, however, Eulenburg feared the political repercussions if he did, in fact, try to "corral" Holstein's moves. The Kladderadatsch affair did not merit the concern which so many had displayed--he, Eulenburg, could let "sleeping dogs lie":

In the evening a grand departure in the imperial special train. The day was horrible! Work, parting from countless people, all of whom wanted something. Almost everyone wants to have a medal. I didn't know where my head was--and then the royal family!--as though there weren't even a departure. The same daily schedule, tennis, etc.--enviable! Not once having to pack a handkerchief themselves and never having to take a ticket--half gods!<sup>91</sup>

Obviously the diplomat possessed far more pressing concerns than Holstein's personal battles.

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<sup>90</sup> Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 327; E. p. K., II. 128; Rich, Holstein, I, 411.

<sup>91</sup> Eulenburg, Erlebnisse am deutschen und fremden Höfen, 34.

After four months of directionless conniving on Holstein's part, the Kladderadatsch affair came to an end. In April 1894, General Moritz von Busch submitted documents regarding Holstein's challenges to the directorship of the Berlin Casino (officers' club and supreme authority over "affairs of honor" in Prussia), which in turn declared that it could not "adopt an attitude in regard to the affair between Herr von Holstein and Count Guido von Henckel-Donnersmarck."<sup>92</sup> Indeed, to this day, the real author of the satirical "A Fourth at Skat," surmised by many to have been Raschdau, has never been definitely ascertained.<sup>93</sup>

After the Kladderadatsch affair had run its course, Eulenburg might be expected to have experienced a period of unparalleled happiness. In April 1894, he received the German ambassadorship at Vienna. Undoubtedly his aid to the Kaiser in the Bismarck reconciliation helped him to achieve this goal. This elevation, while in itself significant, also deserves mention because it offered Eulenburg the opportunity to establish intimate political relations with Bernhard von Bülow. This latter figure, rather ironically, would eventually replace Eulenburg as the most influential

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<sup>92</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 412.

<sup>93</sup>Raschdau, Unter Bismarck und Caprivi, 320; cf. Rich, Holstein, I, 413. Burmeister, "Philipp Eulenburg-Hertefeld," makes no mention of Eulenburg's attempts to identify Holstein's anonymous attackers, erroneously interpreting the situation as one which did not ruffle Eulenburg in the least. (cf. Raschdau, Unter Bismarck und Caprivi, 320-327; Lerchenfeld, Erinnerungen, 383-384; Rich, Holstein, I, 405).



personality of the Wilhelmine court.

Eulenburg and Bülow had been acquainted since 1875, when, as previously mentioned, Eulenburg had an integral part in securing the consent of Emperor William I to Bülow's marriage to the Italian and Catholic Princess Maria Camporeale. Both men had served in diplomatic capacities and remained on excellent terms throughout the 'eighties. Bülow, two years younger than Eulenburg, consistently urged his friend to avoid Holstein and other members of the anti-Bismarck circle. To a larger degree than did Eulenburg, the future Chancellor von Bülow possessed the qualities of a political conniver and could detect these same characteristics in the Foreign Office's most influential figure. As has been demonstrated above, Eulenburg rarely heeded Bülow's advice concerning this matter. Nevertheless, the personal affection between the two men could rise above the political differences, at least to surface appearances. Bülow often encouraged Eulenburg during his trying experiences with William, resorting to veritable flattery. In one instance he referred to the Emperor's "genuineness, most kind heart, and leading hand," obviously all contradictory to the Emperor's true character.<sup>94</sup> It can also be surmised that Eulenburg thought highly of his cohort, though probably not as much as the flattery and "small talk" that he employed in

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<sup>94</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 109; cf. Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 320, regarding Eulenburg's Vienna appointment.

his correspondence with Bülow may have suggested.<sup>95</sup>

In the early years of their careers, at any rate, the two could remain on good terms. Bülow's ambitions (e.g., the ambassadorship to Italy) were realized through Eulenburg's efforts, and he ceremoniously cultivated his influential friend. Likewise, he used his own position in the Foreign Service to place his friends, including Eulenburg, in various capacities. Indirectly, Bülow contributed to Eulenburg's appointment as ambassador to Austria-Hungary because Emperor William, who had become increasingly dissatisfied with Foreign Secretary Adolf Marschall von Bieberstein, had made it clear to Bülow, Caprivi, and others that he was taking Eulenburg under consideration for Marschall's post. Eulenburg, however, when informed of the situation, expressed distaste for this post, desiring, in the opinion of Haller, to stand clear of the intrigue and corruption which suffused the Foreign Office.<sup>96</sup> Of even more significance, Eulenburg's increasing dislike of Holstein's misanthropic and paranoid tendencies added to his reservations about taking over Marschall's post. For example, he found Holstein's fear of Russian hegemony so intense that it "has driven him insane."<sup>97</sup> Finally the Army and School Bill controversies

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<sup>95</sup> Eulenburg, Aus 50 Jahren, 288.

<sup>96</sup> Haller, Aus dem Leben, 108; Burmeister "Philipp Eulenburg-Hertefeld," 168.

<sup>97</sup> Rich, Holstein, I, 407.

had helped make Eulenburg a prominent and (in the eyes of some) a notorious figure, subject to periodical press abuse. Undoubtedly he wished to avoid exposure which might result in a recurrence of his unfortunate Kladderadatsch experience.

Emperor William, when informed that Eulenburg would not take Marschall's post, still resolved to reward his friend in some other manner. After considerable debate with his advisors and a consultation with Bernhard von Bülow, the Kaiser decided to post Eulenburg to Vienna. This appointment thus laid a debt of gratitude on Eulenburg which, as will be seen later, he would eventually repay by recommending Bülow for the post of German Foreign Secretary in 1897.

First, however, Eulenburg played an important part in the events which eventually climaxed in the resignation of Leo von Caprivi from the Imperial Chancellorship in 1894. Mention has been made of Eulenburg's role in the Zedlitz School Bill crisis, which resulted in Caprivi's resignation from the Prussian Prime Ministership and Botho zu Eulenburg's accession to that post. Contrary to Eulenburg's statements about "too many Eulenburgs" (see above), it is difficult not to believe that the Prussian nobleman did have chancellor ambitions for his cousin and would work to secure them. In this endeavor he would have been helped by Caprivi's comparatively advanced age, uncompromising nature, and his general intractability against any changes which William wished to inaugurate. Under such circumstances,

opponents of the sixty-three-year-old general could easily bring about a break between Kaiser and Chancellor.

The immediate circumstances surrounding Caprivi's dismissal centered upon the introduction of an anti-revolutionary bill in the Reichstag. Eulenburg, from 1890, had urged his sovereign to steer clear of such legislation; extraneous circumstances, however, led William to urge the passage of such a program in spite of his friend's advice. The summer of 1894 had witnessed an unsuccessful anarchist attempt on the life of Italian Prime Minister Francesco Crispi and the murder of French President Sadi Carnot. Such events alarmed heads of state throughout Europe, especially Germany's Kaiser, who proceeded to consult with Chancellor von Caprivi on the matter. Caprivi proposed an anti-revolutionary program almost identical to that of Bismarck four years earlier. This action drew applause from conservative groups, especially from the military and from Prussian Prime Minister Botho zu Eulenburg, who unequivocally expressed his reactionary leanings. On the other hand, moderates and liberals found the new proposal appalling and refused to support such a supposedly oppressive measure.<sup>98</sup>

Eulenburg's role in the controversy began when Holstein wrote him a letter which asserted that William's new legislation would initiate dissension between the Kaiser and the

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<sup>98</sup> Rich, Holstein, I, 418; Haller, Aus dem Leben, 148; Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 331-339; Röhl, Germany With-

more liberal factions of the German parliament. Also, in Holstein's opinion, the supporters of Bismarck could use the anticipated governmental crisis as a basis for undermining the Caprivi administration and resurrecting their fallen hero. In view of these impending difficulties, the Foreign Office functionary urged Eulenburg to meet with the Kaiser in order to inform him of the controversy which such a bill would engender. Eulenburg, apparently also foreseeing a government crisis, agreed to present Holstein's ideas. William, however, refused to withdraw his support from the anti-revolutionary proposal. Attempts by Eulenburg to change William's mind by arranging imperial conferences, one with Adolf Marschall von Bieberstein and one with Botho zu Eulenburg, met with a similar lack of success.<sup>99</sup> It appears that once again William's friends in the Conservative party and in the military contributed to his adamant stance.

William's position on the anti-revolutionary bill upset Holstein considerably and he sought to draft a more moderate proposal, one which would appease both the Left and the Center, and thereby make William realize the futility of trying to push forward with his oppressive legislation. Seeing this situation, the Kaiser would then attempt to cooperate more fully with the Caprivi government and its Chancellor in an

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out Bismarck, 112-113.

<sup>99</sup>Rich, Holstein, I, 418.

effort to secure the passage of the legislation favored by Holstein. At the same time, Holstein worked to convince Caprivi of the modified bill's feasibility. The Chancellor, after listening to him, agreed to talk to William in hope of modifying the monarch's anti-revolutionary policy position.

Holstein, however, encountered difficulties which caused him to enlist the services of Philipp zu Eulenburg. William, in keeping with his temperamental personality, vacillated in his opinion of Holstein's anti-revolutionary proposal. While to all appearances agreeing to the modified plan, the Kaiser took advantage of the bill's creation of new army battalions to "toast" Caprivi with a sardonic "I shall thank you when the half-battalions have been made into full battalions," thus implying that the Chancellor's support of the new proposal would prevent Germany from developing a more powerful military.<sup>100</sup> This last comment offended Caprivi to the extent that he wrote an angry letter to Holstein, in which he asserted that he planned to resign the Chancellorship (again!). Caprivi undoubtedly expected Holstein to come to his defense in persuading the Kaiser to accede to the demands of the modified bill's supporters. Thus he must have experienced considerable shock when Holstein, finally tiring of all this controversy, raised no objection to his proposed departure. Nevertheless, the Gray

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<sup>100</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 150-151; Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 348-349.

Eminence knew propriety dictated that Caprivi resign on his own accord, rather than be fired by the Kaiser.<sup>101</sup>

In order to facilitate Caprivi's removal and still prevent a government crisis, Holstein called on Eulenburg to exercise his influence. He advised the Kaiser's friend to persuade Frederick, Grand Duke of Baden, to visit his Imperial nephew, William II, and convince him that he should retract his statements against Caprivi. Eulenburg, who himself did not favor the action, nevertheless complied with Holstein's requests, probably in the interest of preventing a Chancellery crisis. Such action served little purpose, however, for Frederick bluntly rejected the plea. William, it seemed, would deal with Caprivi on his own terms.

As early as July 3, 1894, William had, in lengthy correspondence, insisted to General Albrecht von Stosch on the need for a "younger, more practical man" to fill Caprivi's post.<sup>102</sup>

Eulenburg had received consideration, though the Kaiser found him too "dreamy," too esthetically inclined, and "too nice a fellow" to fit the role.<sup>103</sup> Kuno von Moltke stood as another possibility. William also considered, on Eulenburg's advice, the latter's cousin, Botho zu Eulenburg, and in September 1894

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<sup>101</sup>Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 348-349.

<sup>102</sup>Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 352; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 349-351.

<sup>103</sup>Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 352.

the Kaiser informed the Minister President that if Caprivi continued his obstinancy toward the anti-revolutionary bill, he, Botho, would become Germany's next Chancellor.<sup>104</sup>

Against the background of this mosaic of ambitions, then, the Kaiser, frustrated more than ever by Caprivi's attitude, prepared to spring the trap.

William, in preparing his final maneuvers for dismissing Caprivi, relied heavily on Eulenburg. On October 21, 1894, he called his friend and informed him that he was ready to let Caprivi go, referring to the problems generated by the various Reichstag controversies, the Chancellor's stubbornness, his use of resignation threats, and the Kaiser's inability to get his own programs implemented. Ironically, Eulenburg as formerly in the case of Bismarck, raised no objection to William's decision. It may well be asked whether Holstein's influence or the hope of Botho zu Eulenburg's accession to the Imperial Chancellorship caused him to act indifferent on this particular occasion. Eulenburg's own frustration at seeing the interests of the Conservatives (his own party) thwarted in the cases of the Army and Zedlitz Bills undoubtedly gave him a distaste for Caprivi. At any rate he did nothing to dissuade William from carrying out his plans.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Rühl, Germany Without Bismarck, 114.

<sup>105</sup> Anton von Monts, Erinnerungen und Gedanken des Botschafters Anton Graf von Monts, ed. Karl Friedrich Nowak und Friedrich Thimme (Berlin: Verlag für Kulturpolitik, 1932), 34, hereinafter cited as Monts, Erinnerungen; Nichols, Germany



Eulenburg continued to exert powerful influence on William II during the two days prior to the ultimate dismissal. In spite of his desire to remove Caprivi, William still hesitated to approve the formal resignation which Caprivi submitted on October 23, 1894. The Kaiser's hesitancy stemmed from the problem of finding a successor to the old General. (Botho zu Eulenburg had made it clear soon after his conference with William, that he would not accept the Chancellorship in the face of a dissident Reichstag.) Philipp, at this point, had he wished, could have easily asserted that no one of Caprivi's caliber could be found. Thus the Chancellor would have retained his post. Instead, on the advice of Frederick, Grand Duke of Baden, he presented the name of Prince Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, a moderate Catholic who, in addition to being one of the oldest (aged seventy-five) and most respected members of the Reichstag, was serving as governor general of Alsace-Lorraine, giving him a close tie to the South Germans.<sup>106</sup> Eulenburg carefully portrayed Hohenlohe to William as a person who

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After Bismarck, 354; Raschdau, Unter Bismarck und Caprivi, 370; Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 116-117. Burmeister, "Philipp Eulenburg-Hertefeld," fails to reveal the degree to which Holstein was behind Eulenburg's actions during the internal crisis arising from the Kaiser's determination to rid himself of Chancellor von Caprivi (cf. Nichols, Germany After Bismarck, 348-349).

<sup>106</sup>Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 118-119; Raschdau, Unter Bismarck und Caprivi, 370.

could be easily manipulated to suit the Kaiser's whims. Because he held moderate religious and political views, he would have no strong political commitments--just the type of Chancellor that the Kaiser desired. Similarly, conflicts in the Reichstag could be expected to lessen.<sup>107</sup> By appealing to the Kaiser's dislike of Bismarck and his idolization of his own Imperial grandfather, Eulenburg emphasized that he, William II, could operate with the same success as William I. In this manner, then, Eulenburg paved the way for Hohenlohe's appointment on October 26.

