

Enlightenment, Reform, Reaction: The Schooling Revolution in Prussia

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OF the revolutionary transformations that shaped the nineteenth-century European world, no one of them touched more directly the lives of the broad masses than did the development of the schooled society. The effecting of state-directed systems of compulsory elementary education (schooling) introduced into Europe the age of mass pedagogy. In Prussia and several of the German states where schooling began early in the century, and in France and England where it came a generation or two later, it produced changes in the structure of individual life and society that were both celebrated and feared. Even where schooling was not effected—as in Russia—the debate surrounding it was clamorous and often strident. Some believed it to be the fount of greatness, whether in politics, arms, or production. Others thought it would open the floodgates of social upheaval. Where schooling came to be effected, as well as where it was not, the questions surrounding it were at the center of political and social controversy.

Perhaps because the schooling revolution was overshadowed by the drama of concurrent transformations in politics and production, historians have until recently given it surprisingly little notice. Education history has traditionally been treated as part of the pious story of freedom's unfolding or as taking place in the elevated realm of *Geistesgeschichte*, outside of the context shaped by political and social realities. That is no longer the case. A burgeoning new interest in education history has taken on the task of connecting education to the society surrounding it.

The task has not yet been fulfilled. The inquiry, Lawrence Stone notes, "is at such a primitive stage . . . in the collection of data and the formulation of concepts that it is impossible to provide more than ten-

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tative answers to the questions involved."¹ Strictly speaking, it is not from a lack of concepts that the inquiry suffers. It is being shaped by an abundance of concepts, the most persuasive of which currently appear to be those of social control, modernization, and integration.

This article examines the schooling revolution in Prussia from its origins as an idea in the eighteenth century to its realization in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Prussia's experience is uniquely important to an understanding of European schooling. It was the first of the major European societies to be schooled and the one whose efforts provided the standard against which other societies measured their own. Prussia is, for these reasons, a unique setting in which to take the measure of those theoretical constructs that appear most persuasive in explaining the schooling revolution and its relationships to the larger society.

It is only fair to signal that these constructs, though useful, will be found wanting. They will not explain satisfactorily the circumstances that gave rise to schooling, or why Prussia, rather than France or England, should have pioneered in it. Nor do they, individually at least, envelop conceptually the effects of schooling upon society, or of society upon schooling. To address these questions a new conceptualization will be proposed. Answers to the questions raised must remain tentative nonetheless. While Prussian history seems nearly awash in scholarly ink, its schooling is only beginning to receive detailed examination.² The conceptualization proposed in this article, then, suggests also an agenda for additional research.

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The Prussian schooling process was only part of a larger educational revolution that spanned the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The main impact of this revolution's early phase was upon higher education for the elite, on the revival of the university and the development of the classical *Gymnasium*. Schooling for the nonelite, though the subject of increasingly intense discussion and even of some legislation,

1. Lawrence Stone, "Literacy and Education in England, 1640-1900," *Past and Present* 42 (1969): 69.

2. For example, two standard accounts of the Prussian reform movement do not mention schooling. See G. S. Ford, *Stein and the Era of Reform in Prussia, 1807-1815* (Princeton, 1922), and W. M. Simon, *The Failure of the Prussian Reform Movement, 1807-1819* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1955).

was not made effective until after the military disaster at Jena-Auerstädt in 1806. Then, during a decade of feverish activity, schooling became established as one of the reform generation's most lasting contributions to the remaking of Prussia. Even the reaction of the 1820s, which sought to undo most of what the reformers had begun, chose to expand and complete their work in schooling. By 1837 eighty percent of Prussia's school-age children (6-14) were believed to be receiving systematic elementary instruction.³

The figure may be inflated, but it placed Prussia far in advance of any other society. The Prussian *Volksschule* and teacher-training *Seminar* were by the 1830s the envy of educational reformers in Europe and abroad. In Ohio, Calvin Stowe noted in 1836 that "Prussia does more for the education of the whole people than any government on earth."⁴ France, to promote its own schooling, had in 1831 dispatched Victor Cousin to report on Prussia's experience.⁵ English reformers, considering their island "the worst educated part of Christendom,"⁶ pointed to Prussian educational successes in hopes of moving their government toward improvements of its own.

The idea of schooling for the lower orders (the "masses" of the nineteenth century) came to figure prominently in the considerations of eighteenth-century Prussia's political and intellectual leadership. From the context in which the idea arose it could be argued that the schooling revolution was prompted by a mercantilistic impulse, or to augment military power, or to incorporate newly acquired peoples and territories, or to liberate the peasantry from ignorance or superstition, or even to keep it in line. Whatever the impulse, or combination of impulses, or however large the idea loomed in its rhetoric, the eighteenth century produced little concrete advancement in schooling. Despite an accumulation of legislation and decrees, despite the fact that at the end of the century most communities had something that in statistical compilations passed for schools, W. H. Bruford's conclusion that schooling

3. Wilhelm Harnisch, *Der jetzige Standpunkt des gesamten Preussischen Volksschulwesens* (Leipzig, 1844), pp. 259-60.

4. Calvin Stowe, *The Prussian System of Public Instruction and Its Applicability to the United States* (Cincinnati, 1836), p. 17.

5. Victor Cousin, "Report on the State of Public Instruction in Prussia," in *Reports on European Education*, ed. E. W. Knight (New York, 1930), pp. 123-240.

6. H. C. Barnard, *A History of English Education: From 1760*, 2nd ed. (London, 1963), p. 66.

remained at the end of the century a "dead letter" was held by virtually all contemporary observers.⁷

The legacy of the eighteenth century to the schooling process is not, however, as negligible as Bruford's conclusion might suggest. Most importantly, it had produced the startling assumption that the lower orders were made up of educable beings and established in principle, though not in practice, the state rather than the church as the final authority in matters of education. The importance of the first of these can hardly be overestimated. Without that assumption there could have been no consideration of schooling and, in turn, action on that assumption turned out to be greatly facilitated by the principle of state control.

In the unofficial forefront of the schooling idea during the later decades of the eighteenth century was a group of philanthropists, often noblemen, whose highly publicized educational experiments with the children of peasants and the urban poor generated the pedagogical theory discussed so eagerly in the salons of the Enlightenment. The charitable impulse of these *Philanthropen* led also to the founding of homes for orphans and foundlings separate from the workhouses and insane asylums where they had traditionally been housed.⁸ In this tradition, but going beyond it, was Heinrich Pestalozzi, whose work with peasant children and orphans had by late century made his school in Switzerland a mecca for educational reformers. In Prussia the most prominent work was being done by Baron von Rochow on his estates in Brandenburg. Rochow's reading manuals for peasant children and pedagogical theories remained influential for decades.⁹ When a plan for Prussia's schooling was recommended by Frederick II's justice minister, K. A. von Zedlitz, Rochow's scheme for an estate-based system of schools was the model.¹⁰ And in 1773, when Frederick was persuaded to experiment with centralizing schools and poor relief in Magdeburg, one of Rochow's disciples, F. G. Resewitz, was called to administer the project.¹¹

Their own means, the *Philanthropen* recognized, were insufficient to

7. W. H. Bruford, *Germany in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1935), p. 123.

8. See Joseph Beeking, *Familien- und Anstaltserziehung in der Jugendfürsorge* (Freiburg i.Br., 1925), pp. 131-58.

9. Heinz Tischer, *Geschichte des deutschen Volksschullesebuchs* (Erlangen, 1969), p. 81.

10. P. Schwartz, *Der erste Kulturkampf in Preussen um Kirche und Staat (1788-1798)* (Berlin, 1925), p. 54.

11. See article on "Resewitz" in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (ADB), 28: 241-45.

address the problem of educating the poor; therefore, they looked to the state for the eventual control of education. Here they were to be disappointed. Frederick, it turned out, was less interested in schooling than his rhetoric indicated. Moreover, during the 1790s their enthusiasm for educating the lower orders began to wane. Prussia's war after 1792 with a revolutionary and regicidal France pointed clearly to dangers that could emanate from these orders.¹² Nonetheless, the *Philanthropen* had contributed substantially to the cause of schooling by their role in transforming the image of the peasant from that of pariah to potential patriot.¹³

In high official circles the discussion of schooling was dominated not by pedagogical theory, but by the question of the state's assuming the control of education from the church. The first expression of state concern came in 1717 with Frederick William I's decree urging peasants to send their children to school—if one happened to be available. The king was worried, he said, that children would grow up ignorant "of those things that are necessary for their welfare and eternal salvation."¹⁴ But not very worried. Few schools existed and little was done to establish new ones, or enforce attendance where they did.

