JAMES C. ALBISETTI

Secondary School Reform in Imperial Germany

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Princeton University Press
Princeton, New Jersey

Published by Princeton University Press, 41 William Street,
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
In the United Kingdom: Princeton University Press,
Guildford, Surrey

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data will be
found on the last printed page of this book

Publication of this book has been aided by a grant from the
Paul Mellon Fund of Princeton University Press

This book has been composed in Linotron Sabon
Clothbound editions of Princeton University Press books
are printed on acid-free paper, and binding materials are
chosen for strength and durability. Paperbacks, while
satisfactory for personal collections, are no usually
suitable for library rebinding.

Printed in the United States of America by Princeton
University Press, Princeton, New Jersey

To My Father

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My interest in secondary school reform in Imperial Germany was first stimulated by a brief report on this topic by Peter Vinten-Johansen to Professor Hans Gatzke's graduate seminar on the Second Reich at Yale University. I returned to the subject in Professor Peter Gay's research seminar; under his always stimulating criticism and encouragement, I completed a first version of this study as my Ph.D. dissertation. Professors Gatzke, Henry Turner, and Franklin Baumer offered valuable criticism of the manuscript at that time. During the often delayed process of revising and expanding the manuscript, I received invaluable assistance from Professor Fritz Ringer of Boston University during a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar in 1979, and from Professor Konrad Jarausch of the University of Missouri—Columbia, whose careful reading of the manuscript and helpful bibliographical suggestions enabled me to clarify a number of issues. Remaining errors are of my own omission or commission.

For their aid in my research, I would like to thank Herr Waldmann and Frau Olechnizak of the Zentrales Staatsarchiv, Historische Abteilung II, Merseburg, East Germany; Dr. Ernst Kreuzer of the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in West Berlin; Frau Sabine Preuss of the Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Dahlem; Professor Kurt Koszyk of the Institut für Zeitungsforschung in Dortmund; Frau Pastorin Imort of the Bodelschwingh-Archiv in Bethel bei Bielefeld; Norman Wadham of the Teachers College Library of Columbia University; Ms. Andrea Foster of the Interlibrary Loan Office of Sterling Memorial Library at Yale; and Ms. Barbara Hale of the Interlibrary Loan Office of King Library at the University of Kentucky. Professor Gerald Feldman of the University of California at Berkeley, Herr Peter Göb of the Werksarchiv der Farbenfabrik Bayer AG, Professor Wilhelm Grunwald of the Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek in Göt-

tingen, and Hans Werner von Gossler-Kubitz of Pca. de Córdoba, Argentina, helped me with searches for material that proved fruitless. Charles McClelland, Thomas Helde, and John Piper offered valuable advice on dealing with the East German authorities.

This study could not have been completed without the financial assistance of the Graduate School of Yale University, the Concilium on International and Area Studies, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and my family. To my father, who offered me frequent encouragement during years of investigating overcrowded professions and overburdened students, I dedicate this work.

ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations appear in the footnotes:

BfhS	*Blätter für höheres Schulwesen*
Centralblatt, 18—	*Centralblatt für die gesamte Unterrichtsverwaltung in Preussen, Jahrgang 18—*
COIR	*Central-Organ für die Interesse des Realschulwesens*
DhG	*Das humanistische Gymnasium*
DndS	*Die neue deutsche Schule*
DR	*Deutsche Rundschau*
NAZ	*Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*
NJ	*Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Pädagogik*
NPZ	*Neue Preussischer Zeitung (Kreuzzeitung)*
PA	*Pädagogisches Archiv*
PJ	*Preussische Jahrbücher*
RA	*Deutscher Reichs- und Königlich Preussischer Staats-Anzeiger (Reichs-Anzeiger)*
SB	*Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Preussischen Hauses der Abgeordneten*
ZfGW	*Zeitschrift für das Gymnasialwesen*
ZfR	*Zeitschrift für die Reform der höheren Schulen*
ZStA-II, KM	Zentrales Staatsarchiv, Historische Abteilung II, Merseburg, Kultusministerium
Zt.	Zeitschrift

Part One
THE BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

I have grasped the new spirit of the expiring century.
Kaiser Wilhelm II[1]

ON THE MORNING of 4 December 1890, in the auditorium of the Prussian Ministry of Religion, Education, and Medicine at Unter den Linden 4, the thirty-one-year-old Kaiser Wilhelm II addressed a conference of educators who averaged nearly twice his age. The purpose of his speech, one of the longest this loquacious monarch ever delivered, was to inform the assembled delegates of his will regarding the reform of secondary education. The tirade he aimed at the existing system, in which most of those present had risen to prominence, sounded three major themes. In the first place, Wilhelm argued that the secondary schools had failed to adapt to the changing needs of industrializing Germany and thus were not providing the coming generation with adequate training for what he called "the current demands of our world position." His second criticism centered on what he considered to be "the excess of mental work" in the secondary schools, which he said damaged the health of the nation's future leaders and thereby the nation itself: "I am looking for soldiers!" the Kaiser exclaimed; "We want a robust generation who can also serve as the intellectual leaders and officials of the nation." Finally, Wilhelm denounced the lack of a national spirit in the classical Gymnasium, the dominant secondary school; in his view, "We must make German the basis of the Gymnasium; we should raise young Germans, not young Greeks and Romans."[2]

In an age obsessed with "questions"—one need only think of the social question, the Jewish question, the colonial question, the woman question—the Kaiser's speech marked the

[1] *Verhandlungen über Fragen des höheren Unterrichts, Berlin 4. bis 17. Dezember 1890* (Berlin, 1891), p. 770. This will be cited as *1890*.