Finally in this chapter, mention must be made of Eulenburg's rather limited role in the formulation of German foreign policy during the Caprivi era. In February of 1891, acting as Holstein's intermediary, Eulenburg prevented William from meeting with the family of Tsar Alexander III when the latter came through Danzig on a trip to Denmark, home of Tsarina Maria. In this instance Eulenburg merely wrote William and told him fraternization between himself and the Russian Emperor would be viewed by the Germans as "running after the Tsar" and kowtowing to his expansionist designs. This note, coupled with cautions of a similar kind from Holstein and Kiderlen-Wächter, led the Kaiser to cancel his trip to the Baltic city.<sup>108</sup> Eulenburg also played some

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<sup>107</sup> Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 372-373; Rogge, Holstein und Hohenlohe, 409-410.

<sup>108</sup> Haller, Aus dem Leben, 78-79.

role in securing a successor for elderly General Alfred von Schweinitz, German ambassador at St. Petersburg, who, by the autumn of 1892, found himself being criticized increasingly because of his age and supposed diplomatic incompetence. Schweinitz's personal choice for a successor was General Anton von Werder, a former German military attaché to the Russian court and a favorite of the Romanov dynasty. Eulenburg, along with Holstein, successfully sought through letters to pressure the Kaiser into giving Werder the post. Eulenburg also helped sponsor the appointment of Bernhard von Bülow as German ambassador to Italy.<sup>109</sup> The secondary significance of these activities, however, contrasted sharply with Eulenburg's achievements at the Berlin court in the realm of domestic politics.

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<sup>109</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . . Leben, 192.

## CHAPTER IV

### EULENBURG AND THE HOHENLOHE ERA

From the outset of the Hohenlohe regime, Eulenburg found himself confronting political situations which he believed demanded his intervention. Almost immediately he received a barrage of complaints from Friedrich von Holstein. The unpredictable statesman found Hohenlohe's age and policies to his dislike, especially when the new chancellor attempted to improve relations between ex-Chancellor Bismarck and the Imperial government. (Both Hohenlohe and his son Alexander visited Friedrichsruh on May 13, 1895). Holstein attributed Hohenlohe's overtures to the influence of various ultraconservative advisors, including August zu Eulenburg, High Marshal of the Imperial Court; Hermann von Lucanus, Chief of the Kaiser's Civil Cabinet; and Oswald von Richthofen, Chief of the Berlin Police. All of these men, Holstein felt, should leave their positions. Realizing that Philipp zu Eulenburg only with reluctance would influence William to dismiss these individuals, Holstein even went so far as to suggest that Eulenburg himself assume one of these positions held by the present advisors.<sup>1</sup> While Haller, "court biographer" to Eulenburg, would have one

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<sup>1</sup>E.p.K., II, 1396-1397; Hutten-Czapski, Sechzig Jahre, I, 237-238, 260.

believe that the diplomat refused Holstein's suggestion that he seek such a position because of his "unswerving loyalty" to the Emperor, Eulenburg probably ignored Holstein's overtures for more practical reasons. Eulenburg, for instance, had wanted the office of Minister of the Imperial Household. Several factors, however, prevented him from actually taking this or any other court position.<sup>2</sup> An idealist and a dreamer, he lacked, as previously mentioned, the practical orientation needed to hold such an administrative post. Even more important, Eulenburg realized that if he were to assume a court post his political activities, often conducted behind William's back, would become increasingly visible to his master. Finally, the Kaiser and Eulenburg both feared that the diplomat's being placed in an official position of influence would encourage Friedrich von Holstein to exercise his manipulative powers. The Gray Eminence would view Eulenburg's appointment as a surrender to the former's whims.<sup>3</sup> Thus, when an offer to assume the Imperial Household post came from Hohenlohe, Eulenburg politely declined, citing his loyalty to his ambassadorial duties in Vienna as the major factor behind

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<sup>2</sup>Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 10-11, cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 485.

<sup>3</sup>Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 130-132; Rich, Holstein, II, 486.

his refusal. (An ironic statement, considering the amount of time he spent in Berlin!) Eulenburg, in fact, would never hold a formal court position.<sup>4</sup>

Holstein, for his part, however, remained undaunted in his attempts to secure more political power. He continued to write Eulenburg about the omnipresent "Bismarck cloud" and the need for the diplomat to counter, through William II, Hohenlohe's attempts at effecting a reconciliation between the government and ex-Chancellor. Eulenburg, in return, paid lip-service to Holstein's views, but did little to honor his requests. Holstein also wrote Hohenlohe, requesting that he enlist Eulenburg's advice when executing his policies. Finally, the Gray Eminence forwarded a message to Bernhard von Bülow, then ambassador in Rome, urging his cooperation in securing a position for Eulenburg at the Imperial Court. Neither Hohenlohe nor Bülow would agree to this, however, and Eulenburg remained in Vienna.<sup>5</sup>

As the year 1895 began, Eulenburg found himself surrounded by minor turmoil, especially in the field of foreign affairs. Russia and France had concluded a treaty of

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<sup>4</sup>Rich, Holstein, II, 487.

<sup>5</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 378; D.g.P. III, 438-440; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 23-24, 29-30; Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, 518; E.p.K., II, 1406; Rich, Holstein, II, 490; Palmer, Kaiser, 67.

alliance the year before in response to Germany's having permitted the Reinsurance Treaty to expire in 1890. German sentiments now were divided--should the Fatherland cultivate Russian friendship or remain with Austro-Hungarian allies who seemingly favored an alliance with England? To add to the difficulty, Adolf Marschall von Bieberstein, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, believed that a German agreement with France, as opposed to one with England, would benefit the Reich more. Most of the conservatives in the government, especially Friedrich von Holstein and Bernhard von Bülow, found such an arrangement distasteful, and Bülow foresaw the formation of a French and South German coalition against Prussia. The opposition Marschall received, then, contributed heavily to his eventual ouster.<sup>6</sup>

Eulenburg soon found himself in the thick of the crisis. By February 1895, both Marschall's stance toward France and Russia and his previous concessions to the Center Party had caused Emperor William to level some serious attacks against him. In the case of the Center Party, William felt that the Foreign Secretary had proved himself overly accommodating towards it when he invited Dr. Wilhelm Lieber, one of the party's leaders, to an Imperial court ball. Two persons in particular, however, were attempting

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<sup>6</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 366; E.p.K., II, 1417, 1427, 1432; Palmer, Kaiser, 73.

to prevent William from locking horns with Marschall. Chancellor von Hohenlohe, himself a Catholic, opposed the Kaiser's attacks on his Foreign Secretary, asserting that government needed the Center's support in order to carry out its policies. The loss of that party's backing conceivably could compel Hohenlohe to resign. (The new chancellor obviously had learned the old political trick of threatening resignation in order to get one's own way.) Friedrich von Holstein, wishing to avoid a chancellor crisis, also sought to prevent Marschall's dismissal, and for this purpose enlisted Eulenburg's assistance.<sup>7</sup>

Eulenburg did not share Holstein's beliefs. While not supporting the Center, he had grown tired at least temporarily as a cat's-paw for the Gray Eminence. Yet he continued to act out of political expediency rather than personal conviction. In a letter to Holstein of February 20, 1895, Eulenburg asserted that, while in his opinion the Hohenlohe regime would possess greater strength if Marschall resigned, it would nevertheless be wiser if this were accomplished after the Reichstag's present session ended. While implicitly promising to prevent William from dismissing his Foreign Secretary, Eulenburg still sought an opportunity to secure Marschall's resignation at the same time. He

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<sup>7</sup> Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 40; Rich, Holstein, II, 491-492.



conveyed this impression to Holstein in a letter of the same day.<sup>8</sup>

Eulenburg meanwhile involved himself in a number of other controversies during the year 1895. From the beginning, the Hohenlohe administration had concerned itself with affairs in the Far East. Germany like other European nations was looking toward China for territorial acquisitions. The Kaiser particularly wanted a base of operations on Taiwan. The German Foreign Ministry under the direction of both Marschall and Holstein, however, attempted to thwart these aims.<sup>9</sup> The Foreign Secretary conveyed his opinions to Chancellor von Hohenlohe, asserting that England would protect China's integrity and thus prevent Germany from fulfilling her territorial ambitions. The Fatherland should therefore content itself with a role in China similar to that of the United Kingdom. Berlin initially took this position, and joined London in warning the Japanese, who had obtained Korea in an 1895 war with

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<sup>8</sup> D.g.P., III, 449-452; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 493; D.g.P., III, 450-451.

<sup>9</sup> Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 385; Johannes, Lepsius, Albrecht Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, and Friedrich Thimme, eds., Die grosse Politik der europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914 (Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft für Politik und Geschichte, 1922-1927), IX, 453-458, hereinafter cited as Grosse Politik; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 52; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 436; D.g.P., III, 465-467.

China, not to overextend their territorial demands when dealing with that defeated nation. When the Japanese ignored this warning, Germany decided to support a Russian protest against Japan's annexation of Port Arthur. This request was reinforced by the united efforts of Russia, France, and Germany, and eventually led Japan to withdraw her demands. The success in this matter pleased both opponents and supporters of Marschall alike. Even Philipp zu Eulenburg, who disliked Marschall's policies in many instances, approved the Foreign Secretary's handling of the Japanese issue. Such actions, he felt, in addition to holding that nation in line, also served to show England, Europe's major colonial power, that other nations would not let her dominate affairs in the Far East. Under these circumstances, Eulenburg and other influential government personnel willingly reconciled themselves to permit Marschall's retaining his post as Foreign Secretary.<sup>10</sup>

Controversy nevertheless soon made its appearance, when, after the Treaty of Shimonoseki between China and Japan, the Kaiser agreed to support Russia in her demand for a reduction of the sum of 50 million tael in reparations, which Japan had requested as a war-indemnity from China, to 30 million. (Japan had been forced to forego acquisition

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<sup>10</sup> Grosse Politik, IX, 308, 358-360; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 441-444; Balfour, Kaiser, 187-190; D.g.P., III, 457-458; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 393.

of the Liaotung Peninsula and thus sought compensation for that concession). The German Foreign Office in this instance opposed the Kaiser's pro-Russian stance. Friedrich von Holstein, always paranoid where Russia was concerned, immediately singled out Philipp zu Eulenburg as the one who had influenced William to support Russia. He expressed his views to Chancellor von Hohenlohe. Hohenlohe, though he distrusted Russia, believed that William, though influenced by Eulenburg, had acted correctly in backing that nation during this controversy. By supporting Russia, the Chancellor told Holstein, Germany could retain a free hand in the Far East.<sup>11</sup> Further problems arose, however, when Russia, dissatisfied with Japan's promise to reduce her indemnity requirements, now demanded a prompt Japanese evacuation of the Liaotung Peninsula upon China's payment of the 30 million tael. It appeared that Russia herself now wished to obtain the peninsula and increase her power in the Far East. This alarmed the members of the Foreign Office. Much to their displeasure, the Kaiser still insisted on supporting the demands of the Tsarist empire, and many suspected that Eulenburg had helped William in reaching his decision. The major reason for the Kaiser's position proved unfounded. He offended Austria, who thought that

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<sup>11</sup>D.g.P., III, 480-481; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 444; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanslerzeit, 50, 68-70.

William's cooperation with Russia would enhance Russia's position in the Balkans. It seemed William's fear that Germany would be left out in the cold by a Franco-Russian trade agreement, and thus be excluded from Far Eastern trade, overrode his desire to appease the Dual Monarchy.

Matters grew increasingly complex when, in September 1895, William offered additional concessions to the Russians with the hope of turning their attention away from their frontier with Germany and Austria-Hungary. The Kaiser wrote to Tsar Nicholas II proposing an alliance to the exclusion of France. Germany would defend Russian interests in the Far East if Russia would grant her a few minor territorial concessions in the same region. After sending this message to Nicholas, William sent Hohenlohe an inaccurate copy of his proposal. He also urged the Chancellor to hide the copy from Holstein and other members of the Foreign Office whom he knew opposed negotiations, especially secret negotiations, with the Russian Empire. Such an action could have stirred a tremendous controversy inside Germany, but fortunately Nicholas refused the offer.<sup>12</sup> The Kaiser saw his hopes for a Pacific empire dwindle.

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<sup>12</sup>Grosse Politik, IX, 365-370; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 446; Isaac Don Levine, ed., Letters from the Kaiser to the Czar (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1920), 16-19; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 88-91.

True to his Anglophobic nature, Eulenburg worked at least indirectly to discourage the Kaiser from establishing better political relations with England. Austria-Hungary, for a considerable time, had been growing increasingly impatient with Germany's failure to reach an alliance with England and by the middle of 1894 had seriously considered withdrawing from the Triple Alliance. Eulenburg, as German ambassador to Vienna, thus saw himself in the unenviable position of attempting to preserve the friendship between the two major powers of central Europe. In November and December 1894, when Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, Gustav Kalnoky von Korospatak, presented some serious complaints concerning Berlin's failure to reach any agreement with England, Eulenburg, not wishing to force William into fostering a British alliance, simply did not report the matter to the Kaiser, nor to German Foreign Secretary Marschall. This forced Kalnoky to work through the Austro-Hungarian ambassador in Berlin in order to convey the Vienna government's displeasure over Germany's unwillingness to conclude a British alliance. Meanwhile, William, unaware of Austria-Hungary's discontent, continued his drive for a Russian alliance, and it was only after a lapse of six months that the Kalnoky report first reached Berlin and the Kaiser learned that Austria favored a German treaty with Britain rather than Russia. At the last minute, then, due to the

influence of Kalnoky and Friedrich von Holstein, William retreated from his pro-Russian policy and started courting Britain.<sup>13</sup> Eulenburg's conniving in this instance had thus proved a miserable failure.

