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False Fire: The Wartburg Book-Burning of 1817

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A twenty-first-century visitor must find it difficult to imagine that the Thuringian city of Eisenach, lately known for its shopping, once held a place in the collective memory of Germans. On October 18, 1817, 450 students descended upon Eisenach for the Wartburg Festival, a two-day commemoration of the tricentenary of Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses and the fourth anniversary of the Battle of Leipzig. Drawing on the symbolic power of nearby Wartburg Castle, best known as Luther's hideout in 1521, the festival witnessed a number of songs and speeches calling peacefully for the introduction of reforms by German governments. But that was only part of the story. In a sideshow to the official proceedings, a handful of students also claimed to throw "reactionary" literature into a bonfire, thus interesting police across Europe.[1]

The Wartburg Festival was one of dozens of contemporary ephemera that sought to instrumentalize Luther and Leipzig, both for conservative and liberal agendas. Indeed, just as events unfolded in Eisenach, a separate celebration took place in Wittenberg under the sponsorship of the Prussian king.[2] Christopher Clark has argued that this contest between political factions was

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[1]Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2006), 378; Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1800–1866* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1984), 280; Stefan Berger, *Inventing the Nation* (London: Arnold, 2004), 45. See also Hagen Schulze, *Germany: A New History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 110; Golo Mann, *The History of Germany Since 1789* (New York: Präger, 1968), 58; Matthew Levinger, *Enlightened Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 111; Steven Ozment, *A Mighty Fortress* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 166. The vast majority of accounts written in the last century follow these in the main respects. For two somewhat different depictions, see Franz Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte*, vol. 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1949), 246; and Heinrich von Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1906), 427.

[2]Friedrich Keinemann, *Westfalen im Zeitalter der Restauration* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1987), 22–30, 94–100. On the king's celebration, see Adolf Streckfuß, *500 Jahre Berliner Geschichte*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Goldschmidt, 1886), 752–753.

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part of a broader fight over memory, particularly with respect to war. In Prussia, those eager to preserve the monarchy sought to control history through official ceremonies and statues, such as Schinkel's memorial in Kreuzberg; they cultivated a narrative in which citizens had defeated Napoleon out of loyalty to the king. Dissidents, by contrast, often looked beyond official monuments to generate a more romantic image in which peoples determined their own destiny.[3] Caspar David Friedrich and Ernst Moritz Arndt made such contributions, as did Ludwig Uhland with his song "On the 18th of October 1816." Congratulating the German "*Völker*" on the anniversary of their victory, but also encouraging support for nationalism and the cause of reform, Uhland penned the following lyrics for his postwar audience:

> You have destroyed the foreign hordes,
> But inside nothing is brighter,
> And you are not yet free,
> So long as you have not secured justice.[4]

These words fit within the larger context of an early-nineteenth-century dispute between romantic liberals and their antagonists—a dispute, not just over theoretical reforms, but over how best to construe history. Clark shows that the young organizers of the Wartburg Festival followed men such as Uhland in politicizing their commemoration. First, they adopted the black, red, and gold flag of the Lützow volunteer corps, styling themselves as a continuation of these soldiers in an ongoing "holy war" for the German nation. Second, festival-goers published a statement of principles at the very site where Luther had undertaken his translation of the New Testament. These "*Grundsätze und Beschlüße des 18. Oktobers*," as they were called, again drew upon the history of Leipzig and Luther, mixing past with present in a bit of political theater.[5]

While the festival was the first event of its kind, its organizers had largely neglected to qualify their proposals: political and economic unity for the "German nation"; a constitutional monarchy with parliamentary representation; equal protection under the law; and the guarantee of freedoms of the press and speech.[6] In the absence of specifics, it was thus difficult to say where the festival stood in the complex political landscape of the time—at least until contemporary

[3]Christopher Clark, "The Wars of Liberation in Prussian Memory," *The Journal of Modern History* 68, no. 3 (September 1996): 558–559. See Thomas Nipperdey, "Nationalidee und Nationaldenkmal in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert," *Historische Zeitschrift* 206 (1968): 529–585. See also Reinhart Koselleck, "Kriegerdenkmale als Identitätsstiftungen der Überlebenden," in *Identität*, ed. Odo Marquard and Karlheinz Stierle (Munich: Fink, 1979), 425.

[4]*Die politischen Lyriker unserer Zeit* (Leipzig: A. Ruge, 1848), 6–7.

[5]Reprinted in Max Hodann, *Die Urburschenschaft* (Jena: Eugen Diedrichs, 1917), 48–56.

[6]Huber, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte seit 1789*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1975), 718.

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remembrances intervened.[7] Pamphlets, newspapers, and songs from a range of parties eventually pointed to the burning of "reactionary" authors as a moment that showed the violent, revolutionary agenda of the students in Eisenach. In his journal *Isis*, Lorenz Oken observed that "exactly the burning was the epitome of the festival." This incident, he maintained, rightly gave the festival its fame and German youth its reputation.[8]

As I will argue in my article, however, Oken's recollection was inaccurate. The actual politics behind the burning was more eclectic, and its relationship with the festival less cohesive, than he and many contemporaries acknowledged.[9] Why this disconnect arose is an issue I will also propose to settle, while making some specific historiographical revisions about the Wartburg Festival. The burning "at the Wartburg" was remembered in many contemporary newspapers, and subsequently by a number of historians, as a representation of German youth's broad intolerance for conservatism: it was, these sources tell us, a concerted, even violent, protest against the status quo. But the incident actually took place miles away from the Wartburg on an unremarkable hill, at the behest of a middle-aged man and with the hands of fewer than six students. Moreover, there was no official connection between it and the Wartburg Festival. The burners had a distinct agenda. Only as part of a feud involving Friedrich Jahn's gymnastics-union did they condemn a diverse array of literature, much of which, surprisingly, agreed with the published "Grundsätze und Beschlüße des 18. Oktobers." Part one of my article will treat the cast of burned authors and their relationship to Jahn, with a view to political debates of the time.

By December 1817, many contemporaries remembered the burning incident and the Wartburg Festival in a distorted manner. As I will show in part two of my article, this confusion owed to the design of a few individuals. In the absence of accurate reports about the festival, two newspapermen whose works were condemned in the burning fabricated wild stories in an effort to arouse the interest of police. Among other things, they conflated the handful of burners with the nearly five hundred students at the Wartburg Festival who had called for constitutional reforms, making it seem as though many German students were intolerant to the point of violence. How far this distortion traveled, and with what effect, is a question I will turn to in my third and final section. The festival's organizers called peacefully for the introduction of reforms that were moderate in scope. But that fact went lost in the months afterward, thanks to the erroneous

[7]The earliest reports in local newspapers hardly remarked on the politics of the festival. See Eberhard Matthes, "Das Wartburgfest von 1817 in zeitgenößischer bürgerlicher Sicht," *Sächsische Heimatblätter*, no. 4, 1971, 175–179.

[8]Günter Steiger, "Das 'Phantom der Wartburgverschwörung' 1817," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift Friedrich Schiller-Universität Jena, Gesellschafts- und Sprachwissenschaftliche Reihe* 15, no. 2 (1966): 184.

[9]Such as Heinrich Heine, *Ludwig Börne*, vol. 2 (Hamburg: Hoffmann and Campe, 1978), 549.

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memory cultivated by certain newspapers and, eventually, by politicians and students. In what would serve as a fine testament to the phenomenon Clark identifies, many Germans came to remember the Wartburg Festival, not for its peaceful proposals or its politicized gathering, but for "its" violent book burning.

Part I: Contemporary Politics and Friedrich Jahn's List of Enemies

The Wartenberg is a largely forgotten hill overlooking the city of Eisenach. It is a two-hour walk from the Wartburg Castle, where official ceremonies related to the Wartburg Festival took place during the morning and afternoon of October 18, 1817. This small distinction should not be ignored. On the cold, windy evening of October 18, after a day of songs and political speeches, hundreds of German students marched to the Wartenberg for a party arranged by Grand-Duke Carl August, the sovereign of the small duchy of Saxe-Weimar. Revelry ensued. At some point a student gave a speech in accordance with the festival's official program, criticizing German sovereigns for failing to deliver constitutions as promised in 1815. Then, the overwhelming majority of the crowd went back down the hill and turned in for some sleep.[10] Eager to continue the celebration, nineteen-year-old Hans Ferdinand Maßmann gathered the remaining three dozen spectators, while five associates formed a circle around the biggest of eight bonfires on the hillside. Maßmann carried a basket with roughly thirty-five packets of paper bundled together to resemble books.[11] After a brief speech, he read off several (frequently incorrect) titles from the following list, nicknamed the "list of lies," asking aloud whether they should not be condemned[12]:

- F. Ancillon, *Über Souverainität und Staatsverfassungen* 1814
- Fr. v. Cölln, *Vertraute Briefe 1807. Freimüthige Blätter* und andre Schandschriften desselben
- Crome, *Deutschlands Krisis und Rettung*
- Dabelow, *Der 13e Artikel der Deutschen Bundesacte*, 1816
- H . . ., *Die deutschen Roth- und Schwarzmäntler*

[10]Heinrich Leo, *Meine Jugendzeit* (Gotha: Perthes, 1880), 152. Robert Wesselhöfft, *Teutsche Jugend* (Magdeburg: Heinrichshofen, 1828), 16–17. Dietrich Kieser, *Das Wartburgsfest* (Jena: Frommann, 1818), 36–38. Eduard Dürre, *Aufzeichnungen* (Leipzig: Strauch, 1881), 209–210.