It was during the long reign of Frederick II (1740–86) that the principle of state control was most thoroughly explored, and almost, but not quite, established. Frederick blew hot and cold on schooling, and mostly cold when it counted. The legend of an enlightened monarch promoting education for his lowly subjects has long been exploded.¹⁵ At times he thought schooling might create a better grade of noncommissioned officer, or promote the economic development of the state. After acquiring West Prussia he even suggested German schoolmasters be employed to lift his new subjects out of their "Polish slavishness."¹⁶ Yet, when Zedlitz proposed training for those schoolmasters, Frederick demurred. Retired army sergeants, he thought, would do

12. A. Flitner, *Die politische Erziehung in Deutschland* (Tübingen, 1957), pp. 49–50.

13. J. G. Gagliardo, *From Pariah to Patriot: The Changing Image of the German Peasant, 1770–1840* (Lexington, Ky., 1969).

14. Quoted in R. R. Ergang, *The Potsdam Führer* (New York, 1941), p. 142. For a detailed review of Prussian school decrees see Eduard Spranger's series, "Der Zusammenhang der deutschen Schulgesetzgebung und Schulverfassung," *Die Deutsche Schule* 18–20 (1914–16).

15. See F. Vollmar, *Die preussische Volksschulpolitik unter Friedrich dem Grossen* (Berlin, 1918).

16. Quoted in Max Bär, *Westpreussen unter Friedrich dem Grossen* (Berlin, 1909; reprint ed. Osnabrück, 1965), 1: 550.

perfectly well. And when Zedlitz proposed his scheme for educating each of the estates, Frederick impressed upon him the danger that peasants, "if they know too much . . . will run off to the cities and want to become secretaries or some such thing."¹⁷

Nor did Frederick share Zedlitz's unbridled enthusiasm for state control over education, at least if applied to the lower orders. Frederick considered the church and a good dose of religion useful for keeping peasants at home and from murdering and stealing. Not until after Frederick's death was Zedlitz able to convince the new king, Frederick William II (1786-97), to make a commitment to state-controlled education. The creation in 1787 of a state supervisory agency, the *Oberschulkollegium* (OSK), with Zedlitz as its head, was a crucial, though still ambiguous, step in that direction.¹⁸

The ambiguity manifested itself a few months later when Frederick William II replaced Zedlitz as OSK head with his own confidant, the obscurantist Rosicrucian J. C. Woellner. What had been yielded in principle now seemed retrieved in practice. For the next ten years Woellner used his post to organize what has been called Prussia's first *Kulturkampf*.¹⁹ Using the OSK to do battle with the very secularism that had led to its creation, Woellner directed Prussia's schools and churches to reinforce unquestioning religious orthodoxies. It is no accident that the Woellner era coincided with the extremes of revolution in France and Prussia's first war with the armed force of this revolution. Even the *Philanthropen* began in these circumstances to doubt their assumptions about the inevitable utility of schooling. Responsibility for enforcing religious orthodoxy had nonetheless become a state responsibility, though one it exercised for reasons that had as much to do with salvation of a social and political order as it did with the saving of souls. In 1794 the principle of state control over schools, as well as compulsory attendance, was anchored in the new General Civil Code.²⁰

Whatever the effect of Woellner's tutelage, it is unlikely to have retarded the cause of schooling. Every contemporary inquiry confirmed

17. *Kabinettsordre* of Sept. 9, 1779. See Vollmar, *Die preussische Volksschulpolitik*, p. 217.

18. M. Heinemann, *Schule im Vorfeld der Verwaltung* (Göttingen, 1974), pp. 152-69. See also W. Dilthey, *Friedrich der Grosse und die deutsche Aufklärung*, in Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart and Göttingen, 1959), pp. 158-70.

19. Schwartz, *Der erste Kulturkampf*, pp. 94-95; and F. Valjavec, "Das Woellnerische Religionsedikt und seine geschichtliche Bedeutung," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 72 (1953): 386-400.

20. Title 12 of the *Allgemeine Landrecht*.

that there was little to retard. Though schools existed in name, the instruction they imparted was limited usually to the memorization of a few Bible verses and hymns. Attendance remained at best sporadic, and rare was the schoolmaster with pedagogical training. Schoolmastering was often an occupation of last resort for underemployed artisans or unemployable army veterans, many of whom were themselves only semi-literate.²¹

There was one final effort before the disaster in 1806 to implement a plan for general schooling. Its failure throws into relief the source of eighteenth-century Prussia's reluctance to commit itself to schooling for the lower orders. In 1798 the new king, Frederick William III (1797–1840), commissioned his OSK head, Ernst von Massow, Woellner's successor, to provide "finally for the purposeful education and instruction of the children of town-dwellers and peasants."²² The plan Massow submitted in 1801 was the most comprehensive schooling scheme by the Prussian *ancien régime*. It was in outline what Zedlitz had once proposed to Frederick. Each of the estates was to have its own class of schools. Any mixing of the orders, Massow warned, would make people "unhappy and dissatisfied."²³ State control of the schools was seen as essential to divest them of specifically confessional religious influence. When pressed about the prospect of special training for teachers in the lower schools, Massow, unlike Zedlitz, rejected the idea because it "would cost too much."²⁴ Nonetheless, he believed the implementation of his plan would produce a "national education."²⁵

It was the promise of a "national education" that led a radical young theologian from Halle, Friedrich Schleiermacher, to subject Massow's plan in 1805 to a devastating critique. As long as the populace was divided into legal orders or estates, national education was impossible, Schleiermacher asserted. Only the removal of estate barriers followed by a uniform education of the *Volk* could promise a national education,

21. Reports on this were consistent throughout the century and were confirmed by a 1798 investigation conducted by the OSK. See J. Schultze, *Die Mark Brandenburg*, 5 (Berlin, 1969): 130–33.

22. *Kabinettsordre* of July 3, 1798. See J. Tews, *Ein Jahrhundert preussischer Schulgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1914), p. 39.

23. Quoted in Gunnar Thiele, *Die Organisation des Volksschul- und Seminarwesens in Preussen, 1809–1819* (Leipzig, 1912), p. 3.

24. Quoted in Gunnar Thiele, *Geschichte der Preussischen Lehrerseminare*, pt. 1 (Berlin, 1938), p. 203.

25. See G. Lüttgert, *Preussens Unterrichtskämpfe in der Bewegung von 1848* (Berlin, 1924), pp. 13–14.

and anyone advocating that, he insisted, would be "unavoidably the instigator of revolution."²⁶

Schleiermacher was willing to accept that implication. Zedlitz, Frederick II, Woellner, and now Massow were not, and neither, as it turned out, was Frederick William III, who suddenly began to back away from his earlier commitment to schooling. His apprehension that "our precious lower class" (*unsere schatzbare Volksklasse*) might be corrupted to aspire beyond its station led him in 1803 to reject a proposal from administrators in South Prussia that Pestalozzian teaching methods be adopted to develop the "natural talents of a crude Polish population."²⁷ Similar reasoning led to the shelving of Massow's plan for a national education.