[2] Ibid., pp. 70, 75, 72.

high point of public concern about the "school question." In simple terms, the school question asked, "How should the elite classical schools of the mid-nineteenth century be reformed to meet the needs of the rapidly approaching twentieth century?" Yet in Imperial Germany this relatively simple question actually encompassed a whole series of interrelated issues. Did the rapid advancement of industrialization in the late nineteenth century or the stunning progress in scientific knowledge necessitate a change in the secondary school curriculum? Should a comprehensive secondary school be maintained as a counterforce to the fragmentation being produced by increasing academic and technical specialization, or should a system of tracking be used? If the latter choice was made, when and how should the proper educational track for a child be determined? What could or should be done to prevent the growing demand for secondary and higher education on the part of social groups traditionally excluded from them, including women, from leading to an oversupply of university graduates? Did Germany's transition from a primarily rural society to an urban one place any new demands on the educational system, especially in the areas of health and fitness? How should the schools respond to the changing conceptions of youth in the late nineteenth century? In a country that had recently introduced universal suffrage, should the schools provide civic training? In a country recently unified, should the schools actively promote national and patriotic sentiments? In the face of anarchist violence and a rapidly growing socialist movement, what could or should the schools do to foster loyalty to the existing social and political systems, especially in an age when traditional religious justifications of the status quo were clearly declining in effectiveness?

The Kaiser's insistence that the Prussian Gymnasium had neglected the modern, the healthy, and the national was thus a succinct summary of the many issues involved in the school question. In a second speech to the same conference, Wilhelm claimed that in highlighting these themes he had "grasped the spirit of the expiring century." This claim was not unfounded,

for the debate over secondary school reform reflected very directly several major cultural concerns of the *fin-de-siècle*, that period described by the novelist Heinrich Hart as "this age of searchings and tired doubtings, of gropings and false starts, of confidence in the future combined with fear of backsliding."[3] The problems of defining and adapting to the "modern," the fears of degeneration implicit in the calls for vigor, and the increasingly strident assertion of national values—all were characteristic of western European culture during that transition from the Victorian to the modern world that most historians date about 1890. Germany, despite its new political beginnings in 1866 and 1871, shared fully in this powerful sense of cultural transition which took place around 1890; even in politics, Wilhelm's accession in 1888 to the throne that had been occupied three months before by his ninety-one-year-old grandfather and the dismissal less than two years later of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, who had dominated German political life for a generation, heightened the awareness of the end of an era.[4]

In an atmosphere so conscious of transition, debate over the reform of secondary education often became a discussion over the future of German culture and society as a whole. The discussions were not restricted to educators: other participants included members of legislatures and local governments; professional organizations of lawyers, physicians, architects, engineers, and industrialists; and individuals ranging from Friedrich Nietzsche to Friedrich Krupp. Included also were two Kaisers, Bismarck, and most of Imperial Germany's prominent professors. In varying detail, and from a myriad of points of view, these individuals and groups addressed the question

[3] Heinrich Hart, *Gesammelte Werke* (3 vols.; Berlin, 1907), 3:88.

[4] For an interesting appreciation of this sense of transition in German culture around 1890, see Adalbert Wahl, *Deutsche Geschichte* (4 vols.; Stuttgart, 1926–1936), 3:1–20. Two examples of the younger generation's enthusiasm for the new Kaiser are Hermann Conradi, *Wilhelm II und die junge Generation* (Leipzig, 1890), and Heinrich Pudor, *Kaiser Wilhelm II und Rembrandt als Erzieher* (Dresden, 1891).

of how, if at all, schools that had been virtually unchanged since the 1830s should adapt to the challenges raised by industrialization, urbanization, and national unification. In Prussia, the largest German state and the undisputed leader in educational matters, the government sponsored commissions of inquiry in 1873, 1890, and 1900 in a continuing effort to reach a consensus on the issues; new curricula and other regulations for the schools were issued in 1882, 1892, and 1901.[5] Only after the third attempt at solving the school question did debate on the major issues subside; even then, several unresolved problems continued to produce acrimonious exchanges in the years leading up to World War I.

The following study investigates both the perceptions and the politics of secondary school reform in Imperial Germany; to the extent that these aspects are separable, the discussion of issues is handled in Part Two and the political process of reform in Part Three. In addition to contributing to our knowledge of German educational history in an age when German schools were often models for other countries, this study aims to provide new insight into the sense of national direction in Germany in the late nineteenth century. Much recent historical writing about Imperial Germany has overemphasized the resistance to change: Robert Anchor's assertion that Germany's "transition from a premodern to a modern society . . . was not successful, as the Germans consistently failed to effect a rapprochement between continuity and change, between inertia and momentum, between native traditions and borrowings from abroad, and between their own national existence and that of others" is only a slightly exaggerated statement of a widely held view.[6] At the least, the extent of the debate

[5] In Imperial Germany, education was controlled by the states, so that Wilhelm was acting in his role as King of Prussia in this conference. The debate over secondary school reform was not restricted to Prussia, however; in the text I will always make clear whether I am referring to Prussia or to Germany as a whole.

[6] Robert Anchor, *Germany Confronts Modernization* (Lexington, Mass., 1972), unpaginated preface. For an insightful critique of much of the recent

over secondary school reform should demonstrate that the conservative traditionalists were opposed by a large, varied, and vocal segment of the German elite that perceived the need to adapt ideas and institutions to changed economic and social conditions, and that some Germans, including Wilhelm II, advocated plunging boldly ahead into the twentieth century as they expected it to be.