Eulenburg scored his real success at "statecraft" during the Hohenlohe era in the area of domestic policy. As noted above, Eulenburg had reluctantly acquiesced to Friedrich von Holstein's insistance on retaining Foreign Secretary Marschall, even when the Kaiser himself had pushed for Marschall's removal. In the fall of 1895, however, a situation developed which eventually triggered the Foreign Secretary's resignation. The Prussian Minister of War, Walter Bronsart von Schellendorff, proposed reforming the national military penal code to include provisions for public procedures in certain court-martial cases. Emperor William opposed this and persuaded Bronsart to postpone the project. On November 4, an article appeared in the Münchener Neueste Nachrichten, which stated that the Prussian Ministry of State, having taken over Bronsart's proposal reform, was presenting the Kaiser with the draft of an order for limited public procedures in Prussian military-court cases. It further reported that Ernst Matthias von Koller, Prussian Minister of the Interior, had

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<sup>13</sup>Gross Politik, IX, 174-179; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 448-449; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 118.

been the only member of the Ministry of State opposing the proposal.

The news article precipitated a quarrel between Bronsart and Koller. Bronsart accused the Interior Minister of having leaked secret information about the reform to the press. Bronsart also charged Koller with having informed members of the Kaiser's court that he himself had voted against the Bill, and with letting them know that he hoped that they too, responding to the Interior Minister's stance, would oppose the measure. Koller eventually confessed to the second charge--of having informed two of the Kaiser's aides-de-camp, Generals Wilhelm von Hanke and Hans von Plessen, of his action. Koller's underhandedness in turn led to requests from Chancellor von Hohenlohe and the Prussian Ministry of State that William force the Interior Minister to resign. The Kaiser, however, refused to honor the request, and this prompted Hohenlohe to send in his resignation.<sup>14</sup>

Eulenburg entered the picture at this point, urging to his master that Koller's loyalty did not justify the loss of Imperial Chancellor von Hohenlohe and all the members of the Prussian Ministry of State, and that if the occasion

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<sup>14</sup>D.g.P. III, 501-502; Haller, Aus dem Leben, 159; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 123, 126; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 495-496; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 409.

demanded he should dismiss Koller.<sup>15</sup> Koller made such action unnecessary, however, by submitting his resignation on December 2, 1895. Eulenburg viewed this action skeptically, and implied to Chancellor von Hohenlohe that Koller might be up to something. With bad grace the Kaiser accepted Koller's statement, and simultaneously proposed that the entire membership of the Ministry of State turn in their resignations. No one responded, and William on December 8 allowed Koller to depart unhindered. The Kaiser, nevertheless still had the last word, as he immediately appointed Baron Eberhard von der Reche von dem Hast, a personal favorite from Düsseldorf, to the Interior Minister's post.<sup>16</sup> This rapid action on William's part suggests, then, that Eulenburg helped persuade Hohenlohe and the Emperor that an easily-manipulated new minister would compensate for the loss of Koller.

Eulenburg also used the Koller incident to secure the resignation of Foreign Secretary Marschall. He again wrote the Kaiser, holding that he regretted Koller's departure and that such an event would have never occurred if the

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<sup>15</sup>D.g.P., III, 509-512; Haller, Aus dem Leben, 160; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 496.

<sup>16</sup>D.g.P., III, 510-512; Haller, Aus dem Leben, 160-163; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 496; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 496.



Ministry of State had consisted exclusively of Prussians. The last remark plainly alluded to the Badenese Marschall in his capacity of Prussian Foreign Minister. Eulenburg even went so far as to say that the South German Foreign Secretary, and Foreign Minister, because of his beliefs in constitutional rather than absolute government, had contributed to William's difficulties. Eulenburg then turned to Holstein, and attempted to convince him that Marschall's liberal views had hurt William's public image and that he should be removed. Holstein, however, disagreed strongly with his associate, believing that Marschall had performed rightly in preventing William from overextending his powers. Dissension between the two men began to develop. When Holstein informed Eulenburg of some remarks which the Emperor had made to Colonel Leopold Swain, the British military attache in Berlin, which implied that Germany, Austria, and Italy would support Britain against Russia should she seek control of the Dardanelles, Eulenburg refused even to excuse himself for his unwillingness to intervene in the matter. He asserted simply that he was William's "friend."<sup>17</sup> At Christmastime, when Chancellor von Hohenlohe visited Vienna, Holstein wrote Eulenburg and urged him to persuade the old man to force William to keep

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<sup>17</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 160-163; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 497-499.

himself out of foreign affairs. In direct opposition to Holstein's pleadings, Eulenburg merely asked Hohenlohe what he, Eulenburg, could do about the situation. The Chancellor replied that he should do nothing under such petty circumstances as those presented by Holstein.<sup>18</sup>

Eulenburg soon found, nevertheless, that he would have to moderate his views of monarchical supremacy and acceded to Holstein's whims. Bernhard von Bülow wrote Eulenburg during the last week of 1895, asserting that Hohenlohe and Marschall now believed that William had overstepped his imperial prerogatives in the realm of foreign affairs. Should those three join forces and jointly threaten resignation in the face of William's stubbornness, the Kaiser would be immensely discredited, as would Eulenburg. Someone after all had to put a stop to William's interference in foreign and domestic issues. Bülow thus urged Eulenburg to draft a letter on the subject for Chancellor von Hohenlohe to send to the Emperor.<sup>19</sup>

Eulenburg submitted to Bülow's urging and himself wrote directly to William. He compared his master's intervention in foreign affairs to efforts of a master of the hunt to track down a fox independently of his gamekeeper,

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<sup>18</sup>Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 146; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 500.

<sup>19</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 185-186; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 502.

who was also on the fox's trail. As both hunters converged on the fox, the animal thus had a chance to scent both and escape. On a more concrete level, Eulenburg suggested that William handle his foreign policy with the collaboration of Hohenlohe and Marschall, rather than making his own rules as he went along. Eulenburg also took the position that Hohenlohe should express his opposition to William's meddling in foreign affairs. The Chancellor, however, would not argue with the Kaiser over such an issue, especially in the face of a new crisis involving the latter and Bronsart. William consequently ignored the urgings of the latter and continued along his own course. The plan of Eulenburg and Bülow therewith failed.<sup>20</sup>

The furor over the Kruger Telegram further illustrated William's political ineptness. The situation resulted from the Kaiser's praising Boer President Paul Kruger for his "heroic" defense of the Transvaal against invading British raiders under Dr. Leander Jameson in December 1895.

(Foreign Secretary Marschall had encouraged the Kaiser to react in this manner.) Eulenburg again found himself in a difficult position. He was torn between his loyalty to the Emperor and concern over the anger of the British populace

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<sup>20</sup> Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 151; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 503; D.g.P., III, 519-520; Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 160-163.

and, especially, William's royal kin. A number of German statesmen regarded the Emperor's move as unwise. Friedrich von Holstein particularly attacked his behavior. Couldn't Eulenburg control his master?--so the Foreign Office functionary demanded in a dispatch soon after reports of the Kruger Telegram reached the press. Rather uncharacteristically, Eulenburg this time agreed with Holstein that William had acted foolishly. Nevertheless, he did not seek to reprimand the Kaiser. With no one to control him, then, William despite the public storm refused to retract what he had stated in the telegram.<sup>21</sup> Eulenburg apparently considered it futile to oppose the Emperor in the matter.

Controversies continued to develop, and Eulenburg found himself involved in the "Big Fleet" versus "Little Fleet" question. At the beginning of 1896, a Reichstag conflict erupted when William began pushing for an enlargement of the German fleet. This action undoubtedly came as a response to the Jameson raid, which the Kaiser viewed as imperialist aggression in the Transvaal by Britain, which at this time had the world's largest navy. Chancellor von Hohenlohe, however, opposed such a course, primarily because an increased

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<sup>21</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 417; Haller, Aus dem Leben, 190; Lerchenfeld-Koefering, Erinnerungen, 373-374; Hutten-Czapski, Sechzig Jahre, V, 276-277; Balfour, Kaiser, 193-195; Cowles, The Kaiser, 140-145; Palmer, Kaiser, 76; Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 164-165.

fleet would involve huge budgetary appropriations. In cooperation with Admiral Friedrich von Hollmann, the Chancellor set out to persuade the Kaiser to abandon his plans. He wrote William, asserting that the Emperor's demands might be too much for the Reichstag, and might even jeopardize the passage of the current Imperial naval budget. William would not abandon his position, however, and Hohenlohe's further efforts to deter the monarch's ambitions met with similar results. The Chancellor thus turned to Holstein and Eulenburg for assistance. Holstein responded by attempting to convince Eulenburg that William should go to the extreme of changing chancellors in order to get his bill passed. Such action, Holstein stated, could well lead to an increase in field-artillery appropriations. The appropriations could be covered by lowering the interest rate on Prussian bonds, and consequently transferring the money saved to the military. The lower bond rates, in turn would drive Prussian capital abroad, leading to a deflationary spiral. Eulenburg nevertheless refused to listen to Holstein's frantic summons, causing the latter to accuse him of "barking up the wrong tree" with his unflinching faith in the Kaiser's judgment. Fortunately for Holstein, Hohenlohe's influence, coupled with that of Hollmann and Marschall carried some weight with the Kaiser, and William finally agreed to postpone his plans for a large-scale reorganization

of the fleet. This crisis only ended in the face of another, however, and without any constructive contributions from Eulenburg.<sup>22</sup>

In February 1896, the liberal press on the one hand and Holstein on the other renewed their attempts to force the Kaiser to include public legal procedures in the military penal code. To this end Holstein again enlisted the services of Eulenburg, urging him to do his best to overcome William's opposition to the legislation dealing with public legal procedures. Eulenburg again, however, refused to carry out the request, and in fact urged Chancellor von Hohenlohe to be wary of Holstein's attempts to get the judicial reform bill passed in its modified form. The Foreign Office eminence presumably received word of this action, for in April 1896 the Kölnische Zeitung carried an article asserting that Philipp zu Eulenburg, the opponent of reform, was under consideration for the Imperial Chancellorship. Obviously the article's author fashioned the statement as a means for explaining why Eulenburg submitted to his master's desires. Friedrich von Holstein apparently inspired the article's publications, for only he could have known that Eulenburg, who on several occasions had openly

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<sup>22</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 195-196; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 151-164; D.g.P., III, 526-532; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 504-508; Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 166-171. A commendable volume concerning

expressed his support for military judicial reforms, secretly opposed such measures. Additionally, Holstein would have been only one of a few persons aware of Eulenburg's possible candidacy for the Chancellor's post. Still, the Foreign Office's old wizard denied participation, to the credence of none.<sup>23</sup>

The Kaiser found the newspaper's allegations upsetting and wished to begin hunting down their author. Eulenburg, hoping to prevent William from overextending his influence, attempted to counsel his chief, urging him to exercise caution in uncovering the identity of the culprit. Eulenburg also realized that William's unflinching position regarding the bill had precipitated the press attack. Thus he also sought to win the Kaiser over to a compromise solution regarding the legislation--one which would allow some reforms in military court-martial procedures though not to the extent suggested by Holstein or Bronsart, Minister of War. The solution, simply put, provided that "a prearranged question in the Reichstag and an unambiguous announcement by the Kaiser 'that this question, being a purely military

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William's naval policy is Eckart Kehr's Schlachtflottenbau und Parteipolitik, 1894-1901: Versuch eines Querschnitts durch die innenpolitischen, sozialen, und ideologischen Voraussetzungen des deutschen Imperialismus (Berlin: E. Ebering, 1930).

<sup>23</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 198-199; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 510; D.g.P., III, 532-533; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 201-203.

one, has been submitted to the army and that these discussions were now in progress'"--would put many people in a more compromising mood.<sup>24</sup> With the carrying out of these actions, so William and Eulenburg hoped, moderates and liberals, including Chancellor von Hohenlohe, would likewise relinquish their stand on the public procedures question. The hopes of the two men soon evaporated, however. The old Chancellor refused to serve as the Kaiser's mouthpiece, and rather presented the military judicial proposal to the Reichstag in a way which conformed to his views. A skirmish between Kaiser and Reichstag seemed in the making.<sup>25</sup> To further complicate matters, Bronsart, who had received word of William's disapproval of the act, now threatened to resign. This move would definitely precipitate a Reichstag battle. In view of these circumstances, it is not surprising that Friedrich von Holstein now came to the fore, asserting to Eulenburg that he should not allow William to support Bronsart's removal over the public procedures clause. Eulenburg complied with this request, and eventually persuaded his chief to keep the War Minister.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Undated from Eulenburg Papers in Rich, Holstein, II, 511.

<sup>25</sup>Rich, Holstein, II, 511; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 233-235.

<sup>26</sup>Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 224-233; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 512; D.g.P., III, 554-556, 559-561; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit,



In June 1896, Bronsart however again announced his intention to resign. This time Chancellor von Hohenlohe, tired of controversy, also threatened to leave if War Minister Bronsart left and if the modified reform bill were not passed. Once again, Eulenburg, responding to Holstein and his own common sense, attempted to persuade William to give in on the military reform bill. The Kaiser, unaccustomed to compromising, remained adamant in his convictions and even spoke of firing, in addition to Bronsart, Foreign Secretary Marschall and Karl Heinrich von Boetticher, Prussian Minister of the Interior, because of their moderate stance concerning the legislation. Eulenburg, frustrated by William's arrogance, but not wishing to anger his liege, now announced to his court associates that if they wished to stay in office, they would have to support the Kaiser's views. Many officials, including Friedrich von Holstein, found this suggestion appalling and responded to Eulenburg that William's stubbornness would lead to a breakup of the Reichstag. Holstein also implied that the Kaiser would find no backing from the German princes regarding the reform bill. Eulenburg later insisted that he presented Holstein's arguments to the Kaiser in a most conscientious manner, but at least initially to no avail. Further notes to William from Hohenlohe and Eulenburg, the

latter of which summarized the dangers of changing ministers in times of crisis, met with a similar lack of success.<sup>27</sup> At this point, once again, Eulenburg willingly let the Kaiser have his own way; it seems safe to assume that he himself had sympathized with his chief's position all along.