Since schooling was never effected in Prussia's *ancien régime*, the constructs that might be employed to explain its significance are largely irrelevant. There was, however, an underlying commonality in the discussion of schooling that warrants further analysis. No matter by whom it was conducted, the discussion was inevitably part of a larger consideration of problems that were seen as dangers to Prussia's social cohesion. That cohesion seemed everywhere threatened. Eighteenth-century Prussia was, says Friedrich Meinecke, little more than "an aggregate of varied and separated territories"²⁸ characterized by divisions of ethnicity, religion, and class. Population pressure alone was sufficient for "cracking the frame" of this society, claims Henri Brunschwig.²⁹ Certainly the increase in poverty, a condition Voltaire believed endemic to Germany, was evident in the soaring rates of illegitimacy, child-abandonment, and infanticide, as well as in the bands of beggars and brigands that plagued the countryside.³⁰ The acquisition of Silesia and

26. Schleiermacher was criticizing an elaboration of Massow's plan by another OSK official. For the criticism in full, published in the "Jenaischer Literaturzeitung," see E. Lichtenstein, ed., *F. E. D. Schleiermacher, Ausgewählte pädagogische Schriften* (Paderborn, 1959), pp. 13–17.

27. *Kabinettsordre* of Dec. 31, 1803. See B. Gebhardt, *Die Einführung der Pestalozzischen Methode in Preussen* (Berlin, 1896), p. 11.

28. Friedrich Meinecke, *Das Zeitalter der deutschen Erhebung (1795–1813)*, 6th ed. (Göttingen, 1957), p. 14.

29. Henri Brunschwig, *Enlightenment and Romanticism in Eighteenth Century Prussia*, trans. F. Jellinek (Chicago, 1974), p. 1. Adam Smith had seen education as a way of dealing with poverty and population growth; see his *Wealth of Nations*, Modern Library edition (New York, 1937), pp. 737, 740.

30. E. Shorter, "Sexual Change and Illegitimacy: The European Experience," in R. Bezucka, ed., *Modern European Social History* (Lexington, Mass., 1972), pp. 231–69;

areas of thrice-partitioned Poland added to the strains of division. Together they added nearly four million Catholics to a traditionally Protestant kingdom. The regularity of peasant unrest in Silesia and the great Polish revolt of 1794 served to dramatize the strain.³¹

These problems provided the stuff of social and political theorizing, of which educational theory became a basic part. Frederick II saw in schooling a means to prevent peasants from roaming uselessly through the countryside or crowding into the cities. Poverty in Magdeburg he addressed by centralizing poor relief and school administration. It had been his suggestion, repeated by others in 1803, that schooling might uplift the Polish peasantry. Zedlitz, and later Massow, considered schooling useful for shoring up the tottering structures of estate. The educational efforts of the *Philanthropen* were prompted by a concern for the poor. Pestalozzi had initially achieved prominence with a treatise on infanticide, and then turned to pedagogical work.³²

Underlying these considerations was the perception that society was in danger of coming apart, a perception that was expressed in questions about what it was that held society together and how that, whatever it was, might be strengthened. If we apply to this perception Louis Wirth's formulation "that society is in the last analysis possible because individuals carry around in their heads some sort of picture of that society,"³³ we touch the essence of what the schooling discussion was about: that schooling might be used to refurbish those pictures that lent society its traditional cohesion.

Woellner, for one, thought in almost precisely these terms, and was concerned that old orthodox pictures be refurbished. Frederick II, an unbeliever, had no ultimate confidence in religion, but he saw its utility for preserving among the lower orders the necessary picture of society's estate-based shape and structure. His enlightened friend d'Alembert in Paris, taking the contrary view, defined clearly the eighteenth-century's dilemma over schooling. It was d'Alembert's position that the social

J. Knodel, "Law, Marriage and Illegitimacy in Nineteenth-Century Germany," *Population Studies* 20 (1966-67): 279-94; C. Küther, *Räuber und Gauner in Deutschland* (Göttingen, 1976), pp. 13-29. H. Boehme, *Prologomena zu einer Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte Deutschlands im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt, 1968), p. 40.

31. W. W. Hagen, "The Partitions of Poland and the Crisis of the Old Regime in Prussia, 1772-1806," *Central European History* 9 (1976): 115-28.

32. M. Liedtke, *Pestalozzi* (Hamburg, 1968), pp. 89ff.

33. Louis Wirth, "Preface" to Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York, 1936), p. xxv.

utility of ideas, or pictures, was determined by how closely they approximated enlightened truth. Frederick was not convinced. For twenty years he and d'Alembert debated the question.³⁴ Finally, in 1780, Frederick turned the problem over to his Academy. For its essay competition that year it posed the question: "Is it the lot of the people either to be deceived by being led into new errors, or to be maintained by those in which they find themselves?"³⁵ The question itself reflected a serious loss of confidence in a picture that had once explained that God had divided his world into those who fight, those who pray, and those who work. Woellner during the 1790s hoped to restore that picture to its original purity and authenticity. Frederick William III decided in 1803 that it was best not to tamper with it, in the hope that it might somehow maintain itself.

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The premonition that the world might come apart was fulfilled with the miserable failure of Prussian arms at Jena in October 1806. The subsequent Peace of Tilsit left a Prussia reduced by half in territory and population, and subject to an indemnity and occupation. Some explained the disaster in terms defined by the traditional picture of how the world had fit together. Queen Luise lamented Prussia's having rested on its Frederician laurels. Frederick William III worried that there was no longer left "any point of unity."³⁶ Hegel concluded that "the unifying power has disappeared from the life of men."³⁷

Others, no longer persuaded by the traditional picture, saw in Jena and Tilsit the opportunity for putting their world back together in a new way. They managed to convince a disconsolate king that Prussia's situation was hopeless "if the evil is not eradicated at its roots, if no total reform is carried out."³⁸ This party of reform, as it came to be known, called for a dramatic reordering of Prussia's social, political, economic, and military structures. Basic to that reordering was the idea of schooling.

34. See Adolph Harnack, *Geschichte der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, 1 (Berlin, 1900): 372, 417-20.

35. See E. Hennes, *Die Volkserziehungslehre bei Herder und bei Vertreter des gebildeten Mittelstandes des 2. Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Bonn, 1918), pp. 21, 58-59. The prize was divided between two essayists taking opposite positions.

36. Quoted in R. F. Eylert, *Charakter-Züge und historische Fragmente aus dem Leben des Königs von Preussen, Friedrich Wilhelm III*, vol. 1, 3rd ed. (Magdeburg, 1843), pp. 321-22.

37. Quoted in H. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution* (London, 1941), p. 36.

38. Hardenberg quoted in P. G. Thielen, *Karl August von Hardenberg, 1750-1822* (Cologne, 1967), pp. 176-77.

The *spiritus rector* of this reform party was the Baron Karl vom Stein, called by Frederick William III in the aftermath to Tilsit to be his chief minister. Stein's tenure was brief, cut short by Napoleon himself in November 1808, yet it was his energy that established the machinery of reform and set it into motion. It did not grind down until after Napoleon was securely deposited on St. Helena. The reformers began by dismantling the legal structures of the *ancien régime*. Most sweeping in its implications was the Edict of Emancipation announced in October 1807.³⁹ Its removal of centuries-old distinctions of estate, only recently reinforced during Frederick II's reign, opened the way for a remaking of the social and political map of Prussia. An exuberant E. M. Arndt heralded the edict as evidence of "the will for the re-creation (*Neuschöpfung*) of the Prussian state."⁴⁰ Fichte, in his exhortations to the new German nation, welcomed the end of "dissociating distinctions" of estate.⁴¹ Later decrees promised land reform, occupational freedom, a conscript army, municipal self-governance, and held out the vision of a constitutional monarchy with national representation.

