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THE BOURGEOISIE IN SOUTHWESTERN GERMANY, 1500-1789: A RISING CLASS?

I

STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GERMAN BOURGEOISIE, 1500-1789

In German history the concept of a “rising middle class” has been applied to three major periods of development in three different ways. Traditionally, German historians have been concerned with describing (1) the development of towns and an urban bourgeoisie during the Middle Ages; then (2) the rise of a bourgeois class of university trained jurists during the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries; and finally, (3) the rise of the modern middle class common to an industrialized society.

By 1500 the bourgeois jurists had acquired extensive influence in urban governments, and even before the Reformation, they were also becoming increasingly indispensable as administrative councillors in the governments of the territorial princes. During the sixteenth century the university educated bureaucrat certainly represented a new social type, quite distinct from the medieval burgher; he belonged to a group which had truly “risen”.¹ Was the position of this class at all undermined by the warfare and general depression which followed the Reformation era? Certainly populations declined, and economic decline affected almost every one of the many free towns which had been the chief centers of urban civilization in the Holy Roman Empire.² When prosperity did return some two centuries after the Thirty Years War, it did not occur in the same towns and territories which had benefitted from the boom of the sixteenth century.³ And although the economic revival of the eighteenth century increased the standard of living for the German bourgeoisie, it does not seem to have

¹ Friedrich Lütge, *Deutsche Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte. Ein Überblick* (Berlin, 1952), pp. 229-233.

² That the decline began before the Thirty Years' War is demonstrated by Theodore K. Rabb, “The Effects of the Thirty Years' War on the German Economy”, in: *The Journal of Modern History*, XXXIV (1962), pp. 40-51.

³ Wilhelm Treue, “Die Wirtschaft und der Dreissigjährige Krieg”, in: Bruno Gebhardt, *Handbuch der Deutschen Geschichte*, ed. Herbert Grundmann (Stuttgart, revised ed. 1955), II, pp. 412-436.

produced a new middle class at all.¹ Of course historians of this era do speak of a new bourgeois *spirit* which they associate with an increase in social esteem reflected in the literary brilliance of the age of Goethe and Schiller.² But, as we hope to demonstrate, it is the emergence of a new role conception and not the rise of a new class which lies behind this.

The persistence of the early modern bourgeoisie in German society, must also be seen against the background of late industrialization. Certainly there is considerable lack of clarity about the interpretation of the third period of German history to which the concept of the rising middle class has been applied; the nineteenth century. Allegedly the bourgeoisie then acted as “carriers” of economic development and rose to become the dominant class in society, finally even assuming “political leadership”.³ Allegedly also, the new industrial bourgeoisie was important for the development of Liberalism, although the intelligentsia was still being recruited from the early modern bourgeoisie: clergy and bureaucracy.⁴ Despite all assertions that the new entrepreneurs provided liberal leadership, it cannot be denied that the government of the Constituent Assembly of 1848 was overwhelmingly dominated by middle class jurists, bureaucrats, and intellectuals.⁵

It would seem that confusion has arisen because two entirely different phenomena have not been distinguished from each other: the “rise” of a new class (which implies a change in the social origin of a group), and the “rise” of new attitudes (role concepts) held by a class whose members had been in the same class for centuries. It is possible that historians have confused the two kinds of social change because they have sought to work with an inadequately defined concept of “rising middle class”. Actually it means hardly more than social

¹ Cf. Rudolf Seigel, *Gericht und Rat in Tübingen. Von den Anfängen bis zur Einführung der Gemeindeverfassung 1818-1822*, Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Geschichtliche Landeskunde in Baden-Württemberg, Reihe B Forschungen, Bd. 13 (Stuttgart, 1960), pp. 51 ff. who analyzes the wealth of Tübingen’s patrician magistrates and councillors from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

² Leo Balet, *Die Verbürgerlichung der Deutschen Kunst, Literatur und Musik im 18. Jahrhundert* (Strassburg, 1936); Fritz Brüggemann, “Der Kampf um die bürgerliche Welt- und Lebensanschauung in der deutschen Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts”, in: *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, III (pp. 94-127; Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Entstehung des Historismus* (Munich, 1936), p. 326; Walter Horace Bruford, *Germany in the Eighteenth Century: The Social Background of the Literary Revival* (Cambridge, England, 1939); and cf. idem, *Culture and Society in Classical Weimar 1775-1806* (Cambridge, England, 1962).

³ Lütge, pp. 302-303.

⁴ Hans Gerth, *Die Sozialgeschichtliche Lage der bürgerlichen Intelligenz um die Wende des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Diss. Frankfurt am Main, 1935), pp. 14, 16, and 17 ff.

⁵ Jacques Droz, *Les Révolutions Allemandes de 1848* (Paris, 1957), p. 270.

mobility, or “movement, either upward or downward, between higher or lower social classes”.¹ Yet while such a definition is workable for the sociologist, the historian must ask whether social mobility can be measured over the course of several centuries during which the economic structure of society and the prevailing industrial technology are constantly changing. Is the prospering of a class which has enjoyed about the same kind of esteem for several generations quite the same as its “rise” or upward social mobility? One can deny that they are the same, but one cannot deny that prosperity affects status. And esteem is influenced by the social distance between classes which is itself affected by the degree to which different classes share or do not share in economic growth.

Of course, the creation of social distance need not necessarily imply either the rise of a new class or the disappearance of an old one. Regional differences, so characteristic of pre-industrial society also affect social distance. Early modern society was not as homogeneous as modern industrial society. The social structure varied from region to region, and differences among classes could be determined by differences in regional society. Nor was German society in particular, as homogeneous as that of France and England where national and unified monarchies had established themselves during the early modern period. The society of the declining Holy Roman Empire can be understood if it is analyzed in terms of the heterogeneous regional elements which composed it. Swabia was not Prussia. The original strongholds of bourgeois culture were the free towns of the empire, and the majority of them were located in the southwest.

II

THE ECONOMY OF THE SOUTHWEST, 1500-1789

At the end of the Middle Ages the southwestern part of the Holy Roman Empire (Swabia) contained 36 free towns and the remainder of the empire only 26.² By the end of the fifteenth century these had gained representation in the Imperial Diet (*Reichstag*) and had developed an urban culture peculiar to Germany until the onset of industrialization in the nineteenth century. The economies of most of these towns depended on local trade – either in agricultural products such as wine – or, on trade in manufactured goods necessary to a farming

¹ Bernard Barber, *Social Stratification. A Comparative Analysis of Structure and Process* (New York, 1957), p. 356.

² Robert Gradmann, “Schwäbische Städte”, in: *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin* (1916), p. 432.

population; iron, salt, leather goods, and textiles. As late as the eighteenth century many of the towns contained at most 5,000 to 10,000 people, often fewer. Nevertheless, they were towns and not merely country villages. Their social structure was such that they supported a well defined petty bourgeoisie which was rigidly separated from the peasantry which in this area of Germany was mostly free of servile obligations. The petty bourgeoisie (*Spießbürger*) enjoyed the highest prestige obtainable on the local level when the nobility and the more aristocratic bourgeoisie was not also present.¹ Only a few of the towns enjoyed major importance: Augsburg, Ulm, and Nürnberg – and although Augsburg had contained over 100,000 people during the sixteenth century, it, along with its neighbors had declined to one third its size by the eighteenth century.²

The economic decline of the imperial towns occurred even before the Thirty Years' War. The economy of the southwest had certainly been undermined by the Peasants' War of 1525 as well as by the frequent peasant uprisings which preceded it.³ After 1520 Europe was plagued by almost continuous inflation (the Price Revolution); the result of the discovery of gold and silver in the New World and its expenditure on inflation-producing wars during the reign of Charles V and after. The Reformation, the onslaughts of the Ottoman Turks who reached the gates of Vienna in 1529, and the jealous rivalry between the Habsburgs and Valois made any thought of peace impossible. The treasures of Mexico and Peru were consumed by cannon fodder, and the resources of the great banking houses of Augsburg and Nürnberg were not spared in the abyss of eternal strife.⁴

But the fate of the imperial towns in the southwest was possibly even more completely affected by the Dutch Revolt. During the sixteenth century Antwerp was the trade and banking capital of Europe. The overland routes which tied together the commerce of

¹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 442, who describes such a town as it existed in the nineteenth century before it was affected by the industrial revolution, and when its society was still like that of the eighteenth century.