[11]Bayerisches Staatsarchiv München (henceforth "BstA") MA 7730/2 Bl. 26.

[12]This list is that of Hans Ferdinand Maßmann, *Beschreibung* (Eisenach: Publisher Unknown, 1817), 24–28; however, I include elements from the overlooked list of Carl Hoffmeister, *Beschreibung des Festes* (Essen: Publisher Unknown, 1818), 35–37, notably the extra newspapers and the Benzenberg entry. See also Kieser, *Das Wartburgsfest*, 37–38, and Lorenz Oken, "Der Studentenfrieden auf der Wartburg," *Isis oder encyklopädische Zeitung*, no. 195, 1817, 1557–1558. Both are printed lists that follow Maßmann's. Inaccurate titles due to Maßmann's error.

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- Karl Ludw. von Haller, *Restauration der Staatswissenschaft oder Theorie des natürlich geselligen Zustandes, der Chimäre des künstlich bürgerlichen entgegengesetzt*
- D. J. P. Harl, *Über die gemeinschädl. Folgen der Vernachlässigung einer den Zeitbedürfnissen angemessenen Policei in Universitätsorten überhaupt und in Ansehung der Studirenden ins Besondre*, 1811
- Immermann, *Ein Wort zur Beherzigung*
- Janke, *Der neuen Freiheitsprediger Constitutions—Geschrei*
- Kotzebue, *Geschichte des deutschen Reichs, von dessen Ursprung bis zu dessen Untergange*
- Ludw. Theobul Kosegarten, *Rede, gesprochen am Napoleonstage 1809*
- Ludw. Theobul Kosegarten, *Geschichte meines fünfzigsten Lebensjahres*, 1816
- Ludw. Theobul Kosegarten, *Vaterländische Lieder*
- K. A. v. Kamptz, *Codex der Gensd'armerie*
- W. Reinhard, *Die Bundesacte über Ob, Wann und Wie? Deutscher Landstände.* Heidelberg 1817
- Schmalz, *Berichtigung einer Stelle in der Bredow. Venturinischen Chronik für das Jahr 1808* und die beiden darauf folgenden Geschreibsel
- Saul Ascher, *Germanomanie*
- Chr. von Benzel Sternau, *Jason*, eine Zeitschrift (1808–1810)
- Werner, *Weihe der Kraft. Die Söhne des Thals*
- Karl von Wangenheim, *Die Idee der Staatsverfassung, mit Rücksicht auf Würtembergs alte Verfassung*, 1815
- *Der Code Napoleon* und Zachariä über denselben
- Wadzeck, Scherer und alle andre schreibende, schreiende, und schweigende Feinde der löblichen Turnkunst!
- *Die Statuten der Adelskette*
- *Allemannia* und alle andre das Vaterland schändende und entehrende Zeitungen
- Benzenberg, *Verfassungsbüchlein*
- Ewald, *Verteidigung des Judentums*[13]

Two members of Maßmann's cohort had been instructed ahead of time to shout "yes" as if they were enthusiastic crowd-members; another associate used a pitchfork to place the "books" into the flames. Thus, most of the observers outside the inner circle did not know that this burning's rhetoric failed to match its reality. Maßmann's band pushed onlookers back whenever they tried to examine the literature, which actually comprised nothing more than pieces of paper torn from dictionaries and romance novels. Eventually, the confused crowd fell silent as Maßmann—who later tossed a cane, corset, and wig onto the pile without explanation—also asked whether a live rat should be thrown

[13]This extra entry according to the interrogation of Ernst Zober, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz zu Berlin (henceforth GStA) Rep. 77, Tit. 26a, Nr. 1, Bl. 47.

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onto the flames. His misbegotten theater, not a high-minded protest, was the celebrated "Wartburg book-burning" of October 18, 1817.[14]

Maßmann declared himself a liberal champion in this moment, claiming that the authors he condemned on the Wartenberg all opposed progress. But was the political landscape of the early nineteenth century so simple as to accord with his characterization? By 1817 the vast majority of those in government, including King Frederick William III of Prussia, had acknowledged the need for some kind of deviation from absolute monarchy.[15] To be sure, there were several arch-conservatives at court who espoused the politics of "reaction," or unremitting opposition to the influence of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Code on German governments. But even Friedrich Ancillon, a Prussian aristocrat who loathed the idea of a written constitution, advised the king that a sovereign should place superficial power in the hands of parliament.[16] Furthermore, his was only one of many conservative positions at the time.[17] Matthew Levinger has pointed out several cases in which conservatives sometimes conceded certain reforms while seeking to limit their speed and extent.[18]

At the time of the Wartburg Festival, one of the more contentious issues in politics was Article 13 of the German Confederation's Acts. Agreed at Vienna in 1815, it bound German leaders to introduce a new, parliamentary constitution—but without any concrete wording or timetables. Such a flawed design pleased those in Prussia and elsewhere who did not object per se to the notion of a less monarchical government, but who had concerns that a quick implementation of Article 13 might repeat the Reign of Terror.[19] In the estimation of such men, who included "burned" author Wilhelm Reinhard, an abundance of caution was necessary. Reform must come only at the right moment, which, given the wording of Article 13, did not necessarily need to happen soon.[20]

Meanwhile, a third group pushed to turn Article 13's vague promise into reality, demanding a written constitution similar to those recently passed by such small states as Nassau (1814), Schaumburg-Lippe (1816), and Saxe-Weimar (1816).[21] Liberals, as they became known, otherwise splintered into

[14]BStA MA 7730/2 Bl. 26 gives a detailed, step-by-step version of events. Hoffmeister, *Beschreibung*, 37; Leo, *Meine Jugendzeit*, 152; Wesselhöfft, *Teutsche Jugend*, 16–17; Kieser, *Das Wartburgsfest*, 36–38. See also Jakob Baxa, *Adam Müllers Lebenszeugnisse* (Munich: Schöningh, 1966), 94–96. For some additional information, see Karl Raumer, *Geschichte der Pädagogik*, vol. 4 (Stuttgart: Liesching, 1854), 110.

[15]Levinger, *Enlightened Nationalism*, 155.

[16] *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* (henceforth ADB), vol. 1 (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1875), 420–424.

[17]Ibid., 420–424.

[18]Levinger, *Enlightened Nationalism*, 158.

[19]Huber, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*, 302–304.

[20]Wilhelm Reinhard, *Die Bundesacte über Ob, Wann und Wie? Deutscher Landstände* (Heidelberg: Mohr and Winter, 1817), 51, 105–106.

[21]Huber, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*, 317.

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subgroups, any of whom might align themselves with moderate conservatism on a certain issue. Two distinct streams of thought determined their approach. The first, common among the upper-middle-class educated in northern states such as Prussia, was what William Carr calls historical liberalism. Historical liberals believed that inefficiency of administration helped to bring about German defeat in the early battles against Napoleon. Accordingly, they sought to effect more uniformity in procedures and to "restore and transform" medieval estates "into two-chamber legislatures with limited legislative and financial powers." Such proposed changes would not exclude the king, who was to retain veto power over most to all legislation.[22] On this point, however, theoretical liberals differed. Operating in a romantic vein, they spoke in terms similar to those of the French Assembly's Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1789 and—to the dismay of many Prussians—drew their support mainly from southern and western Germany. These regional ties, in turn, broached the issue of nationalism, or the unification of German states into one *Reich*. Some nationalists requested that Prussia head a new imperial diet of German states, with members subservient to King Frederick William III, while parties in Austria and elsewhere loathed such a prospect. Yet another group of nationalists, called romantics or radicals, rejected the very idea of a confederation and insisted that any unified body must emerge organically "from the nation itself."[23]

It was often difficult to classify an author's politics in view of all this diversity, which made the era's factional alignments "fluid and ill-defined," to quote Levinger.[24] Likewise, if the biography of Friedrich Cölln is any indication, the politics of the Wartenberg burning on October 18 was a good deal more complex than a simple liberal-conservative dichotomy would allow. As early as 1807, in his capacity as a civil servant, Cölln pushed to reform Prussian institutions.[25] He demanded the abolition of feudalism, advocated tolerance for Judaism, encouraged a merit-based system for bureaucratic promotion, and even suggested that inherited estates be outlawed. This political activity earned Cölln his share of enemies among arch-conservatives. Next, with the *Vertraute Briefe über die inneren Verhältnisse am Preußischen Hofe (Confidental Letters on the internal Developments at the Prussian Court)*, he turned his gaze directly toward the Prussian monarchy, arguing, at least in some cases, that it was unresponsive to changing times. Such a position approached historical liberalism and soon landed Cölln in jail on charges of being a "democratic

[22]William Carr, *A History of Germany* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969), 12–13.
[23]Huber, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*, 710.
[24]Levinger, *Enlightened Nationalism*, 158. Carr, *A History of Germany*, 10–11. Huber, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*, 318–319.
[25]Johannes Ziekursch, "Friedrich von Cölln und der Tugendbund," *Historische Vierteljahresschrift* 12 (1909): 49–58, 67.