To awaken the "physically and morally powerful generation" essential to Prussia's renewal, Stein recommended "education and instruction."⁴² Accordingly, a Department for Schools and Poor Relief was created in August 1808 and placed under the jurisdiction of Leopold von Schrötter's still provisional *Provinzialministerium* for domestic affairs. Stein's choice to head the Department was one of Prussia's leading intellectual figures and its current envoy to the Vatican, Wilhelm von Humboldt.

Humboldt's eventual roles in the founding of the University of Berlin and the consolidation of the neohumanist *Gymnasium* have made his name a symbol of Prussian educational reform. Actually, his influence on mass schooling was minimal. His tenure, like Stein's, was brief, lasting only to April 1810, when he resigned to become ambassador to Vienna. Moreover, by the time he arrived in Königsberg (the tempo-

39. For the emancipation edict announcing the creation of a "free people," see E. R. Huber, *Dokumente zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, 1961), p. 40.

40. E. M. Arndt, "Der Bauernstand, politisch betrachtet," in *Arndts Werke*, vol. 10, ed. Wilhelm Steffens, (Berlin, n.d.), p. 3.

41. J. G. Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, trans. R. F. Jones and G. H. Turnbull (Chicago, 1922), p. 3.

42. See Stein's "Politisches Testament," in W. Hubatsch, ed., *Freiherr vom Stein, Briefe und amtliche Schriften* vol. 2, pt. 2 (Stuttgart, 1960), p. 992.

rary capital while Berlin was occupied) in early 1809 to take up his duties, a blueprint for schooling had already been drafted. His chief function, aside from lending his prestige to schooling, was to interpret its aims to a slow-witted Frederick William III.

The blueprint had been drawn up in August 1808 by the Department's interim head, G. L. Nicolovius. Nicolovius's proposals focused on the training of teachers, an approach that previously had always been rejected as too expensive. But he dismissed the old rote method of teaching a little reading and writing as totally ineffective. Effective schooling, he believed, would have to be based on the method of Pestalozzi, for only it "develops spiritual powers . . . and allows the individual to be true to his nature."⁴³ To implement his plan, Nicolovius proposed financial support for students to study with Pestalozzi in Switzerland and the hiring of Pestalozzi's disciple, K. A. Zeller, to establish a Pestalozzian school for teachers in Prussia itself.

Nicolovius's proposals were assured a favorable reception. Reform enthusiasm for Pestalozzi had already been indicated by the consideration the Military Reform Commission had given to adopting his methods in training army recruits.⁴⁴ The initial step in implementing Nicolovius's plan was taken in September when Pestalozzi was informed of Prussia's intent to "undertake a thoroughgoing reform of the educational system."⁴⁵ He was flattered and eager to receive its students. The Department's invitation to Zeller was unfortunately too late. Zeller was, after Pestalozzi, the most sought-after educator in German-speaking Europe. His reputation as an educational *Wunderkind*—an awakener of nations, Pestalozzi called him—rested on the numerous teacher-training institutes and courses he had established in the south German states. Unfortunately for Prussia he had just accepted a post in his native Württemberg.⁴⁶

Zeller was crucial to Nicolovius's strategy. Unless teachers could be trained quickly and in large numbers, effective schooling would be delayed. Stein, moreover, was stressing the need for haste. Renewed peasant unrest in Silesia raised for him the discomfiting prospect of revolution from within. The success of the reforms, he reminded von

43. F. Fischer, *Ludwig Nicolovius* (Stuttgart, 1939), pp. 256–57.

44. From a memorandum by Gneisenau (probably 1807), reprinted in K.-E. Jeismann, ed., *Staat und Erziehung in der preussischen Reform, 1807–1819* (Göttingen, 1969), p. 11.

45. Schrötter to Pestalozzi on Sept. 11, 1808, reprinted in Gebhardt, *Einführung*, p. 17.

46. See "Zeller," in *ADB*, 45: 28–32.

Schrötter in mid-September, "requires a general education and school plan."⁴⁷ The prospects for haste in late 1808, however, were not promising. Humboldt's arrival was still several months off and recent ministerial reorganization had brought the Department, renamed the Section for Worship and Public Instruction, into the new Ministry of Interior. This administrative disruption was followed in late November by Stein's own departure into exile.

Momentum was regained in January 1809 with the appointment of J. W. Süvern to the Section's division for *Gymnasium* affairs. A professor of history and theology at Königsberg, Süvern was already one of Prussia's prominent neohumanist educators, and was to become, in Dilthey's judgment, the "driving force" behind Prussian school reform.⁴⁸ The school bill of 1819, the product of a decade of educational reform, was to bear his name. Süvern's first effort was to expand the proposals made by Nicolovius. In March he proposed that an additional twelve students be sent to Pestalozzi (three had already been sent) and that another, more attractive offer be made to Zeller. He also devised an ingenious plan for training quickly and cheaply the many teachers schooling would require. He urged that orphanages be transformed into teacher-training institutes and the orphans (male) themselves be trained to become teachers. The state would thus be spared the expense of erecting new institutions, and the orphanage would become "the fountain of education for its citizens."⁴⁹ In one bold stroke a major social problem was to be transformed into its own solution—if Zeller could be persuaded to head the project.

A second offer to Zeller was made, this time of a 1200 Thaler salary and the promise of being "a participant in the re-creation (*Mitschöpfer*)"⁵⁰ of Prussia. It was too handsome for him to refuse. The plan was for Zeller to begin in Königsberg by transforming its orphanage into a model Pestalozzian *Normalinstitut*. Later he was to conduct courses for those East Prussian clergymen responsible for supervising schoolmasters in their own parishes. Eventually he was expected to establish *Normalinstitute* in the other provinces as well. The Section anticipated, Hum-

47. Stein to Schrötter on Oct. 16, 1808. See Fischer, *Nicolovius*, pp. 264–65.

48. W. Dilthey, "Süvern," in *ADB*, 37: 206–45. Dilthey's sketch of Süvern is an excellent, if dated, introduction to the politics of Prussian schooling.

49. Fischer, *Nicolovius*, pp. 256–58.

50. Gebhardt, *Einführung*, pp. 75–76.

boldt later informed the king, that 600–1000 teachers could be trained in this fashion annually.⁵¹

It seemed a good plan. Zeller arrived in Königsberg in October 1809, and the Section, as well as the royal couple—still resident in the city—watched approvingly his early work at the orphanage. Queen Luise was so enraptured she wished she could order her carriage and “drive along the road that leads to Pestalozzi.”⁵² The king, now enthusiastic about educating the precious *Volksklasse*, bestowed upon Zeller the title of *Oberschulrath* before he and his government returned, after a three-year absence, to Berlin in December.

Intimations of difficulty, and then scandal, began to reach the Section after its return to Berlin. Zeller wanted more power; then he wanted more money, even that being used to support the students sent to Switzerland; then he wanted to be freed of the commission that oversaw his work. Serious rumors about bizarre educational experiments with the orphans also began to filter back. The Section was ill-equipped to deal with the crisis, especially after Humboldt’s resignation in April, and Nicolovius’s reappointment as interim head. It was heavily committed, moreover, to Zeller’s *Normalinstitut*. But when investigation revealed a terroristic regime of spiritual-psychological purgings of children in the late-night darkness of the chapel, there was no choice but to have Zeller retired.⁵³

The Zeller fiasco threw into disarray a strategy dependent on his *Normalinstitut* approach to teacher training. Had it not been for another appointment in 1809, schooling itself might have been undermined. In May, Humboldt had invited another of Pestalozzi’s disciples, Ludwig Natorp from Westphalia, to work on improving the lower schools in Brandenburg.⁵⁴ Natorp’s assignment was to prepare these schools as best he could for the time when Zeller himself arrived to establish *Normalinstitute*. In the context of 1809, Natorp’s appointment seemed

51. Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Werke*, vol. 4, ed. A. Flitner and K. Giel, (Stuttgart, 1960), p. 226.