² See p. 292, note 1.

³ Günther Franz, *Der Deutsche Bauernkrieg* (Darmstadt, 5 ed., 1958), pp. 1-91; cf. *Die Frühbürgerliche Revolution in Deutschland*. Referat und Diskussion zum Thema: Probleme der frühbürgerlichen Revolution in Deutschland, 1476-1535, ed. Gerhard Brendler (Berlin, 1962).

⁴ Earl J. Hamilton, *American Treasure and the Price Revolution in Spain (1501-1650)* (Cambridge, Mass., 1934); *idem*, "American Treasure and the Rise of Capitalism, 1500-1700", in: *Economica*, IX (1929), pp. 338-357; Frederick C. Lane, "The Mediterranean Spice Trade", in: *American Historical Review*, XLV (1940), pp. 581-590; *idem*, "Oceanic Expansion in the Creation of Oceanic Commerce", in: *The Tasks of Economic History*, Supplement X (1950), pp. 19-31; Royall Tyler, *The Emperor Charles the Fifth* (Fairlawn, N.J., 1956).

Augsburg, Ulm and the other towns of the southwest with that of Switzerland, Burgundy, Italy, France – and headed eastward to Russia via Cracow – became insignificant when Antwerp itself was destroyed by the Spanish in 1585. It was to Antwerp that the spices of the Portuguese empire were conveyed, and it was through their Antwerp offices that the Augsburg bankers arranged to finance the expansion of Portugal. It was here that English and Spanish wool was traded, and Italian silks shipped to all the world. Brabant itself was the center of a sizeable textile industry which was run from Antwerp. When the city was captured the refugee merchants and craftsmen fled to Amsterdam in droves and within one generation that port became the most important commercial town of Europe. But the Dutch traded along the North Sea coast to the Baltic and established a completely new network of trade in the north which no doubt had an adverse affect on the southern trade routes and the commerce of the free towns of the empire.¹

The wars of the seventeenth century, the Thirty Years' War and the Wars of Louis XIV had an even more devastating effect on the urban civilization of the free towns. How severe the impact of these wars was, may be seen in the history of the wine trade after 1618 – for it was viticulture and the wine trade deriving from it, upon which the Swabian towns had based their prosperity. Between 1300 and 1618 vineyard cultivation had achieved phenomenal expansion in the southwest. Both the plantations and the wine processing places were controlled by the town bourgeoisie and not by the peasantry. Esslingen (near Stuttgart) was the chief producer of Swabian wines, and Ulm the chief shipping center. The Thirty Years' War ended all further expansion of Swabian viticulture and caused so extensive a destruction that recovery became impossible. By 1648, for example, three quarters of the total vineyard area of Swabia lay uncultivated, and since restoration of the vine was a slow process which required years of patient labor, the subsequent wars of Louis XIV which hit the southwest harder than other parts of Germany, made it difficult to keep alive the remaining vines, much less allow for planting new ones. Vineyard cultivation also required the employment of a large labor force, and the decimation of the population of course created a severe labor shortage – what hands were available were needed for grain cultivation and for the maintenance of subsistence farming. The general population decline in Swabia is reflected in the figures available for Württem-

¹ A general summary of the economic, social, and political changes involved in the Dutch Revolt may be found in *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, ed. J. A. van Houtte et al, vols. V-VI (Utrecht, 1952 ff.).

berg, the largest duchy in the Swabian circle. Its population was estimated at 450,000 in 1618, but declined to 166,000 by 1652. The total effect of the wars was thus a decline in the standard of living and the destruction of the chief industry, the wine-growing industry. The quality and quantity of wines diminished, adulteration of the product took place and the markets for Swabian wines rapidly vanished.¹ The oppressive tariff policies of the dukes of Württemberg during the eighteenth century naturally, also contributed to the ruin.²

By the end of the eighteenth century the free towns of the southwest were therefore in a state of extreme social and economic disintegration. Their political independence was also threatened. Strassburg had already been annexed by Louis XIV, and although most of the other towns managed to hold on to their independence until 1802 when Napoleon allowed Baden and Württemberg to annex most of the smaller ones, the dukes of Württemberg harassed their trade at frequent intervals during the eighteenth century in order to force them to submit to his sovereignty.³

Economic decline also affected social life. Oligarchical governments came to prevail everywhere by the eighteenth century, although a few had arisen as early as the sixteenth.⁴ They were unresponsive in the face of crises and proved unable to solve the problems of their times. During the eighteenth century there were often rebellions when the citizen's assembly (*Bürgerschaft*) disagreed with the town council's

¹ Karl Heinz Schröder, *Weinbau und Siedlung in Württemberg, Forschungen zur deutschen Landesgeschichte*, vol. 73 (Remagen, 1953), pp. 50-67. The significance of the declining wine production is reflected in the trade turnover for wines of the town of Esslingen, the chief producing town of Swabia. Its greatest turnover occurred before the Peasants' War when in the period 1501-1510 2,337 *Fuder* wine were traded. By 1611-1620 a considerable decline had already set in and only 651 *Fuder* were traded. In spite of some recovery by the eighteenth century, the greatest trade turnover during 1731-1740 only reached 928 *Fuder*. The low was 341 *Fuder* for 1791-1800. See Erwin Salzmann, *Weinbau und Weinhandel in der Reichsstadt Esslingen bis zu deren Übergang an Württemberg 1802*, *Tübinger Wirtschaftswissenschaftliche Abhandlungen*, ed. Carl Fuchs et al, V (Stuttgart, 1930), p. 170.

² Salzmann, pp. 178 ff., 186 ff., 191 ff.; cf. Moriz von Rauch, "Salz und Weinhandel zwischen Bayern und Württemberg im 18. Jahrhundert", in: *Württembergische Vierteljahrshefte für Landesgeschichte*, N.F. XXXIII (1927), pp. 208-250.

³ The histories of the free towns (*viz.*, Esslingen, Reutlingen, Ulm, Hall, Heilbronn, Rottweil etc.) are described in Herzog Karl Eugen von Württemberg und seine Zeit, ed. Württembergischen Geschichts- und Altertums Verein, Heft 12-14 (Esslingen, 1909). This work hereafter cited as KE.

⁴ Eberhard Naujoks, "Latente Zunfttradition in den schwäbischen Reichsstädten", in: *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, XCIC (1962), p. 172; G.L. von Maurer, *Geschichte der Städteverfassung in Deutschland* (Erlangen, 1871), IV, p. 117.

claims to absolute sovereignty.¹ And whenever the rebellions seemed to be getting out of hand, the emperor (who was suzerain lord of the free towns) intervened by sending imperial troops to back the town council's authority. While the history of such uprisings goes back at least to the fourteenth century, and while the frequency of them in no way increases in later centuries, the type of complaints do change somewhat, and depend on changing business cycle conditions. During the eighteenth century the citizens complained about the burden of taxes, corruption, nepotism, maladministration of the mounting public debt, and negligence of public roads.²

In most of these towns the social structure was quite rigid. As during the sixteenth century, the middle class was divided by lines of distinction made all the more plain because its members had to wear clothes which clearly showed their position in society. Three groups defined in an imperial decree of 1530³ were common to the urban bourgeoisie: (1) the common citizens who included retailers and journeymen formed the bottom of the bourgeois social ladder, (2) the merchants and master craftsmen made up a broad middle section, and (3) the upper middle class of patricians who sat on town councils and lived on the returns of invested wealth ("ihrer Zinss und Renthen sich ernehren").⁴ Each of these classes was restricted as to the wearing of gold and silver ornaments, furs, silks, and other kinds of costly clothing. The society of the eighteenth century was divided as rigidly as it had been two hundred years before, and according to roughly the same lines of distinction.⁵

During the sixteenth century the leadership of the urban bourgeoisie had also been in the hands of patricians – and patricians who could

¹ Each town was governed by a patrician council (*Rat*) which submitted legislative proposals to a citizen's assembly (*Bürgerschaft*). Most of the assemblies were fairly powerless, but in times of economic crises they usually sought greater legislative power. The council would refuse to make concessions and rebellions would occur.