This is not meant to suggest that the school question produced a simple division of the concerned population into conservatives and reformers, or antimodernists and modernists. The three themes stressed by the Kaiser in 1890 pointed toward change in several, possibly contradictory, directions; as will be shown, reformers of differing persuasions could oppose each other as vigorously as they did the defenders of the status quo. Issues such as the proper relationship between liberal and vocational education, the relative advantages of a comprehensive school versus several more specialized tracks, and the optimum balance between the individual's freedom to pursue any studies he may choose and the society's need for graduates in various fields do not lend themselves to investigation in simple terms of conservatism and reform. Furthermore, the demands that the classical Gymnasium give greater attention to physical fitness and to German studies, which were certainly new views in the late nineteenth century, nonetheless contained the seeds of an antiintellectualism and hypernationalism that do not have the positive connotations usually associated with the term *modern*. In fact, among the most vehement critics of the traditional Gymnasium were a number of *völkisch* thinkers usually considered as the epitome of German antimodernism in this period.[7]

The complexity and interdependence of the issues involved in the debate of the school question necessitate treating it in

historiography on Imperial Germany, see Geoff Eley, "The Wilhelmine Right: How It Changed," in Richard J. Evans, ed., *Society and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany* (New York, 1978), pp. 112–117.

[7] I refer to Paul de Lagarde and Julius Langbehn; see Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair* (Garden City, N.Y., 1965).

all its aspects. Accounts of the debate written at the time concentrated almost exclusively on the curricular issues, neglecting the social and political dimensions of the reforms.[8] Recently, several historians have examined isolated fragments of the debate, such as the push for parity by the modern schools, the efforts to preserve the social exclusiveness of the Gymnasium, or the campaigns to promote patriotism and fight socialism through the schools; in most cases, their works suffer from a very narrow perspective and also from an excessive present-mindedness.[9] The two most important recent studies have reached diametrically opposed conclusions about the reforms finally adopted in 1900: Detlef Müller sees no valid

[8] Among the major examples are Friedrich Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts auf den deutschen Schulen und Universitaten* (2d ed.; 2 vols.; Leipzig, 1897); August Messer, *Die Reformbewegung auf dem Gebiete des Gymnasialwesens von 1882 bis 1901* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1901); Wilhelm Lexis, ed., *Die Reform des hoheren Schulwesens in Preussen* (Halle, 1902); and Gerhard Budde, *Der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft der Antike im Unterricht der hoheren Knabenschulen* (Langensalza, 1910).

[9] On the drive for parity by the modern schools, see Otto Schmeding, *Die Entwicklung des realistischen hoheren Schulwesens in Preussen* (Cologne, 1956), which is excellent on chronology and short on analysis; and Heinz Balschun, "Zum schulpolitischen Kampf um die Monopolstellung des humanistischen Gymnasiums in Preussen" (Inaugural diss., Martin-Luther-Universitat Halle-Wittenberg, 1964), which takes a simplistic Marxist-Leninist line. For the concern about the social exclusiveness of secondary and higher education, see Hartmut Titze, *Die Politisierung der Erziehung* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1973), and especially the massive work by Detlef K. Muller, *Sozialstruktur und Schulsystem* (Gottingen, 1977), which he has recently summarized in English: "The Qualifications Crisis and School Reform in Late Nineteenth-Century Germany," *History of Education* 9 (1980):315–331. On the intrusion of nationalist and antisocialist views into the schools, see esp. Heinz Ernst Brunkhorst, *Die Einbeziehung der preussischen Schule in die Politik des Staates* (Dusseldorf, 1956); and Helmut Konig, "Der Kaiser Erlass vom 1. Mai 1889," *Jahrbuch fur Erziehungs- und Schulgeschichte* 12 (1972):58–100. Combining an interest in nationalism and the defensive strategies of the social elite are the fairly thin essay by Heinz-Joachim Heydorn and Gernot Koneffke, *Zur Bildungsgeschichte des deutschen Imperialismus* (Glashutten im Taunus, 1973); and the more detailed dissertation of Heydorn's student Eckhard Glockner, *Zur Schulreform im preussischen Imperialismus* (Glashutten im Taunus, 1976).

educational function in the creation of three equally privileged tracks, but only an effort to preserve the social exclusivity of the Gymnasium, while Eckhard Glöckner views the tracks as an attempt to broaden the social recruitment of the elite but criticizes them for sacrificing liberal education to preprofessional training.[10]

As Lenore O'Boyle has argued, much recent work on secondary education in nineteenth-century Germany has treated the schools as so completely the product of competing social forces that it has neglected the beliefs and interests of the individuals most directly involved in education, that is, the teachers and professors.[11] Nevertheless, educators resisted encroachment on their field of expertise by laymen as much as, if not more than, did other professional groups in the nineteenth century. The following pages attempt to avoid the errors of both the earlier studies that considered education as virtually autonomous of social conditions and the recent works that deny any such autonomy.

This willingness to consider the partial political autonomy of the schools must also be supplemented by an appreciation of their cultural autonomy. European secondary education in the nineteenth century did more than provide credentials for and instill loyalty in future civil servants and professionals; its ideology, in fact, stressed its impractical nature. Through a concentration on the languages and literatures of ancient Greece and Rome, the classical secondary schools exposed

[10] Müller's views in *Sozialstruktur und Schulsystem*, passim; "The Qualifications Crisis," p. 329; and Müller, Bernd Zymek, Erika Küpper, and Longin Pierre, "Modellentwicklung zur Analyse von Krisenphasen im Verhältnis von Schulsystem und staatlichen Beschäftigungssystem," in Ulrich Herrmann, ed., *Historische Pädagogik* (Weinheim, 1977), esp. p. 44. Glöckner, *Schulreform im preussischen Imperialismus*, pp. 145, 151, 74, 104, 237. For a valuable critique of both Müller's and Glöckner's approaches, see Christoph Führ, "Die preussischen Schulkonferenzen von 1890 und 1900," in Peter Baumgart, ed., *Bildungspolitik in Preussen zur Zeit des Kaiserreiches* (Stuttgart, 1980), esp. pp. 213–223.