52. Quoted in M. M. Moffatt, *Queen Louisa of Prussia* (New York, 1907), pp. 278–79.

53. E. Lichtenstein, “Aus dem Krisenjahr der Pestalozzischulreform in Preussen,” *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*, 1955, pp. 83–108; E. Hollack and F. Trommau, *Geschichte des Schulwesens der königlichen Haupt- und Residenzstadt Königsberg* (Königsberg, 1899), pp. 471ff.; Dilthey, “Süvern,” pp. 220–22.

54. Humboldt to Natorp on May 23, 1809, quoted in Lichtenstein, “Krisenjahr,” p. 85. Also H.-J. Schoeps, *Neue Quellen zur Geschichte Preussens im 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1968), p. 40.

of secondary importance. It turned out to be Humboldt's most lasting contribution to Prussian schooling. Natorp's stamp was to be decisive, both on the course of teacher training and on the structure of the *Volksschule*.

An inspection tour of Brandenburg's schools in the fall of 1809 convinced Natorp it was pointless to attempt their improvement. The product of these schools was a populace whose cultural level "stands closer to that of animals than human beings," he informed a friend.⁵⁵ Teachers were ignorant and vulgar. Only a "total and radical" reform in their training could improve the schools in which they taught. Zeller's *Normalinstitut* he considered inadequate. The problem lay in the "marginal journeyman's mentality" (*Handwerkerburschengeist*) so pervasive among schoolmasters. For its eradication he urged the creation of a more academically oriented boarding school, something he called a *Seminar*.⁵⁶

Natorp's proposal was, of course, out of place. His superiors were committed to the *Normalinstitut* experiment just then being launched in Königsberg. Orphanages in Brandenburg had already been tentatively selected for Zeller's attentions. And Süvern could not be convinced that Natorp's original assignment was futile. The Königsberg scandal, however, kept Natorp's idea alive and he soon became the Section's leading critic of Zeller. Zeller's work reminded him, he said, of the discredited monitorial teaching approach of the Englishman Joseph Lancaster, a rival to Pestalozzi for the attention of Europe's educational reformers. Lancaster's claim that a single teacher could relay lessons to a thousand pupils appealed to those who hoped schooling might be effected cheaply, and for a time his experimental school in London attracted nearly as many visitors as did Pestalozzi's in Switzerland. Natorp had earlier translated Lancaster's main work into German, but now he accused Zeller of merely "grafting a high-blown Lancasterianism upon a modified Pestalozzianism."⁵⁷

Even Zeller's failure did not lead Section leaders to take kindly to

55. Natorp to Vincke on Dec. 3, 1810, in Lichtenstein, "Krisenjahr," p. 103.

56. Thiele, *Organisation*, p. 97.

57. Natorp to Vincke on Dec. 4, 1810, in Lichtenstein, "Krisenjahr," pp. 101-2. Lancaster developed an instructional method known as the monitorial or mutual approach, by which a single instructor could teach a lesson to as many as a thousand children. He began by teaching the lesson to monitors who in turn relayed the lesson to the pupils. Natorp believed for a time that Lancasterian and Pestalozzian methods could be combined.

Natorp's criticism. He had no jurisdiction in teacher training, and cost alone seemed to put his *Seminar* out of reach. As late as 1811 when Friedrich Schleiermacher took control of teacher training in Brandenburg, he labelled Natorp's ideas as "at least disrespectful."⁵⁸ But Zeller's departure and news that the local orphanages were ill-suited for conversion of any kind led Schleiermacher in early 1812 to ask Natorp for an elaboration of his *Seminar* plan.

The proposal Natorp submitted in October became for more than a century the model upon which Prussian teacher training was patterned.⁵⁹ Even Schleiermacher limited his objections to the specifics of the proposed two-year curriculum. Natorp's star now rose quickly. Süvern commissioned him immediately to draft a master plan for the organization of the *Volksschule*. The result was a proposal that outlined a curriculum, separated pupils into grades, and suggested a routine for the *Volksschule* that Süvern adopted almost entirely when he began in 1813 to draw together into a unified school bill the threads of education reform.⁶⁰

The final version of Süvern's bill was not submitted for another six years, in 1819. The long delay was occasioned initially by Napoleon's invasion of Russia, then by the transformation of that war into one of liberation from the Napoleonic yoke. After 1815, with Napoleon gone, the pressures for reform began to recede and the bill had to be adjusted to meet the objections of a gathering opposition. Still, many reforms continued to be implemented piecemeal. In 1817 the Section became a separate Education Ministry. By 1819 ten new *Seminare* had been established (located often in recently secularized monasteries), staffed in part by the students returned from Pestalozzi.

The opposition to schooling was generated in the main by fears of the political implications of Pestalozzian teaching methods, implications the reformers had eagerly advertised. Fichte had celebrated the removal of social distinctions these methods would bring. Madame de Staël had even suggested they would allow any man to select, "as he chooses, either the cottage of the poor man or the palaces of kings."⁶¹

58. For the Natorp-Schleiermacher disagreement see F. Kade, *Schleiermachers Anteil an der Entwicklung des preussischen Bildungswesens von 1808-1818* (Leipzig, 1925), pp. 22, 136.

59. Natorp's "Grundriss eines Schullehrer-Seminariums für die Kurmark," reprinted in Thiele, *Organisation*, pp. 162-75.

60. Natorp's "Grundriss zur Organisation der Elementarschulen," reprinted in Thiele, *Organisation*, pp. 145-61.

61. Madame de Staël-Holstein, *Germany* (Boston, 1887), p. 129.

Was schooling to be the continuation of revolution by other means? Karl Ludwig von Haller had charged as much already in 1811, claiming that Pestalozzi was instilling "hatred for all natural authority."⁶² Goethe, too, was castigating those who used Pestalozzi to educate the lower orders and then "expect to be able to resist the raving horde. . . ."⁶³

Similar sentiments came to be expressed regularly after 1815 as Frederick William gathered at his court in Berlin a faction that questioned the continuing need for reform. His appointment of B. M. Snethlage to the Berlin Consistory, of Bishop R. F. Eylert to the newly created *Staatsrat*, and of Prince Ludwig von Wittgenstein as Lord Chamberlain brought together a party that was to sabotage the political underpinnings of Süvern's school bill.⁶⁴ Through the influential Wittgenstein, known as the "prime minister behind the scenes,"⁶⁵ even Metternich came to affect the course of Prussian schooling. This opposition to school reform and its Pestalozzian assumptions was galvanized by Karl Sand's assassination in March 1819 of the conservative writer von Kotzebue. The political witchhunt that followed, though directed first at the universities, quickly reached into the *Volksschule* as well. Eylert warned that "the source from which the evil of the present day comes one will find in the one-sided false direction our *Volksschulen*, *Gymnasien*, and universities have taken . . . and in the endless [educational] experimentation of the past thirty [*sic*] years."⁶⁶

The bill Süvern introduced five months later already contained major concessions to antireform sentiment. Universities were to be regulated by a separate code. Dropped was the reform principle of requiring a *simultan* (nonconfessional) identity for *Volksschule* and *Seminar*. The clergy's traditional school supervisory powers were once again respected. Still intact, however, was the crucial reform vision of a structure that linked together the *Volksschule*, *Gymnasium* and university.

62. Haller's attack in the "Göttingen Gelehrter Anzeiger" (Apr. 1811) quoted in Dilthey, "Süvern," p. 225. For background see Liedtke, *Pestalozzi*, pp. 154-55.

63. Quoted in F. Heer, *The Intellectual History of Europe*, trans. J. Steinberg (Garden City, N.Y., 1966), 2: 271. Goethe also used the imagery of a Babylonian Tower of Confusion to portray the "horrible influence which the damnable [Pestalozzian] system breeds." Quoted in L. Lewisohn, ed., *Goethe: The Story of a Man*, 2 (New York, 1949): 238-39.