² KE, pp. 285-367.

³ "Römischer Kayserlicher Majestät Ordnung und Reformation guter Policey, im Heiligen Römischen Reich, zu Augsburg auffgericht, Nov. 19, 1530", partly reprinted in Hans Proessler, *Das Gesamtdeutsche Handwerk im Spiegel der Reichsgesetzgebung von 1530 bis 1806*, *Nürnberger Abhandlungen zu den Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften*, Heft 5 (Berlin, 1954), appendix, pp. 1-5.

⁴ In smaller towns, groups two and three tended to merge. Cf. Rudolf Seigel, *Gericht und Rat in Tübingen. Von den Anfängen bis zur Einführung der Gemeindeverfassung 1818-1822*, *Veröffentlichungen der Kommission der Kommission für Geschichtliche Landeskunde in Baden-Württemberg, Reihe B Forschungen*, Bd. 13 (Stuttgart, 1960), pp. 57ff.

⁵ Robert Hering, "Aus dem Frankfurt des jungen Goethe nach der Francofurtensammlung seines Vaters", in: *Jahrbuch des Freien Deutschen Hochstifts 1916-1925*, p. 194. Although Hering describes Frankfurt society, his remarks also hold true for the free towns of Swabia.

even then trace their ancestry back for two centuries or more. In the sixteenth as in the eighteenth century the highest ranking bourgeois class, however, was that of the university educated jurists who attained offices formerly reserved for nobles. A few had become councillors to princes, but many remained loyal to their towns and served them as legal advisors or syndics. Whether they were privy councillors or town syndics made little difference for their social position. The latter enjoyed ambassadorial rank, the former could exercise the authority of kings. Having risen to prominence in the sixteenth century they remained the leaders of the bourgeoisie, whether urban or territorial, until the nineteenth century.¹ Not even the Protestant clergy, which had also emerged during the sixteenth century could hope to command the same social preeminence. Nevertheless, the two new classes – professional bureaucrats (who were educated jurists) and professional clergy, produced by the Reformation era, remained an integral part of bourgeois society into the nineteenth century. They were joined to the even older class structure of patricians, merchants, craftsmen, and lower middle class (retailers and journeymen) who inhabited the towns during the Middle Ages.

Most of the free towns were governed by an oligarchy of patricians and professional jurists, although the proviso that a certain number of the town council be composed of jurists and that the council employ a syndic, had not become accepted practice until after the Reformation. Previously, also the guilds had participated in town government, but this was true only of the smaller towns by the eighteenth century. And where the guilds were represented the worst corruption also occurred.²

Guilds were important chiefly in those towns in which craft industry rather than foreign trade constituted the main branch of economy. By the eighteenth century, however, most of these could no longer compete with Swiss manufactures and social tensions rose high. In some places, as in the Ortenau area, prices and wages were regulated by the county court which was dominated by the free peasants, and not by the town. Resultant conflicts led to violence, and in 1783 the peasants even captured the free town of Zell.³

¹ Irmgard Lange-Kothe, "Zur Sozialgeschichte des fürstlichen Rates in Württemberg im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert", in: *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, XXXIII (1940), pp. 237-267. Between 1450 and 1496 only 32 % of the councillors in the Württemberg administration were bourgeois. After 1520, however, 69 % were bourgeois. Most of these officials were descended from already ancient bourgeois families.

² K. S. Bader, "Die Reichstädte des schwäbischen Kreises am Ende des alten Reiches", in: *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Kunst und Altertum in Ulm und Oberschwaben*, XXXII (1951), pp. 49-70 (hereafter cited as Bader, "Reichstädte").

³ Eberhard Gothein, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Schwarzwaldes* (Strassburg, 1892), pp. 283-308.

There was, however, probably very little real social distance between well-to-do craftsmen and well-to-do peasants in free towns the size of Zell. Their populations were under 1000. Their governments were in the hands of a magistrate bearing the grandiose medieval title of *Schultheiss*.¹ This official was usually elected by the town council, itself composed of senators who were mostly craftsmen. While the *Schultheiss* (an educated jurist) earned between 1500 to 2000 gulden per annum (the salary of a privy councillor), the senators paid themselves the meager salary of 30 to 80 gulden a year – a sum representing the subsistence income of a craftsmen. Certainly the social distance created by the difference in social origin, education, and income, must have made marriage between *Schultheiss* and town council families impossible. In larger towns, they would of course have formed part of the same upper class.²

Between the largest free towns with populations of 30,000 or over, and the smallest, there were quite a number of medium sized towns with populations of 2,000 to 5,000. Their governments varied considerably, as did their relative states of prosperity and decline. Some were governed by bourgeois and *noble* senators, for nobles sometimes influenced town governments if they composed a part of the urban population – and in some parts of the empire the nobles preferred to live in towns. Biberach was such a town.³ Most of the towns in this category were governed solely by bourgeois councillors through an oligarchical inner council. Most of the greater councils, once dominated by the guilds, had fallen into abeyance and almost everywhere gild influences had ceased to count.⁴

The major free towns, Augsburg, Nürnberg, and Ulm, contained a more regularly subdivided bourgeoisie. Of these, Augsburg was

¹ The *Schultheiss* was originally an official appointed to represent local lords in the towns which were under their authority. By the fifteenth century, however, the *Schultheiss* was replaced with a stronger official, one more responsible to the prince's authority – the *Vogt*. Since the free towns owed their allegiance only to the emperor they could retain an office with the old title of *Schultheiss*. In the princely territories the *Vogt* usually presided over the town magistrate which was composed of members of the town court and the town council. See Seigel, pp. 14ff. During the eighteenth century the Württemberg district officials adopted the title of *Oberamtmann* – like the old *Vogt*, a man who presided over the town government of the main town in the district, for the villages and smaller towns were governed through it.

² Erwin Schell, *Die Reichsstädte beim Übergang an Baden*, Heidelberg Abhandlungen zur mittlern und neueren Geschichte, Heft 59 (Heidelberg, 1929), pp. 27–96 surveys the town governments referred to above.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 149–165.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 103–176.

perhaps the most important and offers an opportunity for examining the best that could be expected of a declining town.

Augsburg's golden age lay in the past, in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, when its chief banking house, that of the Fuggers, had dominated the trade of the world, and when its citizenry had numbered over 100,000 souls. By the eighteenth century, however, even a century after the Peace of Westphalia, and after some economic revival had taken place, its population was still only 38,000. It remained fairly stationary throughout the eighteenth century. The town possessed little real political independence and its destinies were left to the mercy of the Elector of Bavaria who every two years prohibited the export of foodstuffs to the place, because the town refused to honor his depreciated coins. Like so many other free towns it relied for its protection upon the privileges and freedoms guaranteed to it by the *Reich* constitution.¹

The guilds had been excluded from real participation in Augsburg's government since 1548, although they continued to exert some influence by acting as a political lobby whenever their interests were threatened. In the eighteenth century the government of the town was aristocratic. Executive power was in the hands of three collegial bodies: a privy council, an inner council, and a large council of 300 which elected the inner council. All three bodies were dominated by the town's patrician families. All patrician councillors held office for life. Nepotism was a common practice.

The patricians of course, lived on invested income. If their ancestors had engaged in commerce they had long since forgotten it, and preferred investment in real estate. The families were, however, divided by the religious schism that had blighted the town's politics since the Peace of Augsburg (1555). All offices in the government were strictly divided between Protestants and Catholics – from councillors down to midwives. Doctors of theology enjoyed the same status as patricians and together such families composed the town's "aristocracy". Wealthy merchants and bankers who were frequently granted titles of nobility by the emperor for achieving business success, also moved in this society. Ordinary merchants, and lower echelon administrative officials composed the next class in Augsburg's social hierarchy. The lower middle class was made up of retailers, craftsmen, journeymen, and the servants of prominent people.²

¹ Franz Herre, *Das Augsburger Bürgertum im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, *Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Stadt Augsburg*, Schriftenreihe des Stadtarchivs Augsburg, Heft 6 (Augsburg, 1952), pp. 11-13.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 15-21. Cf. also the contemporary accounts by Ludwig Wekherlin (appeared anon.), *Anselmus Rabiosus Reise durch Ober-Deutschland* (Salzburg, Leipzig, 1778), pp.