Seeing that Eulenburg had faltered, William now sought to send him to Alt-Aussee, the temporary seat of Chancellor von Hohenlohe, in order to persuade him to alter his stand on public military trial procedures. Holstein, however, would not give up his attempts to sway William, and upon hearing of Eulenburg's proposed visit, decided to cue Hohenlohe regarding the plan and persuade the Chancellor not to accede to the Kaiser's whims. Thus when Hohenlohe confronted Eulenburg he greeted the latter with, "So you are bringing me the silken cord," an allusion to Eulenburg's supposed intention to throttle the Chancellor into accepting William's opposition to the modified military penal code. Eulenburg, however, ever the diplomat, replied, "I would not exactly say that." Eulenburg then proceeded to portray himself as a "regular fellow," finally asserting that William would not give in on the question of public

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<sup>27</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 200-202; Rich, Holstein, II, 515; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 240, 249-252; D.g.P., III, 554-556, 559-561.

procedures in court-martials--considering his standpoint a matter of personal royal honor. Eulenburg nevertheless also quickly emphasized that the Kaiser would make one concession to the Chancellor regarding the bill. As previously mentioned, William, tired of Bronsart's resignation threats, had planned to relieve the War Minister of his duties unless he agreed to cooperate with him in instituting an unmodified courts proposal. As Eulenburg explained it to Hohenlohe, rather obviously attempting to keep the Chancellor from resigning, the Kaiser intended to carry out this plan, but instead of dismissing Bronsart outright, he would make him Adjutant General. Eulenburg even went so far as to assert that as far as military judicial reform was concerned, any new legislation would contain so many judicial innovations that the section of Bronsart's bill which provided for public court-martial procedures would serve little purpose. Why, then, could Prince Hohenlohe not support the Kaiser?

The Chancellor, however, refused to let Eulenburg's soothing tones deceive him. He squarely asserted that Bronsart's appointment as Adjutant General would not adequately conceal the humiliation of his dismissal as Minister of War. Similarly, other innovations in the military judicial code would not disguise Hohenlohe's abandonment of his support of the principle of public procedures. Bronsart would emerge as a martyr and Hohenlohe a political

Judas who sacrificed his political convictions for personal gain. The Chancellor also drew Eulenburg's attention to the fact that, since 1871, the question of military judicial reform had occupied the public mind, and that his, Hohenlohe's, rejection of public legal procedures in military court-martials undoubtedly would cause him to lose his Reichstag backing, ruining him politically. Eulenburg thus left Alt-Aussee empty-handed, for the time being believing that a compromise bill, pleasing both to the Kaiser and moderates alike, could not pass the Reichstag.<sup>28</sup>

Eulenburg decided now to enlist the services of Friedrich von Holstein. He therefore telegraphed him and requested aid in persuading Hohenlohe to abandon his position on the court-martial procedures. Holstein, however, believing still that an unmodified bill would tear the Reichstag apart, refused to stand in the Chancellor's way.

Eulenburg, nevertheless could not bring himself to see Hohenlohe lose his post because of his stand, for he knew that dismissing the Chancellor would discredit both himself and his Imperial chief. Once again the exhausted Eulenburg turned to William in hopes of persuading him to change his position on the legislation. The Emperor, to everyone's

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<sup>28</sup> Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 249-250; D.g.P., III, 569-573, 574-576, 578-579; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 516-517; Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 194-199.

surprise, now successfully took matters into his own hands. He formally approached Hohenlohe and overwhelmed him with his aggressiveness. The Chancellor thereupon timorously agreed to Bronsart's dismissal while simultaneously consenting to consult the opinion of various army commanders concerning the military judicial reform bill before taking any action. The Emperor and the forces of the right thus won the day. On August 14, 1896, William removed Bronsart and replaced him with Heinrich von Gossler, much to the disappointment of the liberal parties who tended to resent Prussian Junkers. Hohenlohe's stature shrank; the elder statesman now found himself looking weak and vacillating in the public eye. No longer would he be able to achieve his hopes for court-martial reform.<sup>29</sup>

Eulenburg, having emerged victorious from the long struggle, soon confronted another controversy. On September 5, 1896, Tsar Nicholas II came to Breslau, where in reply to a toast proposed by the Kaiser he had stated "que votre Majeste." A German news agency, however, reported the incident incorrectly, quoting the Tsar as having said, "que feu mon pere," implying that Nicholas possessed

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<sup>29</sup> Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 256-257; D.g.P., 581-583; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 519; Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, Denkwürdigkeiten des Fürsten Chlodwig zu Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst, ed. Friedrich Curtius (Stuttgart and Leipzig: Deutsche Verlag-Anstalt, 1907), II, 526, hereinafter cited as Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten; Hutten-Czapski, Sechzig-Jahre, II, 295.

the same feelings toward the "Teutons" as his Germanophobe father, Alexander III. On October 4, 1896, Die Welt am Montag, a newly founded journal, alleged that Foreign Secretary Marschall had provided this misinformation to the paper. Marschall responded to the accusation by instituting a libel suit against the periodical and initiating a government investigation. The investigation revealed that Heinrich Leckert, a nineteen-year-old journalist, had written the article. It also appeared that he had received encouragement from Karl von Lützow, a Berlin police agent, and Eugen von Tausch, Chief Inspector of the Berlin police, when composing the passage.<sup>30</sup>

Eulenburg involved himself in this case primarily as an intermediary between William II, who possessed connections with Tausch, and Friedrich von Holstein. Holstein suspected Tausch of having been, over the previous six years, at the center of many intrigues against the government. He now, in Holstein's opinion, was attempting to facilitate Marschall's removal as Foreign Secretary. Even more shocking and reflective of Holstein's suspicions was his belief that the Kaiser had cooperated with Tausch in this endeavor. Yet this suspicion held substance in the eyes of many, for Bronsart's replacement, Heinrich von Gossler,

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<sup>30</sup> Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 456; Rich, Holstein, II, 520; Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 202-205.

had informed Chancellor von Hohenlohe and others that William had instructed him to bring about a conflict in the Reichstag. Through these means Gossler had given the Emperor the pretext to dissolve the Reichstag and indirectly engineer Marschall's dismissal.<sup>31</sup>

At this point, Eulenburg entered the conflict. Holstein, more than anyone, knew that Marschall's removal would be certain to generate controversy in the Reichstag, and for this reason he enlisted Eulenburg to urge the Kaiser to refrain from dissolving the Reichstag in the face of Gossler's accusations. Even more important, Holstein sought to keep Marschall at his Foreign-Secretary post by requesting that Eulenburg have William censure some remarks which Admiral Gustav von Senden, Chief of the Naval Cabinet, had made concerning Germany's construction of a fleet comparable to Britain's. This issue, irrelevant to the Tausch controversy, nevertheless would divert the Kaiser's attention from Marschall temporarily and thus keep the Foreign Secretary in office until the libel crisis passed.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 204-205; Rich, Holstein, II, 521; D.g.P., III, 585-589.

<sup>32</sup>Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 455-456; Haller, Aus dem Leben, 204-205; Rich, Holstein, II, 522; D.g.P., III, 588-591.

Eulenburg beset William but to no great avail. Although the Kaiser outwardly gave his approval to the libel suit against Tausch, his sympathy for the editor, whom he felt had been unjustly maligned, made the Foreign Secretary's removal a likelier possibility. Eulenburg, who also disliked Marschall, consequently refrained from doing more to prevent William from carrying out his plans.<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless William hesitated. December 7, 1896, saw the arrest of Chief Inspector von Tausch and the condemnation of both Leckert and Lützow to one-and-a-half years' imprisonment, a victory for Marschall who now saw public opinion shifting to his side. This outcome of events apparently also made up the Kaiser's mind to keep Marschall at least temporarily. For William now issued, on Eulenburg's advice, a statement to the Reichstag which emphasized his confidence in the Foreign Secretary's abilities. Other events, nevertheless, soon demonstrated the insincerity of the Emperor's words. On December 10, Eulenburg wrote to Bernhard von Bülow, ambassador to Rome, and informed him that he, Bülow, was under consideration as a candidate for the Foreign Secretary's post. On January 5, 1897, William displayed his true feelings beyond any doubt when, in a

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<sup>33</sup>Haller, Eulenburg, 206-207; Rich, Holstein, II, 522.



letter to Eulenburg, he emphasized the need to "clean house."<sup>34</sup>

While Eulenburg, who disliked Marschall's liberal leanings, could accept the latter's dismissal, other individuals, including Friedrich von Holstein, could not. Holstein feared William's inclination to abuse his constitutional powers. Once started, the Kaiser would attempt to remove Hohenlohe as well as Marschall from the Imperial court, inviting a Reichstag conflict. Holstein conveyed his fears to Eulenburg, who responded that the need for a new Foreign Secretary had made itself felt.<sup>35</sup> Simultaneously Eulenburg did emphasize the necessity for accomplishing such a transition with finesse. He held that William should place Marschall in another ministerial position rather than blatantly fire him. Eulenburg also wrote the Kaiser and urged him to exercise caution when dealing with the Foreign Secretary's removal.<sup>36</sup>

Eulenburg thus found himself playing a role in events that eventually led to the appointment of Bernhard von Bülow as State Secretary for Foreign Affairs. William II,

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<sup>34</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 207-210; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 461; Rich, Holstein, II, 523; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 288.

<sup>35</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 212; Rich, Holstein, II, 525.

<sup>36</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 213; Rich, Holstein, II, 525.

in February 1897, once again renewed his drive to increase the size of the German fleet, much to the disapproval of Admiral von Hollmann and Chancellor von Hohenlohe, both of whom wished to maintain a steady program of naval expansion.<sup>37</sup> Frustrated by their response, and encouraged by Admiral Gustav von Senden, William considered dismissing both Hollmann and Hohenlohe and replacing Hohenlohe with Botho zu Eulenburg, an active proponent of naval expansion. At this point Holstein stuck in an oar, foreseeing a Chancellorship crisis. To this end he wrote Eulenburg on February 3, 1897, and asked him to prevent the appointment of the latter's reactionary kinsman Botho. Eulenburg, although he did not share Holstein's apprehensions, agreed to comply with the request, mainly for the sake of keeping Hohenlohe in office.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Rich, Holstein, II, 526; D.g.P., IV, 12; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 298; Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 211.

<sup>38</sup> Haller, Aus dem Leben, 215; D.g.P., IV, 8-11; cf. Holstein, II, 527; Röhl, Germany Without Bismarck, 213; Burmeister, "Philipp Eulenburg-Hertefeld," 261, gives Eulenburg too much credit for deciding that William II should tone down his plans for unlimited expansion in order to keep the "moderate" Chancellor von Hohenlohe from resigning in protest over the extreme position. In actual fact it was at Holstein's request that Eulenburg confronted the Kaiser in order to persuade him to sanction slower naval expansion. Additionally, the influence of Chancellor von Hohenlohe himself, of Admiral Fredrich von Hollmann, and of Marschall, also played a role in changing the Kaiser's mind. (cf. Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 311-313; Rich, Holstein, II, 529; Röhl, Germany With Bismarck, 213-215).

## CHAPTER V

### EULENBURG'S TWILIGHT AFTER 1897, AND EPILOGUE

The appointment of Bernhard von Bülow as Foreign Secretary led to the apex of Eulenburg's career as a political intermediary. Simultaneously, however, the event signaled the beginning of Eulenburg's demise as an influential figure in the Imperial Court. Bülow took office with the blessing of both of Eulenburg's closest associates, Friedrich von Holstein and Emperor William II. Neither of the two last named could have expected the new Foreign Secretary to behave in so passive a manner as had Marschall von Bieberstein. Bülow, nicknamed "the eel" in Foreign Office circles, would undoubtedly exploit his position in hopes of achieving his political ambitions. Self-confident and capable, this intrigue-loving politician himself eventually would help trigger the exit from the public stage of the two who had brought him to power, Holstein and Eulenburg. As the second William's "Bismarck," Bülow would seek to equal the Iron Chancellor, if not in diplomatic finesse, then at least in mastery of political manipulation.

The year 1898 found Germany beset by a number of controversies involving her relations with neighboring countries--situations which elicited Eulenburg's intervention. One particularly notable event occurred soon after Bülow's assumption of the Foreign Secretary post, and one which

seemed to forecast Eulenburg's lessening influence in Imperial circles. The accession of a representative of the Bohemian nobility with Czech sympathies, Count Friedrich von Thun, to the Austrian Prime Ministership initiated a period of differences between the Dual Monarchy and Germany. Unlike his predecessors, Thun, because of a number of reasons, including his Czech and other Slavic affinities, looked to France and Russia rather than Germany for political support, and sought an Austro-Hungarian alliance with these two countries. Much to Germany's disadvantage, on November 29, 1898, Thun made a point of attacking Emperor William's policy of expelling certain Austrians from Prussia because of their sympathy for the Galician Poles who earlier that year stages an uprising in East Prussia. William II, deeply offended by Thun's attitude, wrote an angry letter to Emperor Francis Joseph, in effect reprimanding him for his prime minister's action. William's gratuitous message upset the Austrian ruler greatly. Eulenburg as well found the Kaiser's behavior offensive, especially because he himself, as German ambassador, would be considered responsible for the Kaiser's hostile attacks on Thun. Worse still, as future events would illustrate, William persisted with additional diplomatic blunders.<sup>1</sup>

Other problems abounded from Eulenburg's point of view.

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<sup>1</sup>Haller, *Aus dem Leben*, 262-265; Muschler, *Eulenburg . . . Leben*, 482; Lerchenfeld, *Erinnerungen*, 374-375.

For some time he and Holstein had, for a number of reasons, been becoming increasingly alienated from one another. Holstein believed initially that Eulenburg had engineered Marschall's dismissal for primarily unselfish motives. When he learned otherwise, the Foreign Office official began to eye Eulenburg with increasing suspicion, wondering whether he would be the next to depart. Holstein also disliked the reactionary tendencies of Eulenburg's cousin Botho. Finally, Holstein, paranoid by nature, eventually singled out the Kaiser's friend as the root of all his troubles. From October to December 1898 he did not respond to any of Eulenburg's written correspondence. When the latter sent New Year's greetings to the "Gray Eminence," Holstein responded, in Haller's words, with a "masterpiece of referred malice." urging that he and Eulenburg "bide our time and drink to each other in goodness knows what--tea for choice!"<sup>2</sup> Offended but not flustered, Eulenburg attempted to calm Holstein in April 1899 with a genial reply meant to mollify him. To the former's frustration, Holstein refused to respond again. This situation, much as it irritated Eulenburg, could be overlooked for the present, however, for neither man so far had publicly defamed the other. Additionally, it is likely that Holstein now believed Bülow to pose a more formidable threat to his own influence in the Foreign Office. He merely

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<sup>2</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 265; D.g.p., IV, 95; Rich, Holstein, II, 552.

wished to prevent Eulenburg from allying himself too closely with the Foreign Secretary and aiding him in crushing Holstein's power. Not until 1906, therefore, would Holstein begin the venomous correspondence which eventually led to Eulenburg's complete ouster from the Imperial circle.