[11] Lenore O'Boyle, "A Possible Model for the Study of Nineteenth-Century Education in Europe," *Journal of Social History* 12 (1978):236–239.

pupils to ideas and patterns of thought that, if not always what Matthew Arnold called "the best that has been thought and known," nevertheless imparted enough of what he labeled "sweetness and light" to enable them "to turn a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits."[12] In teaching young men to think, the secondary schools performed a function that cannot be discussed adequately in terms of social and economic interests, even if defense of the traditional classical curriculum often degenerated in the late nineteenth century into a defense of professional status. To the extent that there is a hero in the following pages, it is Friedrich Paulsen. He saw more clearly and argued more cogently than any other German of his time that obligatory Greek and Latin, perceptibly failing to fulfill the tasks assigned to them in the Gymnasium, could and should be abandoned without endangering the pursuit of truth and critical reason in secondary and higher education.[13]

Calling attention to the autonomy of the schools in certain areas does not mean neglecting the importance of social and political interests in the debate of the school question. A major portion of this study, based largely on the archives of the Prussian Ministry of Education,[14] is devoted to the petitions of pressure groups and to the responses of that ministry, which at various times resisted, followed, and even led public opinion about secondary school reform, always trying to balance budgetary and educational demands with perceived social needs. Individual officials in the Ministry of Education were of crit-

[12] Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, edited and with an introduction by J. Dover Wilson (Cambridge, 1971), p. 8. Bismarck certainly knew that education at an elite institution did not necessarily produce defenders of the social and political status quo—he always said that he had left the Gymnasium as an atheist and a republican: Otto von Bismarck, *Die gesammelte Werke*, ed. Hermann von Petersdorff et al. (15 vols.; Berlin, 1923–1933), 15:5.

[13] This was the major argument in the closing chapters of both the first and second editions of his *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts*, which appeared in 1885 and 1897.

[14] I was allowed to use the files of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of State, and the Kaiser's Civil Cabinet, but not the papers of the various ministers of education and their subordinates.

ical importance to the course of reform in this period; so were the interventions of Wilhelm II, who used to be credited with exercising a "personal rule" after 1890 but who in recent years has frequently been relegated to a minor role in the shaping of German foreign and domestic policies.

The recent polemical literature about secondary school reform in Imperial Germany has almost totally neglected the perspective on German developments that comparative study of educational reforms in other countries in the same period can provide.[15] In the late nineteenth century, interest in developments in other countries was high: an American educator called the conference addressed by the Kaiser in 1890 "in many respects . . . the most important educational body of our time," adding that "Prussia's example in matters of this kind is of capital importance."[16] In the course of the next decade, the Committee of Ten in the United States, the Bryce Commission in England, the Ribot Commission in France, and a Russian school conference debated many of the same issues as were discussed in Prussia.[17] The final chapter of this work will, to the extent the available literature permits, com-

[15] Glöckner's bibliography contains no works on foreign countries, Müller's has general studies on the sociology of education but no works specifically on other educational systems. On the need for comparative study, see Führ, "Die preussischen Schulkonferenzen," in Baumgart, ed., *Bildungspolitik in Preussen*, p. 223.

[16] *Educational Review* 1 (1891):174. The anonymous author was probably Nicholas Murray Butler.

[17] See the Bibliography for the primary and secondary sources on other countries consulted for this study. Especially worthy of mention on American developments are *Report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary Studies* (New York, 1894), and Edward A. Krug, *The Shaping of the American High School* (New York, 1964); on the Bryce Commission, see A. M. Kazamias, *Politics, Society and Secondary Education in England* (Philadelphia, 1966); for reforms in France, consult Alexandre Ribot, *La réforme de l'enseignement secondaire* (Paris, 1900), and Viviane Isambert-Jamati, "Une réforme des lycées et collèges," *L'année sociologique*, 3d ser. 20 (1969):261–294; for the Russian developments, see Patrick L. Alston, *Education and the State in Tsarist Russia* (Stanford, Calif., 1969), Allen Sinel, *The Classroom and the Chancellery* (Chicago and London, 1979), and James C. McClelland, *Autocrats and Academics* (Chicago and London, 1979).

pare the reforms of German secondary education with developments in neighboring countries.

Any historical study of education, and particularly any comparative study, contains explicit or implicit criteria for measuring one educational system against another, or for measuring a single system against an ideal of what "should have happened." Without positing absolute ideals, this study is interested in what constituted a successful "modernization"[18] of secondary education around 1900. In his recent book, *Education and Society in Modern Europe*, Fritz Ringer has proposed three extremely useful, and quantifiable, criteria for comparing school systems: inclusiveness, progressiveness, and segmentation. By inclusiveness, Ringer means the percentage of an age group that is enrolled in any given level of education, with an obvious maximum of 100 percent. Progressiveness refers to the degree of equal opportunity provided by the system, measured by the relative accessibility of secondary and higher education to children from various social classes in comparison to the average for the society as a whole; the ultimate progressive system would have opportunity ratios of one to one for all social groups. Segmentation occurs in a

[18] In using the concept of "modernization," I do not mean to imply that there is a single process of change from some static condition known as tradition to another known as modernity; see the criticism of such use in Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Modernisierungstheorie und Geschichte* (Gottingen, 1975). I want only to suggest that within the context of western education since 1800, certain general trends are discernible despite all national variations, and that movement in the direction of the "modern" structure can be compared. In this study, I am not concerned with education as a contributing factor in economic growth and "modernization," but treat the educational system as lagging behind social and economic conditions and having, therefore, to be brought up to date. Peter Lundgreen has found the measurable impact of educational improvement on economic growth in nineteenth-century Germany to have been very small, but he notes the great difficulty of assessing qualitative improvements in instruction in a country where literacy was very high before significant industrialization began: Peter Lundgreen, with a contribution by A. P. Thirlwall, "Educational Expansion and Economic Growth in Nineteenth-Century Germany," in *Schooling and Society*, ed. Lawrence Stone (Baltimore and London, 1976).

school system when different curricular tracks enroll pupils from significantly different social backgrounds; Ringer distinguishes vertical segmentation, where one tract clearly serves the social elite, from horizontal segmentation, where children from various social groups with the same status nonetheless attend different types of schools. Ringer argues that increased inclusiveness and progressiveness, and decreased segmentation, are desirable developments toward full equality of educational opportunity, and he judges the German, French, and English educational systems since 1800 in the light of these variables.[19] In the following chapters, I will make use of Ringer's criteria and his masterly compilation of statistics on enrollments, social origins, and career choices of secondary pupils and university students, but will also suggest some modifications.