The Enlightenment does not seem to have made much of an impression in Augsburg, but neither did Pietism, the religious revival which was sweeping through Germany at the time. The town's intellectual life was so static that witchcraft was still being debated there at the end of the eighteenth century,¹ and if dynamic elements came to the town, they came from abroad in the person of enterprising young businessmen.²

One of the most important of these was Johann Heinrich Schüle, Germany's leading textile manufacturer in the eighteenth century. He established himself with some difficulty, for his cotton manufacturing business was opposed by the Augsburg weavers, who lodged an official complaint against him in 1764, claiming that he had disregarded a local ordinance by importing unfinished cotton cloth directly from the Netherlands East Indies rather than having it woven in Augsburg (where it cost more to do so).³ Schüle brought suit against the town, and in 1768 the Imperial Court of Appeals in Vienna awarded him a favorable decision. Thereafter he imported East Indian cotton to Augsburg and expanded his business. By 1777 he was employing 3,500 people in his enterprises and producing 70,000 pieces of finished cotton cloth per year. His company earned annual dividends of 200,000 gulden – a fantastic sum for that age – and Schüle was eventually ennobled by the emperor for his achievements.⁴

37ff. who divided Augsburg's classes into 1) patricians, 2) merchants, and 3) masses (*Pöbel*); and Johann Georg Keysslers, *Reisen durch Deutschland, Boehmen, Ungarn, die Schweiz, Italien und Löthringen in welchem der Zustand und das Merkwürdigste dieser Länder beschrieben, und vermittelst der Natürlichen, Gelehrten und Politischen Geschichte der Mechanik, Muhlen-Bau und Bildhauerkunst, Münzen und Alterthümer, wie auch mit verschiedenen Kupfern erläutert wird* (Hanover, 1776), I, pp. 11 ff.

¹ Herre, pp. 23 ff. Cf. for Ulm, Julius Endriss, *Die Ulmer Aufklärung, 1750-1810* (Ulm, 1942).

² Wolfgang Zorn, "Grundzüge der Augsburger Handelsgeschichte, 1648-1806", in: *Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, XLIII (1956), pp. 97-145, describes some of the leading businessmen and bankers as well as their place of origin.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 123; Jacques Waitzfelder, *Der Augsburger Johann Heinrich von Schule, ein Pionier des Textilwirtschaft im 18. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1929); Robert Forrer, *Die Kunst des Zeugdrucks vom Mittelalters bis zur Empirezeit* (Strassburg, 1898), pp. 40-41. Before the Thirty Years' War there were about 3000 master weavers in Augsburg; afterward, only 500. Their numbers continued to decline, in spite of general economic recovery. In 1720 there were only 468. See Zorn, pp. 101, 123.

⁴ Zorn, pp. 123-125, 130-136. It is interesting to compare the development of the cotton textile industry in Augsburg with that of Prussia. While Schüle alone employed 3500 workers, there were only 4503 cotton textile workers in the entire kingdom of Prussia during the mid-eighteenth century and afterwards, which was when cotton textiles were the most profitable of all the textile industries of Europe. Frederick the Great, who is always lauded for having encouraged industry, seems to have invested most of his efforts in promoting unsuccessful and costly luxury industries, e.g. the silk industry, which employed 5055 people. Older industries such as linen weaving (employing 22,500) and

Johann Heinrich Schüle represented a type of merchant-industrialist rare in his time. Elsewhere in Germany it was only the wholesale merchants of Hamburg who could hope to acquire fortunes as large as Schüle's.¹ Capitalistic entrepreneurs like the Augsburg cotton manufacturer, rose rapidly because they were able to take advantage of favorable economic conditions. Their sons usually failed to carry on in like manner and the family enterprised declined as rapidly as they rose.² Schüle and his contemporaries were successful speculators rather than investors. The conditions which made their speculations lucrative vanished when inflation and then the destruction to trade caused by Napoleon's Continental System wiped out the capital accumulation of a century and made it easier for English machine-produced goods to outsell any made in Europe.³

III

THE POSITION OF WÜRTTEMBERG IN THE SOCIETY OF THE SOUTHWEST

The greater urban density of the German southwest lent a more bourgeois character to that part of the empire than to other regions of

woolen weaving (employing 40,000), continued to prosper. Historians who have emphasized Frederick's support of industry, have not always considered his policies in the light of the general development of industry in other parts of Germany. The labor statistics for Prussian industry are from Reinhold Koser, *Geschichte Friedrich des Grossen* (7 ed., Berlin, 1921), II, p. 401. The Prussian silk industry is exhaustively treated in *Die Preussische Seidenindustrie im 18. Jahrhundert und ihre Begründung durch Friedrich den Grossen*, ed. Otto von Hintze (3 vols., Berlin, 1892). A recent East German work on Prussian industry is Horst Krüger, *Zur Geschichte der Manufakturarbeiten in Preussen. Die mittleren Provinzen in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1958).

¹ Cf. the many works on business enterprise in eighteenth century Hamburg: Maria Möhring, 1757-1957. 200 Jahre Johannes Schuback und Söhne Familie und Firma in Hamburg. Veröffentlichungen der Wirtschaftsgeschichtlichen und Forschungsstelle e.V. in Hamburg, Bd. 20 (Hamburg, 1957); Ernst Baasch, "Die Führenden Kaufleute und ihre Stellung in der Hamburgischen Handelsgeschichte", in: *Hamburger Uebersee Jahrbuch*, 1922; Richard Hertz, *Das Hamburger Seehandelshaus J.C. Godeffroy und Sohn 1766-1879*, Veröffentlichung des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte, IV (Hamburg, 1905); Richard Ehrenberg, *Das Haus Parish in Hamburg. Grosse Vermögen. Ihre Entstehung und Bedeutung*, II (Jena, 1905); Heinrich Sieveking, *Georg Heinrich Sieveking. Lebensbild eines Hamburgischen Kaufmanns aus dem Zeitalter der französischen Revolution* (Berlin, 1913).

² Little information is available about the lives and activities of such men, but biographical sketches of eleven of this type were compiled and published by S.G. Meissner, *Charakterzüge aus dem Leben edler Geschäftsmänner und berühmter Kaufleute. Zur Lehre und Nachahmung merkantilistischer Jugend* (Leipzig, 1805).

³ Cf. Tr. Geering, "Die Entwicklung des Zeugdrucks im Abendland seit dem XVIII. Jahrhundert", in: *Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, I (1903), pp. 397-432, describes the remarkable expansion of the cotton printing industry in Central Europe in the eighteenth century.

it. But middle class culture and middle class values were not confined to the free towns alone. The largest duchy of Swabia, Württemberg, was also the most bourgeois territory in the Holy Roman Empire. The Württemberg nobility had seceded from the duchy during the Reformation and had become members of that class of petty sovereigns with lands scattered all over the southwest who ruled their own domains, represented only themselves in the Reichstag, and accepted no other allegiance than to the emperor. So they had given up their seats in the Württemberg estates and it became thereafter almost wholly a Commons being made up of the representatives of major towns and a few Protestant prelates. Because of the rise of the jurists during the sixteenth century, the councillors of the duke too, had become mainly bourgeois. And since Württemberg was a Protestant territory, it also possessed a large class of clergymen who had quickly established dynasties of clerical families which dominated education as well as the government of the church.¹ Because Württemberg had a larger urban bourgeoisie than any other territory, and because of the survival and peculiar composition of the estates, the Württemberg bourgeoisie also exerted more real political power than its counterparts in other regions of the empire.²

As in the towns, society was dominated by a class of patricians who were given the special designation "honorable" (*Ehrbarkeit*).³ Leading members of this class were high officials of state. They included the privy councillors who served the duke, the Protestant prelates, and the leading officials of the estates (*Landschaft*). The latter executed the business of the "parliament" and administered the collection of taxes remitted to its treasury.

