

**ABSOLUTISM IN ACTION : FREDERICK WILLIAM
I AND THE GOVERNMENT OF EAST PRUSSIA,
1709-1730**

Rodney Mische Gothelf

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Absolutism in Action: Frederick William I and
the Government of East Prussia, 1709-1730

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Abstract

Absolutism in Action: Frederick William I and the Government of East Prussia, 1709-1730

by

Rodney Mische Gothelf

This dissertation examines the operation of Hohenzollern government in the distant but crucial territory of East Prussia during the reign of Frederick William I, 1713-40 to determine what impact the establishment of the General Directory in late 1722 and early 1723 had upon day-to-day administration within the Kingdom of East Prussia. Particular attention is given to the role and operation of provincial and local government in East Prussia during the decades before and after the setting-up of the General Directory (*General-Ober-Finanz- Kriegs- und Domänen-Direktorium*).

This study is part of a broader historiographical tendency which questions both the extent and success of Hohenzollern state building and calls into question the validity of the traditional view which gives most attention to the positive role of central state structures and considers the establishment of the General Directory as the apex of the much-admired and widely-emulated Prussian administrative system. This study demonstrates that further governmental modifications were needed in the Kingdom before and after the General Directory's successful operation in the Kingdom in the 1720s and 1730s. The territorial and local levels were where the Hohenzollern rulers would find it crucial to establish their absolutist power. One difficulty Frederick William I faced was that a large corps of loyal officials was lacking in the Kingdom which was only partially remedied by the end of his reign. In addition, critical administrative disputes continued and new ones arose between the King's administrative agencies. Moreover, the powerful native elites who lived in the Kingdom retained significant authority at the provincial and local levels and resisted many reform attempts by a king who they saw as foreign. Their enduring importance helps to explain the distinctive manner in which absolutism developed over these decades. As a result, authority in the Kingdom still was less than securely established by the final decade of Frederick William I's reign.

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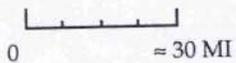
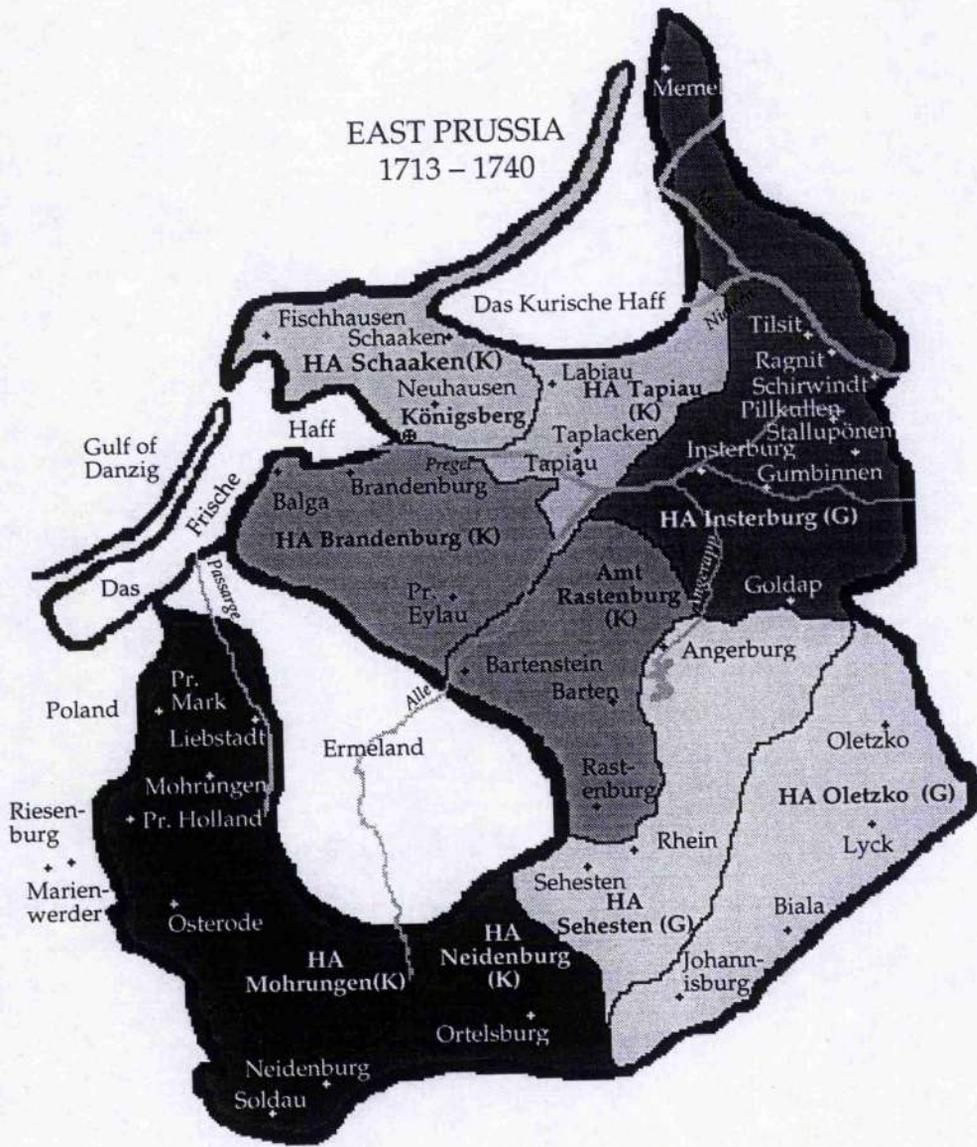
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EAST PRUSSIA
1713 - 1740