Eulenburg also enjoyed some positive experiences during the years 1898 to 1900. Diplomatically, he achieved success in cultivating the friendship of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the haughty heir-apparent to the Austro-Hungarian throne. Considering the German Kaiser's personality, this accomplishment may well have helped offset the conflict between himself, Emperor Francis Joseph, and Prime Minister von Thun. To further improve relations between Austria and Germany, Eulenburg played an integral role in arousing German interest in the Paris Exposition of 1900. He assured his master that the Empire's participation in such an event would indirectly give her the opportunity to reinstate, for the first time since the Franco-Prussian War, a military representative in Paris. This action could improve relations with France and consequently Austria. Neither William nor Foreign Secretary Bülow, however, supported Eulenburg's idea, much to the displeasure of the Austro-Hungarian government, which was attempting to re-establish its military emissary in Paris. Eulenburg, seeing that William's behavior could engender further difficulties between Germany and Austria-Hungary, thus took it upon himself to contact Count

Agenor von Goluchowski, Austrian Foreign Minister, and urged him to refrain from establishing a military mission in the French capital. Goluchowski agreed to the plan, though he and Eulenburg both favored improving relations between the Germanic empires and France. Politics rather than personal preferences again won the day.<sup>3</sup>

Life grew increasingly complex for Eulenburg with the advent of the year 1899. Influenza and nervous disorders plagued him; he found the 1899 Nordlandreise a heinous experience. Further crises occurred which demonstrated how Eulenburg's influence had waned in the realm of domestic policy. William, apparently going through one of the phases in which he wished to appear as the "workingman's friend," attempted to institute a bill which would provide for the protection of non-strikers during labor disputes. This proposal, called the House of Correction Bill, encountered considerable opposition from the parties of the Left, as well as from individual sources. In the face of a possible Reichstag controversy, Eulenburg also opposed the measure, and hoped that his friend and sovereign would retract his proposal. William, however, refused to compromise on the matter, and proceeded to irritate Eulenburg by making some remarks at the dedication of a statue of the Great Elector at Bielefeld. Here William asserted that the ceremony

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<sup>3</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 271-272; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 433.

symbolized that "in my ancestors as in myself there resides an inflexible will which will proceed in the face of all resistance to the goal felt to be right."<sup>4</sup> In essence William, as the Reichstag interpreted his message, would go to the point of dissolving that body if its members did not cooperate with him. Such a declaration earned the bombastic Emperor a severe tongue lashing from Eulenburg. He asserted that public antipathy toward the House of Correction Bill could lead to a movement for the Kaiser's abdication. Eulenburg felt that William's moderating his stance would be far more effective in achieving the legislation's passage. Eulenburg, himself true to his conservative leanings, could understand William's feelings for the non-strikers, yet simultaneously he realized that political expediency made the demonstrations of such sympathies unfeasible. Despite his friend's urgings, however, the Kaiser continued to stand by his House of Correction proposal, and thus witnessed its squelching by the Reichstag legislation committee.<sup>5</sup>

In 1900 Eulenburg encountered a series of unfortunate circumstances which had the effect of diminishing his sway over William II. The outbreak of China's Boxer Rebellion, particularly the assassination of Hans von Ketteler, German Ambassador to Peking, placed the Kaiser in an extremely

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<sup>4</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 254.

<sup>5</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 254; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 538-542.



excited frame of mind. From the very first day of the 1900 Nordlandreise, Eulenburg experienced difficulty with the Emperor, whose initial reaction to the turmoil in the Far East centered upon involving Germany in suppressing the rebellion. Eulenburg objected to William's ideas and became incensed when the latter gave his notorious "Hun speech" at Kiel. Here William in an access of tactlessness likened the German Chinese Expeditionary Force to Attila and his hordes. William further aggravated his friend by wiring messages to the heads of other European nations, proposing that Germany, England, and Russia unite to combat the "yellow menace."<sup>6</sup> By refusing to listen to the cautionary advice of the Foreign Ministry regarding this matter, he angered both Eulenburg and Foreign Secretary von Bülow. The latter especially found William's behavior appalling, and it appears that he sincerely feared that the Kaiser was attempting to manipulate the Foreign Office and destroy his, Bülow's, chances for assuming the coveted Chancellor's position. Yet both men continued to support William.

Eulenburg found other moves by William equally upsetting, especially when he learned that Bülow, eager to remain in the Kaiser's good graces, had decided to acquiesce with the monarch's irrational policies. At the Kaiser's request,

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<sup>6</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 256-259; Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, 97-103; Hutten-Czapski, Sechzig-Jahre, 379-383; Balfour, Kaiser, 229.

Bülow carried through an Imperial demand that China yield up persons responsible for the murder of European, and especially German, victims of the Boxer Rebellion. Eulenburg, in spite of his strong nationalistic tendencies, considered such action unnecessary. He believed that the Emperor's proposal would arouse the suspicions of other European powers concerning Germany's territorial motives in the Far East. Germany's relations with Russia and England, none too good at this point, would hardly improve under such circumstances. Eulenburg's assumptions proved correct. Soon after William's declaration became public, both Russia and England fervently stated their refusal to cooperate with the Kaiser's plan.<sup>7</sup>

Eulenburg, fearing that the Kaiser's reaction to this "snub" would generate unfortunate international consequences, now took it upon himself to write William, begging that he retract the demand that he had given Bülow for China to surrender the "murderers." Common sense, not threats, would help alleviate the complexities of the Far Eastern situation. To further his request, Eulenburg, according to Bülow's later recollections, even went so far as to "inform" the Emperor that the Foreign Secretary, who supported William's China policy, was suffering from some skin disease which affected his

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<sup>7</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 259-260; D.g.P. IV, 185; cf. Rich, Holstein, II, 622.

decision-making capabilities.<sup>8</sup> William, in spite of Eulenburg's possibly somewhat underhanded pleadings, continued to pursue his own course. He reprimanded his friend and asserted that he found no use for independent thinking at this point. This sign of rebellion, coupled with the Emperor's appointing Bülow to the Imperial Chancellorship in 1900, more than ever demonstrated to Eulenburg that his influence stood as only a shadow in comparison to its dimensions of a few years previously.

Still, the appointment of Bülow did not cause Eulenburg to resign any political post or sever his ties with the Emperor. The Kaiser, for one thing, continued to extend Eulenburg at least superficial patronage. Aware of his friend's disgruntled condition, William entertained fears that the diplomat would resign his Vienna post if his personal situation did not improve. Such a development might reflect poorly on the Kaiser's ability as an administrator. In January 1900, therefore, the Kaiser elevated Eulenburg to the rank and dignity of Prince, hoping that this step would keep him within the Imperial circle. Political motives, as well as altruism, however, almost certainly dominated William's move. For a long time the Kaiser had considered enlarging the number of Prussian princely families, the majority of whom professed Catholicism, by adding some Evangelical ones. Naturally

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<sup>8</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 260; Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, 387.

Eulenburg received first preference. One could not say that the Kaiser's friend accepted his title with great happiness, for he perceived the reasons behind William's action. Nevertheless, he accepted the honor in good grace, as he had done for so many years.<sup>9</sup>

Problems continued to mount, straining relationships between Eulenburg and other members of the Imperial Court. One such case involved Eulenburg and Count Bolko Hochberg of the Berlin Royal Theater. Although Eulenburg and Hochberg had enjoyed a pleasant relationship for a number of years, Eulenburg's latter-day attacks against Hochberg's secretary, Pierson, precipitated a dispute which eventually resulted in a lawsuit. Supposedly Pierson had defaulted on a debt to a Viennese contractor, leading the contractor to inform Eulenburg regarding the situation. Eulenburg responded by telling Hochberg of his secretary's financial ineptness. Hochberg, however, took his secretary's side, and Pierson, backed by his employer's support, instituted a libel suit against Eulenburg. Rather than attempting to prove his innocence, the Kaiser's friend apologized to Pierson and thus induced the latter to withdraw his action.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Haller, Aus dem Leben, 270; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 491; Cowles, The Kaiser, 176; Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, 381; Hohenlohe, Denkwürdigkeiten der Reichskanzlerzeit, 553, 537, 600.

<sup>10</sup> Haller, Aus dem Leben, 277-278; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 532-533.

The Pierson controversy would have possessed little significance had it not been for the intrigue apparently generated by the case. According to Bülow, Eulenburg had previously alienated Dietrich von Hülßen-Haeseler, Chief of the German Military Cabinet, with some remarks which he made in letters to the Kaiser. The diplomat thus sought to regain Hülßen's favor by gaining the appointment of the latter's brother Georg, Director of the Court Theater at Wiesbaden, to the post Hochberg presently held. In essence, then, Eulenburg had attempted to use Pierson's default as a means for attaining this goal.<sup>11</sup> The veracity of this allegation, however, like so many of Bülow's, may be challenged on a number of counts, but mainly because no other major source makes reference to Eulenburg's role in the incident. Also, in view of the fact that Hülßen and Hochberg had close associations, it was highly unlikely that General von Hülßen would desire his friend expelled from the Royal Theater even for Georg von Hülßen's benefit. Still, the plausibility of Bülow's assertions, particularly in the setting of the Berlin court circle, cannot be totally dismissed. Philipp zu Eulenburg, like his fellow courtiers, certainly did not hold himself above such methods of operation, and would rely on such if necessary in order to accord with the whims of his Imperial master.

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<sup>11</sup>Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, 604-605; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 532-533; Hutten-Czapski, Sechzig Jahre, 411.

Eulenburg's difficulties continued as he involved himself in a controversy concerning a riotous assembly of Polish-speaking school children at Wreschau, Posen, and similar anti-German demonstrations in Warsaw and Lemberg. The Posen children, who refused to answer in German when under religious instruction in their schools, were subjected to severe restrictions by the German government. Such action alienated many Hapsburg subjects of Polish nationality, who up to this time had been leaning toward Germany rather than France in their sympathies. Eulenburg, at this point, realized that William II could severely damage relations between Germany and Austria, if, in his characteristically belligerent manner, he continued to enforce the restrictions approved by the Reichstag. Nevertheless, save for uttering a mild warning, Eulenburg did little else to prevent his master from sanctioning the desires of the Berlin bureaucrats. Bülow, for his part, added fuel to the fire by reprimanding Count Ferdynand Radziwill, the Polish-party leader in the Reichstag, for his inability to keep his people loyal to the German government.<sup>12</sup> Thus Eulenburg cannot be condemned too severely for his inaction, as any positive move on his part would have been countered by one from the for-the-moment nationalistic Chancellor. Considerations of Prussian domination, then, overrode Germany's need to keep favorable relations with

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<sup>12</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 278; Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, I, 545; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 531.

Austria.

Eulenburg certainly had encountered political difficulties such as these before. Now, however, he began to think of resigning his Vienna post, and thus his diplomatic career. Undoubtedly the state of his health contributed most notably to this attitude. As mentioned earlier, the diplomat had periodically endured bouts with various diseases since childhood. During his early youth he had been plagued with a lung difficulty which supposedly left his "internal organs" weak and increasingly susceptible to disease. An attack of typhus in 1872 indeed laid him low and permanently affected his digestive tract. He experienced a dangerous case of adult measles in 1884, and also underwent surgery for a neck tumor in the same year.<sup>13</sup> Psychologically, as the years passed, growing melancholia (today it would be termed depression) further complicated matters.

Eulenburg's continued physical decline markedly paralleled his period of political decline from 1897. He suffered from influenza, a disorder which brought with it the appearance of the gout ailment. Cures at Bad Gastein and Carlsbad brought little relief, and as the months and years progressed Eulenburg grew increasingly nervous and impatient. A second siege of gout in 1898 seemed further to affect his nervous system. Some of these problems the diplomat could keep hidden in an

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<sup>13</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 283.

attempt to prevent other people, especially the Kaiser, from ascertaining that things were not going well for the aging courtier. He continued to keep a hectic social schedule, and remained a popular figure at Vienna, although he confided to Bülow that he found his social obligations "corroding, heart-rending, and gruesome as the dance of death."<sup>14</sup> More and more the responsibilities of entertaining fell to his wife, Augusta, who patiently accepted his depressed state. Nevertheless, Eulenburg told himself that "loyalty to the Kaiser" would not permit him to relinquish his ambassadorial position.

By 1900, however, Eulenburg concluded after all that he could no longer continue in his duties. His physical decline was causing his physician to insist that he resign. Nervousness, constant fainting fits coupled with mental fatigue, had rendered Eulenburg incapable of even writing as he once had. At times the melancholic ambassador could not even open a letter.<sup>15</sup> On the 1900 Nordlandreise, then, Eulenburg initially requested that the Emperor permit him to resign. William, however, far more concerned with foreign affairs than with his friend's physical well-being, refused to let him depart. A second request by Eulenburg met with the same rebuttal.

Eulenburg finally succeeded in gaining a de facto acceptance of his resignation from his Vienna post only in 1902,

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<sup>14</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 288.

<sup>15</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben; Muschler, Eulenburg, 534.



primarily because of obviously failing health coupled with influence exerted by Chancellor von Bülow. On January 13, 1902, he wrote the Chancellor, asking that he choose the best moment for him, Eulenburg, to retire, and that Bülow aid him in achieving this goal with the Kaiser. Eulenburg emphasized to Bülow how years in the Imperial service had broken his spirit and health, and that his physician had advised that he take at least a year's leave from his ambassadorial duties. At first Bülow, fearing that Eulenburg's resignation would constitute a setback for his administration, refused to comply with the diplomat's request. Apparently several discrete considerations accounted for the Chancellor's attitude. Undoubtedly the entire Imperial Court realized that Eulenburg's influence over the Kaiser had declined, and suspected that Bülow wanted to take advantage of that to remove him from the Imperial circle in order permanently to enhance his own political position. Bülow, of course, hoped to stifle any enlargement of such speculation. The Chancellor also realized that Eulenburg possessed a horde of enemies in Berlin, and that the individuals involved might suspect him, Bülow, of aiding Eulenburg in some scheme. It would be better for Eulenburg to stay in Vienna, away from this crowd. Finally, and seemingly almost in direct contradiction to the first-stated reason, it may be assumed that Bülow, by virtue of his close association with the Kaiser and Holstein, could count on stifling any remaining influence which Eulenburg still might try to exercise

over William II. As long as the diplomat remained in Vienna, he would not be so likely to influence William's policy-making decisions.