The patricians were able to control the estates because they controlled its executive committee, the so-called Small Committee (*Engerer Ausschuss*). It was composed of two prelates, two or three *Landschafts-Consulenten* (consultants),⁴ the mayors of the three principal towns (Stuttgart, Ludwigsburg, Tübingen), and several delegates from

¹ Cf. Walter Grube, *Der Stuttgarter Landtag, 1457-1957. Von den Landständen zum demokratischen Parlament* (Stuttgart, 1957), pp. 67ff; and K.S. Bader, "Johann Jakob Moser, Staatsrechtslehrer und Landschaftskonsulent, 1701-1785", in: *Lebensbilder aus Schwaben und Franken*, ed. Max Miller, and Robert Uhland, *Schwäbische Lebensbilder, VII* (Stuttgart, 1960), p. 95, hereafter cited as Bader, "Moser".

² Cf. Bader, "Moser", p. 95.

³ The origin of this group is described in Hansmartin Decker-Hauff, "Die Entstehung der altwürttembergischen Ehrbarkeit, 1250-1534", (Unpublished doctoral diss., Vienna, 1946), which was not available for consultation but was extensively cited by Seigel, pp. 47ff.

⁴ The *Landschafts-Consulent* was a legal consultant especially employed by the estates. Such councillors enjoyed the same high status as the salaried legal advisers of town councils, the syndics. All were doctors of law.

the estates.¹ The estates met often and was able to maintain its power while the estates of most neighboring territories were either crushed or fell into abeyance. Some of the reason for it has to do with the repeated fiscal chaos which arose in the household management of the reigning dukes. They needed their estates because their estates could appropriate emergency funds to improve their fiscal position. But some of the reason must also have to do with the predominantly bourgeois character of the duchy's society. This is evident from the history of the Great Rebellion of 1763-64, a study of which would also afford insight into the social composition of the various regions of the duchy.

Duke Charles Eugene (1737-1793) is viewed as an enlightened despot by Württemberg historians, but his laudable achievements in model farming and educational reform probably do not outweigh the effects of his militarist policies or his attempt to establish absolutism in a duchy which lacked an aristocracy. During and after the Seven Years' War (in which he was allied with Austria), Charles Eugene endeavoured to establish a standing army and to extend the power of the ducal administration by collecting and levying taxes without the permission of the estates. The latter, the *Landschaft*, followed the example of the Long Parliament of England in 1640: in defense of their ancient charters of rights and liberties the estates rebelled during 1763 and 1764. Eventually the King of Prussia and the Elector of Hanover (who was also King of England) intervened on behalf of the estates by lending support to a case which these had brought before the Imperial Court of Appeals in Vienna. Prussian support was gained because the estates represented the Protestant cause and there was a fear that the triumph of Charles Eugene's policies might alter the religious constitution of the duchy – for the duke himself was Catholic, while the official religion of the realm was Protestant. Frederick II of Prussia also feared that the defeat of the estates would strengthen the duke's military arm, and since he was an ally of Austria, of the Austrian camp within the empire. Faced with such opposition Charles Eugene was made to sign the *Erbvergleich* of 1770, a document by which he and his heirs promised to respect the constitutional rights of the estates. For

¹ The history of the Small Committee is treated in great detail by Ludwig Freiherr von Spittler, "Entwurf einer Geschichte des engeren Landschaftlichen Ausschusses (1796)", *Sämtliche Werke*, XIII (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1837), pp. 146 ff. See also Fritz Benzing, "Die Vertretung von 'Stadt und Amt' im Altwürttembergischen Landtag unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Amts Nürtingen" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Tübingen, 1924), pp. 1 ff.; F. L. Carsten, *Princes and Parliaments in Germany, From the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1959), pp. 28 ff.; and cf. the anti-parliamentary account of Erwin Hölzle, *Das alte Recht und die Revolution. Eine politische Geschichte Württembergs in der Revolutionszeit 1789-1805* (Munich and Berlin, 1931), pp. 3-43.

the remainder of his reign the Small Committee, the duke's mistress, and a privy councillor exercised the real powers of state.¹

During the rebellion, the best bourgeois elements in all the towns rallied to defend the ancient constitution which dated back to the *Tübinger Vertrag* of 1514.³ They represented the sturdy middle of the middle class, but were regarded as the "upper class" in the society of those medium sized towns which dotted the landscape along the Neckar River.³ Of the delegates who attended the *Landtag*⁴ in that year of rebellion, 1763, about half were burgomasters and most of the rest were either town councillors or town magistrates. Only nineteen were notaries or clerks (*Schreiber*), thirteen were master craftsmen, five were jurists, and the occupations of three were unknown. Most of these men were well-to-do, "patricians" by local standards, and probably most of them owned small country estates on the side.⁵

The office of mayor represented the highest social position attainable by the upper crust of the local bourgeoisie. But what was the upper crust? The towns in which they lived were only medium sized. Within the social structure of the entire duchy these men did not rank as high as prelates or ducal officials – although they could become members of the Small Committee and attain considerable political power. Most of them belonged to the same class as pastors and local merchants, and often they were also the relatives of these. Either their ancestors had been members of local well-to-do families for several generations, or they joined their society by becoming mayors after acquiring wealth. They included personalities of all types; embezzlers, statesmen, and carping politicians.⁶

¹ On the reign of Charles Eugene, see e.g., KE, *passim*; Paul Stälin, "Karl Eugen", in: *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, XV, pp. 376 ff.; Carsten, pp. 132 ff.; Karl Weller, *Württembergische Geschichte* (Stuttgart, 4 ed., 1957), pp. 159 ff.; and cf. Bader, "Moser", p. 111, who obscures the constitutional issues, or lacks a clear conception of what the estates' grievance against the duke was. Bader argues that the duke "meant well" although he was convinced that he ruled by "divine right".

² Württemberg's "Magna Carta". It was the product of several years of social and economic unrest characterized by the duke's need for the financial assistance of the town bourgeoisie, and the bourgeoisie's desire for an expansion of its rights. Both, however, favored the suppression of the peasantry which was also anxious to secure new rights. See Grube, pp. 87 ff.; Carsten, pp. 10 ff.

³ Cf. Seigel, pp. 47 ff.

⁴ The generic term for the estates was *Landschaft*; when it was in session it was called the *Landtag*.

⁵ Benzeng, pp. 148-150. For a description of the wealth and property-holdings of Tübingen government officials, see Seigel, pp. 51 ff.

⁶ Among the worst of the mayors was Georg Thomas Schoenleber, mayor of Ludwigsburg after 1754 and a member of the Small Committee. He became mayor by bribing the

In the towns of Württemberg, the power and importance of town councils declined before 1500. Although the councils remained and although their members (*Ratsverwandte*) continued to participate in government administration, they no longer ranked as members of the duchy's *Ehrbarkeit* in the eighteenth century. The actual government of towns was in the hands of the mayors and the magistrates who administered almost all official business, namely police and markets administration. The mayor and the magistrate (*Gerichtsverwandte*) did belong to the *Ehrbarkeit*, but ranked at the bottom of it, for the ducal and *Landschafts* officials of course ranked much higher. Yet on the local level the magistrates and mayors, particularly of larger towns like Calw, counted for most, were in fact the patrician class of the community.¹

Also of importance in the social life of the duchy were the *Schreiber*. These notaries were really "scribes" who lacked a formal secondary education, but had been apprenticed as notaries about the age of fourteen. Their social position was a varied one. A talented scribe could use his post as a stepping stone to other offices – some even became mayors. Sometimes they entered the duke's services and obtained important appointments usually reserved for men with a university education. Most of the *Schreiber* were content with being local political bosses. Because the scribe did the local accounting and knew all the local laws he was in a position to dominate the scene. Some earned a fortune by doing legal business on the side – and some like Friedrich Bernritter became writers – or like Ludwig Wekherlin, journalists. Most of them, however, ranked somewhere in that broad middle class of people between the craftsmen and the university graduates.²

town magistrates and the Württemberg privy council with 3000 gulden. Later he also embezzled 23,000 gulden of the estates' funds. See Albert Eugen Adam, Johann Jakob Moser als Württembergischer Landschaftskonsulent, 1751-1771 (Stuttgart, 1887), pp. 14-15. One of the best was Mayor Jakob Friedrich Duttchenhofer (1697-1769) of Nürttingen. The son of a fulling mill operator, he had risen to the office of mayor by first serving as town notary. After 1737 he was also a regular delegate to the *Landschaft*, and in 1755 also became a member of the Small Committee. He was active in the Rebellion of 1763-1764 and was threatened with charges of *lèse majesté* by the duke. He argued that his loyalty to the oath he had taken to uphold the Württemberg constitution, came before his duty to obey his prince. See Benzing, pp. 150-155.