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radica[l]."[26] But the term "democrat" was not entirely accurate, either. Cölln had written against blanket freedoms of press and speech in *Die deutschen Roth- und Schwarzmäntler (The German Red- and Black-Coats)*, *Freymüthige Blätter*, and *Neue Feuerbrände*, where he backed arch-conservative calls to censor those who would publish materials advocating the overthrow of the state.[27] Thus, Cölln defied a clear distinction between the categories of "liberal" and "conservative" insofar as he endorsed many, but not each particular one, of the values later ascribed to the cause of reform in Europe.[28]

The same could be said for many other authors "burned" on the Wartenberg. Professor Johann Paul Harl argued that in the "spirit of reason," German states should introduce new constitutions to guarantee equality before the law and abolish serfdom. But freedom of speech must have its limits, Harl added in *Über die gemeinschädlichen Folgen der Vernachlässigung einer den Zeitbedürfnissen angemessenen Policei in Universitätsorten überhaupt und in Ansehung der Studierenden ins Besondre (On the harmful Consequences of Neglect of Police at University Sites)*—especially for unruly student fraternities that counseled revolution.[29] Joining Harl in this opinion was August Wilhelm Crome. In 1813, amid French occupation, Crome published *Deutschlands Crise und Errettung im April und May 1813 (Germany's Crisis and Salvation in April and May 1813)*, a pamphlet whose eccentric politics was difficult to classify. One moment, Crome spoke in favor of written constitutions and freedom of the press. The next moment, he advocated a surrender to French occupiers because he saw French armies as a means to stave off a greater threat from Russia.[30] Arch-conservatives, opposed to any reforms such as those offered by the Napoleonic Code, dismissed Crome for his progressive ideas. Nationalists, for their part, were less than pleased with his seeming Francophilia. Only a few periodicals, including Christian Benzel-Sternau's *Jason* and Freiherr von Aretin's *Allemannia*, tried unsuccessfully to defend the nuances of his argument to the public.[31]

[26]Friedrich von Cölln, *Vertraute Briefe über die innern Verhältniße am Preußischen Hofe seit dem Tode Friedrichs II* (Amsterdam: Hammer, 1807), 267. Ziekursch, "Friedrich von Cölln," 67.

[27]Cölln, *Vertraute Briefe*, 270. See *ADB*, vol. 4 (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1876), 412. See also Otto Dann, "Geheime Organisierung und politisches Engagement," in *Geheime Gesellschaften*, ed. Peter Christian Ludz (Heidelberg: Schneider, 1979), 425.

[28]Consider the platform of the Wartburg Festival itelf. Hodann, *Die Urburschenschaft*, 48–56.

[29]Johann Paul Harl, *Über einige der wichtigsten Vortheile und Vorzüge der neuen Verfassungs-Urkunde des Königreichs Baiern* (Erlangen: Kameral-Korrespondenten, 1818), V-VI.

[30]Rolf Haaser, "'. . . der Herd des studentischen Fanatismus und Radikalismus.' Die Universität Gießen und das Wartburgfest," in *Das Wartburgfest und die oppositionelle Bewegung in Hessen*, ed. Burghard Dedner (Marburg: Hitzeroth, 1994), 39–41.

[31]Paul Czygan, *Zur Geschichte der Tagesliteratur*, vol. 2, Abteilung 2 (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1911), 44–45, 54, 358. For the definitive writing on Kotzebue, see George Williamson, "What Killed August von Kotzebue? The Temptations of Virtue and the Political Theology of German Nationalism, 1789–1819," in *The Journal of Modern History* 72, no. 4 (2000): 890–943.

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Almost all authors on the "burned" list inhabited similarly awkward positions in the political landscape. Johann Ludwig Ewald advocated Jewish rights and campaigned to restrict noble privileges in two separate pamphlets, *Was sollte der Adel jetzt thun?* (*What should Nobility do now?*) and *Der Geist des Christenthums und des ächten deutschen Volksthums, dargestellt, gegen die Feinde der Isräliten* (*The Spirit of Christianity and of the true German folk-tradition, as against the enemies of the Israelites*). In a more conservative turn, however, Ewald spoke out against the violent tendencies present in some of the German youth.[32] Rabid young revolutionaries were every bit as objectionable as intolerant aristocrats, he argued, and therefore some freedom of speech must be denied the former. Yet another writer similar to Ewald was Ludwig Theobul Kosegarten. Kosegarten supported written constitutions; equal taxation; and freedoms of speech, press, and religion.[33] That said, he also cautioned against allowing young nationalist groups the full protection of the law. In three separate works—*Vaterländische Gesänge (Fatherland Hymns)*, *Rede gesprochen am Napoleons-Tage des Jahrs 1809 im größern akademischen Hörsaal zu Greifswald* (*Speech Given on Napoleon's Day 1809 in the Large Academic Auditorium at Greifswald*), and *Geschichte meines fünfzigsten Lebensjahres (History of my Fiftieth Year)*—Kosegarten opposed the nativism he saw in some young Germans, many of whom were disciples of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn. Their arrogant "Germanomania" was destructive.[34] Indeed, as Saul Ascher argued in his own pamphlet, *Germanomanie*, Germany's culture was not superior to others and must guard against such arrogance in order to achieve progress.[35]

Hence one sees the makings of a pattern in the list of "burned" authors. Neither uniformly conservative nor uniformly liberal, they tended to limit their commitment to reform when it came to the "excesses" of certain German youth organizations. But why all this fuss about student behavior? While a range of prominent authors, including constitutional advocate Johann Friedrich Benzenberg, shared such concerns, extraordinary incidents of violence remained scarce at German universities.[36] One instance, documented by

[32]Johann Ludwig Ewald, *Was sollte der Adel jetzt thun?* (Leipzig: Kummer, 1793), 4–5, 14–15, 82, 79–80, 37.

[33]Lewis M. Holmes, *Kosegarten: The Turbulent Life & Times of a Northern German Poet* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 195. See *ADB*, vol. 16 (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1882), 750. Ludwig Theobul Kosegarten, *Rede gesprochen am Napoleons-Tage des Jahrs 1809* (Greifswald: Eckhardt, 1809), 34–35.

[34]*ADB*, vol. 16, 750. See Ludwig Kosegarten, *Rede gesprochen am Napoleons-Tage*, 32–33. Cited in Holmes, *Kosegarten*, 194.

[35]See Baxa, *Adam Müllers Lebenszeugnisse*, vol. 1, 1118–1120. Ludwig Kosegarten, *Ludwig Gotthard Kosegartens Geschichte seines fünfzigsten Lebensjahres* (Leipzig: Weygand, 1816), 181–182. See Hellmut Seier, "Der Bundestag und die deutsche Einheit 1816–1818," in *Darstellungen und Quellen zur Geschichte der deutschen Einheitsbewegung*, ed. Klaus Malettke (Heidelberg: Winter, 1992), 66.

[36]Reinhart Koselleck locates Benzenberg ca. 1817 within a liberal constellation that included Arndt, Görres, and Jahn. See Reinhart Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution* (Stuttgart:

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Karl Immermann in the pamphlet *Ein Wort zur Beherzigung*, merely involved a group of students beating each other up over bogus magazine subscriptions.[37] Hardly a great threat to peace. A more reasonable source of worry was that the network of student groups stretched across the geographical boundaries of particular states. While the student organizations themselves ranged from democratic to aristocratic on many issues, they joined together to espouse a sort of nationalist politics that older arch-conservatives, with varying sincerity, had come to fear. I will explore this theme later. For now, it is sufficient to note that several historical liberals wanted to quiet such talk because they believed their own agenda hung in the balance. If the noise surrounding student organizations continued to grow, sovereigns might well be persuaded to delay fulfillment of Article 13.

Karl von Wangenheim saw this possibility distinctly by 1817. Both in his capacity as Württemberg's representative to the *Bundestag* and as the author of *Die Idee der Staatsverfassung (The Idea of the State Constitution)*, Wangenheim had worked for years to secure a constitutional compromise. His parliamentary model would comprise nobles, academics, and popularly elected representatives—very much in line with what Ernst Huber identifies as a moderate position for early-nineteenth-century liberalism.[38] Wangenheim even endorsed freedoms of press and speech for all student groups, continuing to do so after the Wartenberg burning. But while he never diminished his commitment to their rights, Wangenheim worried aloud that violent nationalists might give arch-conservatives the pretext they desired.[39] For him, it was difficult to shake the impression that student fraternities in particular hurt the greater cause of reform.

How reactionary, then, was the cast of authors condemned on the Wartenberg? "Burned" writers Karl Ludwig von Haller, Friedrich Ancillon, Theodor Anton Schmalz, Christoph Christian Dabelow, August von Kotzebue, Johann Christian Janke, and Karl von Kamptz did incline toward arch-conservatism insofar as they opposed the introduction of written constitutions. Nevertheless, since well over half of the thirty-four entries on the roster took moderate to liberal positions on diverse issues, it is difficult to classify the roster at all and misleading to deem it "reactionary." Moreover, there is reason

Ernst Klett, 1967), 303. On Benzenberg's commitment to freedom of the press ca. 1817, see Julius Heyderhoff, *Johann Friedrich Benzenberg. Der erste rheinische Liberale* (Düsseldorf: Lintz, 1909), 75. See finally Johann Friedrich Benzenberg, *Ueber Verfassung* (Dortmund: Publisher Unknown, 1816), 98; and Michael Rowe, *From Reich to State: The Rhineland in the Revolutionary Age, 1780–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 236.

[37]Karl Immermann, *Ein Wort zur Beherzigung* (Jena: Schmidt, 1817), 4–5.

[38]Karl von Wangenheim, *Die Idee der Staatsverfassung* (Frankfurt: Körner, 1815), 188–236. See Huber, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*, 333.