Other criteria for judging the relative success of efforts to modernize secondary education in the late nineteenth century are less subject to quantification, especially those having to do with the spirit and values imparted in the classroom. Yet the type of issues raised by the Kaiser were of vital importance, and they do point to several general paths of development in western education. Under the rubric of the "demands of the present" can be placed the long-term trends toward the teaching of more science and modern languages, and thus less Latin and Greek, to both early leavers and graduates of secondary schools, as well as efforts to delay and make less irrevocable the choice of educational tracks. Related to Wilhelm's concern about the dangerous overburdening of pupils with school work are the tendencies for schools at all levels to assume greater responsibility for pupils' health, including their physical activity, and for secondary teachers to add significant training in pedagogy to their professional preparation. Although the Kaiser's interest in raising patriotic Germans in the schools

[19] Fritz K. Ringer, *Education and Society in Modern Europe* (Bloomington and London, 1979), pp. 22–31. This new work views the German case much more favorably than Ringer did in his first book, *The Decline of the German Mandarins* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969).

can be seen easily as a step backward rather than a modernization of education, when stripped of its dogmatic coloring this interest does mirror another set of general trends: the replacement of the study of antiquity by that of national literature and history as the humanistic core of secondary education, and the emergence of an explicit civic training in the schools that in many ways filled the gap left by the decline of formal religious instruction in the classroom. The movement toward equal educational opportunities for girls and women can be included under the general category of increased inclusiveness, but in all countries it constituted a separate "question" that deserves its own detailed investigation.[20] In the following pages, the education of girls and women will be discussed primarily in relation to its impact on the reform of boys' secondary schools.

The remainder of Part One will set the stage for the debate of the school question by examining the Gymnasium in theory and practice. The first chapter will offer a brief introduction to the German secondary schools as they developed during the first two thirds of the nineteenth century; the second will attempt to provide a basis for weighing the validity of the claims of reformers and conservatives after 1870 through an investigation of what foreign observers and Gymnasium pupils had to say about the classical schools. Part Two, consisting of chapters 3, 4, and 5, will explore the three main criticisms of the Gymnasium in the 1870s and 1880s, as well as the changes that reformers recommended; each chapter will also examine the responses to these criticisms by the conservatives and the Prussian government. The succeeding three chapters of Part Three investigate in depth the Prussian school conferences of 1890 and 1900, with special emphasis on the neg-

[20] A sweeping but thin initial attempt to write a history of women's education in Europe and America is Phyllis Stock's *Better Than Rubies* (New York, 1978); see also the older and more limited work by Yoshi Kasuya, *A Comparative Study of the Secondary Education of Girls in England, Germany, and the United States* (New York, 1933). I have begun work on a study of the secondary and higher education of women in Imperial Germany.

lected role of the Kaiser and of officials in the Ministry of Education; chapter 8 also includes a discussion of the evolution of the issues between the two conferences. A final chapter, as mentioned previously, compares the German experience of secondary school reform with contemporaneous developments in other countries; it also considers the general perspectives on culture, society, and politics in Imperial Germany that the school question provides.

ONE

BILDUNG AND THE *GEBILDETEN*

Bildung *consists not in the possession of facts, but in the possession of lively powers of judgment and action.*
Friedrich Paulsen

The simplest dunce who has an Abitur *certificate in his pocket looks down on the great merchant or industrialist as a less* gebildet *man, and, what is worse, the latter often looks up to him.*
Gustav Völcker[1]

ALTHOUGH its roots reached back to the Latin schools of the Middle Ages, the classical Gymnasium with which the Kaiser found so much fault in 1890 was essentially a product of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It was shaped by a combination of an educational ideal expounded by some of the leading figures in the flowering of German culture around 1800, including Herder, Fichte, and Goethe, with the growing intervention of the Prussian state in the educational system. In the course of the nineteenth century, the Gymnasium developed into the cornerstone of the educational systems of all the German states; especially in Prussia, Gymnasium pupils and graduates gradually obtained a wide variety of rights and privileges that enabled them to dominate the civil service and the professions.

Central to the educational philosophy behind the Gymnasium was the notion of "*Bildung*" as formulated in Germany in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As do its usual translations, "cultivation" and "education," *Bildung* referred to both the process and the result of a person's in-

[1] Friedrich Paulsen, "Das moderne Bildungswesen," in Paul Hinneburg, ed., *Die Kultur der Gegenwart*, part 1: *Die allgemeinen Grundlagen der Kultur der Gegenwart* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1906), p. 54; Gustav Völcker, *Die Schule und die soziale Frage* (Schonebeck, 1891), p. 11.