¹ Seigel, p. 49.

² Ferdinand August Wekherlin, Wirtemberg, Pietismus. Schreiber. Schulen. Und Erziehung und Aufklärung überhaupt (place of publication unknown, 1787), pp. 57ff., 71-72. F.A. Wekherlin is not to be confused with Ludwig Wekherlin, the journalist. On the latter see: Gottfried Böhm, Ludwig Wekherlin (1739-1792). Ein Publizistenleben des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts (Munich, 1893). The *Schreiber* are best satirized by Friedrich Bernritter, Wirtembergische Briefe (Ulm, 1786), pp. 141 ff. Bernritter had himself been a *Schreiber*, but went on to achieve success as a satirist. See Herbert Meyer, "Friedrich Bernritter. Ein Württembergischer Satiriker", in: Zeitschrift für württembergische Landesgeschichte, N.F. III (1939), pp. 127-157.

Middle class job opportunities in the territories may not have been as limited as they were in the declining free towns, but the towns of Württemberg certainly offered less opportunity than could be found in an expanding commercial city like Hamburg. And where talent and a little education could bring offices and incomes, what other alternative was there for the bourgeois parents of a bourgeois child than to direct its career towards the bureaucracy? Only a handful could become wealthy merchants or part-owners of large trading companies. And only that handful of merchants ever attained an income equivalent to that of a territorial privy councillor. So it was that contemporaries noticed an increase in the number of *Schreiber* and university graduates, perhaps because the population grew, perhaps because the administration of government was even then growing more complex. In any event, the Württemberg *Schreiber* had become legion.

The overemployment in the scribal trade caused Duke Charles Eugene to order an official investigation of circumstances. The report was made by one of his best men, the privy councillor Eberhard von Gemmingen, a member of one of the most honorable noble families in the southwest and a poet of some merit.¹ Von Gemmingen's report is instructive. He argued that parents of moderate means had little choice of profession for their children. Except for the *Schreiber's* trade, they could choose only some craft occupation for their sons. Yet the mere mention of a craft occupation aroused contempt among this petty bourgeoisie. A craftsman was doomed to endure his lot in life, but the *Schreiber* was mobile and could advance to higher jobs. His education cost little (certainly less than a university education), and he could be self-supporting in a short time. Von Gemmingen's solution for the overemployment of the trade was to exclude the notaries from some jobs (though gradually) and encourage arts and crafts in order to raise the esteem of artists and the prestige of their trades.²

The contempt of the petty bourgeoisie for the craftsmen indicates that the position of the artisan in the German society of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was a low one. It is not difficult to see why. Guilds were organized and supervised by the territorial government. Accredited masters were permitted to practice in towns only, and then only in towns which admitted them.³ Yet the journeymen and master

¹ Emil Seidel, *Politik und Literatur in Württemberg von der Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts bis zu Schillers Jugenddramen* (Stuttgart, 1910), pp. 69 ff.

² Württembergisches Staatsarchiv, Stuttgart. A 8 Kabinetts Akten, III, 1 Fasc. 64, item 73, Eberhard von Gemmingen's *Gutachten* of 1786.

³ In Württemberg the guilds were allowed regional headquarters in Stuttgart, Ludwigsburg, and Tübingen. These main offices were called *Hauptladen*. District offices were called *Viertel*, and local offices were called *Nebenladen*. Some guilds elected their own ward-

craftsmen led fairly self-contained lives. Their funeral wakes were festive occasions. Twice yearly they held supervised dances which began with church services and ended as drunken brawls. Gala banquets and much celebration also attended the annual convention of the gild masters and journeymen which was held in Stuttgart. But since local police regulations strictly supervised church attendance, dancing, and morals, they must have affected the craftsmen and peasants more than other classes of society.

The regulation of prices, wages, and production certainly restricted the business opportunities of the master tailor, butcher, weaver, and candlestick-maker.¹ But when economic conditions were favorable there seem always to have been enough loopholes to assure success for the enterprising. The rare craftsman has even been known to have saved the small fortune of 4000 gulden during his lifetime.²

The most important crafts in the duchy, woolen and linen weaving, had declined since the Thirty Years' War. By the eighteenth century Silesian linen weavers dominated the world market and the change in consumer tastes away from small woolen cloths to cotton printed cloth had also adversely affected the Württemberg *Zeug* industry. But master linen weavers and master *Zeugmacher* continued to apprentice their sons to the same craft. After all, it cost them less to do so, than to apprentice them to a trade which was not "in the family". The unfortunate weavers had no overall view of the wider economic environment. By continuing their old employments they dug their way into deeper and deeper poverty, and most of them were forced to beg for public relief. The impoverished weavers could no longer afford to consume the products of their brethren in the other trades – and so weavers, butchers, and candlestick-makers could either choose to starve or to emigrate.

Although some craftsmen always supplemented their income from

ens, but the custom varied. Often the duke's officials oppointed the local gild supervisors. Even the gild supervisors were socially distant from town magistrates and ducal officials. On the gilds see: Prof. (first name unknown) Schuez, "Die altwürttembergische Gewerbeverfassung in den letzten drei Jahrhunderten", in: *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft*, VI (1850), pp. 287ff., and Leo Hoffmann, *Das württembergische Zunftwesen und die Politik der herzoglichen Regierung gegenüber den Zunftten im 18. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen, 1906).

¹ Schuez, *passim*. Modern histories of territorial gild organization are badly needed.

² Dr. Walter Troeltsch, "Die Göppinger Zeugmacherei im 18. Jahrhundert und das sogenannte Vayhingerbuch", in: *Schmollers Jahrbuch*, XX (1896), pp. 1255-1277, describes the way in which Ernst Jakob Vayhinger (1729-1791), a Göppinger *Zeugmacher* (maker of small cloths) amassed a moderate fortune. A well paid privy councillor earned between 1500 and 2000 gulden annually. There were few members of the town *Ehrbarkeit* who owned as much as Vayhinger. In Tübingen, e.g., the town's patrician families owned property valued at between 500 to 8000 gulden. See Seigel, pp. 56-57.

the produce of whatever gardens or farms they might own, part-time farming could not raise the craftman's standard of living because the subdivision of holdings customary in southwestern Germany created dwarf holdings which could hardly provide subsistence for one, let alone the members of the several families who owned the holding.¹ Thus the many weavers of Württemberg lived out their lives in destitute poverty and were indeed worse off than the Silesian weavers of the 1840's whose plight was immortalized in Gerhard Hauptmann's play: *Die Weber*.²

Yet the southwest was one of the few areas of Germany which could boast a plentiful if not a rising middle class. Because opportunities were limited, status jobs were rationed in all layers of society. The kinfolk of those who did enjoy high social status, and the talented, could either hope to maintain their status or move up to a somewhat higher class. Seldom could the talented study law, however, for although free education did exist, it was reserved for future clergymen.

IV

THE WÜRTTEMBERG CLERGY

The Protestant clergy in Germany was noted for its remarkable class stability. By the eighteenth century a great number of clergymen came of families boasting numerous clerics on both sides of the family tree. Often their genealogy reached back to the Reformation. During the eighteenth century, and particularly at the end of it, a wider range of

¹ On Württemberg agriculture during this period see: Theodor Knapp, "Die Grundherrschaft in südwestlichen Deutschland vom Ausgang des Mittelalters bis zur Bauernbefreiung des 19. Jahrhunderts", in: Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte. 22 Germ. Abteilung (1901), pp. 48-108; idem, *Der Bauer im heutigen Württemberg nach seinen Rechtsverhältnissen vom 16. bis ins 19. Jahrhundert*, Württembergische Neujaahrsblätter, N.F. 7 (Stuttgart, 1902); idem, *Neue Beiträge zur Rechts- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte des württembergischen Bauernstandes* (Stuttgart, 2 vols., revised ed., 1919); idem, "Leibeigene Bauern auf den württembergischen Landtagen", in: *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Statistik*, vol. 118 (1922), pp. 531-532; Otto Stolz, "Die Bauernbefreiung in Süddeutschland im Zusammenhang der Geschichte", in: *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, XXX (1940), pp. 1-68; Friedrich Ruoff, "Die ländliche Verfassung des Nordostens des Königreichs Württemberg im 18. Jahrhundert", in: *Württembergische Jahrbücher für Statistik und Landeskunde* (1909), pp. 192-255.