- = East Prussian Boarder
- = District Boarder
- = Primary River
- K = Königsberg Department
- G = Gumbinnen Department
- = "German" Samland
- = "German" Nantangen
- = Lithuanian Samland
- = Oberland
- = Polish Nantangen

Glossary of Technical Terms

<i>Accise:</i>	Excise tax that was essentially a sales tax found in urban areas on food and other consumables.
<i>Adeliche- gerichtschreiber:</i>	District legal clerk
<i>Amthauptmann:</i>	The highest noble in a particular East Prussian district, also known as District Captain. Plural, <i>Amthauptleute</i> .
<i>Amt:</i>	administrative district. Plural, <i>Ämter</i> .
<i>Brieffrager:</i>	Letter carrier.
<i>Chargenkasse:</i>	Treasury used by the Hohenzollern ruler for his personal interests and dates from 1686. Revenue derived primarily from fees affixed to appointments based on a percentage of salary or by level of appointment. See also, <i>Rekrutenkasse</i> .
<i>Collegium:</i>	Court.
<i>Commissarius loci:</i>	Excise tax collector. See <i>Accise</i> . Term used in East Prussia throughout Frederick William I's reign but also became known as <i>Steuerrat</i> .
<i>Drayner:</i>	Mill worker for drainage operations.
<i>Fiskal:</i>	Attorney for financial affairs of the Hohenzollern state.
<i>Generalhufenschoß:</i>	Exclusively an East Prussian tax on Junkers. Generally considered the first direct property tax to affect rural noblemen in the Kingdom.
<i>Grundherrschaft:</i>	Agricultural, economic and social system found primarily in southern and western states of the Holy Roman Empire. Tenants were leased land and payments to a landlord were made in cash or kind.
<i>Gutsherrschaft:</i>	Broadly similar to <i>Grundherrschaft</i> except that the landlord was more directly responsible for his land and thus, essentially lived off his own land.