tellectual development. The early theorists of *Bildung* wanted to guarantee the individual freedom to develop his own talents to the greatest possible extent, and therefore resisted any equation of *Bildung* with training designed specifically for a future career. They generally viewed such practical instruction as symptomatic of a society based on hereditary estate rather than on human equality; they preferred that individuals not be forced into a mold by education for a trade until each had been given the opportunity to carry his *Bildung* as far as he could. Two overlapping conceptions of what the results of this process of *Bildung* would be coexisted in German thought at this time: whereas on the one hand the Romantic impulses behind the idea of each individual cultivating his innate talents suggested a broad diversity among the *Gebildeten* (those people with a completed *Bildung*), the roots of *Bildung* in the Enlightenment and neoclassicism pointed to all true *Gebildeten* sharing a common rationality, idealism, morality, and aesthetic sensibility.[2]

In this opposition to an education based on one's hereditary estate, the ideal of *Bildung* contained a powerful democratic component. In German society of the early nineteenth century, however, where formal education for the overwhelming majority of the population amounted to learning only the rudiments of reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion in overcrowded one- or two-room schoolhouses, *Bildung* had an implicit bias in favor of the social groups whose leisure and money permitted them to pursue the cultivation of their talents and personalities. The new cultural ideal could and did serve as a weapon for elements in the middle class fighting against aristocratic privilege; indeed, many aristocrats came to accept *Bildung* as almost as important a measure of status as birth. Yet the ideal of *Bildung* in many ways was not "middle class" or "bourgeois" in the sense usually given to these terms; in

[2] On the rise of the idea of *Bildung*, see Hans Weil, *Die Entstehung des deutschen Bildungsprinzip* (Bonn, 1930); Wilhelm Roessler, *Die Entstehung des modernen Erziehungswesens in Deutschland* (Stuttgart, 1961); and Wilhelm Richter, *Der Wandel des Bildungsgedankens* (Berlin, 1971).

its rejection of practicality and of purposeful work in the world in favor of a leisured cultivation of intellectual and aesthetic interests, *Bildung* stood in opposition to the values of the commercial and manufacturing classes. Within the German society of the time, the new ideal appealed most strongly to those groups that would later be known as the *Gebildeten*, civil servants and professionals.[3]

This elective affinity between certain social groups and the ideal of *Bildung* became clear as the new educational ideal was institutionalized in the emerging state system of secondary schools. Throughout most of the eighteenth century, an interest in obtaining more thoroughly trained civil servants for the state had led many educational reformers to argue that the universities must be revitalized; as a concomitant, only young men who were "ripe" for university studies should be admitted.[4] In Prussia, the most important step in this direction was the introduction of the first *Abitur* examination in 1787. Although the examination was not obligatory for all Latin schools, and its successful completion was not yet required for entering the universities, the new regulation served to accentuate the differences between the larger schools whose pupils were able to pass the examination and the lesser ones that did not offer an adequate preparation. An important goal of the new regulation was to spur the conversion of such lesser Latin schools into more practically oriented Bürgerschulen. By this differentiation between schools for future merchants

[3] On the class bias inherent in the notion of *Bildung*, see esp. part 1 of Ralph Fiedler, *Die klassische deutsche Bildungsidee* (Weinheim, 1972). For the appeal of *Bildung* to segments of the middle class, see Lenore O'Boyle, "Klassische Bildung und soziale Struktur in Deutschland zwischen 1800 und 1848," *Historische Zeitschrift* 207 (1968):584–608; and the corrective in Charles E. McClelland, *State, Society, and University in Germany, 1700–1914* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 112–114. On the appeal of *Bildung* among the aristocracy, see Weil, *Bildungsprinzip*, p. 221.

[4] On university reform in the eighteenth century, McClelland, *State, Society, and University*, pp. 27–98, passim; on emerging notions of ripeness for university study, Hans-Georg Herrlitz, *Studium als Standesprivileg* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1973), pp. 12, 51, 77.

and artisans and those for future civil servants and professionals, the Prussian authorities sharpened an existing division within the middle classes.[5]

The *Abitur* examination of 1787 included both Latin and Greek, but it did not associate these languages with the nascent ideal of *Bildung*. Only after the defeat of Prussia by Napoleon did *Bildung*, usually prefaced by the adjectives *humanistic* or *classical*, become synonymous with a secondary education centering on the study of the languages and literatures of ancient Greece and Rome. The man most responsible for the introduction of classical *Bildung* into Prussian secondary education was the aristocratic philologist and statesman Wilhelm von Humboldt. Although he served as the head of the education section of the Prussian Ministry of the Interior[6] for only sixteen months in 1809–1810, Humboldt laid down the foundation for almost all the measures carried out by his successors. A firm believer in the exclusion of all practical training from schools designed to produce *Bildung*, Humboldt wrote in 1809, "If the two are mixed, *Bildung* becomes impure, and one ends up with neither wholly developed human beings nor fully integrated members of the separate classes." He saw the goals of formal schooling as being to "exercise the memory, sharpen the understanding, correct the judgment, and refine the moral sense"; the specialized knowledge and skills needed for the pupils' future employment would be obtained after leaving school. Contrary to the policy of his predecessors, Humboldt envisioned differentiation within the school system only in terms of the length of study; the Gymnasium would be the only secondary school, serving boys who did not expect to enter the universities as well as those who did.[7]

[5] Herrlitz, *Studium als Standesprivileg*, pp. 90, 99–102; Karl-Ernst Jeismann, *Das preussische Gymnasium in Staat und Gesellschaft* (Stuttgart, 1974), pp. 82, 102.

[6] The separate Ministry for Religious, Educational, and Medical Affairs was founded only in 1817.