² Such is the argument of Troeltsch, *Calwer Zeughandlungskompanie*, *passim*. Because of the growing impoverishment, southwestern Germany proved to be the main source of emigration during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Farmers and craftsmen sold their goods and sought better fortunes in Russia, Pomerania, Poland, Hungary, the Balkans – even in Spain. Many also went to North America. See Karl Büttner, *Die Auswanderung aus Württemberg. Ein Beitrag zur Bevölkerungsgeographie Württembergs* (Stuttgart, 1938).

intellectual professions became respectable. Journals and newspapers appeared, and the bourgeois intellectual came into his own and was able to express himself in a more secular vein. Between 1700 and 1800, a considerable number of Germany's literary luminaries were the sons and grandsons of clergymen.¹ The leading publicists and journalists of the era too were the sons of clergymen.² It was also the children of the clergy together with the offspring of the bureaucracy who provided Germany with its great historians, philosophers, and liberal thinkers during the nineteenth century. The nobility, the merchants, and the craftsmen did not by their combined efforts produce as many.³

The clergy and the bureaucracy were also included in the honorable class (*Ehrbarkeit*). This group was sharply divided from the lower orders of bourgeois society: lesser government officials, minor merchants, and craftsmen. But how was the *Ehrbarkeit* itself structured? How did the clergy fit into it? Certainly the highest court officials (e.g., privy councillors), prelates, and university professors ranked at the top of the honorable class. Next came those state administrators and church officials who fell into a "civil service" category just below that of the highest officials of church and state. They included superintendants (whose office resembled that of a bishop), and also the district governors of the ducal administration (*Oberamtänner*). The councillors of state in the treasury, justice, and internal affairs collegia of the duke's government were also included among them. A third group in the hierarchy included the pastors, mayors, and magistrates of leading towns (Stuttgart ranking foremost), as well as town councillors of such towns. In large towns the most important independent merchants also belonged to the upper crust, especially if they secured election to the magistrate. The magistrates, as pointed out above, had become the real governors of towns while the councillors had sunk in importance. The magistrate in fact exercised the functions of a town council and

¹ Lydia Roesch, *Der Einfluss des Evangelischen Pfarrhauses auf die Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen, 1932), and Rohtraut Schulz-Baesken, *Die Dichter des Göttinger Hains und die Bürgerlichkeit. Eine literatur-soziologische Studie* (Königsberg, 1937), have devoted monographs to the demonstration of this point. Cf. Seigel, pp. 63 ff., who traces the large number of clerical ties in the families of the Tübingen magistrate.

² Johanna Schultze, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Adel und Bürgertum in den deutschen Zeitschriften der letzten drei Jahrzehnte des 18. Jahrhunderts 1773-1806*, *Historische Studien*, CLXIII (1925), pp. 116 ff.

³ Gerth, p. 17. Cf. Walter Bussmann, "Zur Geschichte des Deutschen Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert", in: *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. 186 (1958), pp. 533-534, who points out that most of the members of the Frankfurt parliament in 1848 were university-educated men and were mostly officials, judges, mayors, and clergymen by profession. 48 were university professors, there were no workers, and only 4 were craftsmen. The Prussian Assembly of 1848 also represented the intellectuals and jurists, but contained petty bourgeoisie, craftsmen, peasants, and low ranking officials as well as 2 workers.

was a self-perpetuating corporation whose sessions were presided over by the mayors and the district *Oberamtmann*.¹

The fact that the clergyman's profession brought with it "honorable" status which made it possible to marry his children to the children of high government officials, or his daughters to privy councillors, made the occupation socially desirable. There was ample opportunity for advancing by means of an education in theology. The Württemberg government offered state scholarships for the state-supported secondary schools as well as for education at the state university of Tübingen. But if the craftsman suffered because handicraft occupations were overemployed, then the lot of the clergy was not better. It took so long for a graduate minister to obtain a permanent appointment that he was often over thirty before he could marry – if he lived that long – for the mortality rate among ministers was high, and the number of minister's widows grew throughout the century.² And although the clergy constantly complained of poverty, and even though the parish houses may have been falling apart at the seams, the income of a town minister was at least twice that of a well-to-do goldmaster.³

During the course of the eighteenth century the Württemberg clergy practiced a policy of social exclusiveness. They attempted to shut off ascent from members of the lower orders of society. In the first half of the century some 199 sons of craftsmen were admitted to secondary schools preparing candidates for theology at the university – but by 1751-1800, only 106 sons of craftsmen were admitted to such schools.⁴ Oddly enough this castification process took place during the age of Pietism in Württemberg, and Pietism had tended to be democratising element in society. It modified the social distance among its diverse adherents-generals, princes, preachers, teachers, and the sheep of the fold.⁵

¹ Martin Hasselhorn, *Der altwürttembergische Pfarrstand im 18. Jahrhundert*, Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Geschichtliche Landeskunde in Baden-Württemberg, Reihe B, Forschungen, Bd. 6 (Stuttgart, 1958), pp. 24-25; Seigel, pp. 49ff., 57ff.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 19.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4. In 1758 the salary range for 660 clerical posts was between 150 gulden to over 600 gulden. In 1793 the range for 638 posts was between 400 gulden to over 1200 gulden per annum.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁵ On Württemberg Pietism see: J. Hartmann, "Das religiöse Leben", in: KE, I, pp. 361-377; Friedrich Fritz, *Altwürttembergische Pietisten* (Stuttgart, 1950); D. Christian Kolb, *Die Aufklärung in der Württembergischen Kirche* (Stuttgart, 1908); Dr. C. Hoffman, "Aus einer altpietistischen Zirkularkorrespondenz", in: *Blätter für württembergische Kirchengeschichte*, N.F. III (1899), and IV (1900), pp. 1ff. and 1ff. respectively; F. A. Wekherlin, pp. 15ff.

V

THE HONORABLES AND THE GREAT REBELLION

While the clergy was the most numerous group among the Württemberg elite (there were 800 clergymen, 300 theologians), the secular elite (there were 300 jurists and physicians) exercised more political power.¹ After all, more government offices were open to jurists than to clergymen. Opportunities for the bourgeoisie had certainly increased during the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The growing centralization of the state alone, created new jobs – so did population growth.

Few of the bourgeois councillors of Württemberg may be said to have “risen”. Most of their forebears did not rank lower in social status at all. The privy councillor Georg Bilfinger (1693-1750), for example, virtually ruled the duchy single-handedly during Charles Eugene’s minority. He was a well known mathematician and philosopher and had been the son of a high ranking church official who had ended his career as a prelate. Bilfinger’s mother had been the daughter of a senior ranking clergyman in the free town of Worms. Bilfinger himself had become professor of mathematics at the University of Tübingen and had been appointed by Duke Charles Alexander (1733-1737), to the privy council – mainly because he believed a mathematician might prove useful in the planning of fortifications. Bilfinger later also became chief minister of religion and in the spirit of Enlightenment tolerance, modified the existing restrictions on Pietist practices.²

Another outstanding bourgeois intellectual, and an “honorable”, was the consultant to the Württemberg estates, Johann Jakob Moser (1701-1785). Often called the “father” of German constitutional law, he too was descended from a patrician family – in fact from a family ennobled in 1573 which had subsequently stopped using its title. Moser’s paternal grandfather had been a councillor in the Württemberg treasury, and later a privy councillor. His father had been *Expeditiorat* Johann Jakob Moser, the chief revenue collector of the Swabian circle of the Holy Roman Empire. His maternal grandfather had been Johann Jakob Missler, a Swabian clergyman who had become chief councillor for religion (*Consistorialrat*) for the Swedish government in its duchies

¹ Balthasar Haug, *Versuch einer Beschreibung des wissenschaftlichen Zustandes von Württemberg in Verhältnis gegen Teutschland* (Stuttgart, 1774), pp. 5 ff.