	Forced peasant labour, or so-called serfs, were used. The landlord was responsible for "police" functions.
<i>Hochmeister:</i>	The Grand Master of the Teutonic Order. The highest official in the Order.
<i>Hofgericht:</i>	Provincial court for nobility.
<i>Hofkammer:</i>	Established in 1689 to oversee provincial domain administration, civil finances, tolls, licenses, and mines, etc. Under Frederick William I became the General Finance Directory in 1713.
<i>Hufe:</i>	Land measurement used in many provinces but of uniform size only throughout East Prussia. One <i>hufe</i> = 4.09 acres = 1.68 hectares. Plural: <i>Hufen</i> .
<i>Indigenatsrecht:</i>	Right of the native born to hold office in that state. For example, someone born outside East Prussia in the early eighteenth century could not hold office in administration there.
<i>Kabinett:</i>	Office containing the most important officials and advisors to the Hohenzollern ruler.
<i>Kabinettsräte:</i>	That group which comprised the King's <i>Kabinett</i> .
<i>Königsberg Tribunal:</i>	Highest court of appeals in East Prussia for all territories that rested outside of the Holy Roman Empire.
<i>Kontribution:</i>	Tax found in rural areas that affected the peasantry and generally, revenues went for military purposes.
<i>Kriegs und Domänenkammer:</i>	Primarily the King's financial authorities in the Kingdom but also carried out specific judicial functions. The agency which came to rival the authority of the <i>Königsberg Regierung</i> most directly.
<i>Landrat:</i>	Leader of the district <i>Landtage</i> and therefore one of the most powerful local administrators in East Prussia. He was supposed to ensure

	implementation of edicts and a district's military obligations, for example, as the head of the <i>Regierung</i> .
<i>Oberappellationsgericht:</i>	East Prussian high court of appeals. A distinct court from that with the same name and located in Berlin.
<i>Oberburggraf:</i>	Highest military officer in East Prussia.
<i>Pachmohren:</i>	Leasehold estate unfree servant.
<i>Rekrutenkasse:</i>	King's private treasury.
<i>Regierung:</i>	Highest authoritative body within East Prussia at Frederick William I's accession in 1713. It also dominated most judicial institutions including the highest court of the province.
<i>Schulzen:</i>	Village mayor.
<i>Steuerrat:</i>	Local urban tax collector under <i>Kriegs und Domänenkammer</i> . See <i>Commissarius loci</i> .
<i>Steuerstempel:</i>	Customary stamp tax which was attached to territorial letters of appointment.
<i>Tribunal:</i>	East Prussian Supreme Court of first instance.
<i>Verweser:</i>	District official under <i>Amthauptleute</i> . The <i>Verweser</i> carried out several of the day-to-day duties of local administration.
<i>Warthen:</i>	Town look-out, guard, or scout.

Preface

The research and writing of this doctoral dissertation has been assisted by numerous individuals and institutions and I take great satisfaction in sharing my appreciation with the reader.

I have received tremendous intellectual, practical, and moral support at every stage of the research and writing of this thesis from my mentor and supervisor, Dr. Hamish M. Scott, under whose guidance I have spent the last several years at the University of St. Andrews. His work on early modern Europe and absolutism inspired my interest in eighteenth-century East Prussia. I thank him for his insight, guidance, and patience from which I have benefited immeasurably.

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I received significant financial support from the Russell Trust at the University of St. Andrews, which allowed me to examine essential manuscript material in Merseburg and Berlin, Germany during the summer of 1992. My University of St. Andrews Studentship assisted greatly with my tuition and living while in St. Andrews and Berlin. I am indebted to the German Historical Institute London for their financial support, which allowed me to undertake research in Berlin during the summer of 1994. In addition, I would like to thank Professor Lothar Kettenaker of the GHI London for his advice and support.

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we did. Our lives were much more comfortable in Berlin as a direct result of their work on our behalf.

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I am pleased to thank my parents. Each has helped me more than they will ever know throughout my years as a student. They have taught me the value of education and their unfailing support and words of encouragement are always cherished and appreciated.

This dissertation has allowed me to travel and live in many places I never thought I would ever visit. It also allowed me to make many new friends, many who are noted here. My wife, Nicole, however, has been my best friend from start to finish. Her support and love was truly an inspiration to me.

Abbreviations

ABB = Acta Borussica

EM = Etats Ministerium

GStAPK = Geheimes Staats Archiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz

OF = Ostpreußische Folianten

INTRODUCTION

Issue and Purpose

This dissertation examines the operation of Hohenzollern government in the distant but crucial territory of East Prussia during the reign of Frederick William I, 1713-40. The primary purpose of this research is to determine what impact the establishment of the General Directory in late 1722 and early 1723 had upon day-to-day administration within the Kingdom of East Prussia. Particular attention will therefore be given to the role and operation of provincial and local government in East Prussia during the decades before and after the setting-up of the General Directory (*General-Ober-Finanz- Kriegs- und Domänen-Direktorium*).