[7] Lothar Schweim, ed., *Schulreform in Preussen, 1809–1819* (Weinheim, 1966), pp. 29, 42; Eduard Spranger, *Wilhelm von Humboldt und die Reform*

In assigning a major role in the Gymnasium to the ancient languages, especially Greek, Humboldt showed himself to be a loyal disciple of the neo-humanist Friedrich August Wolf. The first German to call himself a student of philology and later a professor at the University of Halle, Wolf had been instrumental in transmitting to a generation of scholars and teachers the enthusiasm for ancient Greece that had conquered the German intellectual world in the late eighteenth century; his fame as the developer of many methodological innovations in the study of language gave great weight to his views on secondary education. Wolf offered two important reasons why Greek should be part of an education for *Bildung*: the study of its grammar helped develop formal mental discipline, and its literature presented the pupil with the best available examples of human culture in an original, unmixed form.[8] Humboldt fully shared these beliefs, although he himself stressed the study of the Greek language as a pure, original expression of the human spirit more than did most of the neo-humanists. In no way did Humboldt conceive of instruction in the classical languages as preliminary training for future philologists; it was but the most important of many tools useful for the *allgemeine*, or general, *Bildung* of all pupils in the secondary schools. In addition to Latin and Greek, Humboldt's ideal Gymnasium would teach German, mathematics, physics, geography, history, and religion.[9]

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des Bildungswesens (3d ed.; Tübingen, 1965), pp. 135–136. The literature on Humboldt is vast; the most accessible recent work is a projected two-volume biography by Paul R. Sweet, of which the first volume has appeared: *Wilhelm von Humboldt*, vol. 1: *1767–1808* (Columbus, 1978).

[8] Carl Diehl, *Americans and German Scholarship, 1770–1870* (New Haven and London, 1978), pp. 19–43; Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts* (2d ed.), 2:208–219. Still interesting on the German enthusiasm for the Greeks is E. M. Butler, *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany* (Cambridge, 1935), but see also Henry Hatfield, *Aesthetic Paganism in German Literature* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964). The enthusiasm for Greece also served as a way to escape from the domination of French culture: O'Boyle, "Klassische Bildung," p. 590.

[9] Spranger, *Humboldt*, pp. 62, 166–167; Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts* (2d ed.), 2:200–202.

There was certainly an inherent contradiction in prescribing the means by which individuals should best develop their own talents; that Humboldt, who in the 1790s had written several essays on the limits of state power, should involve himself with the creation of a state system of secondary education testifies to the powerful sense of the need for a revolution from above in the truncated Prussia after 1807.[10] However, even the urgency of the reform era could not transform an educational system overnight, and implementing the plans for the classical Gymnasium proved to be a slow and incomplete process. The first important step came in July 1810, after Humboldt had resigned his post, when a decree was issued regulating the certification of teachers for the Prussian secondary schools. Until then, the patrons of the individual institutions—municipalities, foundations, the state, the king, or a combination of these—had been free to choose their own teachers, often young pastors waiting for a parish. Under the new arrangements, the patrons would have to choose from a group of teachers who had passed an examination administered by the state if they wanted the schools to be considered as full-fledged Gymnasien. In accord with the views of both Humboldt and Wolf, the new examination concentrated almost exclusively on the candidate's scholarly qualifications to the neglect of his pedagogical abilities. At the time, when the philosophical faculties of the universities had not progressed far beyond offering an advanced secondary education and *allgemeine Bildung*, this lack of attention to teacher training posed no serious problems; but as the universities evolved more and more into institutions of research that produced scholars instead of teachers, this examination system, even with the changes made in the course of the nineteenth century, contained the seeds of undesirable repercussions on German secondary education.[11]

[10] Among the many commentaries on Humboldt's changed position on state intervention, see Gerhard Giese, ed., *Quellen zur deutschen Schulgeschichte seit 1800* (Göttingen, 1961), p. 15.

[11] A brief recapitulation of the various examinations for Prussian secondary teachers in the nineteenth century is contained in Josef Dolch, "Zur Ge-

The introduction of an obligatory curriculum for the Gymnasium, and an *Abitur* examination based on it, necessarily had to wait for the growth of a sufficient pool of qualified teachers. A recommended curriculum drawn up in 1812 by one of Humboldt's former subordinates, Johann Süvern, called for a ten-year Gymnasium, beginning after four years of elementary school, that would teach ten years of Latin and eight of Greek, with mathematics and German also receiving substantial amounts of class time throughout the course. This curriculum, which called for thirty-two hours of classes per week in every grade, came under fire even from Wolf as demanding too much of the pupils. Consequently, it was never universally adopted.[12] Süvern also issued revised regulations for the *Abitur* examination in 1812, which included six written and seven oral exercises. The severity of this examination continued the earlier policy of separating the Gymnasien from the lesser Latin schools: only ninety-one schools qualified as Gymnasien in the Prussia of 1818. Yet there was still a reluctance to exclude those who did not have an *Abitur*, especially aristocrats, from the university: an "unsatisfactory" grade on Süvern's *Abitur* did not prevent matriculation, and the universities themselves continued to offer separate entrance examinations to prospective students.[13]

Only in the 1830s, under the direction of Johannes Schulze, who headed the department for the secondary schools under Minister of Education von Altenstein from 1819 to 1840, did this flexibility regarding the curriculum and the *Abitur* dis-

schichte des Paedagogicums der Gymnasiallehrer im 19. Jahrhundert," *Zeitschrift fur Padagogik* 9 (1963):20–24; on the way that certification affected the schools, see Jeismann, *Das preussische Gymnasium*, p. 321.

[12] Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts* (2d ed.), 2:288–290. For examples of the implementation of the curriculum on the local level, see Jeismann, *Das preussische Gymnasium*, pp. 372–395; and Klaus Sochatzy, *Das neuhumanistische Gymnasium und die rein-menschliche Bildung* (Gottingen, 1973).