Eulenburg, however, refused to let the Chancellor stand in his way, and wrote him again on March 8, 1902. He urged Bülow to consider the sensibleness of his resignation. The Kaiser's friend first asserted that he held Bülow in the highest esteem and implicitly urged, however mendaciously, that he did not consider him a rival for William's favor. Additionally, Eulenburg devoted much space to a summary of various ailments which he possessed and declared that his doctor had suggested that he refrain from pursuing his political activities with hitherto fervency. Finally, Eulenburg spoke of his family and domestic obligations, both of which he had sorely neglected. Surely the Chancellor could sympathise with his cause and aid him in persuading the Kaiser to let him depart.<sup>16</sup>

This correspondence apparently caused Bülow's attitude to mellow, for he now agreed to handle Eulenburg's departure, though with extreme caution. In April 1902, Eulenburg's mother died, giving both himself and the Chancellor a further rationale for requesting the ambassador's leave. On May 23, Eulenburg, in response to Bülow's instructions, approached the Kaiser and requested a three-months' leave from his Vienna post, pointing again to his failing health, now evidencing

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<sup>16</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 288; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 534; Burmeister, "Philipp Eulenburg-Hertefeld," 303.

itself in a resurgence of his gout condition. In this note the diplomat also emphasized that it would be for the good of the "Fatherland and all who love your Majesty" that he retire.<sup>17</sup> He emphasized, in essence, that his love for William dominated his determination to leave. To Bülow, however, he now presented a different set of reasons for retiring, reasons which superseded his immediate health problems:

Your anxiety to give me a clue which might guide me through the labyrinthine paths of my complex life and still more complex situation, showed me with appalling precision the many dangers arising from the frightful jealousies with which I am surrounded--dangers to which, in my enfeebled state of health, I am no longer equal . . . . In our last conversation at Berlin you said so truly: 'The Prussian genius is hard and ruthless. Subtle natures like yours . . . are not attuned to it.' I have known that from my youth. And I have also been well aware that only the very warm friendship of the most powerful person in the State--combined with good luck--could possibly have nullified the contradiction between my nature and the Prussian genius. The instant that friendship fell off in the smallest degree, the contradiction broke all bounds--and especially as luck failed too.<sup>18</sup>

Such a reflection stands in direct contrast to the outlook of the Eulenburg of fifteen years earlier. The younger Eulenburg could retain his composure in the face of political adversity. Formerly he had possessed confidence in his political abilities. Now he abased himself and considered himself unable to cope with the political intrigue that surrounded him. He who had once professed unrelenting loyalty to his chief now

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<sup>17</sup>Quoted in Haller, Aus dem Leben, 289.

<sup>18</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 290.

questioned his own ability to harmonize with the "Prussian genius." Eulenburg also mentioned, as when corresponding with William, a need to spend more time with his family--a rather ironic declaration in view of the fact that his children had all reached adolescence or maturity and possessed less need of his attention than during their formative years. Obviously the diplomat, and courtier, in addition perhaps to being a physically broken man, also considered his political and courtly world a shambles and wished to depart from it.

Eulenburg's efforts to retire eventually succeeded. In May 1902 Emperor William agreed to allow his friend a three-months' leave from his ambassadorial duties and excused him from going along on the 1902 Nordlandreise. During that summer Eulenburg spent his time at various spas under the care of a medical specialist, attempting to regain his health. The physician, having recommended the three-months' leave, now instituted various treatments--none of which, however, generated any positive results. Giddiness, heart problems, breathlessness, stomach disorders--all continued to plague Eulenburg, and, by his own testimony, to affect the coherency of his thinking processes. Diagnoses by additional physicians revealed that Eulenburg's years of being under pressure had also taken their toll in the form of his having contracted rheumatoid arthritis, a disease for which these learned men knew no cure. At best one could only lessen the pain through rest; the disease would plague its victim for the rest

of his life. Such a situation, then, brightened only by his son Sigwart's receiving his Gymnasium diploma and the engagement of another son, Friedrich Wend, dominated that summer of 1902.<sup>19</sup>

In August, Eulenburg once again took it upon himself to submit a final resignation request--and William still refused to comply with his wishes, because of Bülow's advice and also because of his own preoccupation with such affairs as the Boer conflict and the formation of an alliance with Britain. In view of such circumstances, Eulenburg's health seemed of petty concern. The Emperor also did not want to be bothered with finding a replacement for the Vienna ambassador. Thus, rather than permitting his friend to resign, the Emperor merely extended Eulenburg's leave for another three months.<sup>20</sup> Not until the following November was William finally moved to place Eulenburg en disposition, an indication that he would finally accede to his friend's beseechings. After a month's time, and several more letters, the Emperor formally permitted and received Eulenburg's resignation from his Vienna ambassadorial post, so that on December 16, 1902, the diplomat's formal career came to an end.

Eulenburg's resignation did not generate formidable

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<sup>19</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 290; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 539.

<sup>20</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 291; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 541.

political repercussions. He realized that William still held him in high esteem from some regards, and took the opportunity of the resignation to request that the Emperor appoint his, Eulenburg's, secretary, Karl Kistler, to the position of Court Councillor--Hofrat. The Kaiser assented, and perhaps to reinforce in Eulenburg a continuing sense of loyalty and obligation, also conferred on the aging diplomat the Grand Cross of the Red Eagle With Oakleaf, the highest honor he could bestow on a Prussian subject. Eulenburg, as he had to anticipate, went through a number of departure ceremonies which included exchanging notes of regret with the Austrian Foreign Minister, Goluchowski; attending various testimonial dinners; and receiving a tearful farewell from Emperor Francis Joseph. All wished the diplomat a restoration of health, seemingly an idle ceremonial hope in view of Eulenburg's decrepit condition. The newly-resigned ambassador expressed no regrets over his departure. Now he could return to Liebenberg castle, where, though ailing, he would be able possibly to renew his artistic and cultural pursuits as well as spend time refurbishing his home.<sup>21</sup>

Eulenburg hardly succeeded in fulfilling these idyllic desires. The three years following his resignation, long ago entitled by Johannes Haller "the chronicle of a sickbed," found the ex-diplomat in a constant state of depression,

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<sup>21</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 292.

fighting pleurisy, endocarditis, and other diseases. His physical condition temporarily improved during the year 1903, permitting him to participate in the Kaiser's Nordlandreise of that year. That September, however, Eulenburg suffered a spasm of muscular rheumatism while he was the Kaiser's guest at Rominten. This attack necessitated his return to Liebenberg. The next year saw his condition further weakened with megacarditis, thrombosis, and other disorders. Eulenburg thus again drifted into the role of a recluse, unable to accompany William on either his 1904 or 1905 summer voyages. In 1906, after a brief period of relative well-being, he experienced an attack of bronchitis which further damaged his system, besides confining him to his estate.<sup>22</sup>

In spite of his illness, Eulenburg engaged in some productive activities at Liebenberg. He instituted a number of improvements on his expansive estate and found new joy in family outings. The Emperor patronizingly visited his friend annually and assured him of his continued love and devotion. On May 21, 1904, William attended the Liebenberg wedding of Eulenburg's son, Friedrich Wend, and the Countess of Stubenburg, and one of his royal sons entertained Friedrich Wend with a festivity in Berlin. William also came to Eulenburg's estate on the latter's fifty-eighth birthday, in February 1905, and again in November 1906, at which latter time he appeared to

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<sup>22</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 298. Eulenburg's Mit dem Kaiser contains a detailed portrayal of the 1903 trip.

delight in the musical talents of the Eulenburg children.<sup>23</sup> The middle-aged former diplomat, for his part, visited the Kaiser in June 1905 on the occasion of Crown Prince William's marriage to Duchess Cäcilie of Mecklenburg. He likewise went to Berlin for the simultaneous 1906 celebration of the Imperial couple's silver wedding anniversary and the marriage of their son Prince Eitel Friedrich to Sophie Charlotte of Oldenburg. William also bestowed the Order of the Black Eagle on Eulenburg in that year. Family life continued to hold its pleasant moments for Eulenburg. His daughters, especially, Alexandrine and Viktoria, continued to entertain their father with their musical accomplishments. His son Karl received his Gymnasium diploma in March 1905. His wife Augusta continued her role as his dedicated spouse of thirty years. Outside of his family circle, however, Eulenburg saw few people nowadays. Only Count Kuno von Moltke, his friend from the Franco-Prussian War, continued visiting him on a regular basis. Still, the idyllic environment at Liebenberg could compensate for any loneliness he might have experienced during the years immediately following his resignation from the Vienna ambassadorial post.<sup>24</sup>

Despite his weakened condition, Eulenburg continued to retain a passing interest in the political scene. He read

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<sup>23</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 291

<sup>24</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 291; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 597-602; Rogge, Lebensbekenntnis, 217.



the Berlin Lokalanzeiger, the Kreuzzeitung, and the Vossische Zeitung avidly even though he no longer played any direct role in events which determined the destiny of a nation. He urged Emperor William II to back the Russian Empire during the Russo-Japanese conflict of 1904-05, simultaneously recommending a three-way alliance with Russia and France. Eulenburg now could and did vociferously criticize his master's policies, something he had formerly considered taboo. He could not help but note what he interpreted as a gradual psychological decline in William II. Eulenburg continued as before to find the latter's behavior during the Nordlandreisen Byzantine and juvenile, and expressed to Bülow his concern over a forty-five-year-old man behaving in such an immature manner. The Kaiser, pressured by the cares of office and his own nervous personality, increasingly displayed temper tantrums and related outbursts, prompting his physician to conclude that his nervous system had deteriorated.<sup>25</sup> Eulenburg confided similar feelings to Bülow, hardly a wise idea in view of the latter's abilities as a political manipulator. Yet Eulenburg also began without inhibitions to criticize William directly. The Emperor's "individuality" annoyed the ex-diplomat particularly, and no longer would he allow the Kaiser's possible subsequent ire to interfere with his expressing his true feelings to the former:

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<sup>25</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 304.

You are hard and inconsiderate at--the expense of the heart which belongs to you. Your contempt for your fellow-beings has increased. As you once said to me on a walk in Norway, your main characteristic is self-will. I will not dispute the justice of that view. But in any case, the line between certain actions of a ruler and the manifestations of his self-will is likely to be very hard to draw--if he really is self-willed. This brings with it impatience of contradiction and rejection of the good advice which others are anxious to give you. In a word: Autocracy at the expense of the autocrat's usefulness to himself--and to his people and his country.<sup>26</sup>

Eulenburg also criticized William's expansionist foreign policy and his drive for the Big Fleet Bill. The ex-diplomat also now saw the Prussian class structure, which William had helped to perpetuate, as stifling to Germany's cultural progress because of its emphasis on the military.<sup>27</sup> Such statements, coming from a Junker aristocrat, obviously demonstrated that Eulenburg had relinquished the role that both his Emperor and peer group had wanted him to play.

Although Emperor William now only paid lip-service to Eulenburg's advice, the former nevertheless found his friend's disenchantment disturbing; this in turn moved him to grant Eulenburg opportunity anew to perform diplomatic services for his country. The year 1904 witnessed the birth of an Anglo-French entente, and France, confident of England's support, attempted to extend her hegemony into Morocco. Germany, which saw France as trying to develop her own trade interests at her Teutonic neighbor's expense, now entered the picture in

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<sup>26</sup>Quoted in Haller, Aus dem Leben, 304.

<sup>27</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 307-308.

September 1905 when Emperor William visited Tangiers and made it clear that Germany would support Morocco's integrity and not let his country's interests in that country be slighted. Eventually war threatened, causing the French government to send its Foreign Minister, Raymond Lecomte, to Berlin. At this juncture, Eulenburg found a new opportunity to apply his diplomatic finesse.<sup>28</sup>

Lecomte, a personal friend of Eulenburg, met with him privately, and explained that France, while not wishing for war, still found William's obstinance a catalyst for moving in that direction. The retired Prince in effect responded to the Frenchman by first consulting with General Helmuth von Moltke, new Chief of the German General Staff. The latter assured Eulenburg that Germany too had little desire for conflict and would cooperate with the French government in negotiating over Morocco. Reassured by Moltke's statements, Eulenburg then visited Bülow and informed him of the General's stance. Bülow willingly subscribed to Moltke's decision, but Eulenburg soon encountered a barrier to his plans.<sup>29</sup>

Friedrich von Holstein, who had distanced himself from Eulenburg some years before, now emerged to criticize the latter's actions. Wishing to see Germany demonstrate her

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<sup>28</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 311-312; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 609; Rich, Holstein, II, 721; Lerchenfeld, Erinnerungen, 420-427.

<sup>29</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 312; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 609; Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, II, 312.

military prowess, Holstein expressed his disgust by demonstratively firing off his well-known note of resignation from the Foreign Office, assuming that it would be rejected. Much to his surprise, also well-known, his superiors, the Emperor included, accepted his action, apparently feeling no need for the Gray Eminence's services from then on. Extremely perplexed and indignant in the face of such events, Holstein began to look for a scapegoat, and eventually focused his resentments on Philipp zu Eulenburg.