[39]In a Bundestag meeting. See Alfred Stern, *Geschichte Europas* (Berlin: Hertz, 1894), 637.

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to doubt the claim that the politics of the seven arch-conservatives was uniform. Kotzebue was a Russian spy who antagonized nearly all German politicians, conservative and otherwise, because dissension in central Europe appealed to his employer. No less loathesome to aristocrats than to youths, he also endorsed equality before the law and was once arrested on suspicion of being a "Jacobin." Still less typical were Kamptz and Janke. Kamptz eventually switched his allegiance to liberalism overnight. Janke, meanwhile, belonged to a progressive secret-society as late as 1811 and was known to change his opinions—as well as his account of facts—whenever it might advance his career as a civil servant. As for Haller, Dabelow, and Ancillon, their resistance to German reform never wavered because it came from genuine, aristocratic conviction. These last three men truly feared a repeat of the Reign of Terror. But the same could not be said for many others on the Wartenberg list.

Mysteriously, such nuance was lost on all spectators at the burning.[40] In police interrogations after the incident, Maßmann's cohort consistently asserted that the "burned" writers were all the same. One student stated that each writing "had been burned because of (its) feudalistic convictions." Another maintained that the writings were objectionable because they "had not progressed with the time." Meanwhile, Maßmann's own pamphlet on the Wartburg Festival led police to believe that the student burners did not know their victims' work in detail. Writing with the luxury of Jakob Fries's personal library, the supposed mastermind of the Wartenberg incident still failed to title many of the "burned" selections correctly. It seemed his clique—ignorant of much, if not all, of the writings' content on October 18—had almost certainly been manipulated by some higher authority.[41]

By November 7, 1817, King Frederick William III of Prussia wanted answers. Administrators scrambled to bring him local newspaper reports on the festival as police dispatched additional investigators to Eisenach. At the same time, Prussian Police Minister Karl von Kamptz acquired a list of persons involved with the Wartburg Festival and began to interrogate them privately.[42] Thirty-eight years old by the time of the book-burning, Kamptz was a fixture at the king's court, opportunistically volunteering his services for prominent cases and observing questionable ethics while in pursuit of suspects; he once boldly stated—albeit in a parody by E. T. A. Hoffmann—that "as soon as the criminal is determined, the crime he has committed will reveal itself." The Wartenberg

[40]With the notable exception of Crome. Haaser, "'. . . der Herd des studentischen Fanatismus und Radikalismus,'" 38. Professor Jakob Fries, though ignorant of much of the burned material, was very familiar with a few of the burned authors, including Kotzebue. Maßman also showed Fries his list on the day of the burning.

[41]GStA Rep. 89, Nr. 22640 B1. 61–62.

[42]GStA Rep. 77, Tit. 17, Nr. 15, Bd. 2, Bl. 62; also, BStAM MA 7730/2 Bl. 26; finally, GStA I. HA Rep. 77, Tit. 26a, Nr. 1, Bl. 86, 47.

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investigation presented Kamptz with a career opportunity. But before he could present his case work to the king, he would have to show it to the Prussian chancellor, Prince Hardenberg, who feared his agenda might be blocked by the Wartenberg incident.[43] For years, the chancellor had been trying to convince Frederick William III of the need for a new constitution only to find his aims frustrated by the backdoor machinations of arch-conservatives, who advised the king against consequential reforms. Overworked and in poor health by 1817, Hardenberg believed he could ill afford to let the king obsess over the Wartenberg incident. Frederick William was already drifting toward the camp of arch-conservatism.[44] Kamptz's investigation might well keep him there. As the police minister raced to gather information on the Wartenberg and verify some recent rumors linking it to a grand conspiracy, Hardenberg cautiously awaited the official report.[45]

It was against this backdrop that East-German historian Günter Steiger published a landmark essay, "Das 'Phantom der Wartburgverschwörung' 1817" ("The 'Phantom of the Wartburg Conspiracy' in 1817"). Working in the 1960s with archived police documents, Steiger produced a secret report by Kamptz. Surprisingly, this document ascribed the book-burning on October 18 not to the festival itself or to its 500 students, as the recollection of Lorenz Oken and others attested, but solely to the whims of Friedrich Ludwig Jahn.[46] Aware that the handful of students involved in the burning were inebriated and ignorant at the time of their bonfire, Kamptz fingered their mentor, Jahn, as the man who had chosen the list of books to "burn." Because writings opposing Jahn's gymnastics club had been overwhelmingly represented at the Wartenberg, Kamptz believed Jahn's primary motive was to humiliate his enemies in one fell swoop.[47]

The politics of East Germany in the 1960s heroized Jahn as a sort of proto-socialist. Likely for this reason, Steiger neglected to pursue the background to the burning incident, thus to some extent abiding what I will later identify as

[43]*ADB*, vol. 15 (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1882), 66–67. GStA Rep. 77, Tit. 17, Nr. 15, Bd. 2, Bl. 62. See "Viertes Abenteuer" of E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Meister Floh* for quoted text and entire anecdote. Hoffmann, *Meister Floh* (Bamberg: Meisenbach, 1989). See also Lienhard Wawrzyn, "Staatsschutz um 1819—Der Staat als Mitautor einer Satire E. T. A. Hoffmanns," in *Normalzustände*, ed. Eberhard Knödler-Bunte (Berlin: Ästhetik und Kommunikation, 1978), 68–83.

[44]Paul Haake, *Der preußische Verfassungskampf vor 100 Jahren* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1921), 85–86, 32. Peter Hammer, *Die französische Diplomatie der Restauration und Deutschland 1814–1830* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1963), 69. Alfred Stern, "Hardenbergs Instruction für Jordan 1817 in Sachen des Artikels XIII der Bundesacte," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 12 (1894/1895): 342–343. Heyderhoff, *Johann Friedrich Benzenberg*, 105–107; see also *ADB*, vol. 10 (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1879), 588. See Karl August Varnhagen von Ense, *Denkwürdigkeiten und Vermischte Schriften*, vol. 9 (Leipzig: Assing, 1859), 186.

[45]GstA Rep. 92, Nachlaß Hardenberg, K. 30, Bl. 104; also, GstA Rep. 89, B, III, 82, 10.

[46]Steiger, "Das 'Phantom der Wartburgverschwörung,'" 183–212.

[47]GStA Rep. 77, Tit. 17, Nr. 15, Bd. 1, Bl. 9–15; GStA I. HA Rep. 77, Tit. 26a, Nr. 1.

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a distorted memory of the Wartburg festival. Steiger maintained the belief that students burned "reactionary" literature in line with the festival's overall political agenda.[48] But examination of certain police and literary documents between 1812 and 1817 problematizes such a conclusion. Records confirm Kamptz's suspicion that Jahn had a great many enemies among the burned, several of whose writings took moderate to liberal positions on issues such as constitutionalism. What the burned figures shared was precisely, and only, an opposition to student organizations such as Jahn's gymnastics movement.[49]

This feud had carried weight for Prussian authorities at the time, in what was then the largest of the thirty-nine states comprising the German Confederation. Since 1814, three years after he founded his gymnastics movement, Jahn had been teaching physical fitness to nearly 12,000 pupils from across central and northern Germany. His politics was progressive in certain respects and primitive in others; he published on the need for written constitutions and democratically elected parliaments, but he also avowed anti-Semitism and proposed to retain King Frederick William III as the executive of a new, unified German government. Several liberal and conservative politicians disagreed with Jahn on a range of such issues, and many in the Prussian government had their own concerns about gymnastics. While the so-called "Father" Jahn never counseled revolution outright, he competed with the state in a battle over perceptions, as well as memory.[50] In a sense, his subversion consisted as much in the style of his influence over youth as in principles. Christopher Clark notes that Jahn took pupils on trips to battlefields and staged rival celebrations to those of the government, with some 10,000 spectators gathering outside the gymnastics headquarters in Berlin to watch a torchlit commemoration in 1814. Even at the level of clothing, Jahn worked to instrumentalize history. In addition to old-German pants, his gymnasts all wore jackets that resembled those of the Lützow volunteer soldiers in 1813.[51]

In the years and months before the Wartenberg burning, some familiar voices charged Jahn with sedition, one of whom was a part-time spy named Friedrich von Cölln.[52] There were several others with an axe to grind, too, and Kamptz went on to recognize their works as comprising Maßmann's "burned" material.

[48]Steiger, "Das 'Phantom der Wartburgverschwörung,'" 207. See also Günter Steiger, *Aufbruch* (Leipzig: Urania, 1967), 112.

[49]See also Willi Schröder, *Burschenturner im Kampf um Einheit und Freiheit* (Berlin: Sportverlag, 1967), 81.

[50]This being an underlying concern of the king's mentioned in Altenstein's circular to ministers across Prussia; see GStA Rep. 77, Tit. 17, Nr. 15, Bd. 2, Bl. 76.

[51]F. Clöter, *Erinnerungen* (Hof: Grau, 1878), 20. Max Lenz, *Geschichte der Königlichen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin*, vol. 1 (Halle: Waisenhaus, 1910), 42–50. Wolfgang Meyer, *Die Briefe Friedrich Ludwig Jahns 1818–1852* (Leipzig: Eberhardt, 1913), 11. Schröder, *Burschenturner im Kampf*, 122.

[52]Steiger, "Das 'Phantom der Wartburgverschwörung,'" 186. See Carl Euler, *Friedrich Ludwig Jahn* (Stuttgart: Krabbe, 1881), 478–480.