64. See articles on Snethlage, Eylert, and Wittgenstein in *ADB*.

65. H. von Srbik, *Metternich*, vol. 1, 3rd ed. (Munich, 1957), p. 582.

66. "Promemoria des Bischofs Eylert über eine Reform des Schul- und Kirchenwesens," Oct. 16, 1819, in Max Lenz, *Geschichte der Königlichen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin*, 4 (Halle, 1910): 380-90.

Although there were to be distinct *Landschulen* for peasants and *Stadt-schulen* for town-dwellers, each was to be allowed to promote its talented pupils upward. Talent and inclination, not policy or law, were to set the educational limits for pupils from even the poorest classes. Consistent with the reformers' neohumanistic ideals, the *Volksschule* curriculum was to impart general knowledge for citizenship (*allgemeine Bildung*), not specific occupational skills. The object of this schooling, Süvern wrote, was "to create an *Organismus* in which each of society's components, province, nobleman, vassal, or locality, is allowed to develop its life [while] allowing at the same time these components to grow together into a unified whole [*Ganzen*]."67

Eylert forecast the creation of a world in which "the sacred ties between rightful rulers and their dependent people . . . have been torn asunder."68 Frederick William was led to wonder again how duty could be sanctified if "the feeling for equality has been awakened."69 Süvern, of course, embodied the reform position that schooling would sanctify both duty and the ties between peoples and rulers. But conservative anxieties were nourished when Schleiermacher, in defense of Süvern's bill before the Berlin Academy, contended "that education should operate as a levelling principle [*ein gleichmachendes Prinzip*] and work against continuously developing inequalities."70 Here, it seemed, was the emancipation edict run wild. Yet, as it turned out, the major reform measure that the reaction of the 1820s did not finally choose either to dismantle or let wither from neglect was schooling.

* * *

The principal conservative advocate of schooling came to be Ludolf von Beckedorff, a protégé of the court party, whom it managed to place in 1821 at the head of the Education Ministry's *Volksschule* division. It was Beckedorff who led the successful fight against Süvern's bill, earning thereby the reputation of being the "reactionary leader" in education during the 1820s.71 Yet, he as much as Süvern was responsible for the renown Prussian schooling came to enjoy.

67. From the "Promemoria" to Süvern's draft. See G. Giese, *Quellen zur deutschen Schulgeschichte seit 1800* (Göttingen, 1961), pp. 90-93.

68. Eylert, *Charakter-Züge*, p. 212.

69. Eylert, *Charakter-Züge*, p. 377.

70. See Lichtenstein, ed., *Schleiermacher . . . pädagogische Schriften*, p. 311.

71. Flitner, *Die politische Erziehung*, p. 95.

Beckedorff's concern for schooling was rooted in the same perception that had motivated the reformers. The old Prussia was gone. The creation of a new one was not only possible, but essential. Reflecting on Prussia's post-Tilsit condition, he concluded that "henceforth . . . it [the state] will have to be molded with forethought and purpose, like a work of art. . . ."72 To conservatives during the 1820s the problems of social reconstruction were no less difficult or urgent than they had been for their reform predecessors. The Prussia enlarged at Vienna was still straining under the accumulating weight of population growth. Stein's economic reforms had done little, if anything, to increase productivity in agriculture or industry. The rates of illegitimacy, beggary, and banditry rose again during the depression of the 1820s, which witnessed in addition chaotic efforts of the poor to flee Germany for happier lands abroad.⁷³

Beckedorff had initially come to the court party's attention in 1819 when he published an indictment of the Kotzebue assassination. Until then he had been an unknown tutor; now he was invited to Berlin to serve on the Censorship Board created to implement the Karlsbad Decrees. Soon thereafter he was asked to give an opinion on the merits of Süvern's school bill. He could find none. Reasoning that "society does not rest on the possession of equal rights or demands upon its members, but upon their division . . . into separate classes and estates," he argued that Süvern's proposals would lead to "insecurity for the individual and eternal turmoil for the society as a whole."⁷⁴

Such views endeared him to his sponsors, especially Wittgenstein, who sought to promote his entry into the educational bureaucracy. In late 1820, when the conservative heads of Europe met at Troppau to consider the implications of revolution in Naples, Wittgenstein used his influence with Metternich to encourage Prussia's king to commission a study of connections between school policy and social disorder—and to make Beckedorff a ministerial councillor.⁷⁵ Beckedorff, along with Eylert and Snethlage, was eventually named to the commission

72. H. Brunnengräber, *Ludolf von Beckedorff: Ein Volksschulpädagoge des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Düsseldorf, 1929), p. 28.

73. M. Walker, *Germany and the Emigration, 1816-1885* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), chap. 1; E. A. Wrigley, *Population and History* (New York, 1969), p. 154, speaks of the problem in eastern Germany as being on the verge of "Irish severity."

74. Beckedorff's opinion reprinted in L. Schweim, ed., *Schulreform in Preussen, 1809-1810* (Weinheim/Bergstrasse, 1966), p. 226.

75. Brunnengräber, *Beckedorff*, p. 35; Fischer, *Nicolovius*, p. 422.

to study Prussia's school policy. Its report in February 1821 drew clearly the battle lines with Süvern and reform. Responsibility for the threatening social disorder in Prussia was found to rest "most heavily upon those to whom has been entrusted since 1809 the leadership in the crucial matter [of education]."76 They traced the moral depravity they saw pervading their times to the influence of Pestalozzi and those who had propagated his influence.

As councillor, Beckedorff also launched an investigation of Prussia's teacher-training *Seminare*. He came back convinced that the *simultan Seminare* undermined religiosity, and he was particularly distressed at the range of academic knowledge their curricula required.⁷⁷ Was not much of this knowledge superfluous, or even dangerous? Frederick William was easily so persuaded. Instruction for *Seminar* pupils, he ordered in 1822, should be held within "the boundaries their station requires . . . for otherwise they may give the common people a distorted view of things."⁷⁸

No specific legislative alternative to Süvern's bill was ever produced by the conservatives, even after 1821 when Beckedorff came to head the ministry's *Volksschule* division. Conservative objectives for schooling, however, were clearly articulated in a lengthy essay, "Concerning the Concept of the *Volksschule*," that Beckedorff published in 1825. The object of schooling, he argued, was "the creation of orders or estates (*Standes-Bildung*)," not the promotion of an "artificial equality."⁷⁹ Functions essential to society, Beckedorff theorized, required separate estates for agriculture, industry, commerce, and learning (*Wissenschaften*). To promote their development he recommended for each estate its own school structure: *Landschulen* for peasants; tuition-free *Armenschulen* for the lower urban orders; *Bürger* and *Hauptschulen* for the industrial and commercial estates. This was his concept of the *Volksschule*. There were to be no links between these schools, no passage from one to the next; and beyond the reach of any of them were to be the schools for the learned estate, the *Gelehrtschulen*, the *Gymnasien* and universities that prepared the *Wissenschaftler*. Here, in all but name, was

76. "Promemoria von Beckedorff, Eylert, Snethlage und Schultz," Feb. 15, 1821, reprinted in Lenz, *Geschichte*, p. 390.

77. Brunnengräber, *Beckedorff*, pp. 17, 40-41.

78. *Kabinettsordre* of July 7, 1822. See F. Nüchter, "Die geschichtliche Entwicklung der Lehrerbildung," *Schule und Gegenwart* 3 (1951): 47.

79. L. Beckedorff, "Über den Begriff der Volksschule," *Jahrbücher des Preussischen Volksschul-Wesens* 1 (1825): 24-39, esp. 32. Hereafter cited as *Jahrbücher*.

the conservative's anti-Süvern bill and the conceptual foundation for what became the class-bound nature of nineteenth-century Prussian schooling.