The fall of Eulenburg, so thoroughly covered in Harry F. Young's Maximilian Harden, Censor Germaniae, will be discussed only briefly as regards those facets of the affair which did not involve Eulenburg's friendship with William II. Holstein and Maximilian Harden (real name Felix Ernst Witkowski) publisher of the Berlin journal, Die Zukunft, acted as Eulenburg's foe, and, through Harden's efforts especially, Eulenburg suffered expulsion from the Imperial circle. Holstein initiated his campaign against Eulenburg, hoping to use press editorials to undermine the ex-diplomat, and expressed this idea to Theodor Schiemann, former editor of the Kreuzzeitung. Apparently Schiemann considered the idea unfeasible, for in the spring of 1906 the now-retired official instead began to barrage Eulenburg with threatening letters, accusing him of engineering his, Holstein's, fall. Eulenburg, surprised by these accusations, at first considered responding with a challenge to a duel, reflecting the suggestion of Axel

von Varnbüler, Minister of Württemberg to Berlin. After consulting with Heinrich von Tschirschky and Otto von Mühlberg of the Foreign Office, however, Eulenburg decided to retract his challenge. Instead, the ex-diplomat sent Holstein a letter denying any role in the resignation affair, to which Holstein gave a rude reply, continuing his accusations. After receiving this response, Eulenburg decided to refrain from carrying the matter further, sidestepping the issue for almost a year.<sup>30</sup>

Holstein too might have let the situation rest had not a press campaign attacking his failure to obtain more for Germany in the Moroccan crisis gotten underway during the winter of 1906-07, and served to heighten his paranoid instincts. In imagined self-defense, then, on May 4, 1907, Holstein wrote Harden of the Zukunft, telling him that Eulenburg posed a threat to the Imperial household, and implicitly requesting help in countering the ex-diplomat's influence. Harden, who likewise distrusted Eulenburg, leaped at the chance to assist the former Foreign Office official in his attempt to degrade the former ambassador to Vienna. Harden, according to most sources, had journalistically served the interests of the Bismarcks during the Kladderadatsch affair of 1894, and had leveled further attacks against Eulenburg in

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<sup>30</sup> D.g.P., IV, 419-20; Haller, Aus dem Leben, 329-330; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 606-607; Rogge, Lebensbekenntnis, 256, 265; Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, II, 290-291; Rich, Holstein, II, 760.

a Zukunft editorial, asserting that the Kaiser's friend wished to bring about the downfall of Chancellor von Bülow and replace him with Kuno von Moltke. (Bülow later aided Holstein and Harden by informing on Eulenburg's relationship with Raymond Lecomte.)<sup>32</sup> Soon Harden found additional fuel for demeaning Eulenburg. The autumn visit of Emperor William to Liebenberg in 1906 aroused suspicions of a resurgence of Eulenburg's influence, as did a visit by Raymond Lecomte to the estate in the same year. Courtiers and officials such as Chancellor von Bülow had also expressed concern over Eulenburg's role in the Moroccan crisis. Believing himself to possess a number of important allies, then, Harden launched the campaign which would eventually banish Philipp zu Eulenburg completely from the entourage of William II.<sup>33</sup>

Harden's attacks commenced on November 17, 1906, when, in an article entitled "Praeludium," he gave a summation of Eulenburg's political career and of how the "exile had" now

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<sup>31</sup>Zukunft, Nov. 9, 1901, 207; cf. Harry F. Young, Maximilian Harden, Censor Germaniae: The Critic in Opposition from Bismarck to the Rise of Nazism (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1959), 89, hereinafter cited as Young, Harden; B. Uwe Weller, Maximilian Harden und die Zukunft (Bremen: Schönmeyer, 1970), 181 hereinafter cited as Weller, Harden und Zukunft.

<sup>32</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 314-317; Weller, Harden und Zukunft, 181.

<sup>33</sup>Rich, Holstein, II, 768; Haller, Aus dem Leben, 333; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 608, 615-616; Baumont, L'Affaire Eulenburg, 210ff; Helmuth Rogge, Holstein und Harden: politisch-publizistisches Zusammenspiel zweier Aussen-seiter des Wilhelminischen Reichs (München: C.H. Beck, 1959), 99-104, hereinafter cited as Rogge, Holstein und Harden.

returned to the Imperial circle. More potent, however, was the Zukunft's article "Dies Irae" of November 24, which contained allusions to a homosexual relationship between a "Harpist" (Eulenburg) and a "Sweetie" (Kuno von Moltke), as well as conveying their joint fondness for "Liebchen" (The Kaiser). Such attacks did not stand entirely without substance. As Eulenburg's sensationalized homosexuality trial would later reveal, the former diplomat did seemingly possess some leanings, at least implicitly, toward such a sexual orientation. Rumors of such behavior acquired sufficient significance that during the 1890's the Berlin Police Commandant had entered Eulenburg's name to a list of individuals suspected of homosexual inclinations. In 1897, Foreign Secretary Bülow confidentially informed Eulenburg that in the archives of the Foreign Office there existed a protocol concerning an illicit connection between Eulenburg and the superintendent of a Berlin bathing establishment. Finally, Friedrich von Holstein had informed the Police-President of Berlin of Eulenburg's supposed abnormal sexual behavior. Harden's accusations, then, merely served to set off an intrigue that had been developing potential for over twenty years.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 318-326; Hans von Tresckow, Von Fürsten und anderen sterblichen: Erinnerungen eines Kriminalkommissars (Berlin: F. Fontane and Co., 1922), 168, hereinafter cited as Tresckow, Von Fürsten; Young, Harden, 96. Harden's information sources included Emperor William's sister Charlotte of Saxe-Meiningen, Count Dietrich von Hülsen-Haeseler, Chief of the Kaiser's Military Cabinet, and Prince Max Egon von Fürstenberg, who replaced Eulenburg as the Kaiser's

Eulenburg received Harden's accusations with a surface calm. Others sought, however, to prevent any scandal from erupting. Eulenburg's friend Baron Alfred von Berger approached Harden, and promised that the Prince would retire from the Imperial circle if this would mean an end to the Zukunft's attacks. Harden complied, and in December 1906 Eulenburg left for Lake Geneva.<sup>35</sup> His return to Germany in January 1907 to receive the Order of the Black Eagle, however, precipitated a new Zukunft campaign, beginning on January 5 with references to "Fürst Manriko" (Eulenburg) and "Zücker-süss (Kuno von Moltke).<sup>36</sup> Eulenburg found himself under fire because of "selling out" to the French in the Moroccan crisis. At this point, Holstein, who had allowed Harden to handle the accusations alone, now entered the picture. He asserted to the Zukunft editor what while he approved of Harden's basic intentions, the unwarranted attacks on French Foreign Minister Lecomte could precipitate an international crisis. This access of national concern soon deserted Holstein, however, when rumors began to leak out that he had worked as the sole party behind the Zukunft's campaign to undermine Eulenburg.

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chief confidant. See Haller, Eulenburg, 346; Rich, Holstein, II, 771; Robert von Zedlitz-Trützschler, Zwölf Jahre am deutschen Kaiserhof (Stuttgart, Deutsche Verlag-Anstalt, 1924), 241-242, hereinafter cited as Zedlitz, Zwölf Jahre.

<sup>35</sup>Young, Harden, 93; Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, II, 310-311.

<sup>36</sup>Young, Harden, 97; Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, II, 311.



Holstein, while he frankly acknowledged his previous role in the campaign to undermine Eulenburg, now also reinstated his attacks to a formidable degree. He well knew that others such as Bernhard von Bülow, Otto von Hammann of the German government's Press Bureau, and Foreign Secretary von Tschirschky probably wished to use him, Holstein, as their foil and thereby prevent a resurgence of Eulenburg's influence. Why should he take on the brand of "intriguist" when so many others to some degree had involved themselves in the Zukunft campaign? Unable to come up with an acceptable answer, Holstein again faded into the background, leaving Harden and others to attack Eulenburg according to their own impulses.<sup>37</sup>

Harden's second round of attacks led Eulenburg to demand a meeting with the editor in April 1907. The meeting accomplished little, however, and on the 27th of that month the Zukunft carried an article dealing with the Prince of Monaco, who had just received the Order of the Black Eagle, Germany's highest non-military decoration. In the piece Harden wrote of Eulenburg's receiving the award earlier that year:

Because Prince Friedrich Heinrich suffered from . . . perversion of the sexual drive, he was forced to renounce the mastership of the Order of the Knights of St. John. Do more liberal statutes stand for the Order of the Black Eagle? There we can find at least one whose vita sexualis deviates no less than that of the banished Prince.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Rich, Holstein, II, 770-775.

<sup>38</sup>Zukunft, April 27, 1907, 118; cf. Young, Harden, 97. This last article also accused Eulenburg of having had sexual

This last article elicited a strong reaction from the Imperial Family on May 2, 1907, when Crown Prince William, supposedly urged on by members of the Kaiser's military entourage, brought the Zukunft articles to the attention of his father. William II did not hesitate a moment, ordering Eulenburg to be either "cleared or stoned"--a hasty and thoughtless decision which put the entire responsibility of proof on Eulenburg. The Emperor, to add insult to injury, then asked to see the police files on Eulenburg. On finding his friend and Kuno von Moltke listed as homosexual suspects, William immediately declared that the two were "finished" so far as he was concerned. On May 4, 1907, the Kaiser made good his outburst by removing Moltke from his Berlin Commandant's post and firing off a letter to Eulenburg in which he demanded that the latter tell him what legal steps he had taken against Harden in order to clear himself. Obviously William believed the Zukunft's accusations held some substance. Eulenburg responded on May 5 and asserted that he had done nothing so far about Harden's articles, primarily because he wished to "shield the throne" from any sort of scandal. Illness as well, so he alleged, also prevented him from taking action. This answer did not please William, and, with Chancellor von Bülow as the intermediary,

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relations with Count Wilhelm von Hohenau and Count Johannes von Holman, both of whom were expelled from the garde du corps for their alleged sexual perversion.

he sent a letter to Eulenburg demanding that he leave the Imperial circle.<sup>39</sup>

A series of complicated legal battles followed. In the first, in the Berlin suburb of Charlottenburg, Eulenburg, who had deposed with the district attorney at Prenzlau a request that his life be investigated, demonstrated his innocence of the Zukunft's charges. Nevertheless, because the presiding magistrate, Nolting, had been a friend of Eulenburg, the results hardly seemed credible, at least in the eyes of the Kaiser. Multiplying Eulenburg's difficulties, Count Kuno von Moltke now resolved to take severe legal action against Harden, a decision that was bound to drag in Eulenburg again and, as things developed, hasten his utter downfall. Possibly at the suggestion of Baron Alfred von Berger, Moltke sent his cousin Otto to the Zukunft's editor. Confronting Harden, Otto demanded that the journalist sign a statement declaring that to his knowledge the ex-Commandant had never engaged in abnormal sexual practices. Harden agreed to do this and had prepared to send a statement when Holstein, ever the behind-the-scenes manipulator, contacted him and persuaded the editor not to give in to Moltke's demands. Such obstinance made up the Count's mind for him and he proceeded

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<sup>39</sup> Otto Hammann, Um den Kaiser: Erinnerungen aus den Jahren 1906-1909 (Berlin: R. Hobbing, 1919), 17-18; Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, II, 331; Haller, Aus dem Leben, 345; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 621-624; Zedlitz, Zwölf Jahre, 161; Rich, Holstein, II, 779; Young, Harden, 100.

to bring a private suit against Harden on June 6, 1907. Here occurred one of the ironies of the scandal. Although Count von Moltke had a great deal of evidence at his disposal, the misconduct of the civil trial, combined with the defamatory allegations of his ex-wife, Lili von Elbe (she asserted that Eulenburg had tried to separate her from her husband during the early years of her marriage), and with the court's liberal interpretation of "libel" as the term applied to Harden's accusations, spelled doom for the ex-Commandant's cause. Eulenburg, his friend, did not attend the proceedings--another detriment to Moltke's case. The court acquitted Harden, and the accuser found himself as "established" homosexual.<sup>40</sup>

Kuno von Moltke possessed too many friends in the Imperial circle, however, for the court's decision to be allowed to stand unchallenged. The government now decided to intervene in hopes of getting Moltke acquitted. Seeing what appeared to be a certain victory for his comrade, Eulenburg, probably on the advice of Moltke, now decided to institute his own proceedings against Harden. The editor, defended by Max Bernstein, a prominent Munich attorney, could not counter the government's accusations. The sham trial lasted from December 19, 1907 to January 3, 1908, with the court's verdict going

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<sup>40</sup> Vorwärts, October 24, 1907; cf. Young Harden, 104; Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, II, 307-308; Rich, Holstein, II, 780-784.

unanimously in favor of Kuno von Moltke. Harden received a four-month prison sentence in addition to having to pay the court costs of both the first and second trials.<sup>41</sup> Eulenburg, a witness at the Moltke trial, also took this opportunity to vindicate himself of any homosexual allegations. He asserted to Max Bernstein that he had never committed any such "obscenities."<sup>42</sup> (This testimony would eventually lead to his downfall on charges of perjury.) Eulenburg now hoped that he would be able to return to the Imperial circle. Such optimism lasted only briefly, however, for now Harden appealed his conviction.

The third trial, which opened in Leipzig in 1908, resulted in a victory for Harden, primarily because of an obscure newspaper article. On March 25, 1908, the Neue Freie Volkszeitung of Munich accused Harden of having accepted a bribe of a million marks to suppress evidence against Philipp zu Eulenburg. Harden, angered by this accusation, proceeded to bring a libel suit against the paper's editor, Anton Städele. Such an action would have served little purpose save for the fact that two of Harden's witnesses, Georg Riedl and Jakob Ernst, had previously had dealings with Eulenburg

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<sup>41</sup>Young, Harden, 107; Rogge, Holstein und Harden, 274-275; Rich, Holstein, II, 789-791.

<sup>42</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 335; Zukunft, May 2, 1908, 158; cf. Young, Harden, 107.

during his previous Munich Tenure. Both mentioned Eulenburg during the proceedings. Riedl, at that time an indigent milkman with convictions on thirty-two counts, spoke maliciously and incoherently about Eulenburg's "misbehavior." Ernst, on the other hand, spoke positively of Eulenburg, at least at the beginning of his testimony. Constant prodding by Harden's attorney and the court, however, let Ernst to "reveal" that he had engaged in homosexual acts with the Prussian nobleman.<sup>43</sup>

Other materials likewise served to undermine Eulenburg's defense. Investigators found a letter from Eulenburg to Ernst asserting that their affair was long past and best-forgotten. At Liebenberg, these examiners also found homosexual literature on which Eulenburg had inscribed the name of Count Edgar Wedel, a known homosexual, in order to disclaim possession of the works, so his accusers said. A sailor from the Hohenzollern testified that Eulenburg had made advances on a cruise. Through these testimonies, then, however dubious, Harden gained evidence for his cause.<sup>44</sup>

The results of the Munich trail led the Prussian Minister of Justice to demand a new trial for Harden. In May 1908 the Imperial Court at Leipzig handed down a decision that

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<sup>43</sup>Young, Harden, 109; Rogge, Holstein und Harden, 274-275; Rich, Holstein, II, 789-791.