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One denunciation against Jahn came from Johann Christian Janke, author of *Zeitgemäße Worte eines Preußen an seine Landsleute, oder über der neuen deutschen Freiheitsprediger Konstitutions-Geschrei und ihre Lästerung deutscher Fürsten (Timely Words of a Prussian to his Countrymen, or On the Constitutional Cries of the New German Freedom-Preachers, and their Disrespect for German Princes)*.[53] Janke had already written a letter to the Prussian Police Ministry that called Jahn the leader of a "secret society," the gymnastics-union. Secret societies were illegal at the time, so this charge carried weight in its own right. But Janke went even further, claiming to officials that Jahn wanted to overthrow the current regime by inducing civil-service employees, particularly teachers, to revolt.[54] Other wild allegations followed, and by 1815, the police launched an investigation.[55] Next came a controversy surrounding Theodor Schmalz, a bureaucrat with prominent patrons such as Carl Ludwig von Haller and Karl Salomo Zachariä, both of whom eventually landed on Maßmann's list. In three separate pamphlets, Schmalz renewed the controversy surrounding "secret" societies, particularly the gymnastics-union. Jahn's pupils, he implied, staged performances and rituals that rivaled the government's own. Such independence represented a dangerous innovation in politics.[56]

Almost two years later, in early 1817, Saul Ascher, Friedrich Ancillon, and Wilhelm Scheerer wrote separate pieces attacking the cult mentality they had observed among gymnasts.[57] Jahn responded to the charge with venom, disparaging these opponents as "whores" in a series of exchanges.[58] His words may sound trivial in hindsight. But it is significant that student organizations such as Jahn's earned a debate distinct from those accorded to such issues as a written constitution. In later newspaper articles, Scheerer turned the organizations into a unique concern for authorities. He made the familiar claim—and likely cited an argument by Karl Leberecht Immermann, also "burned"—that the government needed to bring student gatherings under control.[59] After August von Kotzebue and Friedrich von Cölln supported

[53]*ADB*, vol. 15, 67–68, 122.

[54]GStA VI. HA NL Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, Nr. C-V, Bl. 112–127. GStA Rep. 77, Tit. 25 k, Lit. J, Nr. 1, Bd. 1, Bl. 25–26. See Meyer, *Die Briefe Friedrich Ludwig Jahns*, 118.

[55]GStA Rep. 77, Tit. 25 k, Lit. J, Nr. 1, Bd. 1, Bl. 12–17, Bl. 64–65, and Bl. 71–76. GStA Rep. 77, Tit. 25 k, Lit. J, Nr. 1, Bd. 1, Bl. 25–26. See GStA VI. HA NL Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, Nr. C-V.

[56]Theodor Schmalz, *Berichtigung einer Stelle in der Bredow-Venturinischen Chronik für das Jahr 1808* (Berlin: Maurer, 1815), 11. See the *ADB* entry on Schmalz, vol. 31 (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1890). See also Hans-Christof Kraus, *Theodor Anton Heinrich Schmalz* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1999), 145.

[57]Adam Müller, *Ausgewählte Abhandlungen* (Jena: Fischer, 1921), 216. Excerpt from the *Weimarische Zeitung, oder Oppositions-Blatt* of April 18, 1817, reprinted in Euler, *Friedrich Ludwig Jahn*, 494–495. On Ancillon, see GStA I. HA Rep. 77, Tit. 26a, Nr. 1, Bl. 47. See also GStA I. HA Rep. 77, Tit. 17, Nr. 15, Bd. 2, Bl. 62.

[58]Euler, *Friedrich Ludwig Jahn*, 495–496.

[59]Ibid., 496.

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Scheerer in editorials, the Prussian cabinet forbade Jahn's public lectures.[60] As Friedrich Wadzeck suggested in his *Berlinisches Wochenblatt (Berlin Weekly)*, it now seemed that gymnasts transferred allegiance away from more traditional state institutions.[61] For its own protection, the state must tolerate no such organization, with the exception of the Masonic order to which Wadzeck, Janke, and almost all the opponents of Jahn belonged.[62]

The stir caused by his opponents began to overwhelm Jahn by October 1817. Creditors harassed him, and his applications for teaching positions failed. Even his daily walks through the *Tiergarten* in Berlin were spoiled by a government "observer."[63] In Jahn's own estimation, Wadzeck and the "Schmalz-fellows" were responsible for these troubles. Hence the question: was it an animus against gymnastics as an organization, and not a position on issues such as constitutionalism or freedom of speech, that really united the cast of Wartenberg authors? Friedrich Schleiermacher supposed so, though only in private.[64] The interrogations of Maßmann and his burning group lent credence to the idea as well. These youths defined a "reactionary" foremost as someone who opposed Jahn's organization and the benefits it brought to Germany. In this context, constitutionalism and similar debates were only sporadically relevant, and the issue of gymnastics alone could suffice to determine one's assessment of an author.[65] Any visitor to the open-air gymnasium in Berlin could see how Jahn pursued his eccentric vendettas. On symbolic dates, including October 18, he ordered students to burn Friedrich Wadzeck in effigy and kick balls painted with the faces of several other enemies. Although his opponents often had diversely moderate to progressive beliefs, Jahn liked to humiliate them by stereotyping them all as "Schmalz-fellows."

Viewed through this lens, the picture of the burning turns clearer. By late 1817 an anti-Jahn constellation had come to include, among others, Kamptz, Janke, Schmalz, Cölln, Ascher, Ancillon, Immermann, Scheerer, Wadzeck, Zachariä, Haller, and Kotzebue. While these men were hardly carbon copies of one another in their approach to government, they were all "Schmalz-fellows," to use Jahn's term.[66] Jahn thus had a potential motive for the

[60]Ibid., 503. See Franz Passow, *Turnziel. Turnfreunden und Turnfeinden* (Breslau: Max, 1818), 227–228.

[61]Wadzeck's *Nützliches und unterhaltendes berlinisches Wochenblatt für den gebildeten Bürger und denkenden Landmann* reprinted partially in Euler, *Friedrich Ludwig Jahn*, 497–499.

[62]*ADB*, vol. 40 (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1896), 466. See W. Gaß, *Fr. Schleiermachers Briefwechsel mit J. Chr. Gaß* (Berlin: Reimer, 1852), 161–163.

[63]See Euler, *Friedrich Ludwig Jahn*, 465–467, for a seemingly innocuous anecdote involving Jahn's walks with "Dr. Schlottmann"; Euler, like Jahn, did not know that Schlottmann was employed by Hardenberg with the purpose of spying on Jahn.

[64]Ibid., 161–163.

[65]Ibid., 161–163.

[66]Karl August Varnhagen von Ense, *Denkwürdigkeiten des eignen Lebens* (Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker, 1987), 769. In a letter dated April 7, 1817, Cölln distanced himself from Kamptz. See Andrea

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burning, which offered to position gymnastics as progress and to stereotype its detractors, whatever their constitutional politics, as "behind the times." But the question remains whether he actually commissioned this summary judgment. Kamptz never found hard proof that he did. With access to archives and private correspondence, however, that is now possible.

To begin, transcripts of Jahn's lectures in early 1817 suggest that he planned the book-burning. Jahn condemned nearly all the authors on the burned roster, even when they advocated progressive positions. He lambasted Cölln for his wish to "smell crookedness everywhere" in the Prussian government, somehow forgetting that this kind of skepticism could lead to reform. Meanwhile, as if to preview what was to come in October, Jahn also wrote letters criticizing a series of familiar authors; Immermann, Aretin (the publisher of *Allemannia)*, Ancillon, Dabelow, Haller, Kosegarten, and Reinhard each earned his harsh words, despite the fact that some of these men went on to support the general cause of constitutionalism.[67] Jahn certainly had an animus against the burned selections, only not necessarily at the level of the lofty political debates between historical liberals and arch-conservatives. Proving that gymnastics could be a decisive issue in its own right, he vilified many of his opponents despite their constitutional positions, not because of them. One might say, therefore, that Jahn's advocacy for gymnastics could take political priority over other theoretical debates on reform. Nevertheless, provided the campaign against student organizations somehow faded from prominence, Jahn was willing to cooperate with his enemies in broader struggles:

> Those who shy from constitutions . . . don't dare to mobilize the people any more, and also don't believe that the people will rise up in order to do something against the French. To such [individuals] I reply, an honest German will always hit against the foreign invader. I, for example, will go to battle against every foreigner who wants to play master in Germany, even if the entire officer-corps were to consist of authors, *Scheerer* my left, *Wadzeck* my right neighbor, *von Cölln* my staff-sergeant, *Schmalz* my captain, *Kotzebue* colonel, and *Kamptz* general.[68] (Italics mine)

Hofmeister-Hunger, *Pressepolitik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1994), 315–316, and 378–379. In a separate incident, Cölln dismissed Schmalz's work. See Kraus, *Theodor Anton Heinrich Schmalz*, 126.

[67]Meyer, *Die Briefe Friedrich Ludwig Jahns*, 243, 249, 73, 85, 96–99. Euler, *Friedrich Ludwig Jahn*, 527–528, 481. Fritz Eckardt, *Friedrich Ludwig Jahn. Eine Würdigung seines Lebens und Wirkens* (Dresden: Limpert, 1924), 102. Peter Hacks, *Ascher gegen Jahn* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1991), 148–149. Paul Piechowski, *Friedrich Ludwig Jahn* (Gotha: Clotz, 1928), 105–106. See Kraus, *Theodor Anton Heinrich Schmalz*, for the various ways in which Schmalz was linked to Dabelow, Ancillon, etc. See GStA Rep. 77, Tit. XXIII, Nr. 3.