[13] Conrad Varrentrapp, *Johannes Schulze und das hohere preussische Unterrichtswesen in seiner Zeit* (Leipzig, 1899), pp. 360–362; Jeismann, *Das preussische Gymnasium*, pp. 357, 351.

appear. In 1834, after a rapid expansion of university enrollments had created what seemed to be an excess of educated men in Germany, Schulze closed off all paths to the university except the Gymnasium by making the *Abitur* a prerequisite for matriculation.[14] Only three years later, after receiving complaints that the curriculum leading to the *Abitur* was too difficult,[15] did Schulze present a revised plan, standardizing the Gymnasium as a nine-year school in six grades, with the three upper grades lasting two years each.[16] As a student and friend of the philosopher Hegel, Schulze believed the Gymnasium should impart *allgemeine Bildung*, but he did not share as completely in the enthusiasm for ancient Greece as had the neo-humanists of the previous generation; in his curriculum, Greek lost time to Latin and French, which he introduced beginning in the fourth year. German and mathematics fell much further behind Latin and Greek in credit hours allotted, so that the classical languages together accounted for 46 percent of the classroom time. In order to guarantee the "harmonious" *Bildung* of all the pupils' talents, Schulze also decreed that promotion from one grade to the next would depend on the mastery of the material presented in all subjects.[17]

Neither the curriculum nor the *Abitur* underwent any major

[14] Lenore O'Boyle, "The Problem of an Excess of Educated Men in Western Europe, 1800–1850," *Journal of Modern History* 42 (1970):473–478; Ringer, *Education and Society*, pp. 47–49; Varrentrapp, *Johannes Schulze*, pp. 375–376.

[15] See chapter 4, p. 121 of this book.

[16] Like the French secondary school pupil, but opposite from the English and American, the Prussian boy advanced from the higher to the lower numbered grades, which were called *Sexta, Quinta, Quarta, Untertertia, Obertertia, Untersekunda, Obersekunda, Unterprima*, and *Oberprima*.

[17] Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts* (2d ed.), 2:351–352; Sochatzy, *Das neuhumanistische Gymnasium*, p. 155. These regulations for the Prussian secondary schools all took the form of ministerial decrees, not laws. A comprehensive education law drawn up by Süvern in 1819 was never published because of the turn to reactionary policies in that year. The Prussian constitution of 1850 promised that such a law would be enacted, but one was never passed, owing largely to religious conflicts. Prussian Ministers of Education continued to operate by means of decrees until 1918.

changes between the 1830s and the 1880s. During the era of reaction following 1848, Ludwig Wiese introduced a slight increase in the time devoted to religious instruction and a small reduction for science. Wiese also moved the start of French from the fourth to the second year, so that pupils began Latin in *Sexta*, French in *Quinta*, and Greek in *Quarta*;[18] but such minor adjustments did little to dislodge the ancient languages from their dominant role in the Gymnasium. The classical school retained its monopoly over preparation for the university until 1870, and for most fields even longer, so that it became in a certain sense a "practical" preparation for future lawyers, physicians, pastors, and teachers, even if it did not offer specialized preliminary training for these professions.

Several other characteristics of the classical Gymnasium are worthy of note in light of the later debate of the school question. The antipathy of the neo-humanists for anything even remotely tainted with practical training meant that the Gymnasium neglected the contribution that manual skills might make to *Bildung*; even drawing played at best a tertiary role in a Gymnasium education. The educational value of gymnastics and games also failed to impress the Prussian authorities, especially after Father Jahn's gymnastic associations were banned for their political radicalism in 1819. Although the Gymnasium's monopoly over preparing pupils for the universities meant that it would educate all higher civil servants, most of whom were lawyers, it did not offer much introduction to the political and social realities of German life; after 1819, the Gymnasium was supposed to prevent "immature judgments" about "current political conditions" by steering clear of the present in history instruction.[19]

In the other German states, the evolution of secondary ed-

[18] Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts* (2d ed.), 2:486–520; Ludwig Wiese, *Lebenserinnerungen und Amsterfahrungen* (2 vols.; Berlin, 1886), 1:178–183.

[19] Fiedler, *Die klassische deutsche Bildungsidee*, p. 9; Varrentrapp, *Johannes Schulze*, p. 298; Ernst Weymar, *Das Selbstverstandnis der Deutschen* (Stuttgart, 1961), p. 108.

ucation in the early nineteenth century followed a wide variety of paths, but the final results were generally institutions not unlike the humanistic classical Gymnasium in Prussia. In the smaller northern states with only a handful of secondary schools, imitation of neighboring Prussia was virtually the only option open to the authorities. In the larger states, where neo-humanism had independent roots, greater diversity reigned: in Bavaria and Württemberg, for example, the old Latin schools continued to exist, offering a few years of Greek to boys interested in going on to four-year Gymnasien that were equivalent to the upper grades of the Prussian classical schools. The most important factor pushing the schools of the many states toward uniformity was the tradition of German university students attending several universities, often in different states, in the course of their academic work. Consequently, this made reciprocal recognition of the *Abitur*, and thus similarity in the curricula, a necessity.[20]

By the time of Johannes Schulze's revision of the *Abitur* examination and of the curriculum in the 1830s, a Gymnasium education had already become an important source of social status. In rural districts, a town with a Gymnasium often served as something of a cultural center, with a concentration of university graduates as teachers and pupils drawn from the surrounding countryside. The close association of classical *Bildung* with the heroes of the German cultural revival lent a special prestige to being *gebildet*, beyond that usually associated with education. *Bildung* also acquired its practical advantages, especially in Prussia. Most important was the exclusive right of Gymnasium graduates to enter the universities and, after the required years of study, to take state examinations for the civil service, the ministry, medical and legal practice, and secondary teaching. In a society where neither

[20] Paulsen, *Geschichte des gelehrten Unterrichts* (2d ed.), 2:403–441; Franz Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (4 vols.; Freiburg im Breisgau, 1929–1937), 2:354–357; Hans Loewe, *Die Entwicklung des Schulkampfs in Bayern bis zum vollständigen Sieg des Neuhumanismus* (Berlin, 1917).