<sup>44</sup>Zukunft, August 1, 1908, 172; May 2, 1908, 166; July 25, 1908, 138; cf. Young, Harden, 110; Bülow, Denkwürdigkeiten, II, 315.

the Zukunft editor's trial had been conducted illegally, and scheduled a new set of proceedings. On May 7, 1908, the ailing Eulenburg met with Riedl and Ernst at his Liebenberg estate. In spite of his urgings, both refused to retract their respective previous testimonies. The next day, officers of the court arrived to charge Eulenburg with perjury. They arrested him and took him to Berlin, where, despite his illness, he was stripped of his Order of the Black Eagle and imprisoned to await trial. This action later caused him to return every medal which Emperor William had ever given him.<sup>45</sup>

The new trial opened in Berlin on June 29, 1908. From the outset of the trial Eulenburg pled his innocence and emphasized his love of family. This testimony, however poetically presented, achieved little for Eulenburg. Ill and shaken by the damage he had received at the hands of Ernst and Riedl, the aging ex-diplomat in essence provided the court with a defense both blundering and weak. He declared, for instance, in one thoughtless moment, that he was a victim of Bismarck and the Bavarian clericals. Chancellor von Bismarck, so he asserted, had set the rumors of his homosexuality into the world. The Bavarian clericals supposedly also wished to help perpetuate the homosexuality myth. They saw Eulenburg as a North German Protestant standard-bearer, a

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<sup>45</sup> Haller, Aus dem Leben, 421-423; Muschler, Eulenburg . . . Leben, 645.

resentment which went back to his days in Munich.<sup>46</sup> Such statements, to say the least, found credence with hardly anyone and instead alienated many.

Eulenburg persisted for three weeks, finally becoming so ill that he had to enter the Charité Hospital in Berlin. That development did not end the proceedings, however, as the court decided to transfer the trial to the hospital, reflecting the prosecution's belief that Eulenburg was feigning his physiological difficulties. On July 17, the trial came to a standstill when Eulenburg collapsed in the hospital courtroom. One year later, on July 9, 1909, the trial reopened and again the ex-diplomat broke down after a few hours, mainly in response to a judge's assertion that he was using his illness as a convenient means of postponing the trial.<sup>47</sup> The case ultimately remained undecided, yet Ernst's testimony had already done its damage. Never again did Eulenburg enjoy even passably good health, and the psychological repercussions left by the trial permanently affected him. Clearly considered by the court to be guilty of the charges presented by Harden, Eulenburg could never return to the position of prominence which he occupied before 1902. Both he and Moltke, who settled his differences with Harden out of court in March 1909, went into

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<sup>46</sup> Zukunft, August 8, 1908, 233-234; cf. Young Harden, 111.

<sup>47</sup> Haller, Aus dem Leben, 354; Young, Harden, 112.



retirement.<sup>48</sup> For the next twelve years, doctors examined Eulenburg twice a year, and each time declared him unfit to participate in a trial. Not until the initial years of the Weimar Republic did the government finally call the case closed.<sup>49</sup>

Although Philipp zu Eulenburg and William II ceased associating following the former's fall from moral respectability, Eulenburg did not disappear into oblivion totally. He remained at Liebenberg, an invalid, yet managing his estates and writing apologetics concerning his role as the Kaiser's advisor. He also continued to receive visitors, including members of the Imperial court. Most important, he wrote profusely before, during, and after the First World War, criticizing Germany's diplomatic blunders. Although many of his reflections concerning this subject lacked adequate substantiation, his role during this time nevertheless merits brief discussion.

From the turn of the century, Eulenburg with his pervasive nationalism, desire for increased German unity, and Anglophobia, was quite inclined to see advantages in a war. Yet he felt that his nation was preparing for the conflict in the wrong manner. During the first years of his retirement,

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<sup>48</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 361-373; Rogge, Hostein und Harden, 300-302; Treschow, Von Fürsten, 210-215.

<sup>49</sup>Haller, Aus dem Leben, 362; Young, Harden, 112.

both Konrad Hausmann, a South German democrat, and Axel von Varnbüler, former ambassador from Württemberg to Prussia visited Eulenburg at his estate. Both men brought reports of Reichstag activity to the aging ex-diplomat, and it was on the basis of their information that he proceeded to make his pronouncements. His connections at the Imperial court aided Eulenburg in following events, especially his cousin August zu Eulenburg, Minister of the Imperial Household, and military associates Kuno von Moltke and Paul von Lesczynski.<sup>50</sup> Thus it can safely be taken for granted that Eulenburg's statements were based on first-hand information, however subjectively "filtered" by the minds of his sources.

Because of his connections, Eulenburg had an "inside line" concerning Germany's bellicose policies. In April 1912 he wrote an essay entitled "The German Fleet" in which he placed responsibility for a future war with German naval ambitions. The aim of Grand Admiral von Tirpitz's Battle Fleet, so he felt, was to fight a war. German trade and the German coastline would have been safeguarded both more effectively and more cheaply by a small fleet of cruisers, and the money saved could have been used to build up the Army, with which Eulenburg's loyalties lay.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> John Röhl, ed., 1914: Delusion or Design: The Testimony of Two German Diplomats (New York: St. Martins, 1973), 57, hereinafter cited as Röhl, 1914.

<sup>51</sup> Röhl, 1914, 59.

For Eulenburg did still advocate a war between Germany and Britain, merely seeing the expansion of the Navy under Tirpitz as the wrong means for achieving that end. He wished rather for the Fatherland to adhere to what he regarded as the basic guidelines of German foreign policy before Tirpitz's advent. All the powers of the European continent could rally around Germany and thus pose a united threat to England, the nation which he considered the biggest hindrance to German expansion. Eulenburg, unlike most of his contemporaries, even went so far as to suggest that France could play a role in unifying Europe if Germany and herself could agree to "a neutralization of Alsace along Belgian lines."<sup>52</sup> Eulenburg's perspectives actually were consistent with those of an earlier time, when he opposed William's "Big Fleet" operations. Yet his arguments which once persuaded William to refrain from his particular expansionist dreams would hardly have been effective in 1912, when the Kaiser had become such an enthusiast of naval power. It is also rather doubtful, especially with the accession of Poincaré to the presidency in France, that that nation ever would have considered any "Alsatian deal" with Germany. Surely Eulenburg must have been aware of this state of affairs, and his proposal for a unified Europe seems a mystery.

When war broke out in August 1914, Eulenburg, for all

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<sup>52</sup>Röhl, 1914, 61

denunciation of the government's naval policy, considered the conflict necessary. By September, however, his attitude had changed markedly. He now blamed Germany for the events of July 1914, when the fatal Austrian ultimatum reached Serbia following Sarajevo. Drawing from his long personal knowledge of the court and statesmen at Vienna, Eulenburg held, in a letter written to Reichstag Conservative Wolfgang Gans Edler Herr zu Putlitz, that the Austrian ultimatum had been written in Berlin. Both the belligerent attitude of the note and the form and manner in which it was written reflected a German, rather than Austrian author--"Prussian to the marrow."<sup>53</sup> Eulenburg did not believe that it was necessarily the Kaiser or others at the apex of the diplomatic service who were responsible for the note, but rather suggested that a middle-range official at the Foreign Office, such as Privy Councillor Arthur Zimmermann, might have been responsible for altering the tone of Austrian ultimatum.<sup>54</sup> It is rather curious that Eulenburg did not mention William and his associates in connection with the note, and it may be wondered if he was fearful of the repercussions involved if the total truth were revealed.

Writing to historian Kurt Breysig in 1919, Eulenburg went even further in denouncing Germany's alleged authorship

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<sup>53</sup>Quoted in Röhl, 1914, 116.

of the 1914 conflict. Official documents, he held, had been so carefully formulated that it was still possible for the Berlin government to deny that it had been responsible for provoking war. In sharp contrast to these diplomatic notes, he contended, stood the Kaiser's inflammatory marginalia on the same diplomatic records. William II, the military, and the German Foreign Office expected a two-front war while simultaneously believing that England would not attack Germany. The scribblings included such phrases as "Why should we not accept war, after we have prepared ourselves so long for it"--clearly aggressive in tone.<sup>55</sup> These pronouncements, Eulenburg admitted, may well have exaggerated William's true sentiments, but nevertheless did not guarantee that those reading the comments would not take the Kaiser at his word.<sup>56</sup>

Also contained in the letter to Breysig were statements in which Eulenburg inflated the dimensions of his own diplomatic finesse. No Austrian official would have "pushed around" the Serbians without provocation from Berlin, and if he had been in Vienna, Eulenburg claimed, the war would have been averted. He would have explained away the communications from Berlin, and prevented Austrian statesmen from accepting domination by the German High command.<sup>57</sup> Other

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<sup>55</sup>Quoted in Röhl, 1914, 127.

<sup>56</sup>Röhl, 1914, 127.

<sup>57</sup>Röhl, 1914, 127

circumstances seem to counter Eulenburg's claims in this case. A British proposal to secure an international conference in 1914 fell on deaf ears in Berlin and Vienna, demonstrating that neither Germany nor Austria was particularly enthusiastic about preserving the peace. Cooler heads, such as Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg had attempted to prevail, but with little success. Also, Eulenburg's associates undoubtedly knew that he favored war; they would have considered his plea for arbitration ironic in view of these circumstances. Finally, and most important, Emperor William II had allowed himself to be dominated by the military, and would not listen to his Chancellor or Foreign Secretary Gerhard von Jagow. Certainly the influence of these last two individuals would have been greater than Eulenburg's at this juncture. From 1897 onward, the aging diplomat had taken a second seat to advisors such as Bernhard von Bülow and later Max Egon zu Fürstenberg. War would have been extremely difficult to avert after Sarajevo, no matter who represented Berlin in Vienna.

It is true that Eulenburg possessed the ability to bring conflicting agencies into harmony. His finesse in dealing with the Austrians, both as friends and political associates, won him popularity at the Viennese court. Yet the situation of 1914 differed markedly from that prevailing during the Eulenburg ambassadorship (1894-1902). Too many strains in international relations had emerged during the years 1902-1914-- the Moroccan crises of 1905 and 1911, the

Franco-English alliance of 1907, the Daily Telegraph Affair, the expansion of the German fleet, the Zabern Affair --all spiced with William's intermittent "saber-rattling." Austria-Hungary damaged the international balance when she acquired Bosnia-Herzegovina, a fiercely independent stronghold of South Slav nationalism, in 1908. This aggressiveness on Austria's part was something that Eulenburg would have found difficult to come to terms with, as he seemed to view that country's diplomats as satisfied with the status quo. All of these factors seem to demonstrate, in large part, that Eulenburg wished primarily to justify himself ex post facto in a time of new crisis, to seek vengeance on those who had cast him out of their circle and then led Germany into disaster. The situation afforded him an illusory final opportunity to attempt to regain a measure of his old political influence. It was all to no avail. He had had his day.

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Röhl, John G. C. Germany Without Bismarck: The Crisis of Government in the Second Reich, 1890-1900. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967. This work, particularly useful in dealing with the Caprivi and Hohenlohe eras in German politics, portrays the gradual decline of the chancellors' powers during the 1890's. While emphasizing the absolutist tendencies of William II, Röhl, the leading authority on Eulenburg, also discusses that individual's role in the formulating of the Kaiser's political decisions.

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## B. Journal Articles

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Cecil, Lamar. "The Bismarck Papers." Journal of Modern History, XLVII (September 1975), 505-511. The author provides a useful summary of the material contained in the Bundesarchiv at Koblenz which deals with the Bismarck period.

Fraley, Jonathan D. "Government By Procrastination: Chancellor Hohenlohe and Kaiser Wilhelm II, 1894-1900." Central European History, VII (June 1974), 159-183. This discussion of the Hohenlohe administration includes a section which performs the essential service of clarifying the elements involved in the military courts controversy.

Gall, Lothar. "Die europäischen Mächte und der Balkan im 19. Jahrhundert." Historische Zeitschrift, CCXXXIII (June 1979), 551-571.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Liberalismus und "Bürgerliche Gesellschaft": Zum Charakter und Entwicklung der Liberalen Bewegung in Deutschland." Historische Zeitschrift, CCXX (April 1975), 324-356.

Goldschmidt, Hans. "New Light on Bismarck's Fall." Contemporary Review, CLII (November 1937), 584-591. The author denotes Holstein as the key figure in the struggle between Chancellor Bismarck and the Kaiser, and also discuss Eulenburg's role in the labor controversy of 1889.

Gordon, Michael R. "Domestic Conflict and the Origins of the First World War: The British and German Cases." Journal of Modern History, XLVI (June 1974), 191-226.

Herz, Ludwig. "Holstein, Harden, Eulenburg." Preussische Jahrbücher, CCXXIX (July-September 1932), 246-254. The author demonstrates that the Zukunft affair was merely the culmination of Harden's attacks on Eulenburg. Various excerpts from the journal were included.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Räthsel um Fritz von Holstein. Glossen zu seinen Briefen



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Hollyday, Frederic B. M. "Love Your Enemies! Otherwise Bite Them!: Bismarck, Herbert, and the Morier Affair, 1888-1889." Central European History, I (March 1968), 56-79.

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Rühl, John G. C. "Staatsstreichplan oder Staatsstreichbereitschaft? Bismarck-Politik in der Entlassungskrise." Historische Zeitschrift, CIII (December 1966), 610-624. The author presents new insights concerning William's and Eulenburg's attitude toward the Center Party. Rühl sees Bismarck's "accommodating" of the Center as a primary reason for the rupture between Chancellor and Kaiser.

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Snyder, Louis L. "Political Implications of Herbert von Bismarck's Marital Affairs, 1881-1892." Journal of Modern History, XXXVI (June 1964), 155-169. The intensity of the friendship between Herbert and Eulenburg shows through clearly in the latter's role of confidant when the former was courting Princess Elisabeth von Carolath. In general Snyder depends heavily upon the Haller biography of Eulenburg and Eulenburg's own Aus 50 Jahren (see above).

Sösemann, Bernd. "Die Sog. Hunnenrede Wilhelms II. Textkritische und interpretatorische Bemerkungen zur Ansprache des Kaisers vom 27. Juli 1900 in Bremerhaven." Historische Zeitschrift, CCXXII (April 1976), 342-358.