[68]Meyer, *Die Briefe Friedrich Ludwig Jahns*, 98–99. Thüringisches Staatsarchiv Weimar (henceforth TStAW) A 8715.

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In this grudging acceptance of those who opposed him, Jahn united six figures burned at the Wartenberg. It is doubtful that anyone else could have shared that vision—not Maßmann, who never fully read the "books" he burned and knew nothing of the nuanced positions taken by the six authors, much less the few dozen other German students on the Wartenberg, who were merely spectators to the matter.[69] But perhaps the most important conclusion to be drawn from the above is that Jahn considered his enemies potential partners in a greater fight—one that transcended the relatively secondary feud over gymnastics and youth-organizations in which he found himself embroiled. The authors burned at the Wartenberg disliked Jahn on a personal level, and vice versa. But traditional politics was not the driving force in their dispute, and both parties could overcome their differences if confronted with other challenges.

Readers will note the circumstantial nature of the evidence against Jahn so far. While several historians, Hans-Ulrich Wehler and Heinrich Treitschke among them, have already suspected Jahn of being responsible for the burning, they have yet to find evidence that directly implicates him, not least because Jahn ordered most of his letters burned sometime in early 1819. I believe that archived testimonies clinch this point. In the years and decades that followed the burning, three separate associates of Jahn's confirmed his direct involvement. One of the three, Eduard Dürre, stated that some time before the Wartburg Festival, Jahn sent a letter to the festival's organizing committee asking that a book-burning take place on either October 17 or 18. After Jahn was flatly refused by the committee, he declined to let the matter rest and handed his trusted student Maßmann a list of books to burn once he arrived at the festival. Insofar as this act, attested to in two additional confessions by reliable sources, took place in Berlin shortly before September 27, Jahn initiated "that burning scene" on the Wartenberg.[70]

The so-called "father" of gymnastics wished to humiliate his diverse personal enemies by stereotyping them all as relics. But what of the students' goal in helping him? In one regard, Maßmann and his handful of gymnast sidekicks undertook the burning out of devotion to the man who planned it; they did not try to grasp the complexity of the political landscape as represented by the list of authors they "burned." To this extent, the Wartenberg gang were pawns in another man's game. Dupes or not, however, they still had an ideology that led them to put on political theater. They believed fanatically in what they had been told: both that gymnastics and similar national student organizations brought prosperity to youths, and that Jahn's enemies must be humiliated. Thus, while the burning was not quite a sign of political agency, it was a sign

[69]Lorenz Oken and Jakob Fries also could not have planned or organized the burning, for a host of reasons. TStAW Kunst und Wissenschaft, A 8715, Bl. 7–9.

[70]Dürre, *Aufzeichnungen*, 209. Clöter, *Erinnerungen*, 28. Eduard Dürre, "Rückblicke und Träume eines alten Turners," *Deutsche Turn-Zeitung* 19 (May 10, 1872): 104–105.

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of politicization, as the conventional view of historians maintains. The students involved were prepared to risk punishment in the name of what they believed to be a greater cause, eccentric as it may have been.

Part II: Intrigue, Distortion, and the Murder of Kotzebue

It took less than two months for the incident on the Wartenberg to become the "Wartburg book-burning" as remembered by contemporaries such as Lorenz Oken. A review of government records helps to isolate, and even understand, this transformation. By November 1817, as Police Minister Kamptz struggled with his investigation of Jahn in Berlin, Chancellor Hardenberg received some good news.[71] Thanks to a spy, Prussia's foremost statesman now possessed what Kamptz, his rival, lacked: an eyewitness account of the Wartburg Festival.[72] The spy, Schlottmann, had traveled to Eisenach for the purpose of "observing" student organizations and, to the delight of Hardenberg, was in a position to debunk certain lies about the book-burning that had begun to circulate in Berlin.[73]

The source of these lies was a local newspaper edited by Wilhem Scheerer and Friedrich von Cölln, the *Brandenburger Erzähler*. Both authors are already familiar to us for their appearance on the list of the "burned." Outraged at having their works ridiculed by a bunch of ignorant teenagers, they decided in early November 1817 to publish the following account of the Wartenberg incident:[74]

> Since our students, dispatched to the Wartburg, have returned, one hears fantastical things about which it is only to be wished that they are fiction. But unfortunately we no longer live in the age of Reformation, of the Enlightenment, of tolerance of foreign opinion, of humanity, and of social virtues; instead (we live in an age) of arrogance, of youthful impudence, of superstition, of partisanship, of intellectual persecution, and of evil. To the point! On October 18 the students gathered at the Wartburg [and . . .] burned the writings of Mr. von Haller, of Kotzebue, Dabelow, and more similarly minded, honorable authors; also bashed and given over to the flames were pieces of the standing army, as well as, in what mocked the princes, the acts of the Holy Alliance.[75]

[71]GStA I. HA Rep. 77, Tit. 26a, Nr. 1, Bl. 6.

[72]Eberhard Büssem, *Die Karlsbader Beschlüße* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1974), 543.

[73]Lenz, *Geschichte*, 42–50; Leo, *Meine Jugendzeit*, 162–163. See Peter Kaupp and Klaus Malettke, "Robert Wesselhöfft. Geschichte der Jenaischen Burschenschaft," in *Darstellungen und Quellen zur Geschichte der deutschen Einheitsbewegung* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1992), 272. See also Gustav Heinrich Schneider, *Die Burschenschaft Germania zu Jena* (Jena: Costenoble, 1897), 51.

[74]*Beobachter an der Spree*, no. 16 (1817): 704–705.

[75]The mention of "pieces of the standing army" refers to a cane, corset, and wig tossed into the fire by Maßmann. Some historians have seen the burning of these pieces as a coherent protest against militarism and the governments most associated with the pieces: Austria, Prussia, and Hesse respectively. In his anonymous pamphlet, published several weeks after the festival, Maßmann took the

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As has been shown in the first section of this article, only a handful of students was involved in the actual burning, and this contingent neither operated at the grand Wartburg Fortress, nor burned acts of the Holy Alliance. Moreover, it was misleading to say the condemned authors were all "like-minded." Thus, with the above "report," Cölln and Scheerer obscured the true circumstances surrounding the burning of their works. It was not a constitutional debate or an opinion on government, as these two authors implied, but a wish to humiliate Jahn's enemies that had motivated the Wartenberg incident. And the incident itself had not necessarily been indicative of, or connected to, the festival. Nevertheless, Cölln anonymously sent verbatim copies of his "report" to newspapers across Germany and Austria.[76] Without access to more thorough reports, which still remained in the hands of a few, virtually no one could see the degree to which his information was inaccurate.

Cölln and Scheerer imbued their report with a tone of moral outrage, but it was the details of their recollection that increased the event's political scope dramatically. The supposed protests by students against the military and the Holy Alliance with Russia, Frederick's pet project since 1815, struck the king as a personal insult, not least because they were reputed to have occurred at the Wartburg, a storied site in German culture.[77] Hardenberg knew better. First, Schlottmann's spy brief did not corroborate the charges by Cölln. Second, Cölln had already submitted a different story to the police ministry as part of his own account of the Wartburg Festival. When confronted by the chancellor, Cölln demurred, claiming to have made an honest mistake in reporting. The damage, though, was already done. His unsubstantiated claims about "the Wartburg affair" had spread so widely as to become accepted as truth.[78]

Soon the king banned student fraternities in Prussia, informing the public that the actions of the students at the Wartburg Festival should be treated as proof of a

liberty of calling attention to these items and retroactively deeming them a Prussian "*Ulanenuniform*," an Austrian "*Korporalstock*," and a Hessian "*Soldatenzopf*." According to several police reports and eyewitness accounts, however, Maßmann never commented on the (unmarked) pieces to the small crowd near the burning. He also grouped the pieces with a live rat, which to my knowledge held no political purchase. Whatever coherence observers attributed to this part of the incident appears to have come after the fact, around the same time as the emergence of the inflated descriptions by Cölln and others. As for the presence of the pieces, this surely owed to the design of Jahn, whose eclectic tastes favored a particular uniform for Prussian recruits and held more ornate accessories like the cane in contempt.

[76]See *Bremer Zeitung*, no. 329, November 25, 1817, in the Zeitungsabteilung der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Westhafen). There is a note by Cölln to introduce what he sends to the paper; his handwriting is unmistakable.

[77]Steiger, "Das 'Phantom der Wartburgverschwörung,'" 188–189.

[78]GstA Rep. 77, Tit. XVII, Nr. 15, Bd. II, Bl. 96; also, GstA VI. HA NL Hardenberg L. 40, Bl. 1–2. See Ernst Müsebeck, *Das preußische Kultusministerium vor hundert Jahren* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1918), 187–188. Prussian Secret Agent Falkenberg first alerted Kamptz to Schlottmann from his report of November 21, 1817. GStA Rep. 77, Tit. 17, Nr. 15, Bd. 1, Bl. 18–29.