Like the reformers, however, Beckedorff emphasized teacher training in his schooling strategy. Seven new *Seminare* were established during his tenure, bringing the total up to twenty-five.⁸⁰ Many of these were already staffed, and even directed, by Pestalozzians, and Beckedorff himself appointed Pestalozzians to *Seminar* positions. But to underline the *Standes-Bildung* mission of the *Seminare*, all but two of them were restricted to preparing teachers for the rural *Landschulen*, and gradually the *simultan* identity of the *Seminare* created by the reformers was withdrawn.⁸¹ For all of them, Beckedorff directed, the curriculum was to be reconstructed within the confines of "Christian belief and its teachings about duty."⁸²

The purpose of that curriculum was to establish in the minds of teachers the picture of a society redivided into estates. To legitimize that picture Beckedorff and others hit upon the notion of "positive Christianity," vaguely conceived as a duty-laden religious orthodoxy that presumably would hold the estates in equilibrium, or, in Frederick William's words, restore to the world "root and foundation."⁸³ Fundamental to this picture, however, was the principle that it be upheld by the state. There was to be no mere restoration of the old picture. Beckedorff rejected out of hand persistent demands by church interests for the restoration of their right to control education.⁸⁴ "Positive Christianity" was too important to be left to the church. In 1825 came the state decree making school attendance compulsory also in the Rhine-land provinces not subject to the General Civil Code of 1794.⁸⁵

80. "Tabellarische Nachweisung sämtlicher Preussischen Haupt-Seminarien," *Jahrbücher* 1 (1825): 128-48.

81. Order of Jan. 13, 1824, for Posen. See "Fortschritte des Volksschulwesens im Grossherzogthum Posen," *Jahrbücher* 1 (1825): 81.

82. "Reglement für das evangel. Schullehrer-Seminar zu Mörs," *Jahrbücher* 1 (1825): 157. For the role of religion in conservative pedagogical thought, see M. Gleich, *Die Pädagogik des preussischen Konservatismus in der Epoche seiner Entstehung* (Münster, 1933), pp. 42-48.

83. Eylert, *Charakter-Züge*, p. 379.

84. These objections had been articulated in response to Süvern's bill, but they applied to Beckedorff's policies as well.

85. *Kabinettsordre* of May 14, 1825. See F.W. Niedergesäss, *Das Elementarschulwesen in den Königlich Preussischen Staaten: Eine Zusammenstellung der gültigen Gesetze, Verordnungen, Erlasse und Verfügungen das Elementarschulwesen betreffend* (Crefeld, 1847), p. 216.

* * *

The relationships between school and society revealed in this examination of Prussian schooling are, not surprisingly, extremely varied and complex. In fact, there seems sufficient evidence to support all three of those constructs—social control, modernization, integration, either in turn or even simultaneously—that are currently utilized so persuasively in systematizing an understanding of mass schooling. Herein lies their greatest problem. Which one, at which point, does one use to explain what?

Social control is most obviously applicable to the schooling policies of the 1820s. Beckedorff saw in schooling hope for controlling the social fluidity of early nineteenth-century Prussia. Whether that world was in fact as fluid as he and other conservatives thought it to be is debatable, but also beside the point. The great crisis of those decades, Franklin Ford notes, “occurred in social structure and, equally important, in the way men conceived of social structure.”⁸⁶ How Beckedorff hoped to control and shape that structure is reflected in the variety of schools he recommended, their *Standes-Bildung* objectives, the curriculum limitations he imposed upon the *Seminare*, and the rhetoric in which he couched his hopes.

Part of the persuasiveness of the model of social control lies no doubt in that it provides a corrective to facile assumptions that education is inevitably a means of social liberation. Certainly Beckedorff’s policies (and successes) fit comfortably into its confines, as do at least the objectives of the eighteenth century, whether articulated by Frederick II, Woellner, or Massow.

What the social-control model does not adequately explain is the schooling initiatives of the reformers after 1806—that is, the origin of schooling. If it is argued that the reformers, too, were concerned with shaping society to keep it from going out of control, the construct becomes so broad that it loses its power to make the necessary distinction between the schooling of the reformers and the conservatives. Even in its narrower version, it does not explain why Frederick, Woellner, or Massow, though much concerned with social control, did so little to

Not all children had to attend the *Volksschule*. The higher levels of society had their own private schools, or even private tutors.

86. F. Ford, “The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Era: How Much of a Watershed?” *American Historical Review* 69 (1963): 24.

effect schooling. Neither does it indicate why schooling should have been effected first in Prussia, rather than England or France. Would it be at all appropriate to conclude that Prussia, more than England or France, was in need of social control?

These questions purportedly are addressed by constructs developed out of modernization theory. Modernization suggests the process by which a society promotes the popular capacity to participate in the political and social functions of a society. As achievement criteria replace those of ascription in determining that participation, the society is said to be modernizing.⁸⁷ In the economic realm modernization points to the application of technology to production—that is, industrialization. The master determinant, the key to all this, it is argued, is education and specifically mass schooling.

The work of the Prussian reformers is accommodated nicely in this framework. The Stein reforms were designed to encourage both political and economic modernization, and Süvern's school bill, specifically, to promote the capacity to participate in this new world. Even those schooling objectives of the previous century that were prompted by a mercantilistic impulse can be accommodated.

But again, whatever the modernizing objectives of the eighteenth century, they did not lead to schooling. And while those objectives do apply to the later reformers, it must be remembered that the schooling process was "completed" during the 1820s by conservatives who objected to modernity in any of its forms. They feared the growth of political capacity and rejected the implications of replacing ascriptive criteria with those of achievement. They continued schooling to prevent precisely those attributes from developing. If anything, modernization constructs suggest they should have dismantled what the reformers had begun.

Then, too, the *Volksschule* curriculum proposed by the reformers showed little concern with what should be vital to a modernizing elite: technical education. Süvern's curriculum was in line with the neohumanist emphasis upon nonutilitarian general education, not the devel-

87. S. N. Eisenstadt, a leading modernization theorist, defines modernization as "the process of change towards those types of social, economic, and political systems that have developed in western Europe and North America" during the past several centuries. See his *Modernization: Protest and Change* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1966), p. 1. The most far-reaching attempt to link modernization directly to education is by E. G. West, *Education and Industrialization* (New York, 1975).

opment of immediately useful skills. While it might be argued that the literacy produced by schooling, no matter what its objectives, encourages modernization, even that claim, as Peter Lundgreen points out in his study of the relationship between educational expansion and economic growth in nineteenth-century Germany, is difficult to demonstrate.⁸⁸ And in the larger European setting modernization constructs break down completely. England and France, by all economic and political indices more modern than Prussia, did not develop effective schooling until much later in the century.⁸⁹

Closely related to modernization is the integration theory that has been applied to the analysis of schooling in the developing polities of this century. James S. Coleman has constructed a sophisticated model of integration for that purpose, one that seems applicable to Prussia as well. Coleman sees two dimensions to integration, the horizontal and the vertical. The horizontal dimension refers to "the welding together of previously separate political communities into a larger, more all-embracing polity"; the vertical dimension, to social integration that seeks to bridge the gap between the ruling elite and the masses.⁹⁰

Both dimensions are useful in analyzing Prussia's schooling. Frederick II's concern that German schoolmasters be employed to lift a new province out of its "Polish slavishness," as well as the reform generation's hope that its example would lead to moral conquests in the Germany beyond Prussia's borders, points to a desire for horizontal integration. Even the conservatives, confronted after 1815 with an enlarged Prussia, might be fitted into this framework. Moreover, vertical integration to bridge an elite-mass gap was the object of Süvern's proposed *Volksschule*-to-university educational ladder. Süvern was specific on that point. Schooling without social barriers, he wrote, would become "the most important . . . integrating factor in the entire state structure."⁹¹

Not yet accommodated is the *Standes-Bildung* schooling of the 1820s, or the estate-supporting objectives of the eighteenth century, but Cole-

88. P. Lundgreen, "Educational Expansion and Economic Growth in Nineteenth-Century Germany: A Quantitative Study," in L. Stone, ed., *Schooling and Society* (Baltimore, 1976), pp. 20-66.