Although the subject of this study may appear traditional, the approach and perspective adopted are less familiar. Traditionally, historians have considered the establishment of the General Directory to be the most important central government reform during Frederick William I's reign and indeed the whole eighteenth century, establishing as it did the apex of the much-admired and widely-emulated Prussian administrative system. This approach gives most attention to central government institutions and rests upon a belief in the strength and positive role of state structures.

The present study is part of a broader historiographical tendency which questions both the extent and success of Hohenzollern state building and calls into question the validity of this traditional view. As this

dissertation will argue, absolutism in Brandenburg–Prussia was not created by a single institution, even one which became as powerful and wide-ranging as the General Directory. The establishment of the General Directory was only one - albeit the central initiative — of a series of administrative reforms during the early eighteenth century directed toward expanding the ruler's authority throughout the Hohenzollern territories. There is little doubt that Frederick William I improved the operation of government at the central level. Some of these improvements may be attributed to the establishment of the General Directory in 1723. The impact of this institution, however, and its importance within government have been too heavily emphasised by previous historians. This is particularly true for the Kingdom of East Prussia in the 1720s and 1730s. The powerful native elites who lived in the Kingdom retained significant authority at the provincial and local levels and their enduring importance helps to explain the distinctive manner in which absolutism developed over these decades. Moreover, these were the levels at which the Hohenzollern rulers would find it crucial to establish their absolutist power. Their reforms of central administration were not in themselves sufficient. Absolutism had to be established and develop in the individual territories, while policy aims had to be translated into actual initiatives at the local level. In addition, the administrative changes which accompanied the setting-up of the General Directory, there were other significant reforms to government attempted by Frederick William I before and after 1723. This is significant, since absolutism was not an event but a process which extended over a far more extended period than hitherto has been recognised.

The experience of East Prussia between the years 1709 and 1730 explains both developments within the evolution of the Kingdom and its wider relationship to Hohenzollern absolutism. One cannot generalise about the way in which absolutism was implemented throughout all the

Brandenburg-Prussian territories. By explaining how it came about in one important territory, through an examination, for example, of the unique corporate elite structure, economic and agrarian conditions, as well as its relationship with the ruler, one can see some patterns form with respect to the way in which absolutism was beginning to develop.¹

Why study the working of Hohenzollern administration in East Prussia? The Kingdom has been selected for three primary reasons. Firstly, it was the source of the Prussian crown for the Brandenburg-Prussian rulers and, therefore, East Prussia had considerable symbolic importance in the political affairs of the whole Hohenzollern polity. Equally as important, the title of king brought the Hohenzollerns enhanced stature among other major European states and this in turn increased the territory's importance within Brandenburg-Prussia. At the time of Frederick William I's accession in 1713, East Prussia was still a new kingdom as it had only been promoted from the status of a duchy in 1701.

Secondly, East Prussia was where Frederick William I, while still crown prince, had attempted to intervene personally and had taken decisive actions in the government of the territory. This was particularly true with respect to the devastating plague which broke out in 1709. His involvement from this point onwards is important in revealing significant issues relating to the operation and conception of government in East Prussia. It also gave him considerable personal knowledge of the Kingdom and its problems. The dynasty, moreover, in one sense enjoyed unusual freedom of action in East Prussia. The Kingdom, although a part of the Hohenzollern monarchy, lay outside the Holy Roman Empire and therefore not subject to its

¹The application of it to this study has been considerably influenced by the approach and insights of William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. An excellent summary of Beik's approach can be found on pp. 335-39.

authority. After East Prussia became a kingdom, the Hohenzollerns held the territory in full sovereignty, free and clear of traditional international obligations, notably that to the Polish King which had been abrogated as long ago as 1660 but remained important to East Prussians and their separate identity even in the first half of the eighteenth century.

Thirdly, as mentioned above, the traditional system of government which had for long existed in East Prussia at the time of Frederick William I's accession, did not allow the ruler a particularly great role. In fact, the East Prussians saw Frederick William I - exactly as they had viewed his predecessors - as a foreign sovereign. East Prussia had a well established governmental system dominated by the powerful local nobility and burghers who had successfully resisted almost all attempts at change by Hohenzollern rulers throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. When Frederick William I ascended the throne in 1713, however, he brought a new approach to government and was presented with formidable challenges which also became a source of opportunity for him to overhaul the traditional administrative arrangements in East Prussia.