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far-reaching conspiracy to overthrow the government.[79] The king did not recall, or deliberately overlooked, the interrogations recently shown to him, which documented the student burners as being more interested in the feud over Jahn than in the constitutional positions of the condemned literature. To this extent, the king allowed the false dichotomy written by Cölln and Scheerer to prevail. The Wartburg Festival, remembered along with the burning, struck him as proof that a battle was underway across German lands. In one camp was the establishment; in the other, intolerant students bent on violence. Hardenberg moved unsuccessfully to debunk such talk. Aware of his spy's report, he attributed the whole book-burning to Jahn's vendetta and could hardly believe in the notion that a conspiracy of students sought the overthrow of the state.[80] Still, when arch-conservatives cited an alleged contagion of revolution as a reason to forestall the introduction of the constitution that Hardenberg planned, they relied on the *Erzähler*'s distorted portrayal of the "Wartburg book-burning."[81]

In Austria, Metternich arrived at his office in November to find a note containing many of the libels spread by Cölln and Scheerer.[82] Just days before, he had advised Emperor Franz that to introduce a new constitution now, much less freedoms of speech, might allow a "revolutionary spirit" of Jacobinism to overwhelm the existing order.[83] Metternich had genuine concerns about both liberalism and nationalism. The former triggered his memories of the Reign of Terror.[84] As for nationalism, he recognized that the notion of a German nation popularized by Fichte and Arndt was winning traction—a fact to which the program of the Wartburg Festival attested. Indeed, even if nationalism struck Metternich as the stuff of a "myth" or "bad novel," it had already had a real effect on emerging fraternities, which by 1817 comprised a loose network across German cities, including Berlin, Königsberg, Halle, Leipzig, Kiel, Breslau, Erlangen, Heidelberg, Rostock, Gießen, and Tübingen.[85] These organizations' respective celebrations of battles and history aimed beyond the borders established at the Treaty of Vienna by calling for the unification of German-speaking countries. Where existing governments fit into such a scheme was uncertain, of course, and any centralization scared Metternich,

[79]GStA Rep. 92, Altenstein, A Vlb., Nr. 5.

[80]GStA Rep. 77, Tit. 17, Nr. 15, Bd. 2, Bl. 76. GStA VI. HA NL F. L. Jahn, Nr. C-V, Bl. 69–83. GStA Rep. 92, Hardenberg, K. 30.

[81]Rep. 92, Nachlass Hardenberg, K. 30, Bl. 104.

[82]GStA Rep. 77, Tit. 17, Nr. 15, Bd. 2. VStA, S. K. Preußen Korrespondenz 1817–1817 alt. Fasz. 100, Bl. 172–173. See G. de Bertier de Sauvigny, *Metternich and his Times* (London: Darton, 1962), 176–178.

[83]*ADB*, vol. 23 (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1886), 786.

[84]Huber, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*, 721.

[85]Richard von Metternich-Winneburg, *Aus Metternichs Nachgelassenen Papieren*, vol. I (Vienna: Braumüller, 1880), 254.

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who wished to keep the German Confederation as a loose body with only one central institution, the *Bundesversammlung*. Austria also had reservations about its neighbor to the west. Jahn's gymnastics-union, as well as some nationalist liberals in government, had called for the establishment of an imperial diet headed by Prussia, whose economic and geographical power already showed signs of dramatically increasing in the aftermath of the Vienna Treaty.[86]

Police reports soon informed Metternich that the burning incident he had read about in the note was not nearly as brazen or broad as it initially seemed. But these facts were not yet public knowledge, and thanks to Cölln and Scheerer, the current perception of the Wartburg Festival still involved 500 intolerant students violently rejecting state policies. From here, Metternich decided to rely on the wilder version of the story, believing it would convince other states to act as he wished by distancing themselves from national and liberal reforms. Within days the chancellor announced an investigation of the festival in letters to Russian, Bavarian, and Prussian authorities.[87] A "German revolution" was underway, he claimed. The Wartburg Festival would doubtless be the first in a series of violent acts to overthrow the existing order.[88]

This portrayal resonated in Prussia, where Frederick William III already inclined toward the view that a revolution was imminent. Upon reading Metternich's letter, the concerned king quickly sent Hardenberg to visit Grand-Duke Karl August of Saxe-Weimar, in whose land the Wartburg Festival had taken place.[89] The duke had already received his own internal reports on the matter and emphasized, correctly, that the Wartenberg incident was not a fair representation of the overall festival.[90] Suspecting Metternich of ulterior motives, he encouraged Hardenberg and the Austrian ambassador, Zichy, to visit the nearby University of Jena, which was home to nearly half the Wartburg Festival's participants.[91] Zichy accepted this offer and "found nothing

[86]Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, 389. See Henry Kissinger, "The Congress of Vienna: A Reappraisal," *World Politics* 8, no. 2 (1956): 266–267; and Carl Wittichen, *Briefe von und an Friedrich Gentz* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1913), 465. See finally Haake, *Verfassungskampf*, 60, 85–86.

[87]Richard von Metternich-Winneburg, *Aus Metternichs Nachgelassenen Papieren*, vol. III (Vienna: Braumüller, 1881), 234–235. Viktor Bibl, *Metternich* (Leipzig: Günther, 1936), 181. Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv Wien (henceforth WStA) S. K. Sächsische Häuser Karton 2 alt 2,3 Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach 1815–1845.

[88]Haake, *Verfassungskampf*, 86. Hans Ehrentreich, *Die Freie Presse* (Halle: Carl Winter, 1907), 42–47. Hanns Hubert Hofmann, *Adelige Herrschaft* (Munich: Kommission für Bayerische Landesgeschichte, 1962), 350. For specific mention of a letter to Russia, see Carl Brinkmann, "Die Entstehung von Sturdzas 'Etat actuel de l'Allemagne,'" *Historische Zeitschrift* 120 (1919): 95–100. See Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 532–533, 430, 487.

[89]GStA Rep. 77, Tit. 17, Nr. 15, Bd. 2. WStA S. K. Preußen Korrespondenz 1817–1817, alt. Fasz. 101 Nr. 50 A, Bl. 368–374. WStA Akten der Staatskanzlei, Preußen-Korrespondenzen, Fasz. 101. See GstA VI. HA NL Hardenberg K 75.5, Bl. 2. See also WStA S. K. Sächsische Häuser Karton 2 alt 2,3 Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach 1815–1845.

[90]TStAW Polizeisachen B 5420, Bl. 218.

[91]Ehrentreich, *Freie Presse*, 44.

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suspicious." In point of fact, he expressed great approval of the students, applauding their discipline and suggesting that they had been portrayed in a false light. Chats with two famous locals, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and August von Kotzebue, confirmed his opinion.[92] Goethe downplayed the hype about the burning. And even Kotzebue thought it ridiculous to conflate the politics of the Wartenberg incident with those of the Wartburg Festival.

Zichy's visit led at least two ministers to speculate, somewhat inaccurately, that "the Wartburg matter had been taken care of."[93] In the weeks to follow Metternich still awaited a final report on the festival from his secret agent, Sicard, but not even this loyal policeman could deliver enough evidence to substantiate notions of a revolutionary conspiracy linked with the book-burning. [94] While Sicard gave credence to notions that Jahn's organization posed a threat to its enemies, he also put to rest some of the wilder aspects in the libel spread by Cölln and Scheerer.[95] Metternich, though, chose not to rely on this information in his demarche. Instead, he focused on hearsay that claimed those behind the burning incident were part of a paramilitary, revolutionary network. On January 21, 1818, Metternich included such documents in a letter to Chancellor Hardenberg, urging Prussia's highest statesman to stage an "official yet secret" intervention against the purported cabal. As far as Metternich knew, or at least gave to believe, laws had been defiled and a broad conspiracy founded by all "the German students" on October 18.[96] Moreover, this event had taken place, not on the margins of history at the Wartenberg, but in Luther's symbolic hideout, a pivotal site in the collective memory of Germans.

Metternich claimed vindication later in 1818, when German students founded the *Allgemeine Deutsche Burschenschaft*. But he could not clinch his case until April 1819, when Carl Sand murdered August von Kotzebue. It was then that the atmosphere in Berlin turned so paranoid as to embrace an avalanche of hearsay.[97] Sand, an anonymous informant noted, had witnessed the "Wartburg book-burning" in 1817 and spent three days in 1816 with a close friend of Jahn's outside Erfurt. Perhaps equally terrorizing, a

[92]Ludwig Geiger, *Aus Alt-Weimar* (Berlin: Pätel, 1897), 332–333. WStA S. K. Preußen Korrespondenz 1817–1817, alt. Fasz. 101 Nr. 50 A, Bl. 368–374. Ehrentreich, *Freie Presse*, 44. See also Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 432; and Alfred Stern, *Geschichte Europas von 1815 bis 1830* (Berlin: Hertz, 1894), 453. Finally, see GStA VI. HA NL Hardenberg L. 40 Bl. 2.

[93]See Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 430 and 532; Ehrentreich, *Freie Presse*, 42–47.

[94]GStA Rep. 77, Tit. 17, Nr. 15, Bd. 2, Bl. 38–39. GStA HA III 2.4.1. I Nr. 1857, Bl. 62–68, 69, 80–81, 82–88. See Ehrentreich, *Freie Presse*, 45. WStA S. K. Sächsische Häuser Karton 2 alt 2,3 Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach 1815–1845.

[95]See previous note.

[96]Ibid.

[97]GStA Rep. 77, Tit. 22, Gen. P, Nr. 5, Bl. 1–4. GStA Rep. 77, Tit. 21, Spez. W, Nr. 1, Bl. 7–8.