89. For a devastating critique of modernization theory, see Dean C. Tipps, "Modernization and the Comparative Study of Societies," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 15 (1973): 199-226.

90. J. S. Coleman, ed., *Education and Political Development* (Princeton, N.J., 1965), pp. 16-17.

91. Quoted in Thiele, *Organisation*, p. 20.

man does supply an addition to his construct that ostensibly does accommodate them. Recognizing that schooling can also "intensify divisions among different groups," he speaks of its potential for promoting "malintegration."⁹² But are Beckedorff's schooling policies, or Frederick's objectives, adequately accounted for by a concept of malintegration? Is there analytical meaning in describing as malintegrative Beckedorff's *Standes-Bildung* schooling? Are we not brought back full circle to a less useful and more judgmental version of social control?

Be it social control, or integration, or modernization, no one of them accommodates Prussian schooling in its entirety, or suggests why schooling should have been effected there first. Yet it seems clear that schooling can be an agency for the promotion of all three of these and that the effecting of one does not necessarily exclude the effecting of the others. But when, and under what circumstances? A satisfactory model should not only account for the origins of schooling, but also allow for the possibly multiple effects of schooling and establish criteria for distinguishing the one from the other.

The foundation for such a model can be located in the perception shared by all of those concerned with the schooling process at each of its stages: that society was at bottom a human invention that could come apart, be put back together, and be put back together in different ways. The idea of schooling, it has been argued here, was prereform Prussia's response to the perception that it was coming apart; actual schooling after 1806 represented a response to the belief that it had come apart and needed to be put back together. Fundamental to this perception was the notion that society was held together, according to Humboldt, by "clearly defined concepts" that schooling would "implant . . . so deeply they will be reflected in the individual and all of his dealings."⁹³

Humboldt's concepts (or Woellner's orthodoxy) have an analytical equivalent in what social anthropologists call useful social mythology, a web of perceptions that bind together the components of society, says R. T. Anderson, by providing for a "belief in the rightness of the system."⁹⁴ Until the time of the French Revolution, according to Ander-

92. Coleman, *Education*, p. 30.

93. Humboldt, *Werke*, 4: 212.

94. R. T. Anderson, *Traditional Europe: A Study in Anthropology and History* (Belmont, Ca., 1971), p. 166. Robert Graves sees as one of the functions of myth, "to justify an existing social system. . . ." See *Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology* (New York, 1959), p. v.

son's argument, Europe's social and political relationships were held together and explained by a mythology that located their origins and legitimized them in God's design for a world divided into estates. That binding mythology—Wirth would say picture—remained essential during the eighteenth century even for many who no longer were persuaded by its validity. Frederick II and his Academy still found it a *useful* mythology.

For Prussia the utility of that mythology collapsed along with the armies at Jena, confronting the reformers, and later the conservatives, with the task of developing new binding myths. Humboldt spoke of the binding power of concepts clearly defined. In fact, the reformers provided anything but clear definitions. Süvern spoke of a "wholeness" restored through a vague concept of nationhood still to be awakened, in large part through schooling. That particular form of wholeness was rejected by those who during the 1820s proposed in its place one bound together by "positive Christianity." Wholeness was not at issue, but its binding material was.

Developed a step further, what may be called the wholeness model can also point to the circumstances in which schooling has controlling, modernizing, or integrating effects. If, as Süvern suggested, it was the perception of the insecurity of wholeness that led Prussia's elites to implement schooling, changes in that perception could also lead to changes in the purpose of schooling. By the 1840s some Rhineland industrialists, believing the *Volksschule* could now go beyond the promotion of wholeness, urged inclusion in the curriculum of such "useful knowledge" as rudimentary geometry, drafting, and physics. Under Friedrich Harkort they organized in 1843 a "League for the German *Volksschule* and the Dissemination of Useful Knowledge."⁹⁵ Its aims were to effect what we would call modernization. Some of the League's proposals were in fact implemented, but this modernizing campaign was cut short by the revolutionary turmoil of the late 1840s, after which "modern" aspects of the curricula in both *Volksschule* and *Seminar* were again dropped. Harkort himself was accused in the 1850s by educational authorities, again concerned primarily with wholeness, of trying to base a *Volksschule* on industry rather than on Christianity.⁹⁶

95. For an analysis of the industrialists' complaint see L. Kiehn, "German Education and Economy in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Yearbook of Education 1956*, ed. R. K. Hall and J. A. Lauwreys (New York, n.d.), pp. 485-94.

96. The charge was made by Ferdinand Stiehl. See K.-E. Jeismann, "Volksbildung

A framework for analyzing this shifting orientation is suggested by A. F. C. Wallace, who posits that a society's perception of its situation as revolutionary, conservative, or reactionary determines the learning it will choose to impress upon its members.⁹⁷ Conservative societies he defines as those which see themselves in little danger from challenging political orientations. Only they can concentrate primarily upon inculcating modernizing skills. Revolutionary or reactionary societies, faced with political challenge, will be concerned first with the formation of attitudes that legitimize wholeness, or a mythology of togetherness.

If for Wallace's term *reactionary* we substitute *preservative*, we can accommodate the eighteenth century's growing concern with schooling as well as its insistence that religion be the central feature of learning. The ruptures of 1806 perforce changed, for Süvern as well as for Beckedorff, the orientation from *preservative* to *creative* (in place of Wallace's term *revolutionary*). Whether preservative or creative, however, their paramount concern was with the formation of perceptions, myths, or pictures, that would lend moral weight to wholeness. Harkort's modernizing proposals came only when at least one segment of society believed it possible to go beyond the preservation or creation of wholeness to a conservative (modernizing) orientation. When 1848 interrupted that possibility, renewed concern with wholeness took the form in 1854 of Ferdinand Stiehl's School Regulations and their reemphasis of a politicized positive Christianity.

In this form the wholeness model suggests a framework in which to identify the varying orientations for schooling and proposes a method for analyzing their complex interactions. It identifies also a lengthy agenda for additional research in the politics, broadly conceived, of education. It does not, of course, provide the means by which to measure the effect of these orientations in the classroom of the *Volksschule* or *Seminar* itself. Until efforts in that direction are also made, until the history of schooling is investigated from below, the fuller measure of

und Industrialisierung als Faktoren des sozialen Wandels im Vormärz," *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* 18 (1972): 323. Under Stiehl the so-called "Realien" (natural science, modern history, etc.) were reduced to three hours per week, and religion was accorded six hours per week. See E. Spranger, *Zur Geschichte der deutschen Volksschule* (Heidelberg, 1949), pp. 43-4. Similar adjustments were made in the *Seminar* curriculum. See "Regulativ für die Vorbildung evangelischer Seminar-Präparanden" of Oct. 2, 1854, in *Deutsches Zentral Archiv II* (Merseburg) Rep. 76 VII neu Sekt. 7C Gen. Teil I Nr. 1 Bd. 6 Bl. 115-20.

97. A. F. C. Wallace, "Schools in Revolutionary and Conservative Societies," in *Anthropology and Education*, ed. F. C. Gruber (Philadelphia, 1961), pp. 25-54.

schooling's impact will not have been taken. These latter efforts can be focused more sharply, however, by adopting Philip Jackson's concept of "hidden curriculum," the unintentional though inevitable lessons imposed by the nature and structure of the "daily grind."⁹⁸ This hidden curriculum together with the official one, and the politics surrounding both, can provide the structure for a more thorough understanding of the Prussian schooling revolution.

98. P. W. Jackson, *Life in Classrooms* (New York, 1968), pp. 33-34.