The General Directory could not have institutionalised absolutism by itself. There were prerequisites to its successful operation both within the entire Hohenzollern monarchy and in the territory of East Prussia, in particular, both prior to and after Frederick William I's instruction in late 1722 for the setting up of a centralised administrative institution. Above all, government structures required men to run them: a cadre of capable and loyal administrators had to be created. There was a need for a more professional civil service, and this was only to develop later in the century. In addition, East Prussia needed improvements to its agricultural methods in order to increase productivity and prosperity, as well as a stable environment to allow recovery after the harsh plague that had disrupted daily lives so severely in the early part of the eighteenth century. Those

who worked on farms were usually not well educated or trained in either agriculture or livestock techniques and were also restricted by the primitive equipment available to them. Finally, the most essential prerequisite was that the East Prussian nobility had to be reconciled to Berlin's rule and its resistance to Hohenzollern rulers and their authority in the territory overcome. As will be seen, Frederick William I had to face a well-established tradition among the native East Prussian elite of defending established rights and privileges. These were frequently defended vigorously by the elite throughout the reign of Frederick William I: exactly as they had been during the reigns of his father, Frederick III/I and his grandfather, Frederick William, the Great Elector.²

This study will pay particular attention to the day-to-day operation of the various authorities located in the Kingdom of East Prussia, particularly the established agencies of government and traditional elites, above all the Junkers (the nobility) and, to a certain extent, the ruling oligarchies in the towns, above all Königsberg.

The General Directory imported a new administrative framework which overlaid the existing systems of government in the Kingdom, that of the Estates and towns. Native East Prussians dominated the established, traditional system of government and came to play a significant role in the new institutions as well. As this dissertation will argue, the Hohenzollern ruler was a fundamental source of authority in East Prussia, but he was not the only one. There were many native East Prussian officials who acted independently of Frederick William I, and covertly and sometimes openly

²In particular, see Karin Friedrich, "The Other Prussia: A Study of the National, Historical and Political Identity of Burghers in Early Modern Royal Prussia," Ph. D. Dissertation, Georgetown University, 1995, pp. 441-523. Friedrich is concerned, however, with Royal Prussia, that is, the area in the region under Polish authority. East Prussia, or that territory under Hohenzollern authority, was a distinct territory from its Polish neighbour.

resisted his policies and innovations. As will be shown, East Prussian government continued to be dominated by members of the powerful native East Prussian elites who, even if technically the king's royal personnel, often were rivals of Hohenzollern authority.

The Second King in Prussia

Government in the Hohenzollern monarchy during the first half of the eighteenth century remained highly personal in nature. Its effectiveness depended upon the King playing an absolutely central role in the day-to-day operation of administration. Frederick William I literally ruled Brandenburg-Prussia from his own cabinet, as this thesis will underline. He read and annotated innumerable reports, drew up numerous instructions and involved himself in the smallest details, such as the allocation of firewood to officials during the winter months.³ The personality and attributes of the King were crucial in determining the nature of the government over which he presided.

Who was Frederick William I, the second Prussian King? He is perhaps the least understood Hohenzollern ruler during Brandenburg-Prussia's formative centuries.⁴ His character is puzzling and contradictory. Historians often cite anecdotes revealing the king's uncontrollable outbursts

³See below, Chapter Seven, p. 325.

⁴There are a limited number of studies dealing with Frederick William I and his unusual personality (contrasted, perhaps best, with the abundant literature on Frederick William I's son and successor, Frederick the Great). On Frederick William I see the following: The best account (which unfortunately ends at 1713) by Carl Hinrichs, Friedrich Wilhelm I. König in Preußen. Eine Biographie. Jugend und Aufstieg, Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1943; this is supplemented to a large degree by the series of collected essays in Carl Hinrichs, Preussen als historisches Problem: Gesammelte Abhandlungen, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1964; the good but brief account by Gerhard Oestreich, Frederick William I. Preußischer Absolutismus, Merkantilismus, Militarismus, Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1977; and the popular accounts by