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student at the university in Berlin had recently posted an ad through which he sought to recover a lost knife.[98] Hardly the stuff of a clinched case. Still, Metternich and his allies at the Prussian court expressed the belief that these events were part of a concerted revolution underway since the Wartburg Festival.[99] They also had assistance from an article in the *Brandenburger Erzähler*, freshly revived for the occasion by Wilhelm Scheerer and Friedrich Cölln. On April 9, 1819, days after Kotzebue's murder, the *Erzähler* alluded to a broad network that included the Wartburg Festival, gymnasts, and Sand.[100] Since Sand did, in fact, harbor violent convictions, this "link" confirmed Metternich's suspicions about a student revolution—at least to the satisfaction of the German Confederation's members.[101] Within months, the confederation passed the Carlsbad Decrees, delaying the introduction of constitutions, restricting freedoms of speech, and arresting Jahn and his movement in Prussia.[102] Although the Wartburg Festival's exaggerated memory by no means triggered this response from members, it certainly helped to convince them.

Many historians believe Metternich behaved disingenuously in his response to the festival and German students.[103] To what extent this claim holds is too demanding a question for my article, however. For present purposes, I wish merely to emphasize that as of April 1819, Scheerer and Cölln's tale of the 500 violent students in 1817 continued to play an influential, if unwarranted, role, both in the investigation of Sand and in the collective memory of many Germans. So persistent were the details of the "Wartburg book-burning" that shortly before the Carlsbad Decrees, agents confiscated the guest books of the Wartburg Castle as a major component of their investigation.[104]

[98]GStA Rep. 192, Wittgenstein VII B4, Bl. 45; GStA Rep. 192, Wittgenstein VII B4, Bl. 17.

[99]GStA Rep. 192, Wittgenstein VII B4, Bl. 16.

[100]GStA Rep. 192, Wittgenstein VII B4, Bl. 34. The authorship of Scheerer, and thus of Cölln, confirmed in GStA Rep. 192, Wittgenstein VII B4, Bl. 16 and 34. Cölln also wrote Hardenberg shortly after the murder of Kotzebue to remind him of a connection between the "Turn- und Studentenbewegung." See Büssem, *Die Karlsbader Beschlüße*, 581. See also Hans Branig, *Briefwechsel des Fürsten Karl August von Hardenberg mit dem Fürsten Wilhelm Ludwig von Sayn-Wittgenstein* (Berlin: Grote, 1972), 248.

[101]Branig, *Briefwechsel Hardenberg-Wittgenstein*, 247–248. Treitschke, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 529–530, 543. Haake, *Verfassungskampf*, 350–352, 86; Hans Tümmler, *Politischer Briefwechsel*, vol. 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1973), 480–482. Wittichen, *Briefe von und an Friedrich von Gentz*, 389–391. See finally Metternich-Winneburg, *Aus Metternichs Nachgelassenen Papieren*, vol. III, 234–235.

[102]See Levinger, *Enlightened Nationalism*, 146–150.

[103]For those in favor, see J. Hermann, "Zur Kritik der Nachrichten über die Attentate von 1819," *Forschungen zur Deutschen Geschichte* 23 (1883): 592. GStA Rep. 77, Tit. 21, Spez. M, Nr. 3, Bl. 74–77. See also Friedrich Gentz, *Schriften und Briefe aus den Jahren 1815–1832*, vol. 2 (Munich: Drei Masken, 1921), 128. For a refutation, see finally James R. Sofka, "Metternich's Theory of European Order: A Political Agenda for 'Perpetual Peace,'" *The Review of Politics* 60, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 115–149.

[104]GStA Rep. 77, Tit. 21, Spez. F, Nr. 9, Bl. 1.

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Conclusion

Because the Wartburg Festival witnessed a politicization of students, as historians attest, several pamphlets remembered it vividly in the months and years that followed the Carlsbad Decrees. Some recalled it as a dangerous insurrection, while others lauded the gathering that "burned the impure books on the Wartburg."[105] In so doing, though, almost everyone popularized a distorted history written by two "burned" authors. Eager to see their enemies punished, this duo had long since merged the Wartenberg incident with the Wartburg Festival, transforming what might have been seen as a cult's eccentric theater into a tale of broad student intolerance. Others did their part to obscure the facts, as well. Cölln and Scheerer's inaccurate depiction won credulity in part because Jahn's disciple, Hans Ferdinand Maßmann, did little to correct it. In an anonymous pamphlet that he later distributed among students, Maßmann not only pretended that the majority of the festival's 500 students had joined him for the burning, but he also claimed, falsely, that these students solemnly rebelled against the *Ancien Regime* by condemning certain military paraphernalia.[106] The festival, as he remembered it, continued in the spirit of Luther's own burning of the papal bull in 1521.[107]

Several police records might have corrected this fanciful memory, had they not remained a secret to all except a few in government. Whatever Maßmann said, records showed that his small cohort condemned the literature in question primarily to humiliate Jahn's enemies—not on account of lofty ideals such as freedom of speech. Many of the bonfire's victims actually favored reform, only to varying extents and on a range of issues. Moreover, the burners expressed an ideology only sporadically consistent with that of the Wartburg Festival. While Jahn may have wished to humiliate his eclectic political opponents, who included moderate reformers, the vast majority of festival participants did not share his agenda.[108]

In view of this contingency, one might elide the festival altogether and look elsewhere to adduce evidence of oppositional behavior during the Restoration.

[105]See F. G. Eyck, "The Political Theories and Activities of the German Academic Youth between 1815 and 1819," in *The Journal of Modern History* 27, no. 1 (1955): 27–38. Hardenberg himself, when investigating the events of October 18, referred to them as comprising the "Wartburg Geschichte." See Karl August von Hardenberg, *Tagebücher*, ed. Thomas Stamm-Kuhlmann (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000), in the weeks that followed the event.

[106]Maßmann, *Beschreibung*, 22 and 28.

[107]Ibid., 22–23.

[108]Karl Sand, for instance, was a close friend of Wangenheim's and considered him a mentor. And, in 1819, Benzenberg and Wangenheim, despite their burning by student-fraternity members, opposed the absolutist Carlsbad Decrees that sought to ban "liberal" student-fraternities. Elli Mohrmann, "Johann Friedrich Benzenberg," *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 1 (1970): 94. See Raumer, *Geschichte der Pädagogik*, 108–110, for a humorous anecdote involving Wangenheim's reaction to the burning.

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There is certainly no shortage of such material. But I believe it is instructive to explore the Wartburg matter further, even as some recent monographs have begun to examine the festival's particulars more closely. If one looks with skepticism toward "its" book-burning, one will find, foremost, that the festival fits within the larger context established by Clark in his writings on post-Napoleonic Prussia. A second, important conclusion is that while the festival itself came to be remembered and instrumentalized politically, it actually revealed some overlooked conflicts within contemporary liberal and nationalist movements. These reinforce Matthew Levinger's recent contention that "political alignments were fluid and ill-defined in the aftermath of the Vienna Congress."[109] Surely there is some unviewed material that will tell us more about the reasons that student reformers, on other issues than nationalism, often disagreed and took positions ranging from democratic to what would now be identified as conservative.[110]

In the decades after 1817, the Wartburg Festival underwent several instrumentalizations. One text, in its celebration of the Second Reich, cited the burning of books "on the Wartburg" as an early nationalist call for German unification, and several East German writers went on to remember the festival as a forceful stand against aristocracy.[111] A more infamous instance of remembrance took place with Joseph Goebbels's own book-burning in 1933. Speaking at the *Königsplatz* in Berlin, where Maßmann once roamed, Goebbels revived the festival's legacy for a National Socialist agenda, deeming his opponents "un-German" enemies of freedom. Several historians have subsequently twinned this event with the original festival in order to underscore a trait of intolerance in German political culture.[112] But how justified is their link? Consideration of the Wartenberg incident in 1817 suggests that its intolerance was confined to the issue of student organizations and gymnastics; Jahn hardly wished the annihilation of his foes, with whom he was willing to collaborate on greater issues such as foreign policy. Also bearing in mind the fringe nature of the burning, it is therefore difficult to equate the Wartburg Festival's overall peaceful organization with that of the book-burning in 1933. If Goebbels succeeded in doing so, it was perhaps only because a distorted memory of the festival already lay entrenched in German culture.

Finally, some historians will remain convinced, even after reading this article, that if not the Wartburg, then something else would have set off Metternich in the run-up to the adoption of the Carlsbad Decrees in 1819. This conclusion is

[109]Ibid., 158.

[110]See Huber, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte*, 710.

[111]Obviously, Steiger figures here. See also Klaus Wessel, *Das Wartburgfest der deutschen Burschenschaft* (Eisenach: Röth, 1954), and Sigfried Asche, *Die Wartburg* (Dresden: Sachsenverlag, 1957), 59–66.

[112]For a thorough account see Werner Tress, *Wider den Undeutschen Geist* (Berlin: Parthas, 2003).

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sound. There were certainly plenty of other incidents to support his demarche, including the founding of the Allgemeine Deutsche Burschenschaft in October 1818 and the murder of Kotzebue by Sand in 1819. I contend, however, that Metternich did not simply find what he was looking for in the form of an exaggerated Wartburg story. Indeed, his decision to rely on the latter rather than on more modest reports contributed to generations of inaccurate memory.[113]

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[113]Metternich-Winneburg, *Aus Metternich's Nachgelassenen Papieren*, vol. III, 234–235.

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