

FRIEDRICH  
VON GENTZ

*Defender of  
the Old Order*



*Paul R. Sweet*

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# FRIEDRICH VON GENTZ

## Defender of the Old Order

by

PAUL R. SWEET



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ture as space would permit. After living closely with Gentz for several years I must admit that I have found his opinions ingratiatingly reasonable, even when I could not agree with them; and I like him.

There have been three full-length biographies of Gentz, but the most recent, that by Guglia, was written nearly forty years ago. A wealth of pertinent documentary and monographic literature has since been published. Among these publications the writings of the Wittichen brothers and of August Fournier are of primary importance, and every Gentz student must always regret that death removed these men, one by one, before they could bring to completion definitive biographies. In comparatively recent years many scholars, by supplementing the work of Fournier and the Wittichens, have performed indispensable service in rounding out the Gentz picture. Though I have made use of unpublished materials at Vienna, Berlin, and London, I must still acknowledge that the present volume would have been impossible had it not been for the labors of others.

In the search for materials and in the preparation of the manuscript I have met with unflinching kindness, not only from my friends but from people I had never seen before. I am particularly grateful to two archive officials, Dr. J. K. Mayr of Vienna and Dr. C. S. B. Buckland of London, who, as authorities on Gentz, could give me expert assistance. I wish also to acknowledge the generosity of Mr. André de Coppet of New York, who allowed me to see his extraordinary collection of books and manuscripts, and the helpfulness of Miss Emily Driscoll, curator of the collection.

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*Bates College*  
*August, 1941*

# Contents

## YOUTH AND EARLY LIFE, 1764-1797

- |                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| 1. The Burgher .....              | 3  |
| 2. The Reluctant Bureaucrat ..... | 11 |
| 3. The Middle Line .....          | 20 |
| 4. Footholds to Success .....     | 28 |

## THE PUBLICIST, 1797-1802

- |                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| 5. The Good Cause .....        | 41 |
| 6. The Close of a Period ..... | 58 |

## THE INTRIGUER, 1802-1805

- |                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| 7. Cobenzl .....         | 81 |
| 8. The War of 1805 ..... | 97 |

## THE NATIONALIST, 1805-1809

- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| 9. The End of Prussian Neutrality ..... | 119 |
| 10. After Jena .....                    | 132 |
| 11. The War of 1809 .....               | 150 |

## THE EUROPEAN, 1809-1817

- |                                     |     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 12. Metternich .....                | 161 |
| 13. The End of the Crusade .....    | 178 |
| 14. The Congress of Vienna .....    | 191 |
| 15. The Second Peace of Paris ..... | 201 |

## THE CONSERVATIVE, 1817-1828

- |                                 |     |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| 16. The Henchman at Work .....  | 213 |
| 17. Intervention on Trial ..... | 228 |

18. The Eastern Question, 1821-1822 .....	243
19. The Eastern Question, 1823-1826.....	252
20. German Affairs, 1820-1828 .....	264

#### THE CLOSING YEARS, 1828-1832

21. Fanny Elssler .....	283
22. Gentz the Man .....	293
Bibliographical Note .....	307
Index .....	315

to choose from, the king gave the nod to the Rosicrucians, a secret order with a leaning toward spiritualism and alchemy. The obscurantism of a Woellner replaced the favored deism of the Enlighteners, and Rosicrucian brethren ran the state, although a few Frederickian souls, like Hertzberg in the foreign office, managed to hang on precariously for a few years.<sup>4</sup> For more than a decade corruption in public life, licentiousness in private life, and a constantly increasing religious obscurantism held sway in Prussia; and Enlightenment-bred Friedrich Gentz felt the impact of each and successfully resisted none. He was an impressionable and receptive young man, and he had some wild oats ready for the sowing.

As a rule the Prussians of Gentz's class were not inclined to be amenable to the ways of the court, except in such externals as manners and dress.<sup>5</sup> With regard to morality, and especially sexual morality, the educated bourgeoisie had its own ideas, and it held those ideas tenaciously. Eventually, in the nineteenth century, not only the code of the middle class but its manners and dress came to be accepted, even by the aristocracy. Friedrich Gentz, however, had not the middle-class outlook of his time. The ways of the nobility exercised a powerful fascination over him, and he soon displayed the utmost disdain for many typically bourgeois shibboleths.

Also contributing to the change in Gentz's way of life was the uninspiring character of his work. An official report of the year 1786 stated that "with additional industry and application" he *might* become a useful public servant. The implication here is that even at first, when he was new to the job, confident of rapid advancement, and anxious above all to establish himself for what he thought was a forthcoming marriage, his tasks failed to arouse any wholehearted enthusiasm in him. Shifted from the Prussian commercial bank, the Seehandlung, to the provincial chamber of Brandenburg, and in 1787, upon his own request, to the Brandenburg department of the General Directory, he encountered only work that palled on him. Stacked high on every side were reports dealing with taxation, with budgetary information, with statistics — dull stuff that day after day must be leafed through, copied, and recopied.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> George P. Gooch, *Germany and the French Revolution* (2d ed., London, 1927), ch. 16; G. H. Riquetti, Comte de Mirabeau, *Secret Memoirs of the Court of Berlin* (New York and Akron, 1901).

<sup>5</sup> Bruford, *Germany in the Eighteenth Century*, 269.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Bailleu, "Zur Verabschiedung des Kriegsrats Gentz, 1802," in *Festschrift zu Gustav Schmollers 70. Geburtstag* (Leipzig, 1908), 237, 238.

In this characteristic passage, Gentz reveals himself, just as he was to reveal himself his life long. Though he thought always that he knew what he wanted, he was in reality divided against himself. Until 1786 there had been no conflict. Through the spectacles borrowed from his father and polished by Professor Kant, he had looked out upon his good bourgeois world, and everything had seemed to focus wonderfully. Then one fine day he caught sight of a world that seemed beyond good and evil, the glittering world of the eighteenth-century aristocracy. Torn betwixt the two, Gentz epitomized the conflict between the burgher and aristocratic points of view. Keenly responsive to every intellectual stimulus, eclectic by nature, he mirrored in his own personality, and mirrored with rare completeness, the basic social conflict of his age. When later he glorified rational equilibrium, the golden mean, he was but signaling his own inability to integrate himself.

Late in 1789, however, Gentz felt able to choose. He determined to be a virtuous burgher, a dutiful bureaucrat. To this end he riveted his attention on elevating subjects. Realizing his dependence upon the proper associates, realizing the necessity, to use his own words, of having "before my eyes a model who will often and vividly remind me that the venerable and excellent principles of morality can not only be coolly admired but also carried out," he cultivated a correspondence with Christian Garve, the family friend of Breslau; he sought out stimulating and wholesome companions in Berlin; and he occupied himself assiduously with the larger political questions and with intellectual interests generally.

Christian Garve was more than twenty years older than Gentz, but the two men had much to draw them together. As a Königsberg student, Gentz had been more attracted by the utilitarian spirit of Garve's writings than by the speculative genius of Kant. Garve was neither original nor profound, but he wrote clear prose and kept his writing within the sphere of the obviously practical. In Garve Gentz could see a mature development of the very intellectual qualities that he fervidly desired.<sup>9</sup>

It would be a mistake to infer, however, that in 1789 Gentz's affection for Kantian ways of thinking had been entirely alienated by the attraction of Garve's realistic and matter-of-fact approach. On the contrary, he had not yet overcome the academic-speculative propensities that

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 144. Gentz's letters to Garve are interesting documents in themselves, but they are of especial importance in that they provide the only reasonably full record of his attitude toward the first phase of the French Revolution.

the university had nurtured. He was still *aufgeklärt* rather than Frederickian in spirit.<sup>10</sup> Precisely the opposite was true of Garve: his writings contain, in fact, the best justification of Frederickian despotism that his generation had to offer. The distinction between Gentz and Garve at this period is roughly the distinction that Gierke was marking in general when he spoke of the fact that "the natural law theory of the State came to be radically divided into the two sharply contrasted schools of 'Popular Sovereignty' and 'The Sovereignty of the Ruler.'" After the fashion of Hobbes, Garve had maintained that by the original contract the ruler was the recipient, by transfer and in perpetuity, of the natural rights of the people.<sup>11</sup> Gentz in all humility took issue with this position. Without actually using the words "sovereignty of the people" he indicated clearly that he meant just that. It was misleading, he felt, to speak of citizens as a ruler's subjects; they are, he declared, actually his constituents; they are the ruler's master, and the judge of the ruler's actions is the "voice of the people."<sup>12</sup>

After such an opinion on the theoretical side, it is not surprising to find words like the following, when Gentz finally, on March 5, 1790, spoke of the events in France: "The spirit of the age," he confessed, "stirs strongly and vigorously in me; it is high time for mankind to awaken from its long sleep. I am young, and the universal striving after freedom, which breaks forth on all sides, inspires in me sympathy and warmth."<sup>13</sup> As late as December 5, 1790, the Revolution for him was still *die gute Sache*, the good cause. "I should consider the collapse of this revolution one of the greatest misfortunes that the human race ever met with," he declared. "It is the first practical triumph of philosophy, the first example of a constitution based on definite principles and embodying a consistent system of ideas; it is our hope and comfort in the face of the multitude of hoary evils under which mankind sighs. If it should fail, the evils would be ten times more incurable."<sup>14</sup>

While Gentz was thus aglow with enthusiasm for the Revolution

<sup>10</sup> In October, 1789, for instance, he wrote a letter dealing extensively with abstract political questions, but without once mentioning the events taking place in France. Henriette Herz, on the other hand, declared that she saw Gentz a great deal at this time and that he talked constantly of the Revolution. *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:146-153; J. Fürst, ed., *Henriette Herz: Ihr Leben and Ihre Erinnerungen* (Berlin, 1850), 138-139. A more definite statement would be possible were it not for the fact that only two of his letters from the year 1789 have been preserved.

<sup>11</sup> O. F. von Gierke, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society, 1500-1800*, translated by Ernest Barker, 1:143 (Cambridge, 1934); Reinhold Aris, *History of Political Thought in Germany from 1789 to 1815* (London, 1936), 155.

<sup>12</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:151.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 158-159. <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 178, 179.

This enthusiasm for Ancillon was shortly thereafter replaced by an equal enthusiasm for Humboldt. Humboldt appears to have had a fleeting impression of Gentz as early as 1788, and it was not a favorable one: "Gentz is a windbag who pays court to every woman."<sup>18</sup> Closer acquaintance, however, modified this opinion considerably. In 1791 Humboldt, one of the striking figures of his generation, was already, at twenty-two, completing one of his phenomenally brilliant terms of government employment. An aristocrat in the best sense of the word, he possessed a mind, a fund of information, and a passion for knowledge which marked him as a man apart; Gentz was first drawn to him because of his "remarkable head." He was younger than Gentz, but Gentz was elated beyond words when Humboldt finally dropped his cold hauteur and treated him as an intellectual equal. For all his intellectuality, however, one suspects Humboldt of posing. Had he been an American, the disinterested quality of his intellect and scholarship would have made him a great chief justice, but he was not content to be a man of intellect and scholarship. He must play the exquisite, assume the attitude artistic. "Gentz has . . . little aesthetic sense," he commented superciliously; but one wonders whether he himself had much aesthetic sense, in spite of his letters to Schiller and to Goethe. For politics he professed a certain disdain, remarking loftily that the truly great, the intellectually and morally perfected man, exerted greater influence than other people by virtue of his mere existence. From the sheltered snugness of his propertied security he asked the world to leave him and all men of intellect and genius alone. The social problem, as he conceived it, was primarily the problem of the superior individual in his relation to the mass: that society was best which combined order with a maximum of freedom for the unfolding of genius and for the blossoming of a few well-rounded personalities. This conception of *Kultur*, so different from the ideals of the Western democracies, has characterized German thought. Henriette Herz, who knew Humboldt well, declined to take all this quite at its face value: Humboldt was cold toward everything but himself, she said; conceit and the desire for honor and glory were the dominant traits of his character.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Briefe von Chamisso, Gneisenau, Haugwitz, W. von Humboldt, Prince Louis Ferdinand, Rahel, Rückert, L. Tieck, u. a., aus dem Nachlass Varnhagen's von Ense*, edited by Ludmilla Assing (2 vols., Leipzig, 1867), 2:116. See also Anna von Sydow, ed., *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt in ihren Briefen* (7 vols., Berlin, 1906-16), 1:354, 391, 418-420.

<sup>19</sup> Gooch, *Germany and the French Revolution*, 105; Sydow, *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt*, 1:344; E. R. Curtius, *The Civilization of France* (New York, 1932), 13-14; H. Landsberg, ed., *Henriette Herz: Ihr Leben und ihre Zeit* (Weimar, 1913), 59. W. Stolz

Burke's *Reflections* opened up new intellectual horizons to many people of his generation. Gentz saw the originality of Burke's ideas, but he used them for propagandist purposes without being convinced of their validity. To others, such as the German romantic philosopher Novalis, Burke's *Reflections* came as an inspiring revelation: it was truly a "revolutionary book against the Revolution," Novalis wrote.<sup>2</sup>

Burke maintained that the stupendous faith of eighteenth-century men in their own reasoning powers implied an individualism so extreme as to verge on anarchy and social chaos. To undermine this faith in individual reason, Burke insisted that history itself was the manifestation of a higher collective reason. He emphasized that what had been regarded as irrational in history and tradition was actually awe-inspiring and worthy of veneration by mortal man.

If it were really true that Gentz's "political theories at about the beginning of 1793 were those of Burke" and that they subsequently developed but little,<sup>3</sup> it would appear that Gentz, child of the Enlightenment, had effected an intellectual somersault. Actually the amount of change registered in his views by 1793 represented something considerably less.

Gentz had translated Burke's volume not because it was a revolutionary book in the history of political thought, but because it was a magnificently eloquent tirade against the course of events in France. The most profound change that had taken place in Gentz's views involved, therefore, his attitude toward events in France and not toward Burke's "fundamental principles," which he had renounced upon first reading the *Reflections*.

It had been well enough to talk about "striving after freedom," and "the practical triumph of philosophy" over "the hoary evils under which mankind sighs," when these phrases were on every man's tongue and when as pretty ideas they were not challenging reality. Once the actual purport of these ideas was fully manifest, however, Gentz, like any good bureaucrat with social ambitions, scuttled for shelter to the security of a well-defined and stable social order.

This did not mean that Gentz was now ready to disavow natural rights and freedom and all those beautiful eighteenth-century clichés which, not so long before, he had defended. He had espoused natural rights in 1791 on logical grounds; as an academic exercise he could con-

<sup>2</sup> *Schriften*, edited by J. Minor, 2:136 (Jena, 1907).

<sup>3</sup> Reiff, *Gentz*, 39. It is evident from Reiff's subsequent pages that he does not mean just what his quoted words say.

scientifically do so again. But he was no longer concerned with logic and academic exercises; he was concerned with realities. It was not Burke who had converted him: Garve, rather, had triumphed over Kant;<sup>4</sup> in other words, the immediate and practical in Gentz had triumphed over the universal and rational. A systematic thinker would have been troubled by the sort of intellectual impasse into which he had thus worked himself. Not Gentz, however. The logical dilemma of the "either-or" did not disturb him.

The greatness of Burke lay in the fact that he faced squarely the challenge of the either-or. True, his book lacked that symmetrical order which characterized most of the products of Gentz's precise mind. Yet if Burke's book was not only "muscular and rhetorical" but also rhapsodic, it was still "a rhapsody from which a complete system can be developed." Gentz, on the other hand, for all his love of order and symmetry, did not even point the way to a thoroughly systematic political philosophy.

The gap between political ideals and actualized law, which Gentz could not close, did not baffle Burke. True, Burke did not quite bridge the gap, but he showed how it could be done: implicit in his writings was the idea that, through the actual, man might see the gradual unfolding of the ideal. Or to put it a trifle differently: in the actual, the traditional, the historical, man can find rational ideals revealed. Burke scoffed at the effrontery of theorists, sophists, and "oeconomists" who thought they could create rational ideals in their own minds. "It has been the uniform policy of our constitution," he declared in one of his most luminous passages, "to claim and assert our liberties as Englishmen as an *entailed inheritance* derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our posterity; as an estate especially belonging to the people of this kingdom, without any reference whatever to any more general or prior right. . . . This policy appears to me to be the result of profound reflection, or rather the happy effect of following nature, which is wisdom without reflection, and above it."<sup>5</sup>

Gentz, a man of action — some would say reaction — was not deeply affected by this kind of thinking, which engendered an attitude of cloistered quietism, a preoccupation with the endless relativity of things.

<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that in the very year in which his Burke translation appeared, Gentz openly took the field against Kant in an article entitled "Nachtrag zu dem Raisonement des Herrn Professor Kant über das Verhältnis zwischen Theorie und Praxis," which was published in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*. See Walter Rasemann, *Die rationalen und traditionellen Elemente in der Publizistik des Friedrich von Gentz* (Düsseldorf, 1935), 65; Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Gentz*, 2:70-71; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:44.

<sup>5</sup> *The Works of Edmund Burke*, 1:469 (New York, 1837).

For implicit in Burke is the idea that since the actual varies in time and place, the ideal reveals itself under different forms in different places. Burke never got quite that far,<sup>6</sup> but a notable school, which developed in the next generation, did. Marching under a banner bearing the "opalescent" word *Historismus*, this school devoted itself to the cult of objectivity with admirable disinterestedness.<sup>7</sup> It observed in history the various manifestations of wisdom unfolding "without reflection and above it." The highly regarded, but man-made, natural rights of the Enlightenment seemed far less impressive when compared with these new visions, which appeared in the garb of commonplace facts. The heirs of the Enlightenment were left in confusion.

Although he, too, was an heir of the Enlightenment, Gentz did not go to Burke's writings in search of their logical implications. Gentz found in Burke an emphasis on history, on tradition, which could be effectively used to counteract the radical tendencies of the Revolution. Gentz sought a practicable compromise, a common-sense balance, the kind which earlier in the eighteenth century had appealed to moderate men, to Locke, to Montesquieu. Recognizing the need for both rational progress and conservation of the heritage of the past, Gentz believed that the practical tact of wise statesmanship could bring about a satisfactory compromise. This was the message he wanted to impress upon the German people in 1793.<sup>8</sup>

The high resolve that had characterized Gentz's utterances in the latter part of 1789 had borne results. He had cultivated austere men and had devoted himself to productive literary activity upon austere subjects. But he himself had not become austere. For the triumph of Garve over Kant did not affect merely Gentz's intellectual processes; it was reflected in his subsequent conduct as a mature and unabashed worldling. Frequently in the future he was to make cynically devastating comments on his own conduct, but never again were torments of the flesh to wring

<sup>6</sup> See Eriedrich Meinecke, "Die englische Praeromantik des 18. Jahrhunderts als Vorstufe des Historismus," in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 152 (1935).

<sup>7</sup> Charles A. Beard and Alfred Vagts, "Currents of Thought in Historiography," in the *American Historical Review*, 42 (1937):461. See also V. G. Simkhovitch, "Approaches to History," No. III, in the *Political Science Quarterly*, 47 (1932):415, 416.

<sup>8</sup> The old fallacy of Gentz, the Burke disciple, persists even in the most recent literature, such as Artz's *Reaction and Revolution*, 64, 66. On the other hand, Gooch, in his *Germany and the French Revolution*, 97, goes too far in discounting the extent to which Gentz used Burkian arguments. This is due partly to the fact that Professor Gooch, in his analysis of the essays by Gentz, ignores the essay entitled "Versuch einer Widerlegung der Apologie des Herrn Mackintosh," in which the influence of Burke is most apparent. See particularly *Betrachtungen über die französische Revolution nach dem Englischen des Herrn Burke vom Friedrich Gentz* (Berlin, 1793), pt. 2, pp. 125-126, 257.

from him expressions of deep spiritual anguish, such as appear in his earlier letters, or of the old moral purpose. In his intellectual development he had thus far evaded consistently the challenge of the either-or, and in his private life he exhibited the same tendency to avoid the choices that required character and self-discipline. The somewhat unsavory story of Gentz's domestic and social life may be approached in a roundabout way with the introduction of a man named Karl Gustav von Brinckmann.

The adulating hangers-on of the literary world exist in every epoch, and James Boswell has even lent to the species a certain grandeur. Gentz's generation had its share of these gentry, and posterity owes a good deal of its information about the period to the Varnhagens and Böttigers who stalked famous friends and encouraged them to write letters, which were then carefully preserved for the edification of subsequent generations. Brinckmann was a man of this kidney. A Swede of German extraction, he had been educated by the disciples of Zinzendorf and by the savants of Halle. Deeply religious, he became an intimate friend of Schleiermacher, but gave up the idea of an ecclesiastical career to study for the diplomatic service. He devoted himself chiefly, however, to literary pursuits and interests. Brinckmann was capable of sensitive appreciation of other people's work, and he turned out technically impeccable verses of his own, but he lacked the creative spark. Connected off and on through the nineties with the Swedish embassy in Berlin, he made a serviceable if undistinguished diplomat. Charming, disinterested, witty, he was the dilettante in every aspect of life, even in love—cultivating affairs only that he might indulge in the luxury of writing love letters, as the passionate Prince Louis Ferdinand disdainfully remarked.<sup>9</sup>

Brinckmann appeared in Berlin in 1790, about the time that Gentz was writing his anti-Moeser article. He glided upon the scene with his sociable and harmless ways, became acquainted with all the bright young people immediately, and encouraged various small and self-centered groups to mix more intimately with one another. The Jewish colony in Berlin was just beginning to attain a certain precarious respectability; Moses Mendelssohn had already showed what the German Jew could contribute to the nation's culture, and young Jewish women with brains and wealth were casting avid glances toward a world where life was freer and more enticing. They gave a particularly cordial reception to such interesting men as were seeking some mental stimulation amidst

<sup>9</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:1-16.

Berlin's intellectual barrenness. Brinckmann, like Varnhagen later on, was at once made to feel at home by the town's *Judentum*, and both Brinckmann and Varnhagen remained loyal to the group after their own social horizons had broadened. It was Brinckmann who had broken down Humboldt's prejudice against Gentz and had drawn the two young men together, but Brinckmann might not have known either Gentz or Humboldt had they not all frequented the home of Marcus Herz, the Jewish doctor in the New Friedrichstrasse, whose wife Henriette was Berlin's nearest equivalent to the Parisian salon hostess. Intermittently after 1790 Gentz's relations with Jewish circles were fairly close.<sup>10</sup>

Gentz's social connections were, for that matter, being extended in all directions. He gained entrance to aristocratic houses, where his gifted tongue acquired for him a certain modicum of favor. At the same time he retained close ties with the bourgeois-Huguenot section of the population from which he himself had sprung. It was to this class that he turned now to take unto himself a wife.

Whatever may have been the considerations that again turned Gentz's thoughts toward matrimony, one may be sure that all-consuming passion was not one of them. In the second half of 1791 he had composed a letter to his old flame Elisabeth Graun, who for several years had lived apart from her husband; the letter was obviously intended to clear the ground for a proposal of marriage. For some reason the letter was not sent until two years later, and then with a covering note of explanation, for by that time Gentz was a married man.

The maiden name of the wife whom he chose was Minna Gilly. The Gentz and Gilly families knew each other well. Both had Huguenot connections. There was another common point of interest which drew the two families together: Gentz's brother Heinrich was an architect, and Minna's father and her brother Friedrich were the outstanding architects in the Prussia of that day. Founder of the Bauakademie, the elder Gilly exemplified in his work the tendency toward a more functional architecture; the classic simplicity of the country seat he erected for Frederick William III at Paretz contrasts markedly with the petit elegance of Frederick the Great's Sans Souci. At the same time he

<sup>10</sup> So intimate was Gentz with Berlin's Jewry that Benjamin Disraeli even included him among the notable Jews of modern times, and contemporary German genealogical research may be able to substantiate the assertion. I have seen no reliable evidence, however, to indicate that Gentz had Jewish blood, and certainly at one time and another he was responsible for a good many definitely anti-Semitic statements. See Disraeli, *Lord George Bentinck: A Political Biography* (London, 1905), 325.

## 4. Footholds to Success

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ALTHOUGH for a decade after 1792 Gentz's private affairs became more and more muddled, the conditions of his official employment improved greatly. The improvement derived directly from his translation of Burke's *Reflections*. Gentz knew very well that eighteenth-century writers lived not "on their works, but on their dedications," and he inscribed his book to the man who could do him the most good — Frederick William II. To avoid the risk that royal eyes might never fall upon his offering, he wrote direct to the king a letter composed in his best begging style. After expressing gratitude for the good fortune of living under his "wise and mild scepter," Gentz declared that his steadfast intention of opposing French sophistry had led him to translate the "strongest refutation of the Revolutionary ideas which had appeared in any language," and that in an appended volume he himself "sought to develop on political and philosophical grounds a complete theory of the anti-Revolutionary system." At the close came discreet mention of the eight years during which he had labored with "burning zeal" for Prussia and of the three hundred thaler with which Prussia had so far seen fit to reward him annually.<sup>1</sup>

The letter to the king was written on December 23, 1792, and the next month Gentz received the long-coveted title of *Kriegsrat*. In the following June he was transferred to the South Prussian department of the General Directory. This was a new department, made necessary by the second partition of Poland and put under the direction of Voss, Gentz's despised chief. Shortly thereafter, fortunately, South Prussia was assigned to Count Hoym, the Silesian minister. Gentz was given a position of some responsibility, his salary was increased to eight hundred

<sup>1</sup> Georg Brandes, *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature*, 6:60 (New York, 1906); Gentz to King Frederick William II, December 23, 1792, in the British Museum, Add. 39779, f. 17. In writing to Garve on April 19, 1791, Gentz stated that his salary ("fixes Gehalt") amounted to four hundred thaler and that he now earned more than five hundred thaler a year. *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:196.

he belonged "more to the old than to the new school, more and more to the side . . . against which had conspired the tremendous mass of all the superficial, restless, innovation-seeking men, many of the most intelligent men, the majority of writers in all languages, the spirit of the time, luck, all the stupidity and mistakes of governments, and fabulous military victories." Gentz never recaptured enthusiasm for his history; it was not completed, and no part of it was ever published, although five large closely written volumes ready for the press were found among his papers after his death.<sup>6</sup>

The labors that had gone into this abortive historical work were not wasted. By 1798 Gentz was one of the best-informed men in the world on the French Revolution, and his thoroughgoing studies built a sound foundation for the unsystematic though important writings, with the Revolution as their basic theme, which he subsequently produced. Furthermore, the first great German work on the Revolution, that of Heinrich von Sybel, adopted so completely the Gentzian viewpoint that one can almost declare that the book which Gentz never got around to write was finally produced by von Sybel.<sup>7</sup>

Gentz's literary activity in the years between the appearance of his translation of the *Reflections* and 1797 had a definite purpose. He hoped to influence men of cultivated understanding. The number of such men in any age is necessarily small; the experience of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has shown that when all men can read, most of them still prefer to read trash. Probably most literate Junkers and burghers of Gentz's day also read trash, when they read at all; but Gentz did not concern himself with such people. He wrote for a few thousand of the intellectually elite, for a few thousand men who had learned to develop attitudes through a certain amount of ratiocination. Consequently, his writings appealed to the reason; they were logically rounded arguments that presented facts and developed conclusions in sentences of nice precision. Knowing that the conservative position which he represented was antipathetic to the majority of his Enlightenment-bred readers, he took care to give a tone of persuasive moderation to most of what he wrote.

These writings of the period before 1798 indicate that Gentz was preoccupied chiefly with problems of domestic policy—not so much

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 128, 220, 222-224 and note, 226-227, 229, 245-246 and note, 314-317; Bratranek, *Goethe's Briefwechsel*, 24-25.

<sup>7</sup> A. Luebbe, *Friedrich von Gentz und Heinrich von Sybel: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der neueren Historiographie* (Göttingen, 1913); George P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1913), 140-143.

tion with the existing structure of society and in their respect for order, remained essentially conservative.<sup>8</sup>

As 1797 drew toward its close, Gentz's attention was drawn away from France and England and concentrated on events near at home. In November it had become apparent that dropsy was bringing Frederick William II to his end, and official Berlin buzzed with excitement at the prospect of a new king, of new men in high places, and of new policies. The crown prince was a taciturn young man who possessed all the second-rate virtues. He was industrious, economical, and straight-laced; he loved the army because of the uniforms and hated war because of the action. He disapproved heartily of his lecherous old father, and the ties that bound him to the nobility were of the slenderest. Perhaps partly because of all these limitations in the heir apparent, the bureaucrats brought up in the Frederickian tradition viewed the oncoming reign with unfeigned joy. Then, too, the crown prince was known to realize vaguely that the internal administration of Prussia was not all that it might be and that reform along "liberal" lines was desirable. The bureaucrats believed that this favorable attitude, combined with his aversion for the nobility, would make him their natural ally.

In the *Kabinett* the bureaucrats had already an agency through which, by adroit maneuvering, their influence could be made the dominant power in the monarchy; for the Prussian *Kabinett*, which consisted of the king's immediate advisers, was open to the middle-class civil servants, and as an organization existed quite apart from the responsible ministries. The most active of the bureaucratic party was Anastasius Ludwig Mencken, Bismarck's maternal grandfather, an able and honest man. He had already presented to the crown prince a memoir in which he recommended that the *Kabinett* councilors should give advice unasked and that they should in fact be placed over the noble ministers. Such a change would give the bureaucracy governmental supremacy over the nobility. The crown prince accorded the memoir a favorable reception, and the hopes of the Mencken party ran high.

It has been noted that in 1795 Gentz still took a theoretical position on domestic affairs which would warrant classifying him as a temperate constitutionalist. He had at that time definitely committed himself,

<sup>8</sup> It appears to me that Rasemann, in his *Publizistik des Gentz*, 38-42, has been misled by Gentz's confusing use of the term *Staatsbeamten* (state officials), and has accordingly given a false interpretation of Gentz's position. See Gentz, "Darstellung und Vergleichung einiger politischen Constitutions-Systeme die von dem Grundsatz der Theilung der Macht ausgehen," in the *Neue Deutsche Monatsschrift*, 3 (1795):123-127.

glad to hear said. The king's love of peace was played up to in a pretty admonition to neutrality. (Gentz did not really believe in neutrality.) The king was known to favor considerable freedom of the press, and Gentz urged more freedom of the press. (Gentz had not yet thought his way into the clear on this important subject and lived to regret these particular paragraphs more than any he ever wrote in his life.) Only when he came to the relation of government to business, in which he advocated the abolition of artificial restrictions on commercial activity and especially the abolition of certain monopolies, did Gentz, the life-long disciple of Adam Smith, speak with real conviction.<sup>10</sup>

A week after its appearance the letter was brought to the king's attention by the queen. Though preoccupied with routine matters, the king glanced at the phrases urging neutrality, and so struck was he by the words that he read the letter through and praised it heartily several times, once in the presence of the entire court of Prince Ferdinand of Prussia. Gentz soon heard of this favorable reception and hastened to come forth openly as the author. For several days he basked in the limelight that he loved so well. To Böttiger in Weimar he wrote: "This small and unworthy production has made a sensation among all classes, and has brought me actually one of the pleasantest experiences of my life."<sup>11</sup> The German press gave the memorial wide and on the whole favorable publicity, though some thought it a great piece of effrontery for so young a man to pontificate. The immortal Goethe scoffed privately that Gentz had ranged himself with those democrats "who daily stick their bare bottoms out the window."<sup>12</sup>

For the time being, however, everything seemed to be working out well — exactly, in fact, as Gentz had hoped. Not only had his open letter brought his name strikingly to the attention of the king, but on the third day of the new reign Mencken was given "the direction of all civil affairs," a post which he accepted, to quote Gentz, "only on terms which reflect everlasting honor upon him and the king."<sup>13</sup> A commission was also set up to abolish the most objectionable of the monopolies Gentz had attacked in his open letter — the tobacco monopoly — and he had the satisfaction of serving on the commission. He was charged with drafting the protocol. "Seldom have I had a more tiring job, but seldom a more enjoyable one," he gloated; "I knew that the eyes of the entire country were fixed on us and that the result was being awaited

<sup>10</sup> Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 2:12-32.

<sup>11</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:236.

<sup>12</sup> Tschirch, *Geschichte der öffentlichen Meinung*, 1:283-284 and note.

<sup>13</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:235.

with impatience. Last Sunday, in the quiet of my office and with a heart really moved, I wrote the patent of declaration, which I was so sure beforehand would throw several millions of men into delighted ecstasy."<sup>14</sup> Whether or not the millions of men found themselves in a condition of delighted ecstasy, it is certain that Gentz himself was in such a state, not merely because of the tobacco commission but because of the way the internal affairs of the monarchy generally were being managed.

By February 1, 1798 — that is, within a little over a month — disillusionment had replaced ecstasy, and Gentz was re-echoing bitterly the words which the new American ambassador had written to his father six weeks before. John Quincy Adams had reported that the internal changes might be great but that they would not take place immediately nor perhaps very soon.<sup>15</sup> Gentz himself acknowledged that changes must be made slowly and after mature reflection.

The Mencken program, in fact, was being neatly sabotaged, and Gentz was getting an inside view of how governments of men reveal the cross-purposes of men. On the commission for South Prussian reorganization, for example, where he was bringing the protocol to a sorry close, he could see his good friend Mencken in full cry after his good friend Hoym, while simultaneously a group, whom Gentz referred to as the "military cabal," engaged in annoying sapping operations on their own initiative. General von Ruechel, Colonel von Zastrow, and Lieutenant General von Schulenburg appear to have been leaders of this military clique, who, said Gentz, "are striving tirelessly for the scepter and are able to attain their objective."<sup>16</sup> Altogether the more he saw of the government the less attractive it appeared to him. To Böttiger he delivered himself of an explanation which is sufficiently interesting and revealing to warrant full quotation:

"Men whose applause is infinitely precious to me, and whose judgment I respect, have expressed now and then the desire to see me participate in the business of the *Kabinett*. Here also this has been spoken of now and then. I want to tell you seriously what I think of the matter. At the outset of the reign it was in my power to have myself proposed by M. [Mencken] as his assistant, and more than one (possibly sad) opportunity will conceivably come up [in the future] when I could effect this without any difficulty or intrigue. Since M. now

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>15</sup> *Writings of John Quincy Adams*, edited by Worthington C. Ford, 2:233 (New York, 1913).

<sup>16</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:242-243, 252.

directs *all* internal administration [*Zivilgeschäfte*], since he is now extremely sunken and will certainly be torn from us all too soon, you will readily see how much enticement such a career offers to an active, ambitious, and self-confident man. Furthermore I should deceive you if I did not acknowledge that there have been many moments when I felt passionately the attraction which hovers about that prospect, and that there have been other moments when I have been filled with enthusiasm for the idea that it was my *duty* to avail myself of such a position. But reason, cold-blooded reflection, incorruptible knowledge of self, all-powerful fear of selling my freedom for mistaken enjoyment and of exchanging my true mission for a specious one — these won out over ambition for place, and with God's help will always win out. I am not equal to this difficult post: I may have as much knowledge as M., and perhaps more talent than he, but in me there is lacking the imperturbable, everlasting, divine serenity of his character; in me there is lacking his heroism, his steadfastness, his indifference toward all inimical undertakings, and his art in hiding his tremendous strength and firmness behind an exterior that is gentle, gay, and sweetly deceiving. I am not made for banging away at cabals endlessly, I have a fear of the military which is not to be subdued, and if the king should put his entire trust in me today, I should certainly go to pieces in less than half a year."<sup>17</sup>

The events of 1798 strengthened Gentz in his determination to renounce political ambition. A commission was set up to examine thoroughly Prussia's financial system. Once more Gentz drafted the protocol and he presided when the chairman was absent. For two years the sessions dragged on with meager results. In the meantime Mencken and Hoym played out the final act of their dog-eat-dog performance: Mencken saw to it that South Prussia was taken away from Hoym and given to Voss. With South Prussia Voss got a most unwilling Gentz. Illness, as was expected, removed Mencken from *Kabinett* activity, and Beyme stepped into the position upon which Gentz's eye not so long before had been fixed. The *Kabinett* proceeded in fact to assume the dominant position foreseen by Mencken in 1797: it held the mastery over the men who ostensibly were ministers. The government thus fell into the hands of clever but brittle middle-class officials and stodgy martinets.

The development of Napoleonic imperialism made Gentz increasingly resentful of the passive foreign policy that he himself had urged

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 243-244.

friendly terms with England, the Franco-Russian combination could not be resisted; reluctantly he permitted himself to be steered into Paul's anti-English armed neutrality, and reluctantly he allowed himself to be pushed into the occupation of Hanover. He had sought persistently during the summer of 1800 to mediate between France and Austria, only to see the negotiations break down and hostilities resumed. As the year drew to its close the Austrians received the *coup de grâce* at Hohenlinden, and soon afterward they signed the Treaty of Lunéville.<sup>19</sup>

The anti-English orientation of Prussian policy after the middle of 1800 was not reflected in the pages of the *Historisches Journal*. On the contrary, Gentz had veered away from his conciliatory attitude toward the Consulate, and his *Journal* became, if anything, more Anglophile than ever. England was compared to a "dependable squire," France to "a daring gambler" risking everything on the chances of world dominion.<sup>20</sup> The English financial situation was once again analyzed and the fundamental stability of the country reaffirmed, whereas France was pictured as a nation ruined economically but kept going by the irrational stimulation of its military successes.<sup>21</sup> In short, the *Historisches Journal* for 1800 took the tone of an English propaganda sheet. Nothing betrayed its Prussian origin except its language, its author, and its place of publication.

As their own policy became, outwardly at least, more and more pro-French and anti-English, the Prussian ministers grew very cool toward the *Journal*, which they were subsidizing. Count Schulenburg alone remained friendly and approved a grant for the coming year. The king, however, turned his face away and vetoed the appropriation; he would agree only to the proposal that Gentz be relieved of routine duties for another twelve months.<sup>22</sup>

The withdrawal of financial support hit Gentz in his most vulnerable spot, his pocketbook. Bankrupt in 1797, he had replaced the disorder in his affairs merely with more disorder. Froelich, who in 1800 supplanted Vieweg as the publisher of the *Historisches Journal* and to whom Gentz was under contract for the delivery of other works as well,

<sup>19</sup> Prussian diplomacy in this period is admirably treated in Guy Stanton Ford's *Hanover and Prussia, 1795-1803* (New York, 1903), 192-216.

<sup>20</sup> *Historisches Journal*, 3 (1800):496.

<sup>21</sup> See Karmin, "Lettres de Gentz à D'Ivernois," in the *Revue historique de la Révolution française et de l'Empire*, 4:18-19.

<sup>22</sup> Gentz to Froelich, October [?] 23, 1800, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 94, IV, N.b.2, Fol. 49; *The Manuscripts of J. B. Fortescue, Esq., Preserved at Dropmore*, edited by W. Fitz Patrick (10 vols., Historical Manuscripts Commission, London, 1892-1927), 6:378-380.

was constantly called upon to make advances. With unvarying generosity he produced the money, and Gentz signed notes. When they fell due he pleaded for their renewal, demonstrating always in the most plausible manner that solvency lay just a few months ahead. With the refusal of the Prussian government to renew its subsidy, the possibility of meeting these obligations went glimmering.<sup>23</sup> He was now definitely a free-lance writer, and the environment of 1800 was anything but friendly to unsubsidized literature. If no new patron came to the rescue, he faced the unhappy alternative of again becoming a bureaucrat.

Gentz may have been the most irresponsible man in Europe about money matters, but he was not the fellow to accept with resignation a fate that he regarded with such aversion. The mere thought of resuming administrative routine made the roof of his mouth turn brown. For he had known freedom. It was a freedom, to be sure, which smacked a good deal of slavery—slavery to long hours of study, slavery to the task of grinding out one hundred, two hundred, pages monthly on difficult and often abstruse subjects. But he loved it. Life was troubled, and existence was a hand-to-mouth one, but each day there was a conversation tête à tête with some ambassador, a pinch of snuff and a confidential word, and the fan of a great lady tapping delicately upon his sleeve. Burke and Mallet du Pan were both dead, and Gentz felt the mantle of conservative eloquence fall snugly and fittingly around his shoulders. The emperor of Austria, the czar of all the Russias, the king of England, spoke his name approvingly. In Italy, too, he was known, for his *Journal* had been translated into Italian;<sup>24</sup> and even in faraway America young John Quincy Adams had repeated his message.<sup>25</sup> At the café Stadt Paris he could always find a group of kindred souls, roistering, footloose, witty, and uninhibited, with Prince Louis Ferdinand, the most romantic figure of his generation, at their head. Money meant

<sup>23</sup> Gentz to Froelich, November 1[?], 1799, May 30, 1800[?], October[?] 23, 1800, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 94, IV, N.b.2, Fol. 49.

<sup>24</sup> Gentz to Lucchesini, August 7, 1800, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 92, Fol. 82, Lucchesini's Nachlass 27.

<sup>25</sup> Adams had translated one of the most interesting of Gentz's *Historisches Journal* articles under the title *The Origin and Principles of the American Revolution Compared with the Origin and Principles of the French Revolution* (Philadelphia, 1800). Gentz, said Adams in a short preface, is "one of the most distinguished political writers in Germany." The article in question, he continues, "is for two reasons highly interesting to Americans: First, because it contains the clearest account of the rise and progress of the revolution which established their independence, that has ever appeared within so small a compass; and secondly, because it rescues that revolution from the disgraceful imputation of having proceeded from the same principles as that of France. . . . We presume it will afford a pure and honest gratification to the mind of every truly patriotic American reader, to see the honourable testimony borne by an ingenious, well-informed, and impartial foreigner to the principles and conduct of our country's revolution."

nothing, except that through money came wild pleasures and new excitements. To accumulate money, to amass possessions—even books—was to be middle class, to betray one's origins. Away with the library, sell it, even the Parliamentary Reports—everything but the Kant, the categorical imperative! Bankruptcy was fashionable. Did not Louis Ferdinand, the royal prince, have his debts, his troublesome creditors, no less than Gentz? A few hours of mad, concentrated labor . . . a boisterous meal at the Stadt Paris . . . Madame Lucchesini seeking advice . . . Herr Lombard of the *Kabinet*, a governmental power, dropping a succulent hint . . . Lord Carysfort, the British ambassador, listening, impressed ("Carysfort himself in my room!"). Dinner at the embassy, full dress: Count Haugwitz, resplendent . . . Baron Kruedener, the Russian ambassador, "a singularly organized beast" . . . Swedes . . . Danes . . . Talk, talk, talk . . . Out come the cards, away the money. "In *Berlin* there remains almost nothing for me to wish for," Gentz declared in exultation.<sup>26</sup>

Nothing to wish for except another patron! And that was soon found in the British government. As the outstanding Anglophile in Berlin, Gentz had been well received at the embassy all through 1800. The new ambassador, Carysfort, looked upon him as his oracle and filled his dispatches with Gentzian gleanings. When it became evident that the Prussian government was through with his *Journal*, Gentz turned to Carysfort with the proposal that the magazine be continued, that it appear in English translation, and that the government make good any deficit. How he proposed to finance the German edition he did not state in so many words, but his arguments indicate clearly enough that for this also he was expecting British assistance. Lord Grenville, when informed of the proposal, pointed out the impracticability of a regular English edition, but offered to put up 150 or 200 pounds "for [Gentz's] services abroad."<sup>27</sup> This left Gentz considerable leeway, and instead of continuing the *Journal* he published two books in 1801: *Über den Ursprung und Charakter des Krieges gegen die französische Revolution*; and *Von dem politischen Zustande von Europa vor und nach der*

<sup>26</sup> Gentz to Lucchesini, August 22, 1800, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 92, Fol. 82, Lucchesini's Nachlass 27; *Aus Karl v. Nostitz' Leben und Briefwechsel* (Dresden and Leipzig, 1848), 37; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:90, 93, 362; Hans Wahl, ed., *Prinz Louis Ferdinand von Preussen: Ein Bild seines Lebens in Briefen, Tagebuchblättern und zeitgenössischen Zeugnissen* (Weimar, 1917), 136; *Fortescue Manuscripts*, 6:402-403; *Briefwechsel zwischen Friedrich Gentz und Adam Heinrich Müller, 1800-1829*, edited by Marie von Pilat (Stuttgart, 1857), 1-2. This is cited hereafter as *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*.

<sup>27</sup> *Fortescue Manuscripts*, 6:346, 355, 363, 371, 374-380, 394-395, 402-404, 409; *Tagebücher*, 1:3; Gentz to Froelich, March 4[?], 1801, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 94, IV, N.b.2, Fol. 49.

*französischen Revolution*. He had become a paid propagandist for the English government.

The last issue of Gentz's *Historisches Journal* was completely devoted to an essay of nearly one hundred pages, "Über den ewigen Frieden." This article and the two works of 1801 supplemented one another in the development and elaboration of certain basic ideas. With them Gentz reached intellectual maturity. They were far superior in quality to anything he had previously written, and though they lacked the rhetorical eloquence of some of his later works, they rank as the finest products of his labors as a publicist. Gentz never abandoned the principles they set forth.

The setting in which Gentz's ideas had been developed was one of those great periods of upheaval which, when they are widely attended by bloodshed, suffering, and brutality, inevitably renew men's yearning for that golden day when peace shall reign forever. The French Revolution produced a great deal of such yearning in the human heart. Blueprints for the ideal future were a penny a dozen; they ranged from Fichte's utopian vision of a world in which each state was self-sufficing, except in the realm of ideas, to Kant's picture of a league of nations. Skeptics shook their heads doubtfully; man and war, they declared, are and will be eternally inseparable. Among the skeptics was Gentz. "Everlasting peace," he lamented, "is certainly a chimera; but it is a chimera only in so far as a completely legal constitution for mankind in general remains chimerical. We should strive seriously, courageously, and untiringly for both; but so long as we are men, both will be unrealizable for us."<sup>28</sup>

This was not a snap judgment on Gentz's part: the statement just quoted had been preceded by a lengthy critique of universal monarchy, national isolation, and world federation as a means of attaining enduring peace, a critique so able and so realistic that more than a hundred years' subsequent discussion was to add little that was new. This is not to say that Gentz's arguments were irrefutable in any absolute sense. Based on historical experience, they were subject to the weakness of the historical approach — insufficient leeway for flights of the imagination and affirmations based on faith.

Gentz was congenitally a man of little faith. It was as impossible for him to believe in the eventual reality of universal peace as for him to believe in the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. He would

<sup>28</sup> *Historisches Journal*, 3 (1800):781.

have liked to believe in both. Failing these resources, he took refuge in a sort of practical idealism, and again found satisfaction in the idea that through the positive, the actual, man finds the gradual unfolding of the ideal. This idea, which he had discovered in Burke, intrigued him, but he could not wholly accept it, any more than could Burke; for acceptance of such a notion would mean acceptance of the French Revolution, and Napoleon Bonaparte, and the year 1800. For many a man in the land of poets and thinkers the year 1800 was hard to take. Some, like Fichte and Kant, escaped in utopian flights into the future; others, like Gentz's young friend Adam Müller, preferred imaginative flights into the Middle Ages. But Gentz, whose feet were weighted to the ground, was capable only of a pedestrian hop to the Europe of 1788, the Europe that immediately preceded the Revolution. The system of European states that had taken shape in modern times, particularly in the eighteenth century, he found good; it was not ideal, but it was capable of orderly improvement and, when operative, provided a satisfactory *modus vivendi*. Thrown out of kilter by the Revolution, it must be restored, and for its restoration Gentz had a definite plan. He had also a definite conception of the nature of the system he so admired.

If the pre-Revolutionary states system was to be restored, an Austro-Prussian coalition was essential. Russia, England, and most states of the second and third rank would always stand ready to join such a coalition so long as the French dominated Europe. But with either Prussia or Austria lacking, the coalition could never be more than palliative. To cure the evil both countries must join. With the Netherlands, the left bank of the Rhine, Switzerland, and northern Italy in her possession, France was in a position to engulf Germany, unless the two great powers of central Europe met her in united opposition.<sup>29</sup>

The argument was put strongly and without indirection, and it would have been still stronger had not the Prussian censors intervened.<sup>30</sup> Never before had Gentz spoken in such terms about the foreign policy of his country, and never before had he spoken with greater conviction. Through eight long and trying years he was to preach the same doctrine, only to see his counsels unheeded, and with disastrous results for both Austria and Prussia.

Gentz knew that the formation of such a coalition presented great difficulties. In the first place the chancelleries of Europe were by no means convinced that France was their common foe. In Vienna Thugut

<sup>29</sup> Gentz, *Von dem politischen Zustande von Europa*, 254-263.

<sup>30</sup> *Tagebücher*, 1:4.

edges in with the internationalists. He did not believe that a legal world order would ever be completely realized, but this skepticism did not deter him from affirming that Europe as a whole was a confederation of a kind, that from the Peace of Westphalia on this confederate nature had been manifested in the development of a system of public law, and that the interests of the whole took precedence over those of any of its parts.

In the absence of a league of nations — a chimerical conception — this confederate Europe moved along with a maximum of practical efficiency through the application of the principle of balance of power — a principle whose origin and nature Gentz clearly explained: "Experience," he said, "has shown that most wars arose from the excessive overweight that one power or another knew how to create for itself under favorable conditions. From this experience statecraft came to the conclusion that if appropriate alliances, dexterous negotiations, or (when necessary) force, could stop the rise of such overweight — or neutralize it, in case it already had arisen — the peace and security of all must necessarily be materially benefited. . . . The aim was to organize the federative constitution of Europe so skillfully that every weight in the political mass would find somewhere a counterweight."<sup>33</sup> To create a confederate Europe, however, called for more than balance of power; it was necessary to encourage mutuality among nations. Balance of power was negative.

Gentz's talk about a federative Europe had its positive side, however. He declared that the principle that no state was competent to mix in the inner affairs of other states was an unwarranted generalization.<sup>34</sup> Both sound policy and international law, rightly interpreted, permitted a state to intervene in the internal affairs of another if conditions in that state were so disturbed as to endanger its neighboring countries.<sup>35</sup>

The practical importance of Gentz's writings in 1800 and 1801 was that they emphasized principles that the Third Coalition was soon to accept, in large measure, as the official war aims in the struggle against Napoleon. If there was anything new in his principles, he himself refused to admit it. He talked always of restoring *old* principles — the

<sup>33</sup> *Historisches Journal*, 3 (1800):757, 758.

<sup>34</sup> *Ausgewählte Schriften von Friedrich von Gentz*, edited by Wilderich Weick (5 vols. in 3, Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1836-38), 2:195.

<sup>35</sup> *Von dem politischen Zustande von Europa*, 207, 208. It is likely that Gentz was influenced, or at least strengthened, in his convictions on the right of intervention by Burke's first "Letter on a Regicide Peace," in which the doctrine was ingeniously elaborated. Burke, *Works*, 2:242-243. Gentz said that he had been more impressed by this than by any of Burke's other writings. *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:224. See also Walter Alison Phillips, *The Confederation of Europe: A Study of the European Alliance, 1813-1823* (London, 1920), 41.

Europe would be better off if the Great Powers engulfed the small, and he argued that this would be "a powerful step toward the realization of a general system of peace." Although neither the partition policy of the eighteenth century nor the Revolution could be legally justified, he believed that they had benefited Europe by reducing the number of small states; and he did not wish to see this good work undone. In the formulation of these views Gentz had undoubtedly been influenced by a remarkable book, *La Prusse et sa neutralité*, by the Abbé de Pradt. An *émigré* at this time, De Pradt was soon to be won over by Bonaparte, and for two decades Gentz was to tear his hair over every subsequent book that issued from the Abbé's pen. This earlier work, however, was different: indeed Gentz said that it ought to be "the handbook of every thoughtful statesman."<sup>38</sup> After calling for a restoration of the balance of power, De Pradt expressed the hope of seeing Holland and Belgium united and Piedmont enlarged, so that a series of barrier states would be thrown up against France.

These views on the territorial reorganization of Europe, advocated by De Pradt and approved by Gentz, were likewise accepted as war aims by the Third Coalition and realized by the Vienna settlement of 1815.

The British government had reason to feel that its subsidies to Gentz in 1801 had been well spent. It had received a statement of the objectives of the war against Napoleon to which it could give almost unqualified approval. What is more, that statement was from the pen of an author who could reach a wider public than any English political writer.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>38</sup> *Historisches Journal*, 3 (1800):728, 737, note.

<sup>39</sup> On the translation and reception of these works of 1800 and 1801 abroad, see: *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:258; Gentz to Stuart, August 4, 1802, in the collection privately owned by Mr. André de Coppet of New York; *The Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, edited by Charles Francis Adams (12 vols., Philadelphia, 1874-77), 1:244; *The Edinburgh Review or Critical Journal for April, 1803 . . . July, 1803*, 2:1-30 (New York, 1813); *The Life and Times of Henry Lord Brougham Written by Himself*, 1:184 (New York, 1871).

months husband and wife avoided an open breach, but Gentz was making himself impossible. He spent the night occasionally with the actress, his diary records, but she, faithless creature, produced another and more favored lover named Zinnow. Then "the devil broke loose," until Gentz cooled off and diverted Zinnow's attention by bringing forth the acquiescent Pauline Wiesel. Gentz and Zinnow then became boon companions. They stuffed themselves with food and drink at the Stadt Paris, they reeled through the streets of Berlin boisterous with whiskey, they tossed their money away at a game called *Tarock*. Except in the circle of Prince Louis Ferdinand, Gentz found himself a social outcast. By the end of April he had come to the conclusion that he needed desperately another change of scenery.<sup>7</sup>

On April 28 he applied for three months' leave from his "official duties." His health was bad, he complained; the gout gave him no relief, and he desired to visit the libraries of Göttingen, Gotha, and Weimar for the "completion of a work of large proportions on some of the most important aspects of contemporary history." It is doubtful whether Gentz was more than half serious about this historical project. His studies on the French Revolution he had dropped several years ago, and he was certainly no longer enthusiastic about them. "Everything in the world," he told Brinckmann, "strikes me as highly insipid, and I appear to myself as a burnt-out Vulcan." Still he needed some excuse to get out of Berlin, and in Weimar there was not only a library but also Amalie von Imhof.<sup>8</sup>

Until February Gentz had carried on a correspondence of "indefinable warmth and vitality" with Amalie, but in "the feverish confusion and madness" of his affair with Christel her image had left him. News of his wild life had penetrated to Weimar, and Amalie, to a question by the Duchess Louise about Gentz, could only reply: "He knows that I take lively interest in his lot. He is an exceedingly interesting and remarkable character, and it is certain that he has most accurately recognized my nature: with one look he was at home with me. On this, perhaps, he has built false hope. . . . I should like him to remain close to me as a person, as a friend. For he is not one of those people who arouse only a momentary interest. I should not want to lose sight of his destiny, for I am convinced that there is extraordinary strength in him. But he lacks harmonious development and the

<sup>7</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:92; *Tagebücher*, 1:18-20.

<sup>8</sup> Bailleu, "Zur Verabschiedung des Kriegsrats Gentz," in *Festschrift Schmoller*, 239-240; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:93.

moved to lay a memorandum before the emperor, without, however, giving it his own support. In spite of this very lukewarm attitude, Colloredo arranged for Gentz to have an audience with the emperor a few days later. The emperor "tried to say some obliging things" but made it quite clear that he was not inclined to take Gentz into his service. Cobenzl, however, was not yet licked. He countered immediately with new representations in Gentz's behalf, and Colloredo finally agreed to give the matter his definite support. At last, on September 6, 1802, the emperor relented. Without enthusiasm he assigned to Gentz the title of Imperial Counselor, a pension of four thousand florins a year, and no official duties whatever except that "he continue to write for the Good Cause." These glad tidings were conveyed to Gentz by Cobenzl, with the reminder that he would be his "overseer and his very exacting overseer," Colloredo voiced again the complaint that he disliked foreigners and especially Prussians, and the thing was done: Gentz had switched sovereigns.<sup>23</sup>

The spirits of the late-depressed man bounded: "Vienna . . . has apparently decided my fate, and decided it forever," he wrote. "*My role is not yet played out!* I know now that I still ought to do great things; and even though heaven and earth stand against me, I will do them . . . The conditions under which I enter upon this career are so advantageous that I . . . see before me, with ordinary luck, one of the most important and one of the most interesting roles that Europe now has to offer . . . You cannot imagine how full my head is of ideas and plans. I have not been so enthusiastic and active for a long time. Should a war break out *anywhere* in Europe, you may simply believe that I have started it. Peace can and must not prevail so long as unpunished crime reigns. I prefer to see the world in flames than to watch it sink down into this deadly marasmus."<sup>24</sup>

These fighting words indicate that Gentz was eager for a fray in the realm of high politics, but when it came to adjusting his own personal affairs he cringed and shuddered. In Berlin everything that concerned him had been left dangling, and although the people in Vienna wanted "to hold him by the hair," he succeeded in getting a leave of two months to straighten matters out. There was the formal break to be made with the Prussian government, there was the question of his debts, there were certain household arrangements which involved his wife and fam-

<sup>23</sup> Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 194-202; *Tagebücher*, 1:22; Fournier, *Studien und Skizzen*, 2:126; Paul Jacobenz, "Gentz und Fasbender," in *Mitteilungen des kaiserlichen und königlichen Kriegsarchivs*, 7 (1911):66, 70.

<sup>24</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:367-371.

vided a good many embarrassing topics which might have caused trouble, but he and Amalie got on famously, since their conversations carefully avoided anything personal.<sup>27</sup>

The journey from Weimar to England, via Frankfurt, the Rhine, Aachen, Brussels, and Calais, is documented completely by letters of great interest. The cost of hiring a boat on the Rhine; the condition of the inns; the hints of friction with Elliot, the witty but tyrannical traveling companion; Gentz's terror when the boat stalled at the rapids near St. Goar (he got out and walked); his boredom at "the monotony of the Rhine Valley's everlastingly high mountains, with the perpetual sorry ruins at their tops, and the decayed, and thoroughly gloomy towns and villages at their feet"—these little details are all there. Most striking is Gentz's revelation of the surge of instinctive German patriotism that he experienced at his first contact with actual French control all along the Left Bank. No Arndt needed to suggest to him that the Rhine was Germany's stream, and not Germany's boundary; he felt it in every fiber of his being. The sight of the incomparable Talma on the Brussels stage moved him to reflect on Germany's lack of such an actor and brought him to a completely political and nationalistic conclusion. Germany too might have her Talma, he averred, if she but had "a capital, a central point, if we—without doubt the foremost people of the earth—but had some point in space or time where we could reveal our united strength and our united splendor, if we could but concentrate on some great objective of life or of art."<sup>28</sup>

Gentz's first reaction to England was that here was a country that possessed all the requisites for the production of the Talmas of this world. "In this paradise of Europe, in this garden of God . . . there is nothing isolated," he proclaimed. "Everything hangs together; everything is linked, connected, wed, fused together—I lack for words expressive of this *totality*, this remarkable *ensemble*. . . England's real greatness derives from this harmonious completeness. . . This greatness will be perceived at once, through all his senses, by the alert observer who is properly prepared, and properly disposed; he sees it, he hears it, he feels it, he breathes it in the air."<sup>29</sup>

Gentz luckily had arrived in England at a moment when it was possible for him to breathe its spirit in exceedingly rarified air, politically speaking. Except for Pitt, who remained at Bath in discreet semi-retirement, the governing cliques were assembling in London en masse

<sup>27</sup> *Tagebücher*, 1:23; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:101, 240, 373.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 373-387.      <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 387, 392.

of its apparent obsequiousness, in his apostrophe to Windham as the "successor of Burke; if not the only one, at least one of the last statesmen in the midst of general blindness." Gentz's partiality for those in the other camp did not prevent Addington and his foreign minister, Lord Hawkesbury, from treating him like a friend. He became personally acquainted, also, with Canning, Castlereagh, Lord Eldon, the Duke of Portland, Vansittart, James Mackintosh, William Cobbett, Francis Baring, and D'Ivernois, to name a few of the more prominent men. He was presented to the king and to the queen, had long conversations with the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence. But the man who impressed him most favorably was the exiled Duke of Orleans, better known as Louis Philippe. "By his extraordinary mind and his extraordinary character," Gentz thought, "this single Bourbon compensates for the unfortunate weaknesses of three entire generations of Bourbons. . . . Among all the men whom I know this prince is the one who harmonizes most completely and thoroughly with my own political ideas; he is the one whose conversation is most instructive to me, from whom I have learned the most—even about England; and finally he is the one whom I admire and like the most, because of his fine and magnanimous spirit."<sup>31</sup>

Gentz would have liked to remain on the fascinating island for six months, perhaps permanently, but he had already overstayed his leave from Vienna, and the New Year found him back on the Continent. He glowed with satisfaction over the triumph he had experienced in the country where success meant the most to him. His was too simple a nature to screen a bubbling egotism behind the mask of false modesty, and his way homeward, via Brussels, Frankfurt, and Weimar, was strewn with the unguarded boastings of a childlike man. In two quarters, particularly, reports of his good luck roused resentment. His colleagues in the writing fraternity were jealous of his success in tapping the English government for larger subsidies than they had been able to get; for after this newest raid he was reputed to have returned with eight hundred good English pounds in his pocket. D'Ivernois went so far as to make inquiry at the British treasury itself; and though he dared not place his own "talent on a level with that of Mr. Gentz," he was dismayed that he, D'Ivernois, should be so meagerly rewarded after having worked "ten times as hard" as Mr. Gentz. The worthy Johannes Müller was also painfully affected by the news of the eight hundred pounds;

<sup>31</sup> Gentz to Windham, London, November 11, 1802, in the British Museum, Add. 37869, f. 121; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:390.

and Böttiger remarked with superior purity: "Gentz does not appear to me to have brought an end to his erring ways. His Ithaca is now the Treasury at London." With Cobbett the remembrance of Gentz's success still rankled even after four years, as his letter to Windham clearly reveals: "There are many amongst those of the new opposition, as it was called, who *never* noticed me personally. They did not, I dare say, dream that I cared so little about it; and that when I saw them feting the pretender, Gentz, I looked on them with pity for the weakness of their preference rather than with envy towards Gentz."<sup>32</sup>

In Berlin generally the news of Gentz's English triumph was received unfavorably. It was not merely that people there had erroneously supposed that his Prussian exit had been in the nature of a kick downstairs and that they were irked now by his phenomenal prestige abroad.<sup>33</sup> Irrespective of the English trip, well-disposed friends like Humboldt considered that Gentz had made a move really unworthy of himself in fleeing to Vienna. Wrote Humboldt: "I am sincerely sorry" that "Mr. Gentz has gone to serve at Vienna." He "ought not to leave the service of Prussia to enter into that of Austria."<sup>34</sup> People less fair-minded remembered his Berlin debts and asked with a leer what he was doing with the English gold. Some of the more pressing debts Gentz claims to have paid forthwith,<sup>35</sup> and later on in the year 1803, according to his diary, a certain Grattenauer, who had been entrusted with handling his affairs, received five thousand thaler with which to satisfy the more insistent creditors. Twelve years later it was still a piece of stock Berlin gossip that Gentz had irresponsibly ignored all the debts he had left behind him. To Varnhagen von Ense, Gentz then made the following explanation: "In the year 1803 when I for the first time found myself in the position to make an arrangement of my financial affairs, I sent six thousand Reichsthaler to the Commissioner of Justice Grattenauer for the preliminary payment of my creditors in Berlin. In accordance with my instructions he called together my vari-

<sup>32</sup> Otto Karmin, *Sir Francis D'Ivernois, 1757-1842: sa vie, son oeuvre, et son temps* (Geneva, 1920), 413, 414; Wittmer, "Ligne, Müller, Gentz, et l'Autriche," in *Annales Prince de Ligne*, 5:315; Lewis Melville, *The Life and Letters of William Cobbett in England and America* (2 vols., London, 1913), 1:317-318. See also Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 228-229.

<sup>33</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:106.

<sup>34</sup> *Wilhelm von Humboldt's politische Briefe*, edited by Wilhelm Richter (2 vols., Berlin and Leipzig, 1935-36), 1:11.

<sup>35</sup> This claim is substantiated by Gentz's letter of October 22, 1803, to Adam Müller. Greatly put out, Gentz wrote: "In July, 1802, I gave you twenty-six thaler with my own hand to pay the brother of the bookdealer Trorchel, and I emphasized that this was a matter of pressing importance. Nevertheless the bookdealer Trorchel and other creditors have sent bills for these sums. . . . I want a categorical explanation from you about this circumstance by return post." *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:413, 414.

ous creditors, but immediately afterward he went incredibly bankrupt. Thus, without the slightest fault on my part, the money and the hope given to my creditors was lost." Not until 1811, Gentz continues, was he in a position to begin payments anew.<sup>36</sup>

With the evidence at hand, it is impossible to know the complete story of Gentz's settlement with his Berlin creditors.<sup>37</sup> Of one thing, however, there can be no doubt. Most of the debts were not paid for several years, and some of them were never paid at all. Berlin held that against Gentz.

Furthermore, at the height of his London triumph, his recently divorced wife died. This concatenation of events was unfortunate, to say the least, from the point of view of his Berlin reputation. Actually Gentz professed himself "deeply affected" by Minna's death, and there is no reason to doubt his sincerity. After their separation he had always assumed the most chivalrous attitude toward his wife. Before the English trip he had told Stadion that he still loved her and should always be deeply attached to her. "The unhappiness of this marriage resulted from the great difference not so much in our characters as in our tastes and in the way we regarded men, society, and all the things related to them. This unfortunate difference would not in itself have undermined our happiness if my wife had not always remained dependent, in a way, upon her parents, who, being infinitely more foreign than she to my way of life, my tastes, my connections, and my opinions, tormented her with indulgence and reduced her finally to a position where the dissolution of our marriage began to appear to her as a good thing. . . . What I am going to say to you will perhaps strike you as very singular: but it is none the less true that I never think of this woman that the tears do not choke me." A year after her death he told Lucchesini: "In spite of all the bitterness of a poorly matched marriage I have never ceased to be tenderly attached [to my wife] . . . and I still mourn her death as one of the saddest events of my life."<sup>38</sup>

The news of his wife's death did not reach Gentz until his arrival in Weimar on his way back from England. There he passed four days, mainly in the company of his beloved Amalie von Imhof. She in the meantime had become engaged to "an exceedingly ordinary fellow," the Swedish Colonel Helvig. Gentz describes himself as being at the time

<sup>36</sup> *Tagebücher*, 1:29, 30; Gentz to Varnhagen von Ense, Paris, October 20, 1815, in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Varnhagen Nachlass.

<sup>37</sup> The several references to Grattenauer in Gentz's letters to Brinckmann during 1803 throw no direct light on the subject.

<sup>38</sup> *Tagebücher*, 1:24; Fournier, *Studien und Skizzen*, 2:123-124; Bailieu, "Zur Verabschiedung des Kriegsrats Gentz," in *Festschrift Schmoller*, 244-250.

## 7. Cobenzl

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IN ALL HIS voluminous writings of a personal nature Friedrich Gentz has left no positive record that he ever participated in formal religious observance. Yet more than once he hit a sort of personal sawdust trail, and his resolutions after such experiences are expressed in solemn, even pious, terms. The removal to Vienna had been accompanied by a characteristic resolve to lead a different and better life. This new life, Gentz fondly believed, would be strengthened by an all-absorbing purpose: to work for the welfare of Europe as a whole. And since Austrian interests were to a large extent European interests, Vienna was manifestly the best place possible from which to operate.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, with a lightning thrust of Gentzian logic, a platonic embrace of Austria became at once not merely desirable but, by the nature of the case, almost inevitable. To most observers the union bore from the first all the earmarks of a *mésalliance*. The Austrian government was notoriously decorous, cautious, and hesitant; Gentz was a Francophobe firebrand of European repute. How had it happened, people wondered, that the Habsburg government, with its "respect for appearances," had hired him at all? The Prussian foreign office particularly would have been surprised to learn that Cobenzl had originally intended to use Gentz as a potential weapon not so much against France as against Prussia herself.<sup>2</sup>

In the negotiations preliminary to the reapportionment of German territory Prussia had managed to look out nicely for her own interests, and by the time the Austrian diplomats had been allowed to look in at the trough, only a few sorry morsels were left. Consequently, when Gentz first appeared in Vienna, in August of 1802, Cobenzl was especially concerned over "the dangers of Prussian aggrandizement," and in Gentz he thought he had found the man best fitted to awaken Ger-

<sup>1</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:100, 372-373; Fournier, *Studien und Skizzen*, 2:121.

<sup>2</sup> Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 228.

many to these dangers. Unfortunately for Cobenzl, he had mistaken his man. Gentz was not anti-Prussian; he was pan-German. His mission was to foster Austro-Prussian harmony, and Cobenzl wanted him to contribute to Austro-Prussian discord.<sup>3</sup>

During Gentz's absence in Britain, however, Cobenzl and the French had finally come to an agreement on Germany, and in the early part of 1803, as the new arrangements were whipped into definite form, Austria assumed "a more accommodating spirit" toward Napoleon, and consequently toward Prussia. When Gentz returned to Vienna, therefore, in February of 1803, Cobenzl was no longer interested in a subtle press campaign against Prussia. As Gentz soon discovered, Cobenzl had no suggestions for him whatsoever, except that he wait patiently for something to turn up. During the next two eventful years this was the extent of Cobenzl's instructions. A fine predicament for Gentz, a man with an all-absorbing purpose!<sup>4</sup>

To vegetate was not Gentz's natural mode of life. Everything in his makeup conspired to drive him into action. Deprived of a sphere of official activity, he proceeded to find for himself a sphere of unofficial activity. In short, although subsidized by the government, he intrigued quite on his own.

In 1803 Gentz was just turning thirty-nine. He knew the world. Politically it was run by counts, princes, and archdukes, and he was determined to make their world, his world. Professors, writers, members of the lesser bureaucracy, though estimable and frequently intelligent, were fatally bourgeois. When Gentz left Berlin he broke with the middle class. The break was not formally executed, it was never absolute; but it took place nonetheless. In the diary entries of his later years the Müllers and Rankes seem out of place among the innumerable members of the old aristocracy—the Esterhazys, Schönburgs, Lobkowitzes—and among the significant members of a new aristocracy—the Rothschilds, Parishes, and Eskeleses. In 1803 the day of these newcomers had not quite dawned; so Gentz used them . . . and dropped them, at least for the time. The salons of the great families were his constant resort. Through February, March, and April he made the rounds nightly with almost painful zeal, and he was soon on terms of intimacy with the blue-bloods who were to be his companions for the rest of his life.

The Austrian aristocracy was notorious for its pride of birth, but so

<sup>3</sup> Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 191-198.

<sup>4</sup> Deutsch, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 216; *Tagebücher*, 1:25-26.

impregnable was its social position that it did not have to be ostentatiously snobbish. Other personable, interesting, and unpedigreed young men besides Gentz have borne witness to the essentially hospitable atmosphere in fashionable Vienna of that day. Yet for an interloper to have become so much a part of the *crème de la crème* was rare indeed. Gentz acquired a social position that was in a sense unique; he carved out for himself a niche where he could operate as a "brilliant agitator" in the very group that monopolized the decisive positions in the state.<sup>5</sup>

This social success so gratified Gentz's vanity that he had frequently to remind himself that a concert at Prince Lichnowsky's, with Beethoven at the piano and Prince Lobkowitz singing, was not an end in itself but a means to an end. He had to remind himself that these charming people were not there merely to be enjoyed, but to be used, influenced, propelled into desired courses of action. "I neither can nor want to renounce society," Gentz averred, "but it must be relegated to second place where it always belongs." Steadfastly, he remembered his mission.<sup>6</sup>

Experience was to teach Gentz that Austrian high society, from the point of view of his own particular projects, certainly belonged in second place. Starhemberg at London, Stadion at Berlin, Metternich at Dresden might be definitely anti-French and anti-Cobenzl, but they were not representative, Gentz discovered, of the Viennese *noblesse*, which taken as a whole was uninterested in political crusades or in politics generally, except in an exasperatingly diletantist way. Nothing so irritates the zealot as a group that refuses to take the Cause seriously; and Gentz, though he continued his nightly tour of the fashionable establishments, was thoroughly disillusioned and disgusted. "The whole thing is a sorry mess of tasteless sensuality and genteel *misère*," he wrote Brinckmann. "The emptiness and tediousness of the great houses is boundless."<sup>7</sup>

Among Vienna's foreign contingent, however, official and otherwise, Gentz quickly found cronies who compensated temporarily for the dullness of the natives. Of these the chief was Baron Armfeldt, the Swed-

<sup>5</sup> Augusta Weldler-Steinberg, ed., *Rahel Varnhagen: Ein Frauenleben in Briefen* (Potsdam, 1925), 145; *Tagebücher des Carl Friedrich Freiherrn Kübeck von Kübau*, edited by Max Freiherr von Kübeck (2 vols. in 3, and supplementary volume, Vienna, 1909), 1:226-227; Guglia, *Friedrich von Gentz*, 141; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:105-125; Eduard Wertheimer, *Geschichte Österreichs und Ungarns im ersten Jahrzehnt des 19. Jahrhunderts* (2 vols., Leipzig, 1884-90), 1:94-95; Eduard Wertheimer, "Ungedruckte Briefe Friedrich von Gentz," in the *Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna), August 31, 1887.

<sup>6</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:108, 136; vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:127.

own and he was gratified to hear from Vansittart, one of Addington's supporters, that it was only by a "vigorous system of offensive operations conducted on the principles you have laid down with so much force and eloquence that we can expect a result honorable to this country and truly advantageous to Europe in general."<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately it is not known exactly what principles he had laid down in the memoir that Arthur Paget carried with him to London in the late summer of 1803, and to which this was the answer. But not long afterward, in another memoir to the English ministers,<sup>13</sup> Gentz declared that if the war was to be successfully prosecuted, the directors of British policy must choose between two courses: either they must help to bring about an upheaval in the cabinets of the leading powers, thus paving the way for a new anti-French coalition, or they must set into motion expeditions capable of conquering the possessions of European nations in other parts of the world, and particularly in South America. It is obvious that the first course—to work for new leadership everywhere—struck him as the one most likely to bring about the end of French hegemony on the Continent.<sup>14</sup>

A cabinet revolution all around—that was Gentz's dominant idea in 1803; and before long the British government was to give it friendly and encouraging support. This was intrigue in the grand style, and Gentz was in the midst of it. With nothing definite to do in Vienna, he had quickly made himself a busybody operating on a Continental scale. Nevertheless he did not succumb completely to the illusion that his was the master mind of Europe; now and again, in confidence, he insisted that he did not attach undue weight to what he was accomplishing. But his belief in his mission was so great that he professed himself content if he could "become *one* of the instruments, even though the weakest, through which the world would be freed of this monster Bonaparte."<sup>15</sup>

In the meantime, during 1803, the Austrian emperor and his ministers remained strictly neutral. The ministers did not believe that Bonaparte as yet represented an immediate danger to the country. On September 1 when Prince Dolgoruky, whom the czar had recently sent to Vienna on a special mission, blurted out: "Are we never to unite our forces and fall upon these damned French and put an end to their rob-

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 173; Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 26.

<sup>13</sup> See note 9.

<sup>14</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:162.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

Cobenzl on policy were very slight indeed, and Gentz's attitude toward the ministers in charge reflected little credit upon him. On December 18, 1804, in another letter to Brinckmann he insisted that he had always fought with all his might for principles, but that he had been uniformly "mild, forbearing, and friendly toward individuals, even toward those whom I regard as chiefly responsible for the common deterioration."<sup>40</sup> The facts do not substantiate this self-righteous statement; if Gentz had been really honest with himself he would have seen that his insistence upon all-round cabinet revolutions as the sine qua non of a sound European policy against Napoleon led inevitably to a confusing of personalities with principles. By December, 1804, he had fought so long against Cobenzl that he refused to see anything good in him, however Gentzian his principles might have become.

It so happened that the principles of Cobenzl were put to trial in 1805 and that they led to another Austrian disaster. By inference, since the principles of Gentz as set forth in the memoir to John were strikingly similar to those of Cobenzl, that memoir and Gentz must share the strictures that history has laid upon Cobenzl. The fatal error which Gentz shared unwittingly with Cobenzl was in thinking that Prussian adherence to a Russian-English-Austrian coalition was desirable, but not absolutely indispensable. Gentz was willing to risk war, even if Prussia fought on Napoleon's side. He was willing to see Austria embarked upon a course fraught with the most compelling dangers. So anxious to dance was he that *he* did not want to wait for the music.<sup>41</sup>

One extenuating circumstance, however, puts Gentz's political attitude at this time in a better light. Pessimistic though he was regarding the practical possibility of cementing an Austro-Prussian alliance in the immediate future, he insisted that the idea must not be dropped until every conceivable attempt had been made to bring it to pass.<sup>42</sup> The next few months were to find him expending every effort to bring Austria and Prussia in line with each other.

The memoir prepared particularly for the Archduke John Gentz passed around, as was his custom, to a number of other people as well.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

<sup>41</sup> Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 264. Paul Wittichen defended Gentz against the charge of planning "an immediate aggressive war against France" by pointing to the fact that Gentz believed "a successful coalition under the existing conditions impossible." Wittichen's argument, it seems to me, fails to take into account the unreality of Gentz's whole position. What were the conclusions worth that Gentz based on his analysis of "the existing conditions," when he was palpably ignorant of what "the existing conditions" were? "Die Dritte Coalition und F. v. Gentz," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 23 (1902):463-464.

<sup>42</sup> Fournier, *Gentz und Cobenzl*, 258.

## 8. The War of 1805

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FOR GENTZ the year 1804 was largely, but not entirely, a year of intrigue. Most of his energies were expended in agitation for the removal of political undesirables from their positions of influence in the various European capitals, particularly in Vienna. But in spite of his conviction that men like Cobenzl were hopelessly unregenerate, Gentz did not cease, upon occasion, to bring his views directly to their attention.<sup>1</sup>

When on May 18 Bonaparte, with the sanction of the senate, began signing his name "Napoleon," thus signifying his assumption of the imperial title and the foundation of a new European dynasty, Gentz chose the occasion to urge Cobenzl to take a decided stand against the usurper. Early in June he presented a *Mémoire sur la nécessité de ne pas reconnaître le titre impérial de Bonaparte*. Not that he supposed for one minute that Cobenzl and such "filthy beggars" could "be drawn out of their slime!" But he could not repress a certain "delight in harassing and irritating such dogs with stern strong words of truth." Consequently off to Cobenzl the memoir went.<sup>2</sup>

In the development of Gentz's political opinions this memoir occupies a place of interest. The man who in 1790 believed in the sovereignty of the people, who in 1797 was a mild constitutionalist, now retreated to an arch-conservative position. He argued that sovereignty of the people was the root principle of the Revolution, and that Napoleon, for all his arbitrary rule, was bag and baggage of the Revolution. (Napoleon did in fact give lip service to the principle of popular sovereignty by authorizing a perfunctory plebiscite to vote approval of his new title.) Therefore, said Gentz, to recognize Napoleon's imperial title was to

<sup>1</sup> See Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 33, note, where mention is made of two of Gentz's memoirs sent by Paget to London in June. Gentz claimed that one had been presented to Francis and that the other had gone to the czar and had received the stamp of his approval.

<sup>2</sup> The memoir itself is printed in *Mémoires et lettres inédites du chevalier de Gentz*, edited by Gustav Schlesier (Stuttgart, 1841), 1-28; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:194-195.

plimented me for my slight services, either the text or the sense of my reply has been: 'You have among you one who is infinitely greater. Give him first what is his due.' But though I recognized your superiority, unalloyed and without qualification . . . I have pride enough to believe that I have much that can make a continuous connection with me interesting to you. My manner of thinking about the great affairs of the world and of mankind manifestly approximates your own as closely as is possible — taking into account my inferior talent and entirely different external development — and my mind is continually open to every new and free point of view, just as my feelings, praise God, have not grown numb to any of the nobler emotions. To this must be added that few Germans of the learned class touch at so many points as do I the unlearned world — the higher classes, the entire frivolous tumult of the so-called good society, and the foreign countries — which also are not to be scorned. If therefore I do not produce anything myself, I am yet undeniably one of those *through whom* much can be realized. Therefore you dare not, cannot, push me aside or neglect me; and even if you did, I should storm you so long with requests and proposals that you would finally give in to me. I insist on an animated and continuous correspondence; *you must* grant me this." The great theme of this proposed correspondence was to be a discussion of the means "how and where and by whom" the "suspension of all rivalry between Austria and Prussia" might be achieved. "I know very well," Gentz had to add, "that so long as the present Austrian ministry exists, such an alliance is no more to be thought of than any other great and decisive measure."<sup>15</sup> The letter ended on a note of ringing nationalism, in which Gentz expressed his yearning to see all Germany united as one state.

Johannes von Müller must have had difficulty in restraining a self-satisfied smirk as he read this letter. In the first place it was clearly evident that Gentz, for all his pride in his associations with the great world, was appallingly ignorant of what was going on behind the scenes; the lonely Swiss historiographer in Berlin knew far more about the real plans and purposes of the directing statesmen in Vienna than did Gentz. Furthermore, it must have given Müller some satisfaction to know that the most adroit of flatterers had outdone himself in praise and abnegation to him whom the world scorned as a contemptible homosexual. And finally, to a man of letters it must have meant a good deal to have his idea heralded as great and inspiring by a person who unquestionably

<sup>15</sup> Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:14-23. For the date of the letter see *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:234.

Prussia suddenly tried to look innocent and gazed carefully off into space.<sup>27</sup>

Between Ulm and Austerlitz Gentz had been kept squirming by the tantalizing twists, plunges, and reversals of Prussian policy. His moods capricious, his judgments hasty, he pieced together scraps of information from day to day and sought to orient himself and others to the constantly changing situation. His chief positive endeavor was to keep the English informed of conditions on the Continent and to advise them of the course they should pursue to meet successfully the new circumstances as they arose. He wrote frequently to Hammond in the foreign office, to Starhemberg, the Austrian ambassador at London, and to Jackson, the British envoy in Berlin. Until the last minute his chief hope was that England would hold out the kind of bait that would tempt the timid but avaricious Prussians to enter the war. In a letter to Hammond on November 1, he urged that the British go so far as to propose a partition of Germany between Austria and Prussia. This sort of proposal would have appealed particularly to Hardenberg, but the British were far from ready to espouse anything so imaginative. Although Hammond accompanied the infirm Harrowby when he went to Berlin early in November to try his feeble powers of persuasion on the Prussians, and although Gentz's letters—so he presumed—all reached Hammond, his advice was not acted upon. The British were far more interested in making clear to the Prussians that they were unready to surrender any of their claims in Hanover than they were in magnanimous projects for the division of Germany between Austria and Prussia. "In consequence the negotiations between Harrowby and Hardenberg soon arrived at an impasse, and nothing had been settled when the day of Austerlitz decided the fate of the coalition."<sup>28</sup>

Gentz blamed the English bitterly for the unhappy outcome of the 1805 campaign. "The fundamental error lay in London," he told Johannes Müller on December 14, and he went on to castigate the British ministry for its childlike ignorance of foreign affairs and its refusal to learn anything. Not only that: the British suddenly neglected to make the usual deposit with Coutts and Company, and Gentz's creditors in Vienna began to be annoying. To give the final touch to an already ominous situation, Jackson in Berlin announced without warn-

<sup>27</sup> The diplomatic background of the campaign of 1805 is treated exhaustively in part 5 of Harold Deutsch's excellent work.

<sup>28</sup> Stern, "Briefe von Gentz," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 21:130-133; Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 106-107; Deutsch, *Napoleonic Imperialism*, 395-396; Griewank, "Hardenberg und die preussische Politik," in *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte*, 47:230-233.

exile pro tem. There was no telling when the Austrian government would again desire his services. Gentz was more than ever determined to continue the fight against Napoleon with the weapons at his disposal, and several months before the letters from Stadion and the emperor clarified his position with regard to Austria, he had begun to send out feelers in other directions. In February he had found some encouragement in the renewal of his correspondence with Jackson in Berlin, and the curious Ministry of All the Talents filled him with great hopes. "In a few months," he had informed Metternich on February 16, "you will see a new life and a new spirit develop in England." He was confident of the ability of the Grenvilles, Lord Spencer, Lord Minto, and Windham to nullify the influence of Fox and Sheridan. During the first months of 1806 various Englishmen were deluged with a flood of Gentzian communications and memoirs. Among them was a letter, dated March 25, to the Duke of Orleans, which contained these self-explanatory words: "I have long considered it the height of good fortune and of glory to be able to serve England even in the most indirect manner. I am (all *amour-propre* aside) the one who, of all men on the Continent, would be able to render the greatest service to England, if anyone desired it and knew how to employ me. . . . The answer I receive to the letter I have today written to Lord Grenville will decide my future. . . . If I see any favorable chances to consecrate all my strength to the public cause, I shall fear nothing. . . . More independent than ever (for I am free to sever my connection with the court of Vienna), I shall vow to breathe my last in the agonizing and expiring—but not lost—cause of Europe and England. If Lord Grenville's reply is cold, equivocal, or negative, you will not hear my name spoken for a long while. I shall work for posterity, but I shall be dead to my contemporaries."<sup>24</sup>

Lord Grenville, however, like Stadion, received Gentz's importunities in stolid silence. Stadion had good reason for his attitude, as Gentz knew, but not so the British. England was still at war with France, and by June the ascendancy that Napoleon had gained over Prussia after Austerlitz had brought Berlin's declaration of war on England. With the departure of her own diplomatic representatives from Prussia, England needed the kind of expert information about Germany that Gentz could send, and was sending, from Dresden.

<sup>24</sup> Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 177; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 49-50; Thürheim, *Starhemberg*, 346-347. The references to Gentz's letters and memoirs to Englishmen are to be found in: Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 175, 178, 180-182; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:207, 209-212, 217-222; Thürheim, *Starhemberg*, 342, 344; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:274, note.

No sign of appreciation, monetary or otherwise, went out to the stalwart defender of the Good Cause. He wailed: "It is the enthusiasm of despair that animates me to go on working like a fool, when everything that I have the faith to touch is already dead or impotent. I feel that my career is drawing toward its end, and that Sirius and Orion are already waiting for me, and after them the tomb." Visions of the tomb were only transitory, happily; and on September 7 Gentz wrote again, and with all his old vitality, to Grenville: "The complete disgrace into which I have fallen in England (no one has deigned to answer the thirty or forty letters that I have successively addressed there to different people in the past six months) ought to disgust me forever. . . . But the thought of what I owe to the most important cause of my time impels me to make this observation: now is the time when I could render the most positive kind of service, if anyone wished to employ me or even to encourage me. None of those who write to London can know half the things I am told, which are relayed to me from all sides. . . . Time is pressing; I cannot weigh and leash my words; but I dare say you are preparing regrets for yourself if . . . you neglect this advice."<sup>35</sup>

Ignored by Britain, shunned by Austria, and filled with a "deep and insurmountable aversion toward the policy of the Prussian court," Gentz certainly found the actual and potential enemies of Napoleon among the Great Powers highly indifferent to his counsels during the first eight months of 1806. Looking back, he might have acknowledged that Johannes Müller had spoken with wisdom when he had proclaimed immediately after Austerlitz that the banks of the Neva or Volga would be the only congenial places henceforth where persistent Napoleon-haters could spend their days. At the time, Gentz had dismissed the suggestion with a loathing shudder. "I hate the cold like death," he had declared, "and after cold, death, and the French, I hate nothing so heartily as the Russians. Although I have traveled, lived, and done everything but sleep with a Russian princess for four weeks, that hate has increased during precisely those four weeks to a remarkable degree."<sup>36</sup>

Contact with the Russians always aroused this feeling in Gentz; still he did not neglect them, and it was only in St. Petersburg that his activities met with official favor in the first part of 1806. On the very day when he had expressed himself in such derogatory terms about the

<sup>35</sup> Kipe, *Gentz a Polska*, 145-146; Paget, *Paget Papers*, 2:277; *Fortescue Manuscripts*, 9:457-458.

<sup>36</sup> Klinkowström, *Aus der alten Registratur*, 10-11; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:152-167.

## 9. The End of Prussian Neutrality

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IN THE campaign of 1805, the inadequacy of its military system had made the House of Habsburg look like a house of cards. The Habsburgs had come to symbolize the old regime: was the old regime as weak as a house of cards? Friedrich Gentz feared that it was, but he was not destitute of all hope: "We shall surely go to ruin in a very short time, if we do not succeed, under pressure of the utmost distress and by means of the most formidable exertions, in bringing entirely new weapons into the arena," he wrote Metternich on January 12, 1806. There was wisdom in these words, but there was a catch in them also. Could the fire be fought successfully with anything but fire? Could imperialistic nationalism be fought successfully with anything but nationalism? The cure looked as bad as the disease to the rulers of Austria, who knew that to make war in itself nationally popular was to loose a force that might too easily be turned against them.<sup>1</sup>

Since going to Vienna Gentz had played the game of politics in accordance with the rules of the Habsburg court. He had accepted the fact that policies were largely made by a small hereditary ruling caste and had attempted no more than to influence individuals in key positions through the private communication of countless letters and memoirs. "To what purpose should I write now?" he asked. "There is no longer any suggestion of public opinion so far as the great events of the world are concerned; it has become altogether dormant; three or four cabinets absolutely determine the fate of mankind. . . . This handful of men . . . is not at all concerned about what the public thinks and says and writes and reads. If these men are to be guided to a sound policy (the possibility of which I doubt), they must certainly be moved by entirely other means than books."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 42-43; H. Butterfield, *The Peace Tactics of Napoleon, 1806-1808* (Cambridge, 1929), 319-320.

<sup>2</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:280.

A feeling that the existing system lacked some essential is clearly implicit in the above statement. Policies divorced from the masses, policies that failed to tap the immeasurably important resources of popular enthusiasm, would never be able, in Gentz's opinion, to cope successfully with a Napoleon. "It is incontestable," he had written on the eve of the war, "that unless a great revolution is produced in the thought of the people, all the Macks and Suvorovs that heaven can send us will fail in their undertaking."<sup>3</sup>

Cobenzl could see the point in theory, but in practice he believed that an aroused public opinion should be *created* to support policies once they were definitely set in motion. For at the Hofburg policies were made; public opinion was created. To conceive of policy as growing out of, as representing or seeming to represent the public will, was foreign to the nature of the entire system. It was typical of the Austrian diplomacy that Gentz had been put to work on a book of popular appeal *after* the war had started. Gentz could write with speed, but to write and publish a book in less than three months is difficult. Napoleon, however, had found it simple to beat the Austrians in three months.

Since leaving Berlin, Gentz had become more self-consciously German than ever before. His contact with the French on his journey to England in 1802 had brought an outburst of nationalistic feeling. The most eloquent portion of his memoir to Archduke John had been in the same vein, as was also his correspondence with Johannes von Müller throughout 1805. The leaders whom he wanted most to see in charge of the destinies of Austria and Prussia were men like Louis Ferdinand and Archduke John, who had popular appeal and dash, who knew how to assume naturally the *volkstümlich* air. An Austro-Prussian alliance rising spontaneously as the result of national demand—that represented Gentz's idea of the superlatively desirable. In the process of defeating Napoleon he was willing to see old Germany swept to pieces and united at a future time around the two focal points of Vienna and Berlin. His views anticipated those of the Freiherr vom Stein, who would have preferred a genuine national state but perceived a tendency for the German state to separate into two great parts.<sup>4</sup>

In accordance with Cobenzl's desire that he arouse popular enthusiasm for the opening campaign Gentz set to work immediately on a book bearing the title *Fragmente aus der neuesten Geschichte des politischen Gleichgewichts in Europa*. The quick decision of the war nullified the

<sup>3</sup> Weil, *D'Ulm à Iéna*, 57.

<sup>4</sup> Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:179-180; Klaus Thiede, *Die Staats- und Wirtschaftsauffassung des Freiherrn vom Stein* (Jena, 1927), 83.

original purpose of this volume, but Gentz succeeded in permeating its ambitious introduction with dynamic vigor, in spite of the atmosphere of defeat about him. Designed to reach a larger audience than he had ever before addressed, the introduction attained a rhetorical verve that on the purely literary side surpassed anything to be found in his other writings.<sup>5</sup>

"Europe fell because of Germany's weakness," he pointed out. "Through Germany's strength Europe must rise again. . . . Our fatal internal discord, the frittering away of our glorious powers, the rivalry of our princes and the estrangement of their subjects, the extinction of every genuine feeling for the common interest of the nation, the prostration of the patriotic spirit—these have been the conquerors, these have been the destroyers of our freedom, these have been our deadly enemies and the enemies of Europe. . . . Divided we fell. Only when united can we rise again. To enter upon this single road to salvation is, to be sure, much more difficult now than it was earlier. But this much is irrefutably certain: should the *political strength* of Germany ever become united, it must be preceded by unity of the *national will*."<sup>6</sup>

Many Prussians who read Gentz's book at the time missed its point entirely. They jumped to the conclusion that Gentz's nationalism was the same brand as their own, which was in reality no more than a blustering, acquisitive selfishness. When a few years later Gentz expressed his disgust at the prancing pretensions of Blücher's army, he was applying the same standards to exaggerated Prussian nationalism that had led him to condemn the "blind, idiotic, brazen-faced national pride" of the Russians in 1805.<sup>7</sup> But outraged Prussians rose in their wrath and shouted, "Turn-coat!"

The charge was unjustified. True, Gentz regarded nationalism as good in itself; it was desirable, he believed, for peoples to be vigilantly jealous of their "national honor" and to conserve at all costs "a respected name."<sup>8</sup> But there were interests that transcended national interests—the interests of Europe as a whole. Only with manifestations of particular nationalisms that contributed to the general welfare of Europe

<sup>5</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:272; vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 55; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:214; Thürheim, *Starhemberg*, 249; *Tagebücher*, 1:46. The *Edinburgh Review*, in a lengthy notice of the *Fragmente*, could see in the introduction, however, only "a long and laboured harangue." *Edinburgh Review*, 9:257.

<sup>6</sup> The *Fragmente* was reprinted in volume 4 of Weick's *Ausgewählte Schriften von Gentz*, and more recently in *Friedrich von Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe*, edited by H. von Eckardt (2 vols., Munich, 1921), 1:110-112. My citations are from the latter publication.

<sup>7</sup> Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:158.

<sup>8</sup> Eckardt, *Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe*, 1:97.

written the volume, but the question of its authorship has never been definitely settled.<sup>21</sup>

As the crisis between France and Prussia developed, Gentz exhibited all the old confusion between his emotions and his reason. Early in August he informed Czartoryski dogmatically that "any war that is made on France without the real cooperation of an Austria and a Prussia whose forces are coordinated—or without the immediate prospect of this cooperation—will be inefficacious, useless, and null, so far as the common interests of Europe are concerned." Six weeks later, when war was breaking, and there was only the remotest chance of Austrian cooperation, Gentz turned around and greeted it with the words: "Courage and hope animate me this time. This war . . . will not be the work of men. Providence itself will have wrought it."<sup>22</sup>

Gentz has been characterized as "a man of the eighteenth century in . . . his indifferent suspension of religious observance." But despite his general religious indifference, at times he reasoned himself into the conviction that man must have faith, and that a faith buttressed by the great authority of the church was particularly desirable. Honest enough to recognize, that he himself lacked the capacity for faith, he never took the final step toward Rome, in spite of the zealous and persistent proselytizing of his closest friend, Adam Müller. Müller had become a convert to Catholicism in 1805, and in 1806 he was with Gentz in Dresden. His influence is evident in the words that Gentz addressed to Brinckmann on April 21, 1806: "The way in which religion has again developed in my soul would make me interesting in your eyes. In the truest and deepest sense I have now learned for the first time to comprehend the world correctly, for God has become the beginning and the end of all things to me. Thereby alone have I surmounted the abomination of the times, fear and care, and death. . . . Now everything around me stands in balance; chaos," he concluded mystically, "has become order *in me*."<sup>23</sup>

When Gentz resorted to the pious language of his pious Catholic friends, people acquainted with his general outlook taxed him with

<sup>21</sup> See articles in the Brockhaus and the Meyer encyclopedias. When Peter Will translated and published a portion of Arndt's *Geist der Zeit* at London in 1808, he advertised his wares with the false assertion that this was the book for the distribution of which Palm had been executed (see pp. iii, iv). See also Arndt, *Ausgewählte Werke*, edited by H. Meisner and R. Geerds (Leipzig, n. d.), *Einleitung*, 5-6.

<sup>22</sup> *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 2:8; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 59.

<sup>23</sup> Johann Albrecht Rantzau, "Friedrich von Gentz und die Politik," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 43 (1929):78; Klinkowström, *Aus der alten Registratur*, 10-11; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:274.

heated rebuttal when Haugwitz broached the possibility of forcing Austria to take sides. Gentz often resented the bland assumption by his countrymen that he should govern his conduct by the rule, "once a Prussian always a Prussian." He was in the service of Austria, the recipient of an Austrian salary. He had gone to Prussian headquarters at his own expense and at some risk to his position in Vienna. He rightly felt that it ill became him to act as the emissary of a foreign power to his own adopted court, or to write a letter to the Austrian government dated from Erfurt.<sup>32</sup>

The tangible results of Gentz's journey to Prussian headquarters were therefore negligible. He touched up the language of Lombard's long-winded manifesto, which contained such a list of complaints extending back over the years that the reader was more likely to despise Prussia's past conduct than to admire her present foolhardy enterprise.<sup>33</sup> At the request of Haugwitz, Gentz also drafted a proclamation to the army. When Frederick William read the original he said: "Very pretty words, but *too genteel*; I should like the soldiers to understand it also." The manuscript went back to Gentz covered with corrections from the royal pencil. Haugwitz, greatly embarrassed, wanted Gentz to ignore most of the king's suggestions, but Gentz refused to have anything more to do with the matter. He suggested that Goetzen could finish the proclamation in good shape and still keep in the king's good graces.<sup>34</sup>

On October 11 Gentz accompanied the high officials from Erfurt to Weimar. He found everything in a jumble, the town teeming with troops and harassed, worried generals. The Prussian defeat at Saalfeld had just taken place, and Gentz soon learned of the death on the battlefield of his idolized Louis Ferdinand, who fell a victim to exaggerated and misdirected bravery.<sup>35</sup> The next day he left the disorganized headquarters, and by October 17 was back in Dresden. Here he received the news of the final disaster of Jena.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Schlesier, *Mémoires et lettres de Gentz*, 268-271; 304-305.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 251; Friedrich M. Kircheisen, *Napoleon I: Ein Lebensbild* (2 vols., Stuttgart and Berlin, 1927-29), 2:30; Häusser, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 2:627.

<sup>34</sup> Schlesier, *Mémoires et lettres de Gentz*, 287, 305-307.

<sup>35</sup> See the account of his experiences at headquarters which Gentz sent to Czartoryski on October 27, in Kipe, *Gentz a Polska*, 134-146.

<sup>36</sup> One incident of Gentz's stay at headquarters has a certain intrinsic interest, and deserves mention. On October 9 he was presented to the heroine of 1806, Queen Louise of Prussia. "She expressed herself," Gentz wrote, "with precision, with firmness, with energy, and at the same time with a moderation and a prudence that would have captivated me in a man." She defended herself against the charge of favoritism toward Russia and declared that her greatest hopes were pinned on the "closest possible union of everything that carried the name German." Schlesier, *Mémoires et lettres de Gentz*, 296-300.

done his share to encourage the nationalist fervor of the clique headed by Louis Ferdinand and Queen Louise. Under the circumstances he showed admirable restraint in the face of a situation in which he "could scarcely pick up a newspaper" without reading "diatribes" against himself.<sup>3</sup> When finally he decided to slash out, he did so in a private letter to the most vulnerable target in Germany, Johannes von Müller.

Müller had been beset by few doubts with Jena fresh before his eyes. The choice between humiliation and captivation presented no difficulties. "I see that God has given [Napoleon] dominion over the world," he wrote soon after the battle; "never has that been clearer to me than in this war." When the die-hards fled Berlin, he stayed behind, and on November 20 was honored by an interview of an hour and a half with the Great Man himself. Müller's conversion was now complete. "I must say," said the susceptible bookworm, "that the diversity of his knowledge, the acuteness of his observations, the soundness of his intelligence, the breadth of his views, as well as his manner of conversing with me, filled me with affection for him. . . . Through his genius and his simple goodness [Napoleon] conquered me."<sup>4</sup>

Müller's conversion remained no secret. Letters to literary friends bore witness to his new allegiance, and on January 29, 1807, he delivered an academic address "on the glory of Frederick" in which he hailed Napoleon as the preserver of the Frederickian way. His observations undoubtedly contained much that was historically sound; Goethe gave the speech a favorable review and later translated it from the original French for publication in Cotta's *Morgenblatt*. But intimate friends who had known Müller in his anti-Napoleonic moods of a few months before were utterly disgusted by the whole business. "Such are the men," wrote Adam Müller scornfully, "who study history for the sake of great examples." Gentz, because of his previous intimacy with Johannes Müller had particularly good grounds for appreciating the extent of his shamelessness. Only a year before, Johannes had been so brash as to address him repeatedly with the intimate *Du*— a familiarity which no other correspondent save, occasionally, his beloved Adam Müller ever permitted himself—and had written such stuff as the following: "Brother, let there be an agreement between me and thee that we shall never forsake each other. Should Europe fall, let us go to Kazan, for England will not survive Europe, and America is a nation of businessmen. Or shall we go to the British empire on the Ganges,

<sup>3</sup> Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:270.

<sup>4</sup> Wittmer, "Ligne, Müller, Gentz, et l'Autriche," in *Annales Prince de Ligne*, 6:188-190.

where I believe many will seek refuge? Tell me what to do. I am ready for anything except to exist under the yoke of the destroyer of everything which is dear to me."<sup>5</sup>

Gentz knew Johannes von Müller well enough to realize the extent to which the sentimental and the merely rhetorical entered into his impassioned outbursts. Never had Gentz regarded him as anything but a useful though unreliable ally; and cognizant of the fact that Müller was "the most faint-hearted of men," and congenitally so, he was willing to be tolerantly indulgent. As far back as the beginning of the year 1806 Müller had showed signs of wavering in his support of the Good Cause. Gentz had complained, but had done nothing drastic.<sup>6</sup> By February, 1807, however, goaded on by the praise of Müller in the German press in conjunction with its repeated denunciation of his own conduct, Gentz decided that the circumstances justified a forthright break with the slippery historian. On February 27, 1807, he sent him a blistering letter, which contained the following words: "The whole composition of your character represents a strange mis-cue on nature's part resulting in a mind of extraordinary power joined to a soul of the very weakest sort. The multitude of striking ideas and of ingenious and frequently profound observations which have issued from your pen in the last twenty years appear to have been developed merely for others: nothing clings to you, nothing can take root in you. You have been and remain the plaything of every impression that accidentally comes your way. Always ready to recognize everything, to agree on the value of everything, to embrace everything, to connect yourself with everything that comes anywhere in your neighborhood, you are incapable of hating anything completely, or of devoting yourself to anything completely. Your life is a continual capitulation. If the devil appeared on earth in person, I should show him how to make an alliance with you in twenty-four hours. . . . Don't think," Gentz continued more gently, "that I have written this letter without the most lively sense of pain. May your heart, may the past, tell you whether or not I knew how to value your friendship. I feel, therefore, what it means to lose you. As a warrior in a holy cause I pronounce an inexorable judgment of damnation upon your criminal apostasy; as a man, as your former friend, I feel nothing but sympathy

<sup>5</sup> Albert Leitzmann, "Goethe's Beziehungen zu Johannes von Müller," in the *Historische Zeitschrift*, 152 (1935):507-508; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:415-416; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:135; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 44.

<sup>6</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:269; 2:182, 281; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 39, 50; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 4:215-216; Gentz to Madame [?], Dresden, September 20, 1806, in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Autographa.

green as the French armies marched through the countryside. Once more Napoleon found himself at Eylau, but this time his attention focused upon near-by Friedland, where Marshall Lannes hotly engaged the Russian host. Napoleon ordered up the *gros* of his army, and when the sun had gone down on June 14 he heralded the achievement of a new Marengo, a new Austerlitz, a new Jena. In the final act the masses of armed men with stacked muskets, burnished buttons, and polished sabers, formed the background. A raft in the River Niemen held the center of the stage, and Europe gasped to see the emperor of the East clasp the hand of the emperor of the West, while Frederick William stood despondent in the rain.

In the weeks that immediately followed Eylau, Austria lost its great chance. "Oh, if only I were the Archduke Carl!" exclaimed Jomini. Napoleon himself later admitted that a well-timed Austrian offensive in the rear would probably have brought disaster to the French army.<sup>20</sup> The spell cast by Austerlitz and Jena remained effective in Vienna, however. Even the vigorous Stadion was content to rattle the sword a bit and to offer the mediation of his government in negotiations preliminary to a general peace. Friedrich Gentz, more daring and less impressed by the invincibility of Napoleon, chafed at what he considered Austria's undue caution. To Fasbender he wrote on March 10: "The present moment is decisive. Will Austria let her opportunity slip by without exploiting it at all? If Austria is really determined not to take up the sword immediately for the general cause of Germany and Europe, will she not at least do something for herself and thereby for the rest? Will she not at last transform her neutrality, which up to this time has been *passive*, into an *active* neutrality, and take possession of those places which are necessary for her safety, independence, and existence, and which are of obvious importance if her dignity and prestige are to be maintained? . . . Will she not place herself between France and Russia as a real mediator, which is to say as an imposing umpire?"<sup>21</sup>

In April Austria did indeed offer her services, but the figure she cut was scarcely that of an imposing umpire, for Austria's mood at the time was one of weakness and equivocation. Gentz's experience with the Goetzen negotiation had given him insight into Austrian policy, and his observations of Austria's conduct after Eylau confirmed his opinion that any Russian or Prussian hopes that were built on the like-

<sup>20</sup> Butterfield, *Peace Tactics of Napoleon*, 66-67.

<sup>21</sup> Jacubenz, "Gentz und Fasbender," in *Mitteilungen des kaiserlichen und königlichen Kriegsarchivs*, 7:95.

lihood of Austrian entrance into the war would prove illusory: "Without Austria's entrance no salvation; in place of Austria's entrance no substitute; for Austria's entrance no hope." In these three sentences," he informed Ompteda on June 9, "is contained the essence of all my political calculations."<sup>22</sup>

Once sure of his ground, Gentz did not stop with sharing his views with a few intimate friends. In the latter part of April he had laid before the Russian cabinet an important memoir "concerning the aim of the present war and the measures to be taken by Russia to bring it to an end." Basing the argument on his familiar thesis that no coalition that lacked Austria's full cooperation could defeat France, he advised Russia either to attempt to force Austria into the struggle by *threatening* "to share with France what no one wished to defend"; or, all threats failing, to make peace as soon as possible. "This is the first time," Gentz wrote in an explanatory letter to Czartoryski, "that I find myself in the situation of voting positively for a peace which is baneful, odious, and revolting according to my own conviction. Never were the results of my calculations more opposed to my sentiments. I advise what I abhor." He added these explanatory words: "If today I vote for an armistice, it is in the hope that it will suggest to us the means of returning more vigorously to our true course, and of combating under more favorable auspices the enemy of liberty, and of Europe."<sup>23</sup>

It is obvious that Gentz, in advising the immediate negotiation of peace, had no such terms in mind as those that emerged from Tilsit. To Ompteda, who had read the memoir, he wrote: "You will judge whether M. de Rasumovsky is right when he reproaches me with having weakened since the battle of Jena."<sup>24</sup> And in the memoir itself he had carefully separated the threat of sharing with France "what no one wished to defend" as a *possible* means of drawing Austria into the coalition from the move for peace, which Russia was more likely to choose. Tilsit, which ironically linked the two courses, was a phenomenon seemingly wrought of the devil. Before Tilsit Gentz stood aghast. "Yes, everything is now over," he wrote. "Even the most awful of all the outcomes, which frequently haunted me in my sad reflections during the past four or five years, even that partition of Europe between two co-

<sup>22</sup> Kipe, *Gentz a Polska*, 152-158; Ompteda, *Nachlass von Ompteda*, 1:300. See also Gentz to Goetzen, April 24, 1807, in Häusser, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:94.

<sup>23</sup> The memoir is summarized in F. Martens, *Recueil des traités et conventions conclus par la Russie avec les puissances étrangères* (14 vols., St. Petersburg, 1874-1905), 6:419; Kipe, *Gentz a Polska*, 158-159.

<sup>24</sup> Ompteda, *Nachlass von Ompteda*, 1:286-287.

lossal powers — which I have long predicted — appears, though sooner than I believed it possible, to be springing to fruition out of the ruins of all freedom and welfare.”<sup>25</sup>

Gentz sank into pardonable lassitude. Stadion, now prepared to have no foreign policy at all, “save that of seeking favor with France,” warned the Bohemian police that “in certain critical junctures,” Gentz might compromise the government, “although his views and principles are in no sense dangerous to us. It is therefore necessary,” he continued, “for Gentz to be subjected to constant, though not disquieting, observation.” Word accordingly went out to the congenitally overzealous local worthies that the police should serve as Gentz’s guardians and “not treat him as a suspicious person.”<sup>26</sup> It is apparent that the police had little to worry about. He moved from Teplitz to Karlsbad, and back to Prague again in the fall, absorbed the whole time by the “endless pleasures and frivolities” of the world of fashion. “With the first days of July,” he wrote Brinckmann on October 16, 1807, “my political activity . . . ceased. Since that time I have become a privileged loafer.”<sup>27</sup>

At Teplitz and Karlsbad, disporting under the summer sun with gay companions, Gentz had been able to keep gnawing discontent at a distance. But at Prague the incessant fog and rain of early winter, while he tried to occupy himself with reading and writing, brought devils of melancholy chasing about his rooms. “There squats brooding over my whole life a something which I can only describe accurately to you by the English word *gloom*,” he confided to Adam Müller on November 23. A week later his dejection had increased. “What I have felt and suffered during the last few weeks,” he wrote, “bears so little relation to the effect the public calamities have had upon me, that I must reach for entirely new modes of expression to make you understand what I mean.” As the winter progressed, however, the vigorous policy of an England with a Canning at the helm brought some cheer. “This winter will not last forever,” he remembered, “and for the summer new plans and hopes may well in me. If no one on the Continent can, will, or dare use me, I may be able to render England (and thereby indirectly Europe also) a few services with what is left of my ability. If

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 306–307. Herbert Butterfield, with brilliant insight, has described the process whereby in the course of two months Alexander came to accept not merely the idea of immediate peace, but also the idea of “sharing with France what no one wished to defend.” *Peace Tactics of Napoleon*, bk. 3, ch. 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 313; Fournier, *Studien und Skizzen*, 2:156–158; Kipč, *Gentz a Polska*, 114.

<sup>27</sup> *Tagebücher*, 1:52; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:287; Ompteda, *Nachlass von Ompteda*, 1:315–317, 331–333.

larity, but he found considerable time for study. He was gathering material for a work on maritime law, and he laboriously waded through a number of weighty tomes in Latin, which he went to a good deal of trouble to procure. The results of this scholarly work took the form of two memoirs with a decidedly pro-English slant, which he finally composed four years later. In addition he kept a weather eye on everything political that issued from the presses of Germany. Most of these products filled him with dismay; he was moved to chide the editor of the *Nürnberger Correspondenten* for fostering the legend that he, Gentz, had been one of those chiefly responsible for the disaster of 1806. One book, however, roused his hopes for the future of political writing in Germany; this was Fichte's famous *Reden an die deutsche Nation*. His comment is particularly interesting. "I have read with boundless pleasure . . . the *Reden* of Fichte," he informed Adam Müller. "Nothing I have read for a long time has so surprised me. . . . Almost no one has ever spoken so magnificently, so profoundly, so proudly of the German nation."<sup>36</sup>

While Gentz lingered at Teplitz into the late summer, pleasantly occupied with his friends and his books, cumulative evidence indicated that the tide was turning once more against Napoleon, and that his forthright opponents might soon have occasion to go into action again. In August came the news, which Gentz received at first incredulously, then joyfully, of the disasters overtaking the French armies in Spain. In the early autumn Napoleon and Alexander met at Erfurt to re-enact the lovefest of Tilsit; but though the Franco-Russian alliance ostensibly survived, the relations between the two monarchs had cooled, and Metternich confidently reported that Austria need not fear aggression from Russia.<sup>37</sup> Stadion redoubled his efforts to put Austria on a war footing. Save in Hungary, every able-bodied man between the ages of eighteen and forty-five was called into the militia, and a wave of enthusiasm swept through all classes of the population. Simultaneously in Prussia similar measures were inaugurated under the vigorous leadership of Stein, Scharnhorst, and Gneisenau: "Their plans looked to the

<sup>36</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 1:298-302; C. F. Seebode, "Ungedrucktes Schreiben Friedrichs von Gentz an den Redacteur des Nürnberger Korrespondenten," in *Schmidt's Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 1 (1844):290-302; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:326-331, 333-335, 338; John Holland Rose, "The Napoleonic Empire at Its Height," in *The Cambridge Modern History*, 9:326; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 148. See also H. C. Engelbrecht, *Johann Gottlieb Fichte: A Study of His Political Writings with Special Reference to His Nationalism* (New York, 1933), 11, 132, where the reader may find a complete distortion, in summary, of J. H. Rose's interpretation of Fichte.

<sup>37</sup> *Tagebücher*, 1:55; H. du Coudray, *Metternich* (New Haven, 1936), 51.

before, and it is of sufficient interest to be summarized in some detail. After reviewing the situation in Europe he declared that the moment was ripe for action. The diplomats must first do some necessary spadework, however, particularly at the courts of Prussia and Saxony. Once these states were brought into a common front with Austria, and once it was announced in firm and stirring tones that the coalition proposed to free Germany from the tyranny of France, public opinion would sweep the lesser courts into a crusade of truly popular and national scope. He asserted more emphatically than ever that active aid from Russia was neither necessary nor particularly desirable: sad experience had shown what misfortunes attended Russian "support." The purpose of the war would be to create in central Europe a Germany strong enough to preserve the balance between the potentially aggressive states of France and Russia. That meant a new constitution for Germany, and on this subject Gentz had definite ideas. First, in his opinion, the imperial title should be restored to the Habsburgs. Second, though the various states should be allowed complete domestic self-government, their control over foreign policy should be severely limited, and there should be but one army for the whole empire. Third, there should be a confederate congress, which might pass proposals from the Austrian commissioner by a simple majority, and proposals from the other delegates by a two-thirds' majority. Fourth, constitutional changes should require unanimous consent; and, fifth, machinery should be set up to arbitrate between the various states. "The independence of Germany," he concluded, "is Europe's primary political need and conforms to the supreme best interest of Europe as a whole. . . . It is certain that if the much promised *eternal peace* should ever cease to be a shadow picture, it must be brought to mankind by this road and by this road alone."<sup>5</sup>

For reasons beyond his control Stadion was unable to shape Austrian policy as Gentz recommended. A Prussian alliance was not to be gained in 1809; but with Prussia or without Prussia, Austria was determined to fight. "The decision has been made to escape from the previously desperate situation by a mighty exertion of all forces. Austria will not lay down arms until a decisive result has been achieved. I regard this decision . . . as beyond recall."<sup>6</sup> With these words, a few days after his arrival in Vienna, Gentz gave Stein an up-to-the-minute idea of what to expect in the immediate future.

<sup>5</sup> *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 2:104-158; Ritter, *Stein*, 2:354.

<sup>6</sup> Stein, *Briefwechsel*, 3:49.

In reality, Austria's plight in 1809 did not differ greatly from her plight in 1805, when Gentz had waxed so critical of Cobenzl's policy. To be sure, the present war was "desired by the government, by the army, and by the people," whereas the hostilities of 1805 had been, strictly speaking, a government enterprise.<sup>7</sup> Napoleon, furthermore, was supposed now to be materially weakened by his setbacks in Spain. But again, as in 1805, Austria had failed to secure beforehand the Prussian alliance, which Gentz, in his coldly rational moods, regarded as indispensable. And her position was the more vulnerable because the most she could now expect from St. Petersburg was benevolent neutrality, whereas in 1805 Russia had fought on Austria's side. Nevertheless, though it was easy to demonstrate that Austria's present position was perhaps worse than it had been four years earlier, Gentz did not resume the critical tactics that had characterized his relations with the Cobenzl government. The personal element apparently determined his attitude: he distrusted Cobenzl; Stadion commanded his admiration and his loyalty. Nor did Gentz, when the war ended in defeat for Austria, launch into recriminations against Stadion for disregarding his advice to negotiate beforehand an alliance with Prussia and Saxony. His sharp words were directed instead against "the actual originator of all previous misfortune," the hapless Archduke Carl, who once again had been entrusted with the direction of Austria's military forces. To Gentz, in the role which he was least qualified to fill but which he insisted upon playing repeatedly—that of military critic—Archduke Carl had been, as always, "a thoroughly bad general." "With Archduke Carl in control, I should never have begun the war," he declared on August 11.<sup>8</sup> Better qualified judges, it must be added, have not heaped laurels on the Archduke Carl of 1809.

By August 11 the fighting was over. Gentz had composed a stirring manifesto, and Heinrich von Kleist had been inspired to write some of the fiercest hymns of hate ever produced by any war. But they did not win battles. The campaign had opened around Regensburg in April with a series of French victories which cleared the Danube valley; and on May 13 Napoleon entered Vienna. On May 21 and 22 the French crossed the river and were fought to a standstill by the Austrians at Aspern. There followed a pause of several weeks, but on July 5 and 6

<sup>7</sup> Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, 7:349.

<sup>8</sup> August Fournier, "Gentz und der Friede von Schoenbrunn," in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, 144:234, 240 ff. See also the letter of Prince de Ligne to Gentz, February 20, 1806, in which Gentz is chided for his propensity to make snap military judgments. *Annales Prince de Ligne*, 1:283-284.

## 12. Metternich

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NOTHING illustrates better the stability of the old regime than the capacity of its governments to withstand military defeat. A weak and uninspiring Frederick William III could successfully bear the incubus of a Jena, the millstone of a Tilsit. To Austria defeat might bring a Cobenzl in place of a Thugut, a Stadion in place of a Cobenzl, but the Habsburgs seemed destined for everlasting survival. So it was in 1809. Emperor Francis remained, but the direction of foreign policy was transferred from Stadion to Count Clemens von Metternich.

At the outset the chances that this facile young aristocrat could weather the storms of office better than his predecessors seemed slight. "Many officers of distinction in the army" were convinced that the monarchy was tottering to its fall. The emperor, of all people, had resolved to rule alone! The Ministerial Conference, a device created to relieve him of his beloved routine, had been abolished, and Francis stood forth as the sole integrating element in the government. Experience showed that he was unequal to the task, and reform plans were broached from time to time; but nothing was done. Yet the monarchy continued to potter along year after year until the aging Metternich, embellished with medals, was a prince and a chancellor. Metternich continued, furthermore, to direct Austrian foreign policy: even after twenty years his reign at the House on the Ballplatz was but half spent.<sup>1</sup>

From 1809 until his death in 1832 Gentz was to be closely associated with Metternich. For at least ten of those years he was Metternich's

<sup>1</sup> *Tagebücher*, 1:187-188, 216-217, 247-249; Carl Freiherr von Hock and Hermann Ignaz Bidermann, *Der oesterreichische Staatsrat, 1760-1848* (Vienna, 1879), 659-661; Stein, *Briefwechsel*, 3:345; C. S. B. Buckland, *Metternich and the British Government from 1809 to 1813* (London, 1932), 36; Kübeck, *Tagebücher*, 1:208-209; Heinrich Ritter von Srbik, *Metternich: Der Staatsmann und der Mensch* (2 vols., Munich, 1925), 1:456-463; Kroner, *Zur Geschichte Oesterreichs*, 188-189; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 295; Alfred Stern, *Geschichte Europas seit den Verträgen von 1815 bis zum Frankfurter Frieden von 1871* (10 vols., Berlin, 1894-1924), 1:233-234; August Fournier, ed., "Gentz der Reaktionär," in *Der Friede*, 3 (1919):462.

closest adviser, and he became the chief mouthpiece through which, in its days of power, the "system" of Metternich found expression. The intimate relation between the two men did not spring into being without preparation; mutual trust and confidence came only after years of increasing knowledge of each other and when, tolerant at last of each other's foibles and appreciative of each other's capacities, they found themselves united in a common purpose.

Metternich and Gentz had already developed a certain instinctive community of outlook, which as early as 1809 caused them both to reason from a given set of facts to similar conclusions. Thus when Metternich at the beginning of his career as foreign minister announced the main lines of his policy, he did so in terms that Gentz could not but approve. Wrote Metternich: "We must confine our system solely to tacking, to effacing ourselves, to coming to terms with the victor. Only thus may we perhaps preserve our existence until the day of general deliverance."<sup>2</sup>

But there were reasons why Metternich could not immediately use Gentz. The necessity of "coming to terms with the victor" made his active participation in the government most unwise. Bubna, in one of his conversations with Napoleon, had great difficulty in making the French emperor understand that Gentz had suddenly become one of the most convinced peace advocates in the Austrian monarchy.<sup>3</sup> Gentz was consequently encouraged to take up residence once more in Prague which he accordingly did, arriving there on November 14. His long years as a free-lance critic and adviser, furthermore, had brought out his innate irresponsibility, and his name was soon linked with an incident that heightened his reputation for indiscretion. General Grünne of the Austrian army had written a series of letters to the Prince de Ligne criticizing the conduct of the 1809 campaign. The amiable prince, knowing that these letters would be of interest to his friend Gentz, gave them to him to read. Suddenly transcriptions of them began to appear in the papers. The Austrian emperor was furious. General Grünne fell into permanent disgrace and De Ligne, for all his princely dignity, was subjected to a day's arrest. Perhaps Gentz was no more than remotely responsible, but the incident was not likely to improve his reputation for trustworthiness.<sup>4</sup> It should be added, however, that Gentz's

<sup>2</sup> Du Coudray, *Metternich*, 59.

<sup>3</sup> *Tagebücher*, 1:156.

<sup>4</sup> Wittmer, "Ligne, Müller, Gentz, et l'Autriche," in *Annales Prince de Ligne*, 6:233; Ernst Benedikt, "Les Lettres du général comte de Grünne au prince de Ligne," in *Annales Prince de Ligne*, 16 (1935):197.

irresponsibility was not solely or primarily a result of personal weakness. It derived largely from his deep-rooted desire to keep his independence and to acknowledge no one but himself — and no principles but his own — as master. In this independence he was encouraged by the shortsighted policy of the emperor, who "shouted only when he had to give money," and who rewarded Gentz with a stipend totally inadequate for the way of life to which he had grown accustomed. Gentz had come, therefore, to lean on the financial assistance of his English and other foreign connections; and though it is true — as his apologists have frequently pointed out — that "he took money only from those who thought as he did,"<sup>5</sup> he developed no genuine loyalty to Austria until he had achieved financial security from sources directly or indirectly connected with the Austrian government. This had not occurred by 1809, and his best friends, though they admitted that he had first-rate ability and broad knowledge, invariably added that he was indiscreet and frivolous.<sup>6</sup> Under the circumstances Metternich was wise in acting on the assumption that Gentz, though potentially useful, should be kept at a certain distance.

Toward Metternich Gentz himself blew hot and cold, mainly cold, in the last months of 1809. When it first seemed likely that Metternich would be the next foreign minister, Gentz had gone to some pains to call attention to his own availability as aide. In a letter to General Bubna of July 17 he had said: "Should you, as I suppose, be with Count Metternich quite a bit and sometime know of nothing better to say, then remark that I am here reading all day long what the Latin authors have to tell about the decline and fall of Rome, counting the stars at night, and, since I know of nothing wiser to do, keeping myself physically in good health."<sup>7</sup>

But a good deal of water had flowed under the bridge since 1803, when Gentz had spoken of Metternich as a "true angel," and since 1805, when he had "organized cabal after cabal" to get Metternich "placed in charge of all the affairs of the monarchy." Metternich had gone instead as ambassador to Paris, an appointment of which Gentz disapproved for reasons which he expressed in his own inimitable way. "A soul so pure and sublime as yours," he wrote, "ought never to have come in contact with the scene of so many crimes and horrors." In

<sup>5</sup> *Lettres et papiers du chancelier comte de Nesselrode, 1760-1850*, edited by A. de Nesselrode (11 vols., Paris, [1904-12?]), 2:34-35.

<sup>6</sup> Max Lederer, ed., "Heinrich Joseph von Collin und sein Kreis," in the *Archiv für oesterreichische Geschichte*, 109 (1921): 293-294.

<sup>7</sup> Fournier, "Gentz und der Friede von Schoenbrunn," in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, 49:106-107. See also *Tagebücher*, 1:62.

considerable thousand ducats a year, at which he started in 1812, to the munificent sum of four thousand ducats.<sup>38</sup>

Thus Gentz, through the good offices of Metternich, at last received a steady income. But as is so often the case, financial independence brought with it a certain spiritual dependence. Gentz's connections with the hospodars made necessary the perpetuation of his confidential relations with the Austrian foreign office, for otherwise his reports would be of slight value. The hospodar of Wallachia made Gentz an Austrian, and Gentz soon gave interesting evidence of this fact. //

<sup>38</sup> For a more detailed consideration of the subject see Paul Sweet, *Friedrich von Gentz and the Danubian Principalities* (Birmingham-Southern College Bulletin, Birmingham, Alabama, 1935) and Nicolas G. Alexandresco, *La Correspondance du chevalier Frédéric de Gentz avec le prince de Valachie, Jean Caradja, et la question d'Orient* (Paris, 1895).

### 13. The End of the Crusade

DURING THE epochal last six months of 1812, which saw Napoleon's great army march to cruel disillusionment in the heart of Russia, Gentz's correspondence reveals no consciousness that his political views had undergone a profound change. Yet that is precisely what happened. Until the middle of 1812 Gentz's views on German affairs were still those of a confirmed pan-German. Although he had not abandoned the conception of middle European solidarity, he now regarded *Mittleuropa* from the standpoint of a confirmed Austrian. To state it baldly, he had sold out to Metternich, and he had received in return the lucrative connection with the hospodar of Wallachia. Gentz never admitted in his own mind that he could be motivated by anything so crass as a veiled bribe, and he was sufficiently adept at political casuistry to satisfy himself that he remained loyal to the political convictions which he had so long entertained. It is true that he had paraded always as a believer, first and foremost, in balance of power; and it is true that when at one time he took his stand as a good German nationalist, or at another time as a good Austrian, he worked himself into the belief that as an enlightened European he could do nothing else. But that his European sensibilities should demand a shift from pan-Germanism to arch-Austrianism precisely in the year 1812—this is something that cannot be explained on the basis of existing evidence without giving a large share of the credit to the persuasive powers of the thousand Wallachian ducats.

This change shows clearly in the attitude that Gentz now took toward his co-worker of 1809, the Freiherr vom Stein. Stein had not altered his views on the German question. Early in 1812 he had been invited by the czar to present himself at the Russian court, and he had lost no time in complying. Soon he was the center of an active group that sought to make the Russian war an excuse for reawakening some semblance of nationalistic fervor among the German princes. Since most

of the German states, including Austria and Prussia, were fighting with Napoleon against Russia, this struck legalistic purists as an act of bad taste at best, and to some it smacked of revolution. At one time Gentz's hatred of Napoleon might have led him to justify and to participate in such activities; Stein wrote to him as an ally in 1812. But his alliance with Metternich and his acceptance of the Austrian viewpoint made him perform a legalistic purist. He failed to answer Stein's letters, and when the Russian commander in chief issued an appeal, drafted by Stein, for "the Germans to range themselves under the banner of the Fatherland and of honor" Gentz remarked with some heat: "To summon subjects to stand in judgment over their governments is outrageous under all conditions and unworthy of legitimate rulers."<sup>1</sup> He was careful not to attack Stein directly, but on the fiery Arndt, whom Stein had drawn to his side and who was exhorting the German nation to rise with one accord to glorious, hate-inspired activity, Gentz gave full vent to his feelings. "I do not care for the foot-and-a-half words of Mr. Arndt," he told Nesselrode frankly. "I myself make no claim to the sort of eloquence that kindles popular flames; my style is more the kind one uses to extinguish flames. Therefore there is no feeling of rivalry influencing my judgment of his writings. But I believe that they overshoot the mark, and that they can become very dangerous. Furthermore, though very eloquent, they are composed in diabolical taste."<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile the Grand Army, which Napoleon was leading against Moscow, neared its tragic end, and Stein in November, 1812, perceiving correctly that "the war will probably become offensive instead of defensive," turned his attentions energetically to the future reorganization of Germany. The German princes, he informed the czar, "have no right, whatever may be their behavior, and whether they resist or submit at once, to demand the maintenance or restoration of their sovereignty; they are at present in the position of enemies, and at the moment of the entrance of the allied armies, the princes commanding them can use their right of conquest as their own interest may dictate." This pointed

<sup>1</sup> Seeley, *Stein*, 2:139-140; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 93-94. Langsam, in his *German Nationalism in Austria*, cites in his bibliography a work by Gentz from the year 1812, called *An die deutschen Fürsten; Und an die Deutschen*. This work actually dates from the year 1814 and was composed of two parts. The first, *An die deutschen Fürsten*, had appeared as a pamphlet in 1813 entitled *Aus dem russischen Lager*, and Gentz was certainly not the author of it. The second part was a reprint of the introduction to his *Fragmente zur neueren Geschichte des europäischen Gleichgewichtes*, first published in 1806. Langsam is altogether unjustified in citing this work (see page 155 of his *German Nationalism*) as representative of Gentz's views in 1812. See also Friedrich C. Wittichen, "Zur Gentz-Bibliographie," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 27:686; J. G. Meusel, in *Das Gelehrte Deutschland*, vol. 5 (1820).

<sup>2</sup> Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:41.

clearly to a radical solution of the German problem, and when in March, 1813, Prussia switched from Napoleon's side to that of Alexander, Kutusoff, the commander in chief of the allied army, immediately issued a proclamation which, though couched in vague terms, indicated a definite intent to do something thoroughgoing about Germany. In 1806, it will be remembered, Gentz himself had declared that German unity was the "only road to salvation" and that German unity must inevitably "be preceded by unity of the national will." But in 1813 when Kutusoff proclaimed in a similar vein that "the more immediately this work of German regeneration shall issue, in its essential structure and outline, from the inmost original spirit of the German people, just that much more vigorous, vital, and united will Germany be able to appear once more among the nations of Europe," Gentz threw cold water on the whole business. He complained to Nesselrode that there was no excuse for stirring up any more popular passion, and he pooh-poohed the idea of making a new German constitution. "How is anyone going to solve this problem," he asked, "which the greatest publicists have pronounced insoluble even in pure theory, at a time when nothing really favors it except a few sterile prayers from a few patriotic hearts?"<sup>3</sup>

There can be no doubt about it: Gentz knew quite well by 1812 on which side his bread was buttered. He had learned just in time, for he might easily have made a false step and ruined once for all the Austrian career that was opening up to him. For the German people were being worked upon not only from Russian headquarters: in Austria itself a movement was under way to rouse the valiant men of Tyrol to a new insurrection against the French. The British agent King, the Archduke John, and other erstwhile cronies of Gentz were deeply involved. In March, 1813, the vigilant and unsympathetic Austrian police nipped this conspiracy in the bud, a number of estimable patriots landed in jail, and Mr. King was given his walking papers. Gentz, with an eye on the British treasury, was as helpful as he could be under the circumstances. He wrote a judicious letter to Cooke at the foreign office, he aided King in winding up his affairs, and shortly afterward cashed in to the tune of two hundred pounds sterling for his pains. And as a reward for opposing the German policy of the Russian cabinet, he soon received a mark of Alexander's high esteem.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Seeley, *Stein*, 2:167-168, 232-233; Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:65-67.

<sup>4</sup> There is an extensive literature on the plot for an insurrection in Tyrol in 1813. Buckland, in his *Metternich*, treats the subject from the British angle as illuminated by the documents in the Public Record Office; Srbik, in his great biography of Metternich, gives the matter brief but clear treatment, but says (1:715) that the story has not yet been told as completely as available Austrian sources would permit. See also Krones, *Zur Geschichte*

Gentz, now timidly hesitant, was ready to leave unexploited the great opportunity provided by the armistice. With all the zeal of a convert he argued for peace and declared that a settlement which dissolved the Duchy of Warsaw, restored Magdeburg to Prussia, freed Hamburg from France, and gave the Illyrian Provinces back to Austria would suit him. Such a peace, he believed, could be secured by negotiation and would save Austrian statesmanship from the grave dangers inherent in the growing nationalism of the German masses.<sup>8</sup> These terms, it is true, reflected in their essentials the views of Metternich; but there was an important difference. Metternich looked upon them as a *sine qua non*; they were terms that Napoleon could accept or reject, but rejection meant war. The Treaty of Reichenbach, which Austria, Prussia, and Russia signed on June 27, embodied this point of view: should Napoleon reject the Austrian demands, Austria would join the anti-French coalition. Gentz, however, maintained that the Austrian terms should be regarded merely as a basis for further negotiations, and when he learned at second hand of the Treaty of Reichenbach, he voiced a hearty protest. Metternich had erred, he said, in allowing his hands to be tied just when it should have been made clear to the allies that if Austria entered the war she would do so when and how she pleased. Metternich laughed off these Gentzian objections with patronizing, though tolerant, amusement. "Gentz," he said, "fears peace because of the consequences which it may have, war for the chances which one runs, cold days on account of the rheumatism, and hot days because of the thunderstorms." By the time the opportune occasion had arrived for laying Austria's demands before Napoleon, Metternich was convinced of the inevitability and desirability of war, and to the stipulations called for by the Treaty of Reichenbach he added other specifications which he knew the French emperor would not accept; namely, "the restoration of Prussia, so far as possible, to her position in 1805, and the dissolution of the Confederation of the Rhine." Meanwhile the news of Wellington's victory at Vittoria, and assurance that Bernadotte would march his Swedes down from the north, brought Austrian war sentiment to such a peak that even Gentz resigned himself to the situation and went to work upon the famous manifesto, which was intended to heighten still further the enthusiasm of the Habsburg subjects for the new crusade. "Since all the world wants war, war is my song," he told Pilat.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Gentz to Metternich, June 10, 1813, in *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 99-105.

<sup>9</sup> *The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, edited by Adolphus W. Ward and George P. Gooch (3 vols., Cambridge, 1922), 1:401-407; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3,

Gentz was by no means crushed by the failure of Austrian policy to follow the course he had advised. Metternich had taken him to Bohemia in June, and he had remained there through the summer as the diplomats shuttled back and forth between Dresden, Prague, and villages with barbaric names like Gitschin, Ratiborziz, Opatchna, and Nachod, where "the four great sovereigns of Europe with their ministers, cabinets, foreign representatives, a part of their courts, and five or six hundred thousand armed men" huddled elegantly together, lending the glamour of Paris, St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Vienna to the rustic Sudeten region.<sup>10</sup> Gentz had been treated as a man of real importance. He conferred hours on end with Metternich; the czar honored him with an audience during which an edifying exchange of political views occurred; and conversations with smaller fry, such as the ambassadors Wilhelm von Humboldt and Lord Aberdeen, formed part of the regular routine. The Austrian emperor, with whom Gentz for once saw eye to eye, chose this moment to bestow on him the long-yearned-for title of *Hofrat*, and with his pockets full of money, Gentz experienced all the heady sensations of having arrived socially and politically. "I was more than ever stamped as a fine gentleman," he remarked with satisfaction when he revised his diaries years later.<sup>11</sup>

When hostilities opened, Metternich trailed along in the wake of the armies, while Gentz stayed behind in Prague performing manifold routine duties. He was very busy and felt highly important. Prior to Metternich's departure, he told a friend, "I lived altogether in another and through another. Now all others want to live in and through me."<sup>12</sup>

The campaign opened with an allied setback at Dresden, but Gentz, bustling about officiously, rose above this adversity and glowed with "a feeling of comfort, a delight in myself . . . such as I have not known . . . since 1806." Only with the great allied victory at Leipzig did he begin anew to squirm uneasily. Reports of the "Prussian mania for land" disturbed him deeply, and he prophesied that the satisfaction of Prussia's claims would cause more difficulty than the peace negotiations with Napoleon himself. He suggested to Metternich that Austria and Russia, without consulting Prussia, should agree on the future organi-

pt. 1, pp. 116-120; Sydow, *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt*, 4:92, 96; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 2:369-393; *Tagebücher*, 1:265; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Deutschlands im XIX. Jahrhundert*, edited by Karl Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (2 vols., Leipzig, 1868), 1:42-44 (cited hereafter as *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*). Pilat was Friedrich Schlegel's successor as editor of the *Austrian Observer*. The Austrian manifesto was given circulation even in the United States. *Niles Register*, 5 (1813-14):181-184.

<sup>10</sup> *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:22.

<sup>11</sup> *Tagebücher*, 1:266-267.

<sup>12</sup> Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:139-140.

zation of Germany, obtain England's consent, and force the Prussians into line. At this point the negotiations could be brought into the open and the impression produced that Prussia had played a major role in making the arrangements. These arrangements, as envisaged by Gentz, called for the division of Germany into no more than sixteen states bound together by alliances, with an Austro-Prussian alliance forming the backbone of the entire system. "*A German empire*," he concluded, slapping directly at the nationalists, "simply cannot exist today." But "*Austria can and must be the foremost German state*." The Prussian Gentz had become more Austrian than the Austrians. When the news reached him that Metternich was beginning to waver before the widespread demand that the Austrian emperor should once more assume the imperial German crown, Gentz expressed his dismay in vigorous language. And Metternich, against the protests of German nationalists, heeded these words of admonition.<sup>13</sup>

Gentz's opposition to the nationalistic overtones of the *Befreiungskrieg* remained no secret to the German patriots; if anything, they were inclined to magnify his sway over Metternich and to blame Gentz exclusively for the foreign minister's well-known dread of the people.<sup>14</sup> "Gentz exercises a tremendous influence over Metternich," whom "they have dubbed Jitternich [*Zitternich*], because he trembles at every sign of popular activity," Stägemann reported. "Nothing is more contemptible, more depraved," Friedrich Schlegel told his brother, "than to be a half-French diplomat like Gentz. . . . With him everything is secondary to his *hatred for the people*. . . . He never speaks of Germany except with the greatest contempt. . . . The harm that he has wrought during the past winter more than makes up for whatever good he may have been responsible for previously." And Count Karl von Brühl, when he heard from his mother of Gentz's anti-Prussian fulminations, declared vehemently: "If Gentz had stormed against Prussia like that in my presence, a tragi-comic scene would have resulted, for I should have given him a terrific lacing down. And since by nature he is a complete

<sup>13</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 139, 185, 193-197, 205-207; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:196-197.

<sup>14</sup> Aberdeen to Castlereagh, November 16, 1813, P.R.O., London, F.O., 7/103: "I confess that Prince Metternich appears to me to have too great a dread of *disorganization*. Finding the people ready to support the government, he has not had recourse to any measures by which an enthusiastic spirit and independent movement may be excited among them. He is, I think, too anxious to make the Government the sole Source of Action and indeed has not sufficient respect for the unassisted and spontaneous exertions of the great body of the people. Any general movement of this kind he deprecates as tending to disorganize the State of Society, and declares that it is from the experience of the war in 1809 that he deprecates a recurrence to similar measures."

sia he received all his education, the very nourishment for his old body and soul, freedom of thought. Teachers, comrades, friends, relatives—all Prussian, and all forgotten. And the reward? Metternich's acquaintance!"<sup>21</sup>

Thus echoed the hue and cry against Gentz the apostate. He himself, however, was concerned chiefly about the amount of trust that Metternich was willing to repose in him. Distance and time were doing their work, and he no longer could boast of an intimate knowledge of Metternich's views. "I will say quite frankly," he wrote Metternich on November 13, "that I am often troubled by the thought that you are surrounded by so many people who are especially devoted to you, while I—not the least of your true servants—know myself to be so widely separated from you." But instead of a prompt summons from Metternich to join him, he received the humiliating "advice" to beat a retreat to Vienna, though to salve his pride he was allowed to make the journey by way of headquarters. Gentz was greatly piqued, but his diary offers only the cryptic comment that "private reasons," which were completely known to him and which were not so much in his interest as in that of someone else, lay behind his relegation.<sup>22</sup>

Regretfully on December 4, 1813, Gentz set forth from Prague for headquarters in Freiburg. His political hopes at this time centered on a peace that should leave Napoleon on the throne of a France bounded by the Alps and the Rhine. Arrived at his destination, he was relieved to find Metternich still in accord with this point of view, though convinced that military operations should continue while peace was negotiated. Against this program Gentz had no complaint. But before he left headquarters for Vienna the difficulties of carrying it out were evident: the enthusiasm of Blücher's army would be hard to control, and the secret plans of Alexander and Bernadotte for the French throne had become known to the inner circle of Austrian statesmen. The situation was thus fraught with complications when Gentz, after performing some useful service in the matter of Swiss neutrality, left Freiburg on January 18, 1814, and set forth for Vienna, which he reached on January 29.

The question of the French throne now interested Gentz more than any other. Disturbed by the way public opinion threatened to force governments to enact its will, angered at Alexander's apparent aim to use the desires of superpatriots to substitute slyly a Russian for a French

<sup>21</sup> Leitzmann, *Briefwechsel zwischen Karoline von Humboldt, Rahel, und Varnhagen*, 142, 147, 150-151.

<sup>22</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 206; *Tagebücher*, 1:271.

hegemony, Gentz sought with all the persuasiveness at his command to strengthen Metternich's original intention to maintain Napoleon on the French throne. It was his thesis, as it had been Metternich's, that a Napoleon ruling a France pushed back into its old bounds would not conflict with the reorganization of Europe, based on balance of power, that they both thought so desirable.

The pressure of his allies, however, forced Metternich to compromise. He agreed to carry the military operations into the heart of France, and the success of these measures forced the abandonment of the idea of a Rhine-Alps boundary. In return Metternich persuaded Alexander to relinquish his daring plan of placing the French crown on Bernadotte's head. The question of the throne was left for the moment in abeyance, while the allies negotiated in vain with the French at Châtillon.

More closely in contact with affairs than Gentz and more keenly aware of what was practicable and what was not, Metternich had already decided that the most Austria might hope for was a regency of Austrian-born Marie Louise. Gentz, who had feared the dangers of defeat more acutely than had Metternich, now viewed the consequences of too decisive victory with greater bitterness. He was sure that the annihilation of Napoleon meant the triumph of the revolutionary spirit as exemplified in the nationalism of Blücher's army — the very spirit that the allied sovereigns were supposedly combating and which he, indeed, had spent the best part of his manhood in opposing. He argued that Napoleon was the legitimate ruler of France, as legitimate as the king of England, for example; he argued that foreign powers had the right to intervene in the internal affairs of a sovereign state only to uphold the principle of legitimacy; that if Napoleon or any other ruler misgoverned his own state, foreign powers had no right to interfere. His concern about legitimacy was clearly a subordinate corollary of his concern about the restoration of balance of power; but the fact was that Napoleon would not fit into a balanced system. Metternich perceived this salient point sooner than Gentz did, and in resigning himself to the overthrow of Napoleon he acted more consistently.<sup>23</sup>

The negotiations at Châtillon, which had opened on February 3, 1814, dragged along until March 19. Because neither Napoleon nor the Russians showed any steadfast desire for peace, they arrived nowhere. Backing the Russians, furthermore, was the clamor of English and German public opinion. Only Metternich, and the responsible statesmen of

<sup>23</sup> Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:177.

England and Prussia who sided with him, hoped sincerely for a successful outcome. As it became more evident that the odds were too great for Metternich to push through his policy, the most desperate expedients began to appear desirable to Gentz. He thought of a resurgence of Napoleonic power, which might sweep the allies back across the Rhine, as something to be welcomed with subtle resignation; and on the eve of the Treaty of Chaumont, upon which the "Confederation of Europe" was subsequently founded, he said that his greatest desire was to see the coalition buried.<sup>24</sup>

Although Gentz supposed himself a model of discretion, he did not limit such heresy to private communications with Metternich. His opinions, though uttered in presumably confidential circles, found their way into police reports. A rebuke from Hudelist, who had charge of the foreign office during Metternich's absences, was approved by Metternich, although he himself displayed an understanding tolerance for the Gentzian vagaries.

The rebuke chastened Gentz somewhat but by no means completely. After the breakdown of negotiations at Châtillon the allies came out in a public declaration for the restoration of Louis XVIII. On April 11 Gentz, in his report to Caragea, the hospodar of Wallachia, explained in a tone of cool detachment why circumstances had made this step inevitable. But with the czar's avowed intention to let the French people give Louis the sort of constitution they desired, he was furious. The Bourbons, he thought, would be the tools of the Russians anyway, and to heap insult on injury by forcing upon Louis the "revolutionary" doctrine of popular sovereignty seemed to Gentz intolerable. He launched vigorous protests to Metternich; and turning to his friend Pilat, he asked: "Did I wage war on the Revolution for twenty-four years *in order that* finally *all* its fundamental principles should be triumphantly enthroned and solemnly proclaimed by the greatest sovereigns and ministers?"<sup>25</sup>

Gentz thought that his public career was over. The disposal of Napoleon and the delineation of the French boundaries consumed Metternich's time, and for understandable reasons he did not bother to write to his eager but frequently critical friend in Vienna. Though somewhat encouraged by indications that Louis XVIII was to be less under the Russian thumb than he had expected, Gentz refused to be enthusiastic about events in the shaping of which he himself was denied a hand. He

<sup>24</sup> Phillips, *Confederation of Europe*, 74; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 271.

<sup>25</sup> *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:136.

## 14. The Congress of Vienna

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SINCE MAY, 1813, except for a brief period of exultation after the battle of Leipzig, Gentz had been quite unmoved by all the fine talk about the "liberation of Europe." It might once have been said that in all Christendom Napoleon had no more ardent opponent than Friedrich Gentz, but by the summer of 1814 Gentz thought he knew the world too well for optimism. Enthusiasts might palpitate in eager expectation of salvation; Gentz could only croak that new evils would supplant the old. Nevertheless plenty of gusto was still left in him. When he had nothing better to do, he might, indeed, nurture his middle-aged *Weltschmerz* and declare that he had neither appetite for tavern delights nor fire enough for the girls. But he sat down to extravagant breakfasts every morning and gave the ladies their due share of his attention.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, though his cynicism regarding politics and statesmen was very real, Gentz was quite ready to work the assembling congress for the excitement and fame there was in it. In the course of the summer he became reconciled with his chief and acted once more as confidant, mediator, and scapegoat in the famous Metternich-Sagan amatory entanglement. The art of circulating in high society had developed into a sort of profession with him, and he thrived in that atmosphere where "visits become duties"; where "clothes, card playing, the most idle gossip" become "business, important." Not long before the congress assembled, when there was abundant social intercourse and not much work, his only regret was that the time was too short to allow him to do everything he wanted.<sup>2</sup>

Once the fine people had congregated in Vienna, however, it was

<sup>1</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 181; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 92; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:137; Sydow, *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt*, 4:373.

<sup>2</sup> *Tagebücher*, 1:278; Weldler-Steinberg, *Rahel Varnhagen*, 270; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:178.

politics, and not the spectacle of the Prussian king "dancing to the music of a single clavier," which came first with Gentz. Politics with him was a serious matter, but politics as practiced at Vienna evoked from him mainly cynical and sardonic remarks. People in general might expect great things from the congress; Gentz did not. Almost at its outset he wrote: "I think I can assert with assurance that it [the congress] will bring none of the advantages that Europe had the good nature to expect from this assemblage." And when he had seen the statesmen of Europe four months at work, his original conviction was only deepened: "The high-sounding phrases, 'reconstruction of the social order,' 'reformation of the European political system,' 'lasting peace based on a just division of power,'" he wrote, "were at best produced to calm the people and to invest this solemn assembly with a dignified and sublime appearance. The true aim of the congress consisted, however, in the division among the victors of the spoils." And when, finally, the work of the congress was done, he could see nothing accomplished other than a distribution of the spoils. Although he had hoped for "a general reform of the European political system, guarantees for an eternal peace—in short, for the return of the age of gold," the congress had produced only "some restitutions decided in advance by force of arms—some arrangements among the great powers little propitious to future equilibrium and to the maintenance of peace in Europe—some transfers, arbitrary enough, in the possessions of the smaller states; but no act of a highly elevated character, no great measure of order or of public safety which would indemnify humanity for its long sufferings or reassure it as to the future."<sup>3</sup> These were the judgments not of a man whose role was insignificant and who was soured by that fact, but of one of the most important participants in the congress.

In a sense, the Congress of Vienna is a figure of speech, hallowed and sanctified by long usage. Vienna in the fall of 1814 had the makings of a congress: in addition to the swarm of monarchs, queens, toadies, generals, mistresses, courtesans, actresses, painters, musicians, aristocrats, Jews, salesmen, lobbyists, social climbers, placemen, and princelings, Vienna possessed all the requisite plenipotentiaries for a congress. Yet the congress as such never came into existence, except in so far as its

<sup>3</sup> Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 447-448, 450, 496; J. G. Lockhart, *The Peacemakers, 1814-15* (London, 1932), 104; *Dépêches inédites du chevalier de Gentz aux hospodars de Valachie, pour servir à l'histoire de la politique européenne, 1813 à 1828*, edited by Anton Count Prokesch von Osten (3 vols., Paris, 1876-77), 1:153-155. Cited hereafter as *Gentz aux hospodars*.

Final Act gave coherence to the scattered and apparently uncoordinated and unsystematic labors of nine months.

No one had planned it that way. The victorious Great Powers, although determined to keep the direction of affairs in their own hands, had assumed that their decisions would be referred from time to time to all the plenipotentiaries in plenary session assembled. When it became obvious, however, that Talleyrand intended to use the plenum to thwart the will of the victorious allies, the Four Powers postponed any formal assembly, first until November 1, 1814, and then indefinitely. In the meantime a directing council composed of the chief representatives of Austria, Prussia, England, Russia, France, Spain, Portugal, and Sweden had been formed. Metternich was president of this committee, Gentz its secretary, "and in this sense they were President and Secretary of the Congress."<sup>4</sup> Except for the work on the German constitution, which was delegated to a separate committee, the big five on the committee of eight were charged with the major negotiations which were carried on at Vienna.

Gentz's office was the business center of the congress. The most important plans and declarations were the work of his pen. To him alone "was left the task of drawing up the form of the treaty," and upon him devolved the task of editing the document in its final form. It was a huge job, and friend and foe alike agree that Gentz was one of the hardest workers at Vienna. Furthermore he was eminently well equipped for his duties. No man of his time could draft a diplomatic document with such recognized proficiency as he, and the various foreign delegations availed themselves liberally of his services.<sup>5</sup>

Gentz's position at the congress, however, was not limited to the sphere of his technical skill. His diary offers abundant evidence that his activities were many and varied. On October 29, 1814, for example, he wrote: "Passed a part of the morning at Metternich's home. Dined at the house of the Prince de Ligne. Conference with Lord Castlereagh, the chancellor, Nesselrode, Humboldt, Wessenberg, and Prince Metternich on the means of setting the congress in motion. I talked a great deal; I killed the idea of the congress. The conference lasted until 12:30 A.M. There followed a special conference with Castlereagh and Metternich on Poland. Then still another hour with Metternich regarding his affair with the duchess. Returned home at three o'clock in the morning.

<sup>4</sup> Charles K. Webster, *The Congress of Vienna, 1814-1815* (London, 1919), 87.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 78, 80, 87; Sydow, *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt*, 4:559; H. von Gagern, *Mein Antheil an der Politik* (4 vols., Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1823-33), 2:176.

his plans for a Polish monarchy, he can scarcely be accused of mere wishful thinking.

Austria had played a cosier game. She had kept a free hand on Poland, for the Treaty of Teplitz of September 9, 1813, simply looked to "a friendly arrangement between the three courts of Russia, Austria, and Prussia on the future lot of the Duchy of Warsaw."<sup>8</sup> A friendly arrangement indeed! The Austrians were violently opposed to the creation of a kingdom of Poland. They steered Prussia halfway into their camp by using Saxony as bait to tempt the Nordic greed of Hardenberg and his ilk, and when the diplomats assembled at Vienna they did so in uneasy awareness that their first task must be to consider all possible ways and means to break the deadlock. England was backing Austria, and Alexander was isolated. His isolation was Olympian; he was adamant and seemed willing to fight. Metternich and Castlereagh did not want to fight; they wanted peace, a peace that made as few concessions as possible, to be sure, but peace nonetheless. They were experienced diplomats. They knew that a diplomatic campaign can be a long affair, and hoping for the best they dug in for the winter.

Gentz had seen the storm brewing throughout the summer preceding the congress. He knew that among equals deadlocks are peacefully broken only by compromise. The congress, he perceived, would have a grand façade. There would be glitter and romance, and a barrage of high-sounding phrases to impress the multitude; but behind the scenes there would be nothing but compromise—glorified horse-trading. He held his nose and went to work.

Gentz had always looked upon the original partitioning of Poland as a crime against the public law of Europe; but let the dead bury the dead, he reasoned. Poland was a sad memory; she could not be resurrected. Alexander's desire for a new kingdom was a travesty on history, another trick that the living wanted to play on the dead. Behind this view of the situation lay Gentz's fear of Russia, his dread of a new colossus from the East replacing the colossus of the West to grind Middle Europe under heel. Echoing his master, he professed a grudging willingness to see Prussia take Saxony in order to thwart Russia. "Necessity commands the maintenance at any price of the bond of friendship and of mutual trust between Austria and Prussia," he told his Wallachian correspondent on September 5, 1814.

There is strong reason to believe, however, that Metternich and Gentz never intended Prussia to emerge from the congress with all of Saxony.

<sup>8</sup> Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution française*, 8:187.

vinced Frederick William III that Russia merited his support; and Hardenberg had to inform Metternich that he could not "act further with Austria and Britain in the determined matter which had been agreed."<sup>11</sup> By November 5 the deadlock was thus more pronounced than ever. Talleyrand at least was well content.

Recriminations flew thick and fast. The czar stormed at Metternich, even talked of a duel. Gentz, who all along had been more unyielding on Saxony than his chief, had his own ideas on how to deal with the crisis. In his opinion the time for Metternich's attempts at conciliation had passed. Austria must look to her diplomatic fences; she must put them in order and then present a stern front to the Russians and Prussians. This meant a *rapprochement*, first of all with France, secondly with the south German states. A memoir to this effect, which Gentz is said to have composed, caused widespread comment.<sup>12</sup>

An Austrian clique, headed by Schwarzenberg and Stadion, had been critical all along of what they considered Metternich's weakness. As the congress progressed Gentz drifted more and more into this anti-Metternich camp. He encouraged Schwarzenberg to oppose Metternich's "weak palliatives"; he criticized Metternich's frivolous waste of time, particularly in the company of that "clan of whores," the princesses of Courland.<sup>13</sup>

Gentz and Talleyrand, on the other hand, became thick as thieves. Retailers of backstairs gossip attributed this to the fact that the wily Frenchman came bearing gifts. Talleyrand also carried a liberal portion of flattery's sweet oil and a disarming proposal that Gentz move to Paris and take service with the French government. Nevertheless the simple explanation that Gentz had sold out to the French cannot be naïvely accepted. Anyone who reads what Gentz and Talleyrand had been independently writing in the months before the opening of the congress will perceive at once that their thoughts had been coursing through much the same channels. Gentz was convinced that he was best serving Austrian interests by lending support to the French position. As early as February 15, 1814, he had protested against the exclusion of France from the coming negotiations; such exclusion, he maintained, was not conducive to the permanent well-being of Europe. Need one be surprised, then, that Talleyrand, when stating the French

<sup>11</sup> Bruno Gebhardt, *Wilhelm von Humboldt als Staatsmann* (2 vols., Stuttgart, 1899), 2:83; Webster, *Castlereagh*, 1:347-349.

<sup>12</sup> Du Coudray, *Metternich*, 139-140; Fournier, *Geheimpolizei*, 73, note; Webster, *Castlereagh*, 1:552; Stein, *Briefwechsel*, 5:183.

<sup>13</sup> Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 86; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:186-187.

case at his first meeting with the leading ministers, noted that he had made an impression "particularly on M. de Gentz"?<sup>14</sup>

Obviously Gentz was no opponent of the treaty of alliance that Austria signed with France and England on January 3, 1815, a treaty designed to force the Prussians to back down on Saxony. And the Prussians did back down, accepting eventually a compromise very similar to that forecast by Gentz as early as September 27, 1814.<sup>15</sup>

The embittered feelings aroused by the controversy brought all sorts of charges ringing about Gentz's ears. He had minced no words on the subject of Prussian greed, and the Prussians repaid him with a loud chorus of abuse, which Treitschke, who admired Gentz's political insight, was still echoing sixty years later. To the Prussian patriots it was always inconceivable that a native son should not want the Fatherland to gobble up everything in sight. Even Metternich was said to have chided Gentz for his "un-German expressions," and his own brother in Berlin spoke of him scornfully as a reprobate. The letters of many other old friends bristled with words of denunciation, and casual observers resorted to out-and-out slander. At last even the Saxons lambasted him for failing to support their cause to the last ditch. With such nasty rumors making the rounds, it is not surprising that a zealous agent of the Austrian police came to the conclusion that Gentz was "a spy for all the powers at the same time."<sup>16</sup>

Gentz had made himself an easy target. He had talked a lot, and he had taken money from everybody. This was well known. His abundant resources — and the abundance was magnified by malicious tongues — provided fine food for gossip. The governing class of the day, predominantly aristocratic and scarcely aware of the source of its own income, found it easy to scorn a man like Gentz, who must live largely by his wits. There were, besides, numerous adventurers in Vienna who envied him for his success where they had had none. In his opinion, however, the whole congress was a sordid business, and since he had chosen not to remain fastidiously aloof but to dirty his hands in the mess, he did so without squeamishness.

This does not mean that Gentz lacked all integrity. Where major

<sup>14</sup> *Tagebücher*, 1:326, 343; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 243-244; Talleyrand, *Mémoires*, edited by the Duc de Broglie (5 vols., Paris, 1891-92), 2:280.

<sup>15</sup> *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:99-102.

<sup>16</sup> Stein, *Briefwechsel*, 5:224; Sydow, *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt*, 4:425-426, 430, 438, 559; Fournier, *Geheimpolizei*, 22, 256-257, 378-379, 385; Varnhagen, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, 3:315; Weil, *Congrès de Vienne*, 2:24, 140, 195, 240; C. A. Endler, ed., *Der deutsche Gedanke bei den mecklenburgischen Verwandten der Königin Luise* (Leipzig, 1932), 155-158; Hedwig von Olfers, *Ein Lebenslauf*, 1:237, 261, 265 (Berlin,

issues were concerned he was by no means without steadfast principles; but on questions that he considered of scant importance his scruples were few, as typical entries in his diary indicate. On April 30, for example, he notes: "I got Prince Schwarzenberg [to agree] that he would persuade the emperor to give the Grand Duke of Baden a regiment." And on May 10: "The Grand Duke of Baden . . . has made me a present of one thousand ducats." According to Humboldt, this method of transacting business was not peculiar to Gentz; it was the way business generally was carried on at the congress.<sup>17</sup>

Gentz took a hand in a number of miscellaneous questions. Among them may be mentioned his support of the English in their fight to abolish the slave trade,<sup>18</sup> his help to the Jews in raising their civil status,<sup>19</sup> his apparently quite gratuitous labors to improve trade relations between Austria and the United States, and his efforts to secure the appointment of Erich Bollmann as American consul to Vienna.<sup>20</sup> The German publishers, however, who desired an adequate German copyright law, did not find him so cooperative.<sup>21</sup>

Taken as a whole Gentz's record at the congress, in spite of the slander that found its way into the police record, was creditable enough. If a leader with the power and personality of Alexander had appeared on the scene and had approached the large problems from a European rather than a selfish standpoint, Gentz in all probability would have lent his enthusiastic support. Early in February, 1815, for example, Castlereagh raised the question of a general declaration by the powers signifying their intention to maintain the newly established order. Gentz was asked to draft such a declaration. In the document he accordingly produced he spoke in eloquent terms of the aforesaid peace, having apparently forgotten in the heat of composition that he himself thought the settlement largely disgraceful. Alexander was almost moved to tears when he listened to Gentz's composition, and Metternich expressed ad-

1908); *Aus Nostitz's Leben*, 152, 162-163; W. Dorow, *Denkschriften und Briefe zur Charakteristik der Welt und Literatur* (5 vols., Berlin, 1838), 4:88, 134; Rühl, *Briefe und Aktenstücke*, 1:371.

<sup>17</sup> *Tagebücher*, 1:375, 377; Sydow, *Wilhelm und Caroline von Humboldt*, 4:565-567.

<sup>18</sup> Gentz to Caragea, January 20, 1815, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (31K) 95; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 495; Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Gentz*, 2:93; *Tagebücher*, 1:352; Webster, *Castlereagh*, 1:423, 424, note.

<sup>19</sup> Count Egon Caesar Corti, *The Rise of the House of Rothschild*, translated by Brian and Beatrix Lunn (New York, 1928), 102, 103, 152-153; Salo Baron, *Die Judenfrage auf dem Wiener Kongress* (Vienna and Berlin, 1920), 49-54, 67-69, 118-123, 130-133, 138-145, 200-205; *Tagebücher*, 1:365, 368, 369, 371, 374, 381, 382, 385, 386.

<sup>20</sup> This episode is treated in some detail in Paul Sweet, "Erich Bollmann at Vienna in 1815," in the *American Historical Review*, 46 (1941):580-587.

<sup>21</sup> Bertuch, *Tagebuch vom Wiener Kongress*, 194-198, 257-260.

## 15. The Second Peace of Paris

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THE MOST COMMON phrase used for pigeon-holing Gentz — and one sees it frequently in reference works, casual footnotes, and indices — is “opponent of Napoleon.” The phrase carries with it implications that do not fit the facts. Gentz did not oppose Napoleon on personal grounds: Napoleon, the man, he admired. He opposed rather the imperialistic principle that Napoleon represented. After the battle of Leipzig, Gentz was convinced that Napoleon no longer embodied the danger to European balance; he believed, on the contrary, that a strong France with Napoleon at its head offered the best guarantee for a satisfactory peace. On May 12, 1814, he had, indeed, written a hypocritical letter to Louis XVIII in which he pretended to have longed always for a Bourbon restoration; and at the Congress of Vienna he worked in close harmony with Talleyrand. Nevertheless, to a certain extent he had remained a partisan of Napoleon. On various occasions he expressed admiration for the way France had been governed during the Napoleonic period, and he opposed the use of drastic measures against the deposed emperor, whom he considered harmless enough at Elba.<sup>1</sup>

Thus when Napoleon packed up and left his Liliputian realm Gentz, although genuinely surprised, was not bitterly indignant. When he wrote the declaration of March 13, 1915, directed by the powers against Napoleon, he did what he could to soften its tone. And when he had fully grasped the import of Napoleon's phenomenal success in France, Gentz adopted a surprising attitude, which he set forth on April 24 in a remarkable confidential memoir to Caragea. The allies had been congratulating themselves on the fact that they were assembled at Vienna when news of Napoleon's escape came, and had thus been able to concert on measures immediately. Gentz viewed this circumstance in a different

<sup>1</sup> Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 342, 468, 688-690; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 84, 148-160; Weil, *Congrès de Vienne*, 1:45.

light. He thought such concentration of the responsible heads a positive misfortune: it had been possible for them to act not only quickly, but too quickly — particularly from the point of view of Austrian interests. Austria, in his opinion, had nothing to fear from Napoleon “even on the supposition that he could ever become again as of old.” And according to Gentz’s reasoning there was no possibility of Napoleon’s again becoming “as of old.” For without the support of the constitutional element in France he would fail, and that element had no intention of allowing him to regain his former status. It would therefore have been most desirable, Gentz believed, if the powers had accepted Napoleon. As it had turned out, however, Metternich allowed himself to be carried along the common path. A further impairment of the balance of power seemed inevitable.<sup>2</sup>

The situation was analogous to that of the first months of the preceding year. Whereas Metternich found it more politic to be cooperative and tractable, to subordinate what Gentz considered Austrian interests to the desires of his allies, Gentz took the line that the general interests of Europe, conceived in terms of balance of power, coincided with Austrian interests. Such had been his attitude since the winter of 1813–14, when it became evident to him that the coalition masked a multitude of selfish aims and personal ambitions. At that time he had written that his policy was daily becoming more egoistic, more truly Austrian;<sup>3</sup> and so it had remained throughout the Congress of Vienna. That it must be so had affected him deeply; he had become cynical and somewhat indifferent. He has often been accused of being a soulless tool of Metternich’s,<sup>4</sup> but the statement damns him unjustly; for it indicates a failure to understand that in Gentz’s case, during 1814–15, the soul was there, but imprisoned. When, eventually, out of the conflicts of the period ending in 1815 the powers drew into a more harmonious group and developed a policy that seemed to subordinate selfish desires to a common interest, the “tool” became an enthusiastic co-worker.

In the spring of 1815, however, Gentz did not believe that what most Europeans wanted represented true European interests.<sup>5</sup> A strong

<sup>2</sup> Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 53–54, 86–87; Adolphus W. Ward, “The Congress of Vienna,” in *The Cambridge Modern History*, 9:646; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 592–616; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:166.

<sup>3</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 271.

<sup>4</sup> Helmut Tiedemann, *Der deutsche Kaisergedanke vor und nach dem Wiener Kongress* (Breslau, 1932), 111.

<sup>5</sup> Srbik, in his *Metternich*, 1:219, speaks of Gentz’s criticism of Metternich because he acted “as a European, not as an Austrian” in supporting the Bourbons in 1815, thus putting “European” interests before “the interests of Austria.” This, it seems to me, misses the point of Gentz’s criticism. Gentz believed that a strong Austria was in the best interests of

France in his opinion was essential to a healthy Europe, and a strong France would best be ensured by Napoleonic rule. He even found a Napoleonic regime consistent with the formula of legitimacy, arguing in oft-quoted words: “Legitimacy is born in time; it can therefore be considered not in an absolute, but only in a relative, sense; and from time to time, like everything human, it must be modified.”<sup>6</sup>

But when Napoleon let it be known under what sort of constitution he proposed to govern, Gentz realized what an air castle he had constructed. He was forced to admit that there was indeed no practical alternative to a Bourbon restoration, and when he was summoned to Metternich’s side at Paris to aid in the negotiation of the new peace, the question of the throne was already settled.

The policy Metternich proposed to follow Gentz found on the whole satisfactory. Metternich was not prepared to admit that Germany’s territorial demands were justified; at the same time he was not willing to inflict so light a punishment on France as Castlereagh and Alexander now desired. As Gentz had foreseen, the final territorial settlement followed fairly closely what Metternich had in mind, and he was quite pleased with it.

Gentz’s official duties at Paris were much the same as those he had performed at the Congress of Vienna, and since they entailed considerable bustling about, he felt satisfactorily important. In agreement with his chief on the larger issues, he was able to play “a more active and significant role than before”; yet, by his own admission, he was “morally responsible for only a few of the results” reached at Paris. He had become, by now, so much a fixture at international gatherings that the proposal was “seriously” discussed of making him permanent secretary general of Europe.<sup>7</sup>

During the latter half of 1815 Gentz was bothered chiefly by two bogies: the ambition of German nationalist-expansionists and the senseless machinations of ultraconservatives. At first the Germans annoyed him more, but the excesses of the ultras soon convinced him that in them lay the real danger. He reacted by a swing to the left, which was

Europe, if Europe were to seek its well-being in balance of power. He would therefore not agree that Metternich was really serving European interests in adopting a policy that conformed to the clamor of German, Russian, and British public opinion; his criticism was directed against Metternich the malleable politician, not against Metternich the European. See Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 615–616; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:170.

<sup>6</sup> *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 199, 202–203.

<sup>7</sup> *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:184, 187, 208; Webster, *Castlereagh*, 1:459, 477; Weldler-Steinberg, *Rahel Varnhagen*, 427; *Tagebücher*, 1:421.

ognize popular sovereignty, Gentz sincerely regretted that Napoleon, upon his return to France, chose not to govern under constitutional forms. In his opinion, the fact should be recognized that the French people wanted a constitutional monarchy. He referred to the ultras with the utmost scorn: "No color is black enough to portray the system and the views of this party. It longs for the absolute counterrevolution, the annihilation of everything that does not appear compatible with the old regime in its full extent." When the Duke of Orleans — upon whom the friends of constitutional government not long before had pinned their hopes — decided to leave the country out of opposition to the trend of affairs, Gentz, like a Lafayette or an Alexander, referred to him as "the only one of the princes who understands the true interests of the country and the course which the king ought to follow to consolidate his power." And on November 22, 1815, he wrote: "Those who in 1814 thought they would be able to re-establish the old regime, pure and simple, have done France as much harm as Robespierre and Bonaparte. But the nature of things is more powerful than men. . . . Absolute power, once it has been totally overturned, will never raise itself again. The *old Bourbons* cannot and should not rule any more."<sup>11</sup>

Still, since the Bourbons represented "the only string on the lyre," Gentz could but hope that Louis XVIII would try to be sensible and safely surmount the obstacles ahead. Whenever it was a question of making the way less rough for Louis, Gentz did what it lay in his power to do. He not only opposed letting France be ground under the heel of a stern army of occupation, but protested as well against making her pay a disastrously large indemnity.<sup>12</sup>

Without question Gentz was better satisfied with the second Peace of Paris than he had been with the results of the Congress of Vienna. True, he had no great faith in the lofty sentiments expressed in the Holy Alliance. But on the whole the problems at Paris had been considered with commendable disinterestedness, the powers had manifested praiseworthy intentions of working together, and though a number of ominous signs were discernible to the discriminating eye, one might look into the future with a certain confidence. "The moment has now come," Gentz went so far as to proclaim in the *Beobachter*, "when the prospect of a golden age in Europe no longer belongs among the empty

<sup>11</sup> Weldler-Steinberg, *Rahel Varnhagen*, 429-432; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:569; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 691-693; H. A. L. Fisher, "The First Restoration," *The Cambridge Modern History*, 9:573; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:187-188; Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:237.

<sup>12</sup> Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller, 191; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 88-89.

dreams." In view of Gentz's gift for rolling out appropriately flatulent phrases, his real opinions probably differed from his high-sounding words. Metternich thought the public should be fed verbiage, and Gentz aimed to please. The article, however, was not allowed to stand unchallenged. Goerres, in his *Rheinische Merkur*, let fly a broadside against those who had allowed France to keep Alsace-Lorraine, and he accused Gentz of insincerity in his defense of the peace. Gentz tossed back this latter accusation as a charge unworthy of a man like Goerres, but he felt constrained to make clear that by the dawn of an age of gold he had meant only a period of peace. He refused to make the nationalist ideology his standard of judgment, as Goerres was doing, and justified French retention of Alsace-Lorraine on the grounds that experience of the past century had shown that French possession of those provinces did not endanger the balance of power.<sup>13</sup>

By 1816 Gentz was already bored with peace. Much as he hated war, he was forced to confess that when a man "has passed the greatest part of his life in the midst of catastrophes and storms, a general peace is an insipid and tedious state of affairs." At Vienna he found himself out of tune with friends, with people in general, and with an existence more or less stale. "You can scarcely imagine," he wrote to a kindred spirit on January 8, "how precious few here have yet comprehended that one must think and act in the year 1815 [*sic*] entirely otherwise than in the year 1794, or 1809, or 1812. . . . Scarcely a day passes that I am not outraged by the miserable twaddle of petrified or half-putrified purists; these people have still no other fear than that the king of France may rule too *mildly*. *Our* views are completely strange to them." Gentz's friends, Pilat and Adam Müller, were numbered among the "purists" and were made to feel the weight of his criticism. To Pilat he wrote that so long as "obscurantism and tyranny, Ferdinand VII, Labourdonnaye, and Hyde de Neufville" continued to be preached in the *Beobachter*, that paper need expect no support from him.<sup>14</sup> Metternich also fell under his disapproving glance. He was traveling through Italy with the emperor, and in the opinion of his critical aide in Vienna the plaudits of the multitude had turned his head completely.

Without question Gentz's bitterness arose, at least partially, from the fact that Austria alone seemed unappreciative of his services. Other

<sup>13</sup> Metternich and Klinkowström, *Oesterreichs Theilnahme*, 742-747; Tiedemann, *Deutsche Kaisergedanke*, 131; Eckardt, *Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe*, 2:11-31.

<sup>14</sup> Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:246; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 101; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, p. 318.

chief, Count Philip Stadion. The latter half of the year found Gentz thoroughly engrossed in these affairs, to such a degree, in fact, that he almost forgot how disgruntled he was. It is interesting to note the regard he now had for "possible" policies, for "realizable" measures; in 1810, he had cooperated only half-heartedly with O'Donnel and Wallis because they did not bring their policies into accord with his own theory of paper money. In 1816, though he emphasized that his theory remained unchanged, he recognized clearly and painlessly that the age was "not yet ripe for such an artificial structure" as his ideas called for; and with the zeal of a partisan he defended Stadion before his critics.<sup>17</sup>

Gentz prided himself on the practical, statesmanlike attitude that his diplomatic experience had taught him. Such an attitude seemed lacking in most people in the summer of 1817, and lacking indeed in many of his closest friends and associates. Having made equilibrium the governing principle of his political theories, Gentz had come to conceive of it not merely as a balance of political power between states; he now believed equilibrium should include a balance so far as possible between the conservative and the radical tendencies that were continually operative within the individual state. Between 1791 and 1813 the radical forces had held the upper hand; working through Bonaparte they had endangered the principle of equilibrium in all its aspects. To combat this danger, Gentz had striven with the instruments at his command to restore the old balance. The years 1813-15 had stilled the threat of French imperialism, but other threats had arisen: inordinate extension of Russian power; triumph of the revolutionary spirit, as exemplified in the nationalist ardor of Blücher's army; a stifling resurgence of conservative-reactionary forces. In the years 1816-17 this resurgence, in Gentz's opinion, presented the real danger. To him it was "unmistakable" that the situation had "changed essentially in the last years." No longer was the "traditional" endangered by the "rational." Instead the reverse was true. And in his defense of the "rational" he now emphasized that in his fight against the Revolution he had never opposed progress as such. What he had opposed was the assumption that the world should be made over, and from the inside out. When, however, with the Revolution bridled, men like Adam Müller scornfully junked "all the endeavors and all the products" of the past thirty years, Gentz recoiled as instinctively as he had from the Revolution itself. On September 5, 1817, he still held to the same line; he told Pilat that on the whole he agreed with those who thought that the French people had

<sup>17</sup> *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 211, 217; Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:243.

been made happier, more law-abiding, more thrifty, and more worthy of esteem because of the Revolution.<sup>18</sup>

It is interesting to note that so long as Gentz asserted such moderate views, he made no progress toward obtaining from his own government a reward for his service at the congresses. He had got nowhere in 1816 with his desire to be named *Staatsrat*. He had originally scorned the idea of a tidy present in hard cash, but when, in November, 1816, Metternich offered to recommend to the emperor that he be given five thousand ducats, Gentz was delighted and announced that he would give up all claim to titles and decorations. Metternich neglected this friendly chore, unfortunately, and on the first day of January, 1817, Gentz wrote his chief a "letter of major importance," in which he discussed his own interest and that of the state. Not until May 26, 1817, did Metternich take definite action, and then it was merely to draw up a *Vortrag* for the emperor, which Stadion was also to sign, requesting twenty-five hundred ducats and emphasizing Gentz's services in connection with the finance measures. Stadion approved of the idea but declined to sign for fear of dissension in his own department.<sup>19</sup>

In spite of his large extra income during the congresses at Vienna and Paris, Gentz, as we have noted, was in financial difficulties even at the beginning of 1816. By the summer of 1817 the deflated condition of his pocketbook caused him serious alarm. To remedy this dismal situation, Stadion finally recommended that Gentz be granted a present, and when Metternich left for a trip to Italy on June 5, 1817, everything appeared on the verge of a happy solution. For almost two months, however, the emperor ignored the recommendation. Finally Gentz, whose plans were made for a vacation at the watering places, decided on a drastic step: from the banker Arnstein he secured five hundred ducats on Metternich's credit, without warning Metternich of his intention. By this audacious act, Metternich was given a stake, willy-nilly, in the wobbly concern of Gentz and Company. Nevertheless, with even this incentive to push the cause of his brash, impecunious friend, Metternich accomplished nothing until November. The emperor was then persuaded to grant the sum Gentz had struggled almost two years to obtain. In the meantime a significant change had taken place in Gentz's attitude toward the policy of the monarchy.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 243-245; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:270; *Tagebücher*, 2:159, 161.

<sup>19</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 319-321, 343, note; *Tagebücher*, 2:87, 101-102.

<sup>20</sup> Paul Sweet, "Four Letters from Gentz," in the *Journal of Modern History*, 7 (1935): 448-452.

his circle. Although Gentz decided that Kapodistrias was "by no means a Jacobin," he feared his influence on the czar: poor Pozzo, though "actually a genius," received less attention from Alexander than "Kapodistrias' coattail." Nevertheless, during the congress the czar "to a certain degree emancipated himself from the influence" of Kapodistrias and acted in a very cooperative spirit. Gentz in gratitude hailed Alexander as "the director and hero" of the gathering.<sup>13</sup>

The people about whom Gentz wrote *con amore*, however, were the bankers, who, he says, provided his real "recreation." The banking fraternity showed up in force at Aachen to gather in the lucrative business connected with the French indemnity and to lobby for Jewish rights. His role of perennial debtor and financial expert had already brought Gentz into contact with a variety of financiers, ranging from the helpful though somewhat unlettered Ballabene of Prague to the incredible Monsieur Ouvrard of Paris. With the patrician Bethmann of Frankfurt, the optimistic Laffitte, the scrupulous Baron Louis; with the Parishes, those enterprising Scotchmen who operated on the Continent, and finally with the Rothschilds, he already had had personal relations of one sort or another. Aachen widened his circle of financial connections. Baring and Labouchère were there from London, Hope from Amsterdam, as well as Solomon and Carl Rothschild, David Parish, and others. "The Rothschilds," Gentz noted in a letter worth quoting, "are vulgar ignorant Jews, outwardly presentable. In their craft they are merely 'naturals' without any sort of suspicion of a higher order of things, but they are gifted with a remarkable instinct which leads them always to choose the right, and of two rights, the better. Their enormous wealth (they are the richest people in Europe) is entirely the result of this instinct, which the crowd calls luck. Now that I have seen all of them at close quarters, the most profound reasoning of Baring inspires me with less confidence than the sound insight of one of the more shrewd Rothschilds—for among the five brothers there is one who is altogether weak and another who is mediocre. If Baring and Hope ever fail . . . I can state with confidence that it will be because they have thought themselves cleverer than Rothschild and have not followed his advice.

"David Parish . . . is the matador, the pearl in the business community of all Christendom. . . . He is one of the most perfect specimens

<sup>13</sup> *The Diary of Philipp von Neumann, 1819-1850*, translated and edited by E. Beresford Chancellor (2 vols., Boston and New York, 1928), 1:2; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 362-364; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:349, 353, 361; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:404. See also Webster, *Castlereagh*, 2:102; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:573.

of man that I have ever seen. Nevertheless Baring, measured according to intellect and knowledge alone, is superior to him."<sup>14</sup>

The cynic upon reading the record will conclude that Gentz had good reason to be exhilarated by the society of these pillars in the world of business. In return for the services, actual or potential, that he was able to render, Parish had already given him an interest in a loan to the tune of 100,000 florins, Solomon Rothschild at Aachen handed over 800 ducats, which he had won for him by speculating in British bonds, and the following year he unexpectedly received 14,880 francs from Baring as his share in a forgotten enterprise. When one remembers Gentz's financial plight at the end of 1817, the conclusion seems justified that the capital for these speculations was put up by Messrs. Parish, Rothschild, and Baring, and that so far as Gentz was concerned he was in on a sure thing: he pocketed the winnings, but the losses, if any, fell to the bankers. Rothschild and Parish, however, must have felt adequately repaid, for in 1820 they floated a sizable Austrian loan, the first business of this kind that the ambitious Rothschilds had been able to secure from the Habsburgs, and Solomon Rothschild settled permanently in Vienna. It was Gentz, the trusted adviser of Stadion, minister of finance, who had accomplished the not inconsiderable feat of getting Metternich to break bread at Aachen with Carl and Solomon Rothschild. The intimate rapport that Gentz established with the Rothschilds in 1818 endured for the rest of his life and secured for him a financial backlog against the monetary adversities of the future.<sup>15</sup>

It would be a mistake to infer that Gentz's friendship with the more prosperous bankers was dictated solely by his desire to exploit them for his own personal interest. As one who by sheer talent had risen to eminence in the political world, he felt a frank admiration for men who by comparable efforts had risen to positions of financial power. His cal-

<sup>14</sup> Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 88; *Tagebücher*, 1:411-412; 2:186, 268-269; Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:286-287; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 267-268.

<sup>15</sup> *Tagebücher*, 2:238-239, 241, 277; Corti, *Rise of the House of Rothschild*, 203-205, 221-222. In this period, according to Corti, an "agreement" was made between Gentz and the Rothschilds. The existence of a formal agreement in 1818 is merely inferred by Corti, although there can be no doubt that Gentz henceforth did furnish the Rothschilds "with an important source of political information and a connection with Metternich." Corti, however, is not content to speak with certainty of a purely hypothetical "agreement." He goes on, with unpardonable innuendo, to say that the Rothschild connection in 1818 enabled Gentz "to indulge in his expensive middle-aged amour with Fanny Elssler." Since Fanny Elssler in 1818 was about nine years of age, and was to meet Gentz for the first time ten years later, it is scarcely fair to imply that his financial transactions, discreditable as they may have been, were made to support women. The fact is that in the decade 1818-28, the period of his most extensive speculations, he lived, so far as women were concerned, an almost monkish existence.

someone has attacked openly not some isolated point but the entire mass of bad principles. Few people, I believe, would have imagined that a stroke so vigorous would emanate from the cabinet at Vienna. The accession of the others is a miracle; and in general, the events at Karlsbad, although I have been an eyewitness of them, appear to me like a dream."<sup>25</sup>

One does not need to judge Gentz from the standpoint of liberalism to arrive at the conclusion that his glory of 1819 had been purchased dearly. His performance appears somewhat discreditable, not because he had trampled recklessly on the sacred tenets of this or that political faith, but because he had weakly turned tail on his own convictions. His position was fundamentally false. His personal leanings were rationalistic, but he had scant trust in the thinking apparatus of mankind in general, and when, as in 1819, unreason seemed to him rampant, he could think of nothing better than to scuttle to religion and seek Divine sanction for his own opinion. He was never, it is true, unsympathetic toward religion, but, as he had explained to Adam Müller a few years before, he could not with intellectual honesty subscribe to *revealed* religion. In 1819, however, he felt in his desperation that revealed religion was something to which men *must* subscribe; without it the social order would go to pieces. Accompanying this shift toward the suprarational, a marked tendency toward obscurantism becomes evident in him. He publicly defended the Karlsbad press measure in these words: "In the last few years we have been so surfeited with political ideas and dreams that every rational man ought sincerely to think himself, his friends, and especially the leaders of states lucky, should it be possible, amid this wild and confused commotion, to find a short pause for meditation."<sup>26</sup>

Some years before, in a moment of despair, Gentz had written: "There must be *belief* again, there must be *obedience* again, there must be a thousand times less *reasoning* than now, or there can no longer be *government*." It will be noted that he seems here to have underlined the wrong words: it was the "musts" that should have been scored. That at any rate, was the attitude with which, in 1819, he turned toward religion: we *must* have it, for as practical statesmen we know of nothing that can serve our purpose quite so well. "Religion has to be restored, if civil organization is to continue to exist," he wrote. "It is

<sup>25</sup> S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (31K) 95. The original and a copy of this letter are in the archives. The copy bears the date 1829; that on the original is unclear. Internal evidence, however, indicates that the letter was written in 1819. See *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, I:410-411.

<sup>26</sup> Eckardt, *Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe*, 2:80.

little clique of experienced diplomats who had regulated the disposition of Europe at Vienna and Aachen. England and France, however — ominous sign! — were represented merely by onlookers who lacked full powers.

Metternich was the actual head of the congress, and Gentz served as his *alter ego* in a sense that was true at none of the earlier European gatherings. He was closeted with the foreign minister for hours every day; "never before," he reported, "has the prince treated me with such unlimited confidence; I know his most secret thoughts." The bulk of the time-consuming drafting and editing connected with the congress was entrusted as usual to him, and when he was not at his desk he conferred with members of the foreign delegations. Other Austrian diplomats of some importance, such as Count Zichy and Baron Lebzelttern, were present at Troppau, but there could be no doubt that Gentz was second in importance to Metternich.<sup>3</sup>

The leading figure outside the Austrian camp was Kapodistrias, who, despite the predictions and hopes of Gentz, retained the favor of Alexander. Kapodistrias' favorite contention was that the maintenance of order could be made "compatible with the ascendancy of liberal ideas," and he had come to Troppau with a program worthy of the daringly ingenious statesman that he was. Along with a general guarantee binding the powers to put down revolution, he wanted the Neapolitan government reformed "on the model of the French *Charte*" — the sort of reform, he remarked blandly, "which all enlightened men will approve most." On November 6, to the horror and disgust of the Austrians, this program was put in the form of a definite proposal. Gentz wrote a detailed critique of it, but showed his work to no one but Lebzelttern.<sup>4</sup>

Metternich found himself in an unhappy position; the only way he could sabotage Neapolitan reform was to agree to the principle of general intervention. He was by no means unsympathetic to intervention, but he knew well that a general statement of policy on the matter would be anathema to the English and might well destroy the Concert. Nevertheless, in a preliminary protocol of November 19, which was signed by the three Eastern monarchies, the doctrine of intervention was affirmed in cases of revolutions "the results of which threaten other states." This doctrine was used to justify Austrian intervention in Naples, and the protocol was submitted to England and France for approval. A

<sup>3</sup> Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:604; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:444; Webster, *Castlereagh*, 2:285-286.

<sup>4</sup> *Gentz aux hospodars*, 2:13; Webster, *Castlereagh*, 2:288, 525-526; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:198.

merely as a bulwark of legitimacy, but as a support to the Gentz exchequer as well.

The Congress of Laibach represented Austrian success at its peak: central Europe was brought safely through the storms of 1820, and the semblance of a concert still remained, although "the defection of England from the European community was as good as decided." But at the extremities of Europe—on the Iberian Peninsula and in Greece—the revolutionary flames remained unquenched. In recognition of this fact the powers, before they left Laibach, agreed to hold another congress at Verona in the fall of the following year.<sup>15</sup>

When the Congress of Verona met in due course, the situation was quite different from what it had been at Laibach. English foreign policy was in the hands of Canning, and he embraced with a will policies that Castlereagh could espouse only with the greatest reluctance; they were not policies that would bolster the tottering "Confederation of Europe." Tendencies among the other Great Powers, however, were more satisfactory from the Austrian point of view. Kapodistrias had been finally removed from his position of influence in Russia, and the czar was more than ever convinced of the necessity for united action against revolution everywhere. In France the ultras had climbed into the saddle, with Villèle, Montmorency, and Chateaubriand directing the conduct of affairs. The trend in Prussia also was toward the right.

The personnel of the delegations at Verona reflected these changes. Outside the ranks of royalty, Metternich, Gentz, and Nesselrode were the foremost veterans of such gatherings. Wellington, who represented England, was of course well known in diplomatic as in military circles, but no Englishman seemed a part of the confederation group in the sense that Castlereagh had been. Strangford, British ambassador at Constantinople, was in attendance, and it was this diplomat, rather than celebrities like Wellington and Chateaubriand, who impressed Gentz.<sup>16</sup>

The negotiations at Verona resolved themselves predominantly around Spain, and Gentz did not care especially about Spain. Villèle, then chief minister in France, favored forceful representations, not armed intervention, in Spain. In these views Villèle approached the standpoint of Metternich, but with this difference: the French minister wanted France to act alone, whereas Metternich wanted joint steps by all the allied powers. Villèle was badly served at Verona, however, first by Montmorency and then by Chateaubriand, who were deter-

<sup>15</sup> *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 340; *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, 2:42.

<sup>16</sup> *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:86, 91.

mined to do something spectacular for the pitiable Bourbons across the Pyrenees and wanted the sanction of the powers for French military action. England was of no mind to associate herself with such a project. Alexander, on the other hand, burned with zeal to march Russian troops into Spain: Cossacks in Andalusia appealed to his fancy.<sup>17</sup>

It was Metternich's hope to bring the discordant notes of the various powers into sweet harmony; and he was willing to change his own tune, if Wellington, Alexander, and Chateaubriand could thereby be persuaded to pipe in concert. In the end this hope was not realized. Austria, Prussia, and Russia, taken in tow by the French extremists, sanctioned French intervention in Spain. Wellington, however, was instructed not to associate England with this enterprise, and the break in the European Concert was now plainly revealed.<sup>18</sup>

The relations between Metternich and Gentz were exceptionally close at Verona; Gentz noted at the end of the congress that he had rarely gone out save to see his chief, who lived about a hundred paces away. The most important Austrian state papers were all written by Gentz, and there is no evidence to indicate that he disagreed in any respect with Metternich's policy.<sup>19</sup> He developed no special policy of his own at Verona; his role was simply that of a valuable and valued co-worker. Since he had not expected much from the congress, its rather negative results, from the Austrian point of view, did not worry him. The consideration given him, as a seasoned veteran of congresses, the way in which a Chateaubriand courted his esteem—these things made of Verona a personal triumph. He was in high good humor. "Gods holds his hand over Austria," he told Pilat confidently. "As long as the emperor and Prince Metternich live, no storm will convulse us."<sup>20</sup>

Gentz's hopeful prophecy of "peace in our time" came true, in part. Neither he nor the emperor, at least, lived to see Austria convulsed with storms, though Metternich was not so fortunate. But the years that immediately succeeded the Congress of Verona were full of unrest, and the signs of the times were not encouraging to those who venerated

<sup>17</sup> Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:614–616; Emmanuel Beau de Loménie, *La Carrière politique de Chateaubriand de 1815 à 1830* (2 vols., Paris, 1929), 2:28, 36.

<sup>18</sup> *Tagebücher*, 3:111.

<sup>19</sup> *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:120; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 366–367; *Tagebücher*, 3:96, 101–102, 108–109, 119; Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:273; Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 2:292–293, 295; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 3:578–586.

<sup>20</sup> *Tagebücher*, 3:97; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 3:527–528; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 1:177, 362–367; 5:321; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 368–369; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:123.

monarchical institutions or who believed in the mission of states which, like Austria, "violated" the principle of nationality. Events in Latin America and in Greece widened the breach in the Concert which had been revealed at Verona, and agitation for a liberalization of political institutions in Germany continued unabated. In the seven years that followed the Congress of Verona these three issues—Latin America, Greece, and Germany—occupied Gentz's attention simultaneously. Latin America did not affect Austria's vital interests as did the events in Germany and the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless Austrian policy in regard to Latin America is not without interest, if for no other reason than that the policy is so frequently misunderstood.

Since Metternich is popularly regarded as the heart and soul of the Conservative Alliance, it is often assumed by the half-informed that Austria headed every attempt, or suggestion of an attempt, to repress revolution anywhere. Actually, the Austrian attitude revealed at Verona was typical of her policy: On questions that did not pertain to middle Europe, the Vienna government did not take the initiative in urging armed intervention; and although Gentz had affirmed that "every revolution brought about by usurped force would justify in itself intervention by the powers," he preferred that intervention should be diluted into mild diplomatic pressure in places like Spain, where Austrian interests were only remotely affected. When the French insisted on armed action in Spain, therefore, the Austrians made the best of it. Thus the whole doctrine of intervention was conceived realistically and was tempered by consideration of Austrian interests.

The question of Latin American independence reveals even more clearly Austria's realistic interpretation of the doctrine of intervention, and Gentz, whose opinion was sought at every step of the way, was largely responsible for Austria's attitude. The problem arose soon after the Congress of Vienna, when the Spanish colonies, having cut loose from the Bonapartist regime of Joseph, displayed unwillingness to renew their allegiance to the mother country. The English, who had fought so valiantly in the name of the Bourbons in Spain, could not with decency deny the political rights of Spain in South America. But the English had benefited greatly by the opportunities for South American trade opened up by the removal of the Spanish monopoly during the Napoleonic wars, and they were determined to retain their increased commerce. The reactionary and shortsighted Spanish government refused to give England the assurances she demanded, and in 1817 rumors grew persistent that Russia, in exchange for Minorca, had agreed

derstood that the independence of the Spanish colonies was inevitable," and by November they were beginning to talk of a congress as "the best means of offering the joint mediation of the European Powers for the settlement of the dispute between Spain and the colonies." "If the prejudices of the Court of Spain should prevent the success of the negotiations," the French reasoned, "it will be a satisfactory reflection that the Allied Powers have paid the tribute which is due to Legitimacy by the attempt to ensure the settlement of the differences between Spain and the Colonies, and . . . each Government will be at liberty to pursue the course which their particular situation and the interests of their subjects appear to require."<sup>25</sup> This was handsomely said, and if the French government had not been too lofty to take the United States into its confidence, President Monroe might have softened his famous retort.

As it was, the Monroe Doctrine was enunciated. It made considerable impression in Vienna, and particularly on Friedrich Gentz. Of the European conservatives Gentz alone realized the full significance of the message. That is not surprising, in view of the fact that he knew far more about America than did the vast majority of his contemporaries and was equipped with an imagination capable of grasping the vast future of the United States. Writing to Pilat in 1818 he had said: "The progressive extension of the territory of the United States is in my opinion the greatest political fact of our time; here lies concealed the seed for events that will entirely change the face of the world not in a hundred, but in twenty years." Consequently, although the president's address struck him as a piece of "unparalleled impudence," he admitted that the speech would be "epoch-making in the history of our time. Every line of it," he continued, "deserves to be weighed with the most serious attention."<sup>26</sup>

Gentz himself was among the first to weigh Monroe's words with serious attention. In a memoir bearing the date January 13, 1824, he set forth his views. After a preliminary admonition, to the effect that the "transatlantic colossus" presented a moral threat to the conservative foundations of Europe which must constantly be taken into consideration, there creeps into Gentz's discourse a tone of satisfaction over the fact that Monroe had brought the issue into the clear. It had long been manifest to Gentz, and he now assumed that it must be manifest to

<sup>25</sup> Webster, *Britain and Latin America*, 1:119; 2:127.

<sup>26</sup> Dexter Perkins, *The Monroe Doctrine, 1823-1826* (Cambridge, 1932), 170; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 1:300; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 85-86; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 5:102.

it ought to be guaranteed by the various European great powers."<sup>28</sup> This statement he embodied in a memoir.

Gentz's analysis of the South American situation was masterly. His views found acceptance, furthermore, among the responsible directors of Austrian policy. Why, then, did the Vienna government not press its views upon Madrid and Lisbon? The answer is that no Austrian interest was vitally affected; Austria could therefore afford to maintain an attitude of the most correct consideration for the legal rights of the Iberian governments in Latin America. The position of the Austrian emperor had been made clear in 1822, when in his name Metternich had stated: "Invariably faithful to the great principles on which the social order and the maintenance of legitimate government depend, his Imperial Majesty will never recognize the independence of the Spanish American provinces, so long as His Catholic Majesty has not freely and formally renounced the sovereign rights that he has heretofore exercised over those provinces." Gentz, who knew his legitimist doctrine, could not but acquiesce. As a *Realpolitiker* he might complain that the kings of Spain and Portugal were fools not to face facts, but as a legitimist he could not admit the right of Austria, or of any other government, to do anything drastic about it. Mild persuasion through ministerial conferences was the most obviously decent procedure under the circumstances. Consequently it was with his full approval that Metternich, on January 27, 1824, proposed that the ministerial conference at Paris (which since 1815 had met intermittently to deal with a variety of problems) should be resumed to deal "with all questions of 'major importance.'" <sup>29</sup>

Metternich's hopes for the success of the conferences were blasted by Canning, who "wished recognition to be a British, not a European action." England refused to participate, and Canning, on January 30, 1824, "announced that the independence of the Spanish colonies had been achieved and that recognition must follow."<sup>30</sup>

Gentz was irked by this latest example of England's unwillingness to work out her policy in concert with the Continental powers. In a memoir of March 5 he went to particular pains to criticize the passage

<sup>28</sup> S.A., Vienna, Interiora, 105. The memoir is in Gentz's hand, is undated, and bears the title "Successions Bestimmung." Since the British proposal referred to is that set forth by Canning on August 5, 1823 (Webster, *Britain and Latin America*, 1:226), the memoir was probably written toward the latter part of the year.

<sup>29</sup> Perkins, *Monroe Doctrine*, 138, note; H. W. V. Temperley, "Canning and the Conferences of the Four Allied Governments at Paris, 1823-1826," in the *American Historical Review*, 30 (1924):22, 34.

<sup>30</sup> Webster, *Britain and Latin America*, 1:21, 22.

in the English declaration in which Canning had said: "The British government have no desire to anticipate Spain in . . . recognition. . . . But the Court of Madrid must be aware that the discretion of His Majesty in this respect cannot be indefinitely bound up by that of His Catholic Majesty, and that even before many months elapse, the desire now sincerely felt by the British Government to leave this precedence to Spain may be overborne by considerations of a more comprehensive nature." England had no right in international law, Gentz argued, to force the hand of the king of Spain. If the king of Spain had the right to win back the colonies, as Canning admitted, that right was perpetual, unless he renounced it of his own free will.<sup>31</sup>

Having thus given voice to his legitimism, Gentz soon returned to the field of the practical. The ambassadorial conferences in Paris had convened, but Austrian views, which actually favored recognition of Latin American independence, did not prevail. Both the czar and his energetic ambassador at Paris, Pozzo di Borgo, were still obsessed with the idea of contriving somehow to strike a blow for legitimacy in the New World. Gentz was frankly critical of the czar's new-found ultraism, and when the possibility was mentioned of recognizing the independence of most of the erstwhile colonies, but of winning back part of them, preferably Mexico and Peru, he threw cold water on the whole project. In a memoir of May 20, 1824, he pointed out that England's refusal to cooperate with the Continental powers was decisive. Henceforth people who played with such ideas "fooled the Spanish government and fooled themselves." This was good sense, but Gentz's counsels did not prevail. The Austrian ambassador at Paris joined his colleagues in solemnly recommending that Spain "do her best to reconquer her revolted American provinces, indicating Mexico as the most likely object of attack."<sup>32</sup>

With that, Gentz washed his hands of South America. Austria, desirous always to work in close harmony with Russia, had been led down a blind alley, and the Spanish king, instead of being encouraged, as Gentz desired, to face unpleasant facts, had been urged to continue adamant. From the beginning Gentz's advice on Latin America had

<sup>31</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 86-91; Webster, *Britain and Latin America*, 2:414.

<sup>32</sup> Perkins, *Monroe Doctrine*, 228-230; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 2:308-309; "Observations sur un point important dans l'affaire des colonies espagnoles de l'Amerique," [May 20, 1824], S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105. The dating of this memoir is clear from Gentz's *Tagebücher*, 3:306. Temperley, "Canning and the Conferences," in the *American Historical Review*, 30:25.

been clear-sighted, intelligent, statesmanlike. If Austrian policy did not display those qualities consistently, it was not his fault.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> "Nowhere," says Professor Perkins, "was there better or fuller information on the actual state of affairs in the New World than in the Austrian archives, nowhere a less biased interpretation of events taking place across the Atlantic. This may have been due, in part, to the intimate contact between the Austrian and British governments, at least during the foreign ministry of Castlereagh. But it was due, too, no doubt to . . . Friedrich von Gentz." *Monroe Doctrine*, 135-136. A memoir dated April 23, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105, deals with Brazil. Internal evidence indicates that it stems from the year 1825. It adds nothing substantially new to our knowledge of Gentz's attitude toward the Brazilian question.

## 18. The Eastern Question, 1821-1822

GENTZ'S INFLUENCE on Austrian policy during the decade 1818 to 1828 was by no means limited to the Latin American problem. Quite as substantial was his contribution to the conduct of Austrian policy during the long European crisis precipitated by the revolt of the Greeks in 1821. His diary contains such notations as: "The two of us [Metternich and Gentz] are directing Russo-Turkish affairs quite by ourselves"; and, "The prince has given over to me the most important part of the Turkish work." To his old friend Brinckmann Gentz wrote in 1824: "I am deeply involved in great affairs. For some years the prince has placed unqualified trust in me. It has become customary — I might almost say necessary — for him to talk over all important matters with me. . . . In addition I have made a particular *study* of *one* great question — the Turko-Grecian — and it is certainly not the easiest or the most pleasant. For four years I have expended much energy in trying to become accurately and thoroughly acquainted with this subject in all its branches — historical, political, and diplomatic."<sup>1</sup>

Gentz used the words "accurate" and "thorough" advisedly; he was German and knew what they meant. He not only read and digested the works of Hammer, Schloezer, Thornton, and other writers on the East, but took time to make copious jottings. "I must tell you that my favorite subjects at the present time are the history and geography of the East," he wrote in 1821. "A book like the newly published journey of Jaubert to Persia keeps me awake until four o'clock in the morning."<sup>2</sup> Gentz has been credited with an expert knowledge of American

<sup>1</sup> *Tagebücher*, 3:26, 195; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, 2:340. Similarly Lord Cowley, British ambassador at Vienna, reported to Canning on September 22, 1822: "The person . . . most in the confidence of Prince Metternich is Monsieur de Gentz. No step of importance is taken by the Austrian minister without consulting this gentleman." *The Diary and Correspondence of Henry Wellesley, First Lord Cowley, 1790-1846*, edited by F. A. Wellesley (London, 1930), 105-106.

<sup>2</sup> *Tagebücher*, 2:26, 27, 41, 427-428; 3:226; 4:281; *Briefwechsel zwischen Gentz und Adam Müller*, 357.

affairs, but this must not obscure the fact that he was much better informed on the Eastern Question.

The reliance which Metternich was widely known to place on Gentz's counsel gave rise to the belief that Gentz exerted more influence than was probably the case. Stratford Canning, upon the occasion of his visit to Vienna in 1824, referred in a letter to George Canning to "three puissant personages who, as you well know, are all in all within the limits of this Empire." These three personages whom George Canning supposedly knew as all-powerful were the emperor, Metternich, and Gentz! It is well to remember, however, that a reputation of unlimited power, however much it would have gratified Gentz's thirsty vanity, would have been dangerous to one in his position. An adviser without responsibility, he was obliged to have a "passion for anonymity" and to cater to the vanity of other people. Gentz knew enough of the world to be fully aware of this, and as early as 1822 he felt it necessary to disavow the impression that his was the directing hand behind Austria's Eastern policy. "Nothing is so highly wrong as this supposition that I 'exclusively direct the more important Oriental affairs,'" he wrote to one of his critics. "My accidental cooperation in this business has limited itself merely to the following two points: First, His Highness, the Prince has delegated me upon various occasions to draw up, in accordance with his specific verbal instructions, certain papers having to do with Turkish questions. Secondly, the prince has thought well to entrust to me the composition of the articles for the *Beobachter*. . . . Hereupon I have based the vain presumption that I directed Turkish affairs!" Gentz then proceeds to poke fun at the supposition that "under a minister like ours" anyone could even "help direct" policy.<sup>3</sup>

In the circumstances these were undoubtedly the right things for Gentz to say, but the evidence indicating that his participation in the conduct of affairs was by no means a wholly subservient one is too overwhelming to justify taking this letter at its face value. On the other hand, to assess Gentz's influence with exactitude, it would be necessary to know what went on during those daily conferences when Metternich gave him his "specific verbal instructions." And that can never be known. The evidence is sufficient, however, to justify the modest generalization that Gentz's influence on Austria's Eastern policy was great.

From the point of view of the legal issues involved, the Greek revolt was similar to the Latin American revolution. Subjects had taken arms

<sup>3</sup> Stanley Lane-Poole, *Life of the Right Honourable Stratford Canning, Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe* (2 vols., London, 1888), 1:351, 353; Gentz to [?], December 4, 1822, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (31K) 95.

## 19. The Eastern Question, 1823-1826

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THE GREEK REVOLT in its first phase had seriously endangered Gentz's personal fortunes, but he had advanced himself, temporarily at least, to a position more advantageous in some respects than before. Austrian policy had also had its success in that Russian intervention in Turkey had thus far been averted; but it was a negative success, not a positive achievement.

The major task of Austrian policy remained for the future. Russian intervention must still be averted, but intervention might be expected at any time unless the particular grievances of the Russians against the Turks were cleared up. Austrian policy must therefore strive to facilitate the re-establishment of amicable relations between Russia and Turkey. The continuance of the Greek revolt made this a difficult task. Much as they would have liked to do so, the Austrians could not ignore the Greeks. In spite of the ground swell of pro-Greek sentiment that was sweeping Europe, the governments, and particularly the Russian government, must be held to the orthodox dogma that the Greeks had revolted against their legitimate Turkish masters and that this was a matter of Turkish, not of European, concern. At the same time, to clear the atmosphere, the Turks must be quietly admonished to get down to business, put their house in order, and crush the Greeks, without any more massacres than were absolutely necessary.

Although Stratford Canning as early as September, 1821, had expressed the ominous desire to see the Greeks "put in possession of their whole patrimony" and the sultan "driven bag and baggage into the heart of Asia,"<sup>1</sup> England until 1823 acted in reasonable accord with the broad aims of Austrian policy. Following the Congress of Verona, Lord Stratford, British ambassador at Constantinople, was entrusted with the task of whittling away at the obstructions that blocked the renewal of diplomatic relations between St. Petersburg and the Porte. Strang-

<sup>1</sup> Lane-Poole, *Stratford Canning*, 1:307.

either antagonistic to Turkey or subservient to Russia, whereas the reverse would be true of a semi-independent state. In short, Austria ought to recognize the independence of Greece.<sup>11</sup>

Mavrocordato's arguments were timely. Vienna was beginning to realize that other means than those heretofore relied upon were necessary to solve the Greek problem, and Mavrocordato's communication had followed a hint that a change of course was being contemplated by the Austrian government. Mavrocordato erred, however, in assuming that the niceties of Austrian diplomatic conduct would permit an outright espousal of the Greek cause. The position of the Turkish government, so far as the Greeks were concerned, was similar to that of the Spanish government with respect to its former colonies. "No law exists between independent states other than that established by treaties," Gentz pointed out in his reply to Mavrocordato. "Treaties have either implicitly admitted, or explicitly recognized, the sovereignty that the Porte has exercised over Greece for centuries."<sup>12</sup> Therefore Austrian recognition of Greek independence could only follow prior action by the Turkish government.

This did not mean to Gentz that Austria and the other powers should fold their hands patiently and wait for the Turkish government to lead the way. Stability and legitimacy had been solemnly reaffirmed as the fundamental principles of the Austrian government. This gave dignity and strength to the Austrian position. But Austria did not propose to let the other powers suppose that because she was moral she was muscle-bound. In a surprising document laid before Metternich, and bearing the date November 10, 1824, Gentz declared that Austria should propose out-and-out recognition of Greek independence.<sup>13</sup> Otherwise she stood in danger of being dragged into a war to push through a Russian plan, which neither the Turks nor the Greeks desired any more than the Austrians. He later said that this proposal was only a move to tie the negotiations at St. Petersburg in a knot, but there is evidence to indicate that at the outset he was serious about it. A hint he dropped to the Austrian consul at Corfu, a dispatch to the hospodar of Wallachia, a letter to Ottenfels, all suggest that he was in dead earnest.<sup>14</sup>

The possibility of using Gentz's proposal of recognition to prolong the discussions at St. Petersburg appealed to Metternich, and in Janu-

<sup>11</sup> Prokesch, *Abfall der Griechen*, 4:132-137.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 140-141.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:324, note; *Tagebücher*, 3:368-369.

<sup>14</sup> Krauter, *Ottensfels*, 137, 148; Prokesch, *Abfall der Griechen*, 1:316; 4:132-133; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 2:400-406.

action by Austria, but only at the sacrifice of some of that legalistic correctness which, he proudly thought, formed the basis of Austrian policy as a whole. For as Canning slyly pointed out, since Austria refused recognition to the Greeks, it would be only logical to hold Turkey responsible for the acts of piracy by its subjects.<sup>20</sup>

During the first months of 1826 the new czar of Russia, Nicholas I, held the center of the stage. Nicholas' intention, Gentz understood, was to concentrate on internal reform, and his conduct was at first reassuring. On March 17, however, Russia sent an ultimatum to the Porte. This action, though drastic, caused no particular alarm in Vienna. Ignoring the Greek question, Russia demanded that the Turks send delegates to clear up the specific points of controversy that still existed in connection with the Treaty of 1812. The ultimatum impressed Gentz as being straight to the point and as indicating a desire for a peace based on a real settlement of differences between the two states. The Turks, having decided to be discreet, agreed to the Russian demands, and Akkermann in Bessarabia was designated as the place where the negotiations should take place. Gentz expressed his relief at such appropriate compliance by addressing a laudatory letter, via Ottenfels, to the Turkish foreign minister.<sup>21</sup>

In the meantime events of great importance had been taking place in St. Petersburg. Wellington, who had journeyed to Russia ostensibly to extend the best wishes of England to the new czar, was in reality under orders to negotiate an Anglo-Russian agreement on what to do next in regard to the Greek question. The negotiation culminated on April 4 with an important protocol stipulating "joint formulation, and joint or separate mediation, of a settlement between Turkey and the Greeks, on the basis of an autonomous and tributary Greek principality." This protocol, unlike those of the allies, was actually meant to be carried out. It marked not only the beginning of a new phase in the diplomatic history of the Greek revolt, but also the collapse of the Concert of Europe. The collapse, however, had been so long foreshadowed that it aroused no extraordinary expressions of wrath in Vienna. Gentz was at first inclined to attribute the agreement to the

<sup>20</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 218-220, 286-287; *Tagebücher*, 4:84, 102, 106, 123, 147, 167; Ottenfels to Gentz, November 25, 1825, January 25, 1826, February 25, 1826, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 23; Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 5:230; Prokesch, *Zur Geschichte der orientalischen Frage: Briefe aus dem Nachlasse Friedrichs von Gentz*, 136-144; Crawley, *Greek Independence*, 67.

<sup>21</sup> *Gentz aux hospodars*, 3:100-102, 113-122; Ottenfels to Gentz, May 26, 1826, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 23; Prokesch, *Zur Geschichte der orientalischen Frage: Briefe aus dem Nachlasse Friedrichs von Gentz*, 124-125.

It had become apparent to even the Austrians that the powers could not properly intervene in Greece to defend the principle of legitimacy. "Correct" procedure called for assent by the legitimate government at the Porte to such intervention; but the Porte would assent to no such intervention: it knew that some of the powers did not want, and would not consent to, a restoration of Turkish control in Greece. The dynamic principle of nationalism had successfully challenged the static principle of legitimacy, and the Conservative Alliance had been split asunder.

The German temper between 1815 and 1830—the so-called Biedermeier mood—was keyed to compromise between the ideal and the actual.<sup>28</sup> Compromise also characterized the foreign policy of Austria, for which the emperor and Metternich were responsible, but which Gentz had influenced every step of the way. No man had played a greater role in articulating the ideals of the Conservative Alliance than he. Yet no man in the Austrian foreign office had a clearer view of facts, a deeper insight into the logic of events. In connection with the Greek question he had consistently urged that the ideals of the Alliance be kept intact; and when this became obviously impossible, he had recommended a compromise in harmony with the political amenities and consistent with Austrian interests. Even this had failed. The Russo-Turkish war had brought the Greek question to a new phase. But for Gentz it was the end of an epoch.

<sup>28</sup> Paul Kluckhohn, "Biedermeier als literarische Epochenbezeichnung," in the *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 13 (1935):14-15.

and unluckily for him everyone had not forgotten this fact. It occurred to the Leipzig publisher Brockhaus that a reprint of this document would be highly "piquant," and in 1820 the piece was brought out, ostensibly by a Brussels firm. A good deal of embarrassing laughter resounded through Germany. In vain did Adam Müller pass the word around that Gentz viewed his youthful indiscretion "as his only political sin." The thing was done, and Gentz had to make the best of it. By 1831, indeed, he was able to admit that he had received "a well-deserved chastisement." His immediate reaction, however, was one of profound annoyance. Brockhaus' part in the business was no mystery to him, and he knew further that Brockhaus was also bringing out secretly the very objectionable periodical *Hermes*. Even Metternich must have smiled a little when Gentz, using the *Hermes* as his ground for complaint, urged that more general measures were needed to control the "misuse of branch print shops, false firms, etc."<sup>4</sup>

During 1820 and 1821 the troubles that beset southern Europe were so great that the Vienna government could only congratulate itself that conditions in Germany were no worse than they were. The misuse of branch print shops was annoying, but it could wait. In the meantime the agitation centering in Württemberg for the medium-sized German states to combine against Austria and Prussia continued to grow. A notable pamphlet entitled *Manuskript aus Süddeutschland* had already appeared in 1820, but when its anonymous author (Lindner) came forth in 1822 with another pamphlet, *Über die gegenwärtige Lage von Europa*, Gentz went on the warpath. "Such a political meteor has not appeared in the German political heaven for a long time," he noted after reading the pamphlet "with great agitation."<sup>5</sup>

Lindner's remarkable work is a document of some importance in the history of German nationalist thought. At Metternich's behest, Gentz gave it a searching analysis, which was published in the *Allgemeine Zeitung* on March 21, 1822. Interpreting Lindner's work correctly as an

<sup>4</sup> Heinrich E. Brockhaus, *Die Firma F. A. Brockhaus von der Begründung bis zum hundertjährigen Jubiläum, 1805-1905* (Leipzig, 1905), 38; Ludwig Salomon, *Geschichte des deutschen Zeitungswesens* (3 vols., Oldenburg and Leipzig), 3:20-22; Heinrich E. Brockhaus, *Friedrich Arnold Brockhaus* (3 vols., Leipzig, 1872-81), 2:323-325; *Aus den Tagebüchern des Grafen Prokesch von Osten*, edited by Anton Count Prokesch von Osten (Vienna, 1909), 80; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 24-26.

<sup>5</sup> The full title page of the Lindner pamphlet reads: "Über die gegenwärtige Lage von Europa: Ein Bericht, Sr. H. dem Prinzen von XX. auf Befehl vorgelegt von Freiherr von X. Herausgegeben von Carl Heinrich Kollmannner. Frankfurt und Leipzig, auf Kosten des Herausgebers. 1822." The copy used by Gentz, with his markings on the pages, may be seen in the Staats-Archiv, Vienna, Interiora (61), 105. See also *Tagebücher*, 3:6; Pollard, "Germanic Confederation," in *The Cambridge Modern History*, 10:369; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:521-522.

attack on "everything which exists and especially everything *which exists in Germany*," Gentz sought to give his article a pervasive tone of outrage that such ideas could arise in the minds of men, to say nothing of their coming to expression. His fear of nationalism was, in fact, so great that he had shuddered at even the thought of what the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* might do to arouse a sense of Germanic solidarity; and he had refused to have any part in the publication of this great collection of historical source material.<sup>6</sup>

The dominant note in Lindner's work was a vigorous nationalism: "Germany does not have to be weak; our governments have only to *will* it, and we shall be the best, the most civilized, the strongest people on earth." Lindner called upon the princes to pool their interests in a great common purpose and to set the stage for the "German Bonaparte," who would bring into existence a new state "worthy of the enlightenment and civilization of the century." Gentz, resorting to a device frequently used in polemical writing, equated Lindner's nationalism with the hated Bonapartism and pictured Lindner's whole argument as a throwback to the political heresy that set no store by the sacred principle of equilibrium. He foresaw with trepidation the ejection of Austria from Germany, and, faithful Habsburg subject that he had become, he denounced Lindner in no uncertain terms.

Gentz's article was sent to the Austrian representatives at the various German courts, and Gentz himself composed the accompanying note, which called attention to the insidious nature of the Lindner pamphlet and emphasized the importance of maintaining the Germanic Confederation unchanged. Before long Lindner felt the kind of pressure that Vienna knew how to exert, and in 1824 he crawled to Metternich begging for forgiveness.<sup>7</sup>

Press conditions, after this episode, became not better but worse, and in September, 1822 — at the period when consultations were taking place in Vienna on the course to pursue at the Congress of Verona — Gentz drew up a memoir<sup>8</sup> urging positive steps to curb the abuses that he saw

<sup>6</sup> Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 3:241-257; Gentz to Schoenburg, February 17, 1822, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, 95; Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:310-311; George P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1928), 66-67; Mayr, *Geschichte der oesterreichischen Staatskanzlei*, 136.

<sup>7</sup> Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 3:240-241. See also the dispatch to Trautmannsdorff, February 6, 1822, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (31K) 95.

<sup>8</sup> "Mémoire sur la nécessité et sur les moyens de réprimer les abus de la presse en Allemagne," S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105. The manuscript is in the hand of a copyist, with additional marginal corrections in Gentz's writing. He has noted on the manuscript: "Written in the month of September, 1822." That this was September 4 or 5 is evident from his *Tagebücher*, 3:80.

rampant. He pointed to conditions in Saxony, Grand-ducal Hesse, and Württemberg as especially abominable. The "inconceivable laxity" of the Saxon government threatened unusual danger to the other states, since Leipzig was the center of the German book trade. In Hesse "censorship had existed only in name," and a terrible sheet, the *Mainzer Zeitung*, was allowed to flourish.<sup>9</sup> Finally, in Württemberg a situation prevailed which defied description. Whereas in the other German states "enemies of peace and public order are only tolerated, in . . . Württemberg," Gentz declared, "they are protected, caressed, and magnanimously assisted." Here was published the *Neckar Zeitung*, vilest of sheets. In its columns were to be found a selection of the most obnoxious articles from foreign papers, inevitably prejudiced news articles, and finally, under *mélanges*, an array more scandalous than could be imagined "of bitter jokes, gross blasphemies against religion and its ministers, and infamous anecdotes about the most respectable people, living and dead." A twofold program was desirable, Gentz concluded: first, the "conservative sovereigns—guardians of the general tranquility"—should agree upon means of exerting direct pressure upon truculent governments; and secondly, the federal commission of five should be "recomposed with care" and the diet itself "revived and reorganized," so that the measures recommended to it would be pushed through. These proposals found fairly complete embodiment in a new *Denkschrift* which Bernstorff, the Prussian foreign minister, had composed at about the same time and which Gentz had edited. At Bernstorff's instigation, an Austrian memoir, in whose composition Gentz likewise had had a hand, was laid before the czar at Verona, its purpose to persuade him that pressure must be exerted on the king of Württemberg.<sup>10</sup>

Immediately following the Congress of Verona, a select group of safely conservative German diplomats assembled at Vienna to arrive at some definite conclusion about what should be done. Gentz prepared two important papers setting forth the Austrian position;<sup>11</sup> and in a confidential report, which the timely arrival of a thousand ducats from Russia made particularly worth while, he summarized concisely for Nesselrode the measures that appeared desirable from the Austrian

<sup>9</sup> In January Gentz had taken issue with this paper in the columns of the *Beobachter Tagebücher*, 3:6.

<sup>10</sup> Eugen Guglia, "Eine ungedruckte Denkschrift von Gentz aus dem Jahre 1822," in the *Historische Vierteljahrsschrift*, 3 (1900):504-507; *Tagebücher*, 3:119.

<sup>11</sup> "Über die zum Schutze der Ordnung und Ruhe in der Bundesverfassung liegenden Mittel," published by Guglia in the *Historische Vierteljahrsschrift*, 3 (1900):511-519, and "Entwurf eines Präsidialvortrags über die Aufrechterhaltung der Pressgesetze," given in Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:317, 318; Heyck, *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 214, 215.

point of view.<sup>12</sup> They included a change in the procedure of the diet to eliminate useless talk; publication of only the results of the diet, so that divergence of views would not be advertised; limitation of sessions to four months in each year; clarification of the supremacy of the diet over the various diets in the states; action to halt the publication of the transactions of legislative bodies in the constitutional states; and above all a tightening of press regulations. On this last point Gentz wanted to proceed more drastically than did Bernstorff or even Metternich; but in the end it was decided merely to recommend that the press committee at the diet punish a few newspapers in Stuttgart.<sup>13</sup>

The Württemberg government was in too belligerent a mood to be impressed by these half measures and refused to join the chorus of praise with which, at Austria's behest, the Verona circular had been greeted at Frankfurt. Too late did the Stuttgart authorities realize their mistake. A humble retraction in the *Stuttgarter Hofzeitung* was not enough. In a dispatch written by Gentz,<sup>14</sup> Austria demanded either the recall of Wangenheim, Württemberg's representative at the diet, or that he be instructed to answer the Verona circular as had the other German courts. When Württemberg declined to follow either of these courses, Austria, Prussia, and—to the chagrin of the king of Württemberg—Russia, withdrew their representatives from Stuttgart. The king had depended on Russia. Austria requested France also to recall her minister, but since it did not appear seemly that France should mix in German affairs,<sup>15</sup> she was to base her action on the anti-Bourbonism fostered at Stuttgart.

The dispatch to Paris presenting this request was written by Gentz, and is a document of great interest.<sup>16</sup> Gentz pictured the king of Württemberg as a man who would have liked to play Napoleon. Before 1815, as crown prince, he had envisaged the extension of Württemberg across the Rhine: "Alsace would have formed the bulwark of Germany, and the line of the Vosges would have marked the frontier of Württemberg's domain"; but the peace of 1815 "killed his ideas of conquest."

<sup>12</sup> "Note confidentielle sur les affaires de l'Allemagne," S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105; *Tagebücher*, 3:137.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 149; Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:318.

<sup>14</sup> Dispatch to Oechsner, March 8, 1823, original in Gentz's hand, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105; *Tagebücher*, 3:161-162.

<sup>15</sup> Russia had not said a word about the recall of Wangenheim either. Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:320.

<sup>16</sup> Dispatch to Vincent, April 17, 1823, the original in Gentz's hand, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105. A fragment toward the end of the dispatch is printed in Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere* 4:32-33. See also *Tagebücher*, 3:175-176.

nationalism, persisted in peering through. "Among the Austrian political newspapers," the Prussian ambassador remarked, "the *Allgemeine Zeitung* appears like a rich, powerful, spirited, intelligent man in the midst of starved and stupid beggars."<sup>31</sup>

The unique position of privilege that Cotta's paper occupied in Austria was a tribute not only to the unparalleled excellence of the *Zeitung* itself, but to Cotta's gifts as a negotiator. It was no mean task to stay on the good side of the Vienna authorities without making the paper an organ for the expression of the Austrian point of view exclusively. Cotta accomplished this difficult feat by establishing the best sort of connections in Vienna. He had sought to win Gentz as a regular contributor, but Gentz wanted no such binding relationship.<sup>32</sup> He wrote for the paper occasionally, and the articles he published in the *Oesterreichische Beobachter* were reprinted at once in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*. In place of Gentz, Cotta, with great secrecy, had persuaded Pilat to write the Austrian articles, which appeared anonymously.

Nevertheless Cotta had his troubles. He claimed that Pilat continually warned of the imminent suppression of the *Zeitung* in order to mulct more money from its owner.<sup>33</sup> To what extent Pilat's reports were true, and to what degree Gentz may have been responsible for making them so, is hard to determine. Although Gentz told Pilat in 1822 that he had never favored suppression of the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, nevertheless in 1820 he had reminded Metternich that the time might be ripe to exclude it from Austria.<sup>34</sup> In general, Gentz's statements about the paper were so equivocal that it is difficult to fathom what he actually thought should be done. Without doubt he was frequently irritated by the policy of a paper whose reputation for neutrality was "merited neither by the purity of its intentions nor by the authenticity of its news."<sup>35</sup> He did not hesitate to complain directly to Cotta, and that excellent businessman,<sup>36</sup> out to make money as well as to defend principles, was not too proud to heed the voice from Vienna.

In 1821 Gentz reminded Cotta that attacks on the House of Rothschild were attacks on the Austrian credit. The editor of the *Zeit-*

<sup>31</sup> Erwin Hölzle, "Cotta, der Verleger, und die Politik," in the *Historische Vierteljahrschrift*, 29 (1935):576-596; Maltzahn to Bernstorff, June 24, 1830, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 92, Maltzahn Papers.

<sup>32</sup> Salomon, *Geschichte des Zeitungswesens*, 2:152-153.

<sup>33</sup> Heyck, *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 255-256.

<sup>34</sup> *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:101; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 1-2.

<sup>35</sup> Mémoire . . . sur les moyens de réprimer les abus de la presse," S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105.

<sup>36</sup> Weldler-Steinberg, *Rahel Varnhagen*, 476-477.

ung, Stegemann, had to promise Cotta that in the future "nothing whatever relating to the value of Austrian public securities, and nothing whatever relating to Mr. Rothschild (at least as affecting his relations with Austria)" would be printed.<sup>37</sup> But the paper continued to exasperate Vienna, partly, perhaps, because the Bavarian government hesitated to take drastic action for fear Cotta would move his business elsewhere. In 1826 Gentz sent an out-and-out threat to Cotta via Spiegel, the Austrian representative at Munich. Only Cotta's repeated promises to bar from his columns anything unpalatable to Vienna had kept the paper from being barred long ago from Austria, he said. In the past months, however, "such bitter hate against all the old order" had been displayed that the Austrian monarchy was considering seriously whether "the entire reading class of its subjects" could be allowed to form "their judgments regarding world events day after day" from such a paper. This letter alarmed Cotta so much that he made a special trip to Vienna, where he conferred with Metternich, Gentz, and Pilat. Few journeys of his industrious life had been "so satisfying" as this one, he said. The future held in store new annoyances from Vienna, but Cotta's paper kept its head above water; and it is significant to note that with Metternich's fall in 1848 the *Allgemeine Zeitung* lost its old power.<sup>38</sup>

Notwithstanding Gentz's constant concern with the affairs of Cotta, it must be said that his general interest in the German press waned after the successful administration of "the second portion of Karlsbad water" in 1824. After this victory his utterances and actions betray preoccupation with other matters. But when he did speak out on Germany in the years immediately following, it was the vein of 1824. "Our strongest and most energetic fight," he wrote to Metternich in 1825, "must be directed against the *overpowerfulness of the press*. . . . This conviction is inscribed in my soul more deeply than ever." And in 1826 he informed Pilat that freedom of the press "alone could destroy us. I therefore consider a censor, at once strong and skillfully organized, as the first of all our spiritual and political needs—and in consequence [I look upon] every consideration of *economy* that opposes a thoroughgoing reform of this . . . vital institution not merely as petty, but as senseless and criminal."<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Corti, *Rise of the House of Rothschild*, 266; Heyck, *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 252.

<sup>38</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, p. 26; Dispatch to Spiegel, March 30, 1828, S. A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105; Heyck, *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 255-256; Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 3:343.

<sup>39</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt 2, p 164; Gentz to Pilat, September [2?], 1826, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 23.

when a dispute between the censor officials and the *Studien-Hofkommission* over the advisability of using a work by Professor Schnabel of Prague, as a text for courses in public law, was referred to him. After a leisurely study of the question Gentz came to the conclusion that Schnabel's was "a thoroughly reprehensible work, based on false concepts, leading to the most dangerous consequences, and in striking disagreement with the principles of public law consistently adhered to, and up to this time recognized, in the Austrian state and in practice." His study of this book, Gentz went on to say, had brought forcibly to his attention the importance of the whole textbook question, and he thought the prohibition of the Schnabel book was by no means enough; one should stride on to the "introduction of other measures of greater comprehensiveness." He announced his intention of addressing a *Vortrag* to the emperor, pointing out the danger inherent in "the present condition of our educational system."<sup>43</sup> Whether these plans were sabotaged before they reached the emperor or whether they reached him and were turned down, is not known; but we have Gentz's own word that nothing came of his proposals.<sup>44</sup>

It is to the credit of Gentz, irrespective of the wisdom of the specific measures that he recommended, that he showed at least some insight into one of the fundamental issues of Austrian politics: Austria's future role in Middle Europe depended upon the establishment of the moral preponderance of Austrian principles, whatever those principles were or were to be. The Hofburg consistently evaded this issue. It lacked the imagination to see that the *Polizeistaat* had become an anachronism. And in spite of certain items on the credit side of his ledger, it cannot be said that the Gentz of the twenties rose far above his surroundings.

One of the most significant developments then taking place in Germany was the extension of Prussia's economic influence through the *Zollverein*. Gentz read Adam Smith all over again, watched approvingly while his friend Adam Müller tried to undermine the tariff union, and once condemned publicly Friedrich List's views as a disgrace to "the famed enlightenment of the age."<sup>45</sup> But that was all, and that was not nearly imaginative enough. Preoccupied with the political trivia that demanded his daily attention, Gentz stood in grave danger of becoming merely a useful routineer. He accepted the new leaders in the

<sup>43</sup> Gentz to Sedlnitzky, January 15, 1822, "Confidentielles Schreiben," S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (31K) 95; *Tagebücher*, 3:4.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 169, 359. See also Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 2:398-399.

<sup>45</sup> Baxa, *Adam Müller*, 374; *Tagebücher*, 2:56; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 2, pt. 2, p. 6, note.

try place where he established himself in the spring and stayed as long as possible. With typical *Gründlichkeit* he went at his gardening systematically, studying botany under the director of a tutor.

His friends were pious people. Pilat, who lived near him at Weinhaus in the summer, was one of the arch-Catholics of Vienna, and Pilat's home was generally looked upon as the rallying point for the clerical party. Maltzahn spoke of Pilat's circle as "the real Vienna congregation," and Gentz was generally regarded as one of the chief cogs in this spiritual society. Nevertheless, he could not muster any of the tense religious excitement of the other devotees of the cult, and to the end he hewed to a middle line between Catholicism and Protestantism.<sup>52</sup> The indecisiveness that early in his life had seemed to indicate merely perplexity and doubt was dignified at last into something approaching the nobility of a pragmatic synthesis.

The majestic beauty of the Alps had come to have a great attraction for Gentz, and late in the summer he was wont to set out for some spot that combined healing springs with fine scenery. The gout, from which he had long been a sufferer, bothered him increasingly with the years; but he derived a certain satisfaction from his ills. His letters are full of miseries, doctors, quacks, and cures. Gastein, his favorite resort was situated in one of the loveliest spots of the Salzburg region. Then a secluded and little-frequented retreat, it satisfied his newfound love of solitude. His solitude, however, was of his own kind, for he liked his domestic comforts, and on one occasion was accompanied on his vacation by a retinue of no less than eleven servants.

Though Gentz had without doubt become a fine gentleman, he was not by any means a gentleman of leisure. He worked very hard, for Metternich now leaned upon him for help in all phases of his work.<sup>53</sup> But he was allowed to arrange his schedule about as he pleased. He conferred with Metternich almost every day in the famous building on the Ballhausplatz, where the Congress of Vienna had met, where Doll-

<sup>52</sup> Maltzahn to Bernstorff, June 24, 1830, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 92, Maltzahn Papers; Mayr, *Geschichte der oesterreichischen Staatskanzlei*, 106.

<sup>53</sup> A memoir of 1820, which is preserved in the Vienna archives in its various stages, illustrates particularly well how Gentz and Metternich worked together. The original sketch in Metternich's handwriting is merely a rough outline indicating the main points that he wanted brought out. The draft that Gentz then prepared, and which may be seen in his handwriting, is identical, except for the insertion of two words by Metternich, with the finished copy, which was sent to Hardenberg in Berlin and returned. The style and the bulk of the argument had been left completely to Gentz. Here one finds an illustration for Srbik's shrewd observation that one might perhaps speak more properly of Gentz's system than of Metternich's system. S.A., Vienna, Preussen Collectanea, 4. See also Mayr, *Geschichte der oesterreichischen Staatskanzlei*, 149.

before his death in 1832, indicates the disorder into which his private affairs had fallen.<sup>10</sup>

Gentz now snatched in vain at every sort of political hack work that promised either temporary or permanent relief. Lord Cowley, the English ambassador at Vienna, helped him out occasionally; but Gentz's attempt to get something really substantial from London appears not to have been successful.<sup>11</sup> Count Orloff, in 1830, interceded for him at St. Petersburg; this court had been helpful in the past, but whether or not it again reacted generously is unknown.<sup>12</sup> What is known is that the Rothschilds remained faithful, and Gentz became a formal agent of that House, delivering frequent memoirs on public affairs and receiving an annual stipend of ten thousand florins.<sup>13</sup>

There were also a miscellany of political adventurers and seekers-after-favors with whom Gentz associated himself, for the usual pittance, during the last years of his life. In 1829, for instance, the son of Gustav IV of Sweden was in Vienna, parading the title "Prince Vasa" and ardently pretending to the Swedish throne. Gentz became his confidential adviser.<sup>14</sup> He likewise interested himself in the perennial controversy between Baden and Bavaria.<sup>15</sup> The pretensions of the House of Löwenstein to the throne of Bavaria secured his attention, as did the policies desired by the Duke of Nassau.<sup>16</sup> And the very last letter known to exist from Gentz's pen concerned a very secret negotiation by the exiled Duke Karl of Brunswick to recover certain property in his former duchy.<sup>17</sup>

Trivial as some of the foregoing details may appear in isolation, they

<sup>10</sup> "Tableau des dettes du Chev. de Gentz"; "Sommes reçues," Gentz to [Lebzelttern?] October 30, 1830; Lebzelttern to Metternich, November 1, 1830; Gentz to [Lebzelttern?], November 7, 1830; receipt signed by Gentz, November 8, 1830; Gentz to [Lebzelttern?], October 27, 1831; Lebzelttern to Gentz, October 28, 1831; receipt, April 30, 1832; Gentz to [Lebzelttern?], April 26, 1832; all in the Staats-Archiv, Vienna, Interiora, 105.

<sup>11</sup> *Tagebücher*, 5:216, 217, 234, 237, 270; Fournier, "Gentz," in *Der Friede*, 3:490; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 136-137, 141, 143-144.

<sup>12</sup> *Tagebücher*, 5:216, 239.

<sup>13</sup> Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 58.

<sup>14</sup> *Tagebücher*, 5:30-32, 37.

<sup>15</sup> Gentz to Tettenborn, April 19, 1830, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105; *Tagebücher*, 5:189. In connection with the earlier history of the controversy between Baden and Bavaria, see Nesselrode, *Lettres et papiers*, 5:247; Webster, *Castlereagh*, 2:117, 171, 178-179; *Gentz aux hospodars*, 1:231-232; Zwiédineck-Südenhorst, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 2:8-9; Stern, *Geschichte Europas*, 1:292-293; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 1, pp. 352-354.

<sup>16</sup> Constantin Erbprinz zu Löwenstein to Gentz, August 29, 1830, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 116; Nassau to Gentz, May 17, 1831, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, (61) 105; *Tagebücher*, 5:336.

<sup>17</sup> Gentz to [?], May 12, 1832, and other correspondence relating to the same subject may be found in the Staats-Archiv, Vienna, Interiora, 105.

acquire a real significance when viewed cumulatively in their relation to the change that took place in Gentz after 1828. His real loyalty to Metternich and Austrian official policy dated from the time in 1817 when he began to enjoy economic security; once that security was destroyed, his sense of obligation to Metternich and to Austrian policy vanished.

Fortunately his chronic state of financial crisis did not overwhelm Gentz. He still possessed the astounding resiliency that had served him so frequently and so well before. Jolted out of the rut of complacent service to the cause of conservatism, he rose superior to the influence of his pious, obscurantist friends;<sup>18</sup> he freed himself from the old widower's illusion that his own comfort was of supreme importance; he stood forth a man in the full sense of the word.

Gentz was an earthy man. He liked food, women, soft beds. He liked work and power. Often to be found skirting around the fringes of religion, he was never religious in the sectarian sense. He was afraid of death because he loved life. To God he might have turned as a last resort, but the world never failed him that badly.

So it was in 1828. With bankruptcy staring him in the face, he looked out upon the world and found it good. For the first time in years his physical ailments vanished; he felt fine. For the first time in years he became sentimentally excited about a woman, Princess Louise Schoenburg; and he spent a week writing her a letter.<sup>19</sup> From the date of his infatuation with Louise Schoenburg, some woman almost continuously absorbed Gentz's attention; that is, from his sixty-fourth to his sixty-eighth year. "In old age women are the best and the last resort," he noted with satisfaction.<sup>20</sup>

Gentz had had wide experience with women from all social classes, but he had never been dependent upon women in any spiritual sense. Women were occasional instruments that administered to his physical needs or his social ambitions, and only exceptionally did he feel any obligation for such services. Devoid of all prudishness, Gentz recorded his little adventures in a matter-of-fact tone that horrified his readers when, years later, the diaries were printed for a world that had come to make a fetish of the unmentionable.<sup>21</sup> Once in a while illegitimate

<sup>18</sup> Eugen Guglia, "Neue Briefe von Gentz," in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, 70 (1892):170.

<sup>19</sup> *Tagebücher*, 4:388-390, 393, 395-396, 405; Gentz to Alfred Schoenburg, June 2, 1828, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, 95.

<sup>20</sup> Gentz to Wallmoden, December 11, 1829 (copy), in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Varnhagen Nachlass.

<sup>21</sup> Andlaw, *Mein Tagebuch*, 1:260-261.

and even the emperor expressed his annoyance. Gentz lived to see himself cold-shouldered in many of the aristocratic houses where for so long he had been at home. With time his relations with Fanny underwent a subtle change, and people remarked that she was playing fast and loose with him. There was an element of truth in this, but Gentz retained until the end the limited kind of devotion which, he was wise enough to know, was all that he could well ask of the full-blooded creature to whom he had given himself heart and soul.

Every lover is supposed to stand in need of a confidant, and Gentz had several. Chief among them was Anton Prokesch-Osten, a young man still in his thirties, to whom Gentz became very much attached. No other friend save Adam Müller ever became so intimate with Gentz as Prokesch. At once scholarly and sociable, literary and practical, Prokesch had first come to the fore as the protégé of the powerful Schwarzenberg family. This in itself was sufficient cause for Prokesch to be viewed askance by Metternich and his henchmen; but in addition Prokesch consorted at Vienna with liberal and "arty" people like Grillparzer and Franz Schubert, and declared himself committed to work all his life for the downfall of despotism.<sup>30</sup> When, during the Greek revolt, he got himself sent to the Near East as a sort of news-gatherer extraordinary, he was opposed, on obvious grounds, by both Gentz and Metternich; but he performed his task with such remarkable efficiency that he won both the admiration of Gentz and the support of Metternich.<sup>31</sup>

When after several years Prokesch returned to Vienna, he became intimate with Gentz at once. He fostered Gentz's new-found delight in lyric poetry, particularly in that of Heine, and he strengthened Gentz in the unpopular stand he was taking on political issues of the day. "You have given me the courage," Gentz wrote in gratitude, "to grasp and hold fast to the joys of life that fate still offers me." Prokesch retained for Gentz the highest regard, published many of his papers posthumously, and in his diary paid him the noblest of tributes: "The man whom I respected most among the living was a person of many weaknesses: Gentz. He was a man!"<sup>32</sup>

Prokesch had interested himself in the Duke of Reichstadt; he be-

<sup>30</sup> Friedrich Engel-Janosi, "Die Jugend des Grafen Anton Prokesch-Osten," in *Mitteilungen des Instituts für oesterreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 49 (1935):428.

<sup>31</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 92-93, 225, 289-292; Gentz to Metternich, December 31, 1826, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, 105; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 14.

<sup>32</sup> Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 1:368; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 173.

## 22. Gentz the Man

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**P**ERSONAL FACTORS conditioned in decisive fashion Gentz's attitude toward public affairs between the outbreak of the Russo-Turkish War in 1828 and his death in 1832. The disintegration of the financial arrangements that had given him economic security in Austria for a decade reduced his stake in the conservative system and fostered in him a critical attitude toward the things Metternich stood for; the liaison with Fanny Elssler broke his social ties with many of the fashionable aristocratic houses, whose point of view he had largely reflected; the influence of Prokesch gave him the courage to speak out in pronounced opposition to the policies of his chief and of his government.

Gentz's leftward swing did not occur suddenly. It was rather a vague shift, which expressed itself in sometimes irascible objection to certain specific policies. The position at which he arrived by the year of his death lacked the dogmatic consistency of his earlier conservatism; nevertheless it had a basic, though somewhat elastic, principle. This principle was that an intransigent maintenance of the old order had become a practical impossibility; the moment had come for the forces of conservatism to retire in good order and take their stand anew, but on a different front.

In a letter among the most widely quoted of the thousands he wrote, Gentz gave eloquent expression to his drift toward a position of resigned acceptance of the new political order. The letter was written in September, 1828, to Frau von Helvig — the Amalie Imhof of his younger days — who had broken a long silence to remonstrate with him about the stand he had been taking on public questions. Gentz's reply was written approximately when his financial affairs were approaching the first of those crises which marked his last years. "World history," he wrote, "is an eternal transition from the old to the new. In the continuous rotation of things everything destroys itself, and the fruit that has

grown to ripeness detaches itself from the plant that brought it forth. Side by side with the great and, in the long run, ever preponderating number of those who are working for the new, there must necessarily be a smaller number that seek, with moderation and purpose, to uphold the old order; this rotation will lead to the rapid downfall of everything existing." For himself, he had long ago felt called, "by virtue of the talents and means" with which nature had endowed him, to be a "defender of the old and an opponent of innovations." But all the time he knew that "the spirit of the age would in the end remain the more powerful." Despite the inevitability of ultimate defeat, however, he did not propose to shift his ground, for "only a bad soldier leaves his colors."<sup>1</sup>

The same note of resignation is evident in a letter written a few months later to Varnhagen. "Perhaps I should have done better," he confessed, "not to leave my earlier career [of journalist]; fate threw me into another career whose illusions indemnified me for a time. Whatever I may think of that now, I have chosen my course, and must, with the consciousness of the incompleteness of that experiment, even wish to be forgotten as a writer."<sup>2</sup>

A decided change, more in mood than in ideas, is apparent in these letters to Frau von Helvig and Varnhagen. No longer did the soldier really enjoy the fight, and though Gentz was still loyal to his chief, he had begun to question his leadership. The record shows that during 1828 Gentz became more or less openly critical of Metternich; he felt particularly that Austria was not making sufficient efforts to bring London into open opposition to St. Petersburg during the Russo-Turkish campaign of 1828.<sup>3</sup>

The Russian government fortunately "arrived at the conclusion that the fall of the Turkish Empire would create more problems than it solved," and Gentz had to acknowledge that the Peace of Adrianople, which ended the war, was "the greatest luck that Europe could experience."<sup>4</sup> For about a year from the time when he perceived that the war would not turn out badly, Gentz was periodically his old conservative self. He rejoiced at the ascendancy of the ultras in France, deplored every tendency to make concessions to the liberals, and consoled him-

<sup>1</sup> Schlesier, *Schriften von Gentz*, 5:319-322.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:275.

<sup>3</sup> Maltzahn to Bernstorff, June 29, 1828, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 81, Wien I, no. 139a, Secret Correspondence; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 317-318; Gentz to Strangford, July 5, 1828, S.A., Vienna, Nachlass Gentz, 23.

<sup>4</sup> *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy*, 2:102-103; Gentz to Ottenfels, October 14, 1829, in Prokesch, *Zur Geschichte der orientalischen Frage: Briefe aus dem Nachlasse Friedrichs von Gentz*, 193-197. See also Krauter, *Ottenfels*, 252.

self with the thought that the "unavoidable new explosions" that were bound to occur in the world would find him dead and buried.<sup>5</sup>

Upon other occasions, however, he strayed off the conservative reservation and appeared to have moved into the camp of Mr. Jeremy Bentham, the English "radical." Gentz's views on the future organization of the Greek government will illustrate the point. An assortment of candidates were interested in acquiring the crown of Greece. Prince Philip of Hesse, an Austrian general who had been endorsed by England, asked Gentz's advice, and subsequently, in a letter Gentz wrote for him, announced the withdrawal of his candidacy.<sup>6</sup> Prokesch could not understand why Gentz had not encouraged Philip to go after the crown, and he wrote as much to Gentz. This led Gentz in January, 1830, to make the following observations: "I find it not only deplorable but highly ridiculous . . . that they want to name a German prince as sovereign over Greece. . . . Consider the single matter of religion. . . . *Why a prince? Why a sovereign?* Greece is cut out *to be a republic*, because of its geographical situation, because of its physical construction, the character of its inhabitants, its present poverty, and because of all its antecedents; a constitution like that of Switzerland, with the difference only that a president clothed with almost unlimited power should stand at its head, is what I call a Greek government; and if the president could be a man like Mavrocordato or Trikoupes, there would remain for me nothing further to wish."<sup>7</sup> Gentz may have hoped that with Mavrocordato as president of Greece he could utilize his old friendship to establish with him a relationship as advantageous as his former connection with the hospodars of Wallachia. But quite apart from this possibility, his recommendation for the future Greek government evidences the greater elasticity with which, in his last years, he interpreted the fundamental canons of his political thought.

Not until the July revolution in France, however, did Gentz directly oppose the policies of his chief. As late as June 13, 1830, he told Metternich that the wise course for Austria was "persistence in the system which we have followed in the last years."<sup>8</sup> But though he might still pay lip service to the old system, he was no longer the important cog in its operation that he once had been. The easy familiarity with Metter-

<sup>5</sup> *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:262, 267, 271; *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 1:105-106; Gentz to Wallmoden, December 11, 1829, in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Varnhagen Nachlass.

<sup>6</sup> *Tagebücher*, 5:115; Crawley, *Greek Independence*, 175.

<sup>7</sup> Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 1:325-326.

<sup>8</sup> *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, pp. 346-347.

nich, which similarity of views and congeniality of taste had brought into existence, was giving way to a rather tense friendliness; and no longer did he compose a large share of the official papers.

Gentz had greeted with joy the advent to power in France of the ultraconservative Polignac; but by June, 1830, he was criticizing Polignac's policies. When the revolution broke out in July he attributed it squarely to the foolhardy policy of the French ministry. A personal acquaintance and admirer of Louis Philippe, whom he had frequently eulogized, Gentz felt incapable of displaying the proper horror over what had taken place west of the Rhine. He fell into arguments with Sedlnitzky, the ultraconservative minister of police, whose influence over Metternich he greatly feared; and he told Prokesch that he wished Sedlnitzky would break his neck.<sup>9</sup>

After England and Prussia had recognized the Orleans monarchy, there was at first nothing for Austria to do but to recognize it likewise, and on September 8, in a letter to Louis Philippe, written by Gentz, Emperor Francis announced his decision "not to intervene in the internal troubles of France." In spite of this conciliatory act and in spite of his confidence in the peaceful intentions of Metternich and Kolowrat—the two most powerful officials in the monarchy—Gentz was alarmed about the possibilities of war. To Prokesch he declared that the constitutional principle could no longer be held in check by the old concert-of-Europe methods; and he defended Louis Philippe as at least the representative of the monarchial idea. Louis Philippe and his following were not so consequent in their logic, Gentz admitted, as either the radicals or the ultras; but he was no longer particular about faultlessly logical political positions.<sup>10</sup>

Illustrative of Gentz's lack of any consistent, doctrinaire point of departure in forming political judgments at this period is his attitude toward the revolt in Belgium. There was no compelling reason why his reaction to the events in Belgium should not have been fairly similar to his reaction to the revolution in France. Yet such was not the case. "Force alone must subdue the Belgians," he declared. "All together they are not worth a shot of powder; and yet powder alone can bring them to reason." When, a few days later, Prokesch wrote that the constitutional principle was bound to have its day, Gentz declared that he

<sup>9</sup> *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:267, 292; Viktor Bibl, *Metternich in neuer Beleuchtung* (Vienna, 1928), 31; Lord Cowley, *Diary and Correspondence*, 179, 185–186; *Briefe von und an Gentz*, vol. 3, pt. 2, p. 345; *Tagebücher*, 5:199; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 44.

<sup>10</sup> *Tagebücher*, 5:207; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 5:30; *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 1:146; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 45, 49, 51; *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:303–304.

thought so too and was glad to find someone in Vienna who agreed with him. One can only conclude that though there were moments in the last months of 1830 when Gentz's insight was profound, he actually was quite bewildered by the rapid movement of events and knew not where to turn. He could point out that the only real cause for fear was the "incurable misery of the lower classes of the people"; but since he assumed fatalistically that the misery was incurable, and in fact spoke out against reform in Austria "on account of the impossibility of carrying it through,"<sup>11</sup> he might just as well have been blind to the existence of suffering.

Perhaps because he had no truly fixed ideas on anything, Gentz for a time in 1830 was on good terms with Metternich; in October he wrote that Metternich had become almost more friendly and considerate toward him than he had ever been. An exceedingly vocal war party in Vienna, however, had by December brought Metternich almost completely over to their side.<sup>12</sup> That was incentive enough for Gentz to take a positive stand on a major issue once more, and with great energy he espoused the side opposite his chief.

There is much below the surface in this difference of opinion on policy. Gentz's loyalties, no less than his ideas, had been undergoing a gradual reorientation. He was no longer Metternich's man except in a perfunctory sense, but the break did not come suddenly, and it was never complete. Until the end Gentz occupied almost the position of a member of the family in the Metternich household. But since 1828 he had carried on an undercover correspondence with Kolowrat, minister of the interior and Metternich's arch enemy in the government.<sup>13</sup> He consorted on congenial terms with Wessenberg and other men of moderate and sometimes liberal opinions, while his relations with his old conservative cronies were strained and uncomfortable. He repaid the Rothschilds for their constant generosity by pushing their political views with far greater enthusiasm and sincerity than he could find for Metternich's policies. It was typical that the Rothschilds and Gentz should be strong for peace, but that Metternich should be inclined toward war.

Metternich was obsessed with the idea that all revolutions resulted from the machinations of a network of secret societies, and since he had

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 307, 320; Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 1:398, 400; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 70.

<sup>12</sup> *Briefe von Gentz an Pilat*, 2:316; Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 1:396; Eckardt, *Gentz: Staatsschriften und Briefe*, 2:289; Kübeck, *Tagebücher*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 302.

<sup>13</sup> Prokesch, *Zur Geschichte der orientalischen Frage: Briefe aus dem Nachlasse Friedrichs von Gentz*, 173–175.

come to think himself as the personification of the established order, he looked upon revolution, wherever it might occur, as a personal attack upon himself. The outbreak of revolution in Poland, following upon the heels of the events in France and Belgium, made him particularly susceptible to the suggestion that the time had come for the conservative forces of Europe to pool their resources once more against France, the breeder of revolutionary ideas. He was unable, however, to repress a certain *Schadenfreude* at the discomfiture the Poles were causing Russia.<sup>14</sup> Leading advocates of a French war were Alfred Schoenburg, the Austrian representative at Stuttgart, who had come to Vienna to agitate with all his might,<sup>15</sup> and Count Senfft, the Austrian representative at Turin, who was soon recalled because of excessive ultraroyalism and placed in Metternich's intimate circle as an additional plague to Gentz.<sup>16</sup>

Gentz made no secret of his disgust at the failure of the die-hards to recognize the fact that Europe was facing "new forms, new combinations, new doctrines," which in some fashion would have to be accepted. To sympathetic friends like the Rothschilds he declared: "There is at this moment *absolutely no political* complication that could not be amicably settled without difficulty. The danger of war lies not in *things*, but in *men*—in the hatred of a few great cabinets toward the system of government produced by the last revolution in France, in the insensate desire of some ministers to display this hatred at every opportunity, in the vain threats, in the publicly advertised preparations for war . . . wherewith one presumes to *impress* or to *frighten* France."<sup>17</sup>

Through the extraordinary efficient connections the Rothschilds maintained with the various foreign offices, Gentz sought on his own responsibility to counteract the influence of the Austrian warmongers. He tried particularly to gain the ear of his old friend Louis Philippe. On December 9, for example, after stressing the harm the newspapers were doing by spreading rumors about the increase in armaments, he requested that the matter be called to the attention of Louis Philippe "with all the precautions that the delicacy of my personal position exacts."<sup>18</sup>

By the middle of February, although he reasoned to the contrary in

<sup>14</sup> Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 1:407; Srbik, *Metternich*, 1:653.

<sup>15</sup> Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 66; Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 1:407-408; *Tagebücher*, 5:239.

<sup>16</sup> *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 1:164-165; Maltzahn to Frederick William III, September 12, 1830, G.S.A., Berlin, Rep. 81, Wien I, no. 141a, Secret Correspondence; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 145.

<sup>17</sup> *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 1:108-109, 146-152.      <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 160-161.

his reports to the Rothschilds, Gentz thought war was unavoidable; and his fears were fully shared by Kübeck, an increasingly influential Austrian official, who viewed affairs in much the same light as Gentz did at this period. Gentz's temper became more and more irascible. He had disputes with Metternich, with Metternich's bride, with Alfred Schoenburg, with Windischgraetz. In Vienna the news was bruited about that Gentz had "become a revolutionary." When Gentz heard that Schoenburg, long an intimate friend, was among those who gave credence to such rumors, he was angry enough to break formally with Viennese society. He invited Schoenburg, along with two "of the best representatives of the Good Cause," Prince Reuss and General Vieth, to hear him explain himself; but whether or not he convinced his friends that he was no revolutionary, it is certain that he did not change his ways. He continued to carry on acrimonious arguments with Metternich, and since he found little sympathy for his own point of view, he became more than ever disgusted with politics. "The old phraseology with which our dispatches are filled irks me more every day," he wrote to Wessenberg. "I wish that we could press forward on a line of independence as much as our position in the middle of the continent allows, and that we bothered much less than heretofore about how the wind blows from Petersburg, Berlin, and even from London. I believe that today we should arrive at a solid basis of peace far more easily and quickly by means of a close and sensible agreement with Paris . . . than by means of all triple, quadruple, and quintuple arrangements."<sup>19</sup>

The difficulties between Austria and France were not decreased by the revolutions which in the early part of 1831 broke out in Italy. France, understandably enough, was unwilling for Austria to arrogate to herself the right of regulating Italian affairs forever. By May, however, the relations between the two countries had become less tense. Austrian finances were in no condition to bear the strain of war, and Archduke Carl emerged from his retirement for a brief moment to speak some powerful words for peace. The situation had been materially eased also by the fact that in March, Casimir Périer had become head of the French ministry. As a measure to restore the confidence of the two powers in their mutually pacific intentions, Périer broached the idea of doing something to promote disarmament. Metternich gave the pro-

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 172; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 83-84; Kübeck, *Tagebücher*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 331; *Tagebücher*, 5:268, 271, 274, 280, 289; Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 5:95; Gentz to Schoenburg, March 15, 1831, S.A., Vienna, Interiora, 95; Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 2:14; Fournier, "Gentz," in *Der Friede*, 3:490.

things should appear in the Prussian dispatches, for the sole purpose of mystifying Gentz.<sup>22</sup>

Gentz, having taken his line, stuck to it. To the sturdy Wessenberg, always a willing listener to criticism of Metternich, he stormed: "Mistrust of everybody, spying on trusted friends, and the opening of all letters without exception has reached a point here which cannot be duplicated in all the history of the secret police. . . . Every expression of opinion that by the widest stretch of the imagination smacks of deviation from the 'correct' is damned and treated with incomparable intolerance. Every day I have to be the unhappy witness to the conversations and diatribes caused by the intercepted letters, in which Count Sedlnitzky and others whom I do not want to name play the chief roles. I myself am frequently charged with lax purism and too much independence, though not yet (like you) with pronounced liberalism; but I am so little bothered by these accusations that I never suppress a truth, or what I believe to be a truth, and I often get involved in the most furious debates with the prince personally."<sup>23</sup>

The record shows that these assertions were not exaggerated. Of Metternich's Italian policy Gentz was a sharp critic. He hoped that the powers would insist on the restoration to the Poles of the constitution granted them in 1815! He supported Wessenberg and Esterhazy, who had made themselves very unpopular in Vienna because of the way they had conducted the Austrian end of the negotiation at London on the Belgian situation. He combated the devious course that Metternich was pursuing in Germany, where the ground was being prepared for a further extension of the Karlsbad decrees. Gentz could find no hope in additional measures against representative constitutions and freedom of the press in Germany. The policy that Austria should undertake, he declared, was a policy that would improve conditions among the common people.<sup>24</sup>

This sudden interest in the general welfare was the outgrowth of fear that a social conflict was impending: "The possibility of an uprising of the lower classes against the upper classes, of the poor against the rich, that is the danger which hovers over us," he wrote in Janu-

<sup>22</sup> Metternich and Klinkowström, *Metternich's nachgelassene Papiere*, 5:97, 101-105, 111, 223, 226-227; Prokesch *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 1:409-410; Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Gentz*, 2:320; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 84; *Tagebücher*, 5:275, 289, 301, 334, 339.

<sup>23</sup> Fournier, "Gentz," in *Der Friede*, 3:514.

<sup>24</sup> Prokesch, *Nachlass des Grafen Prokesch: Briefwechsel mit Gentz und Metternich*, 2:24; *Aus dem Nachlasse von Gentz*, 2:229-230; Fournier, *Gentz und Wessenberg*, 138-140; Fournier, *Studien und Skizzen*, 3:242-262; *Tagebücher*, 5:334; Prokesch, *Tagebücher*, 118-119; Bibl, *Metternich*, 144-156.