² Eugen Schmid, “Geheimrat Georg Bernard Bilfinger (1693-1750)”, in: *Zeitschrift für Württembergische Landesgeschichte*, N.F. III (1939), pp. 370-422; Heinz Liebing, *Zwischen Orthodoxie und Aufklärung. Das philosophische und theologische Denken Georg Bernhard Bilfingers* (Tübingen, 1961). Bilfinger’s rise was not without precedent. During the reign of Duke Frederick I (1593-1608), Dr. Matthäus Enzlin, a Tübingen professor, was chief councillor, and also an advocate of absolutism.

of Bremen and Verden. Later he also became a superintendent (bishop). Moser himself was educated in law at Tübingen and married Frederike Rosine, the daughter of *Oberrat* Dr. Johann Jakob Vischer, an administrative official with a rank just below that of a privy councillor.¹

Moser gained experience at the Imperial Court of Appeals in Vienna, served in the bureaucracy of several small territories, published numerous works in law, achieving considerable fame as a jurist – then became a pietist, poet, composer of hymns, and accepted the post of legal adviser (*Landschaftskonsulent*) to the Württemberg estates in 1751. His enthusiasm at the time was for improving the duchy's economy and the efficiency of its administration – but he was soon caught in the struggle between the duke and his parliament. He favored the duke's mercantilist policies and attacked the estates for opposing them, and as he believed, impeding progress. But in the dispute between the duke and the estates he defended the constitutional position of the latter, and was imprisoned by Charles Eugene in July of 1759 because he would not cease his "disrespectful and calumniating writing".²

Moser remained in prison until the end of the rebellion in 1764, and despite all hardships endured by him, he emerged with the same conservative views he had held before his arrest. He continued to believe that the *Landschaft's* unwillingness to approve mercantilist policies were a greater evil than the duke's military policies. Nevertheless he also believed that the law was above the sovereign, and this was why he was forced to endure imprisonment.³

A contemporary of Moser's, Ganz, published a memoir of the rebellion in which he vindicated the duke completely. Ganz's views reflected those of the opportunists in the ducal service, for the most part men whose origins were obscure, and who had more to lose by opposition than they could gain by collaboration. Certainly Ganz did not understand the constitutional issue involved in the rebellion, and maintained that large assemblies are slow at dispatching government business, indeed, that order depended on having "a single strong voice of authority".⁴

Those who shared Ganz's views included such careerists as Lorenz

¹ Bader, "Moser", pp. 96-99.

² Das Leben Johann Jakob Moser's. Aus seiner Selbstbiographie, den Archiven und Familienpapiere dargestellt, ed. August Schmid (Stuttgart, 1868), p. 278; cf. Bader, "Moser", p. 253.

³ On Moser see: Adam; Schmid; Oskar Waechter, Johann Jakob Moser (Stuttgart, 1885); J.P.Glökler, Johann Jakob Moser, Ein Lebensbild aus dem 18. Jahrhundert (Stuttgart, 1872); Robert von Mohl, Die Geschichte und Literatur der Staatswissenschaften (Erlangen, 1855-1858), II, pp. 402 ff.; and the recent Bader, "Moser".

⁴ Anon. (J.F.F.Ganz), Württembergische Briefe, oder Schilderung der Sitten und der Merkwürdigen Personen dieses Herzogthums (Frankfurt, 1766), pp. 40-47.

Wittleder and Georg Jakob Gegel. The former had been a tanner who migrated from Prussia to Württemberg in order to become a non-commissioned officer in the duke's army.¹ He eventually dominated the fiscal administration of the realm, becoming treasury councillor, chief minister of religion, and chief dispenser of public offices, whose sale he introduced. Gegel, the son of an impoverished country parson, was more concerned about his job than his conscience, and obediently attempted to execute the duke's unlawful tax decrees, although he was fully aware that they violated the constitution. In defence of his actions, he later argued that it was a greater sin to disobey one's sovereign liege and lord than to rebel against his wicked policies. God would judge the duke.²

Most of the district governors supported the duke.³ Perhaps this was because Wittleder had undermined their personal fortunes (for if they wished to retain their jobs they had to pay him sizeable sums), or if new men had purchased the offices, they might be opportunists and probably not members of the original "honorable" class. In any case, the only district official to rebel against the duke was the "honorable" *Oberamtmann* of Tübingen district – Johann Ludwig Huber (1723–1800), a lawyer and the duchy's leading poet.⁴ He was also the son of a clergyman, but of less petty bourgeois origin than Gegel's father. Huber fervently believed that his conscience compelled him to rebel, that his chief loyalty was to the constitution rather than to the prince who sought to abolish it. Huber had celebrated liberty in all of his works and held tyranny to be anathema. The law was above the ruler, and the poet's calling was to bring the prince before the bar of judgment:

“Wer strafft die Obrigkeit, die keine höhere scheut,
Die nichts dem Untertan, sich alles selbst verzeiht,
Wenn's nicht der Dichter sagt, wer sagt's beherzt den Prinzen,
Sie seien, was sie sind, durch Zufall der Provinzen.”⁵

For his refusal to coerce his district into paying the duke's disputed

¹ Wittleder's career is vividly described in Georg Jakob Gegel, *Beleuchtung einer Regierungsperiode des gegenwärtigen Regent Württembergs, zur Beherzigung und Belehrung für meine Landsleute in Rücksicht meiner damaligen Dienstjahre* (Stuttgart, 1789), pp. 190 ff.; see also Ganz, pp. 34 ff.

² Gegel, p. 222.

³ Karla Johns, "Johann Ludwig Huber, ein Tübinger Demokrat. Die Geschichte eines tapferen Oberamtmanns", in: *Tübinger Blätter*, 42, p. 28.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 25–30.

⁵ Cited by Seidel, p. 29. It might be translated: "Who shall punish high authority, which, eschewing all higher wills, forgiveth all to lords and naught to subject man. If poets do not speak, whosoever speaks emboldens tyrants sovereign. Princes be what they are by chanced and accidental acquisition of domain."

tax levy, Huber received the backing of the mayor of Tübingen and of the townspeople. The university awarded him an honorary doctor of law degree at its May convocation. In June the duke intervened by sending troops and by arresting Huber. He was imprisoned briefly during 1764, and when released upon the intercession of the Austrian minister, retired to live as a lawyer and writer.¹ His best friend, von Gemmingen, remained in the duke's government however, and although sympathetic to Huber, did not oppose the duke's tax schemes. Another Württemberg "honorable" who had gone abroad, Karl von Moser, the son of Johann Jakob, and an official in the Hesse-Darmstadt government, shared Huber's views. For both of them the seivle obedience for the sake of obedience expressed by Gegel and Ganz was a transgression against the dignity of man, indeed the root of all evil in German political life.²

The respect for human dignity reflected in the writings of the rebels, and the willingness of the Württemberg bourgeoisie to rebel when rebellion became necessary, reflected a political conviction which was not a-typical in the German southwest during this part of the eighteenth century. As such it does not represent the attitude of a rising bourgeoisie eager to share in government. Rather does it represent a defense of ancient prerogatives. The town bourgeoisie had successfully continued to share in government and did not wish to relinquish its established position, a position protected by constitutional charter. And if losing its political freedoms also meant losing its religious freedom, then the willingness to risk all, was so much the greater. It was the patrician bourgeoisie who favored the rule of law and the limitation of absolute despotism. And by doing so, it endeavoured to realize the best ideals of the Enlightenment, thus continuing the heritage of Humanism which had taught them and their fathers respect for the dignity of man and hatred of tyranny – ideas which had never made themselves felt in the fundamental motives of enlightened despotism.

¹ Johann Ludwig Huber, *Etwas von Meinem Lebenslauf und etwas von meiner Muse auf der Vestung – ein kleiner Beitrag zu der selbst erlebten Geschichte meines Vaterlandes* (Stuttgart, 1798), pp. 41 ff. The Landschaft later awarded him a pension of 600 gulden per annum. See Johns, p. 30.

² Seidel, p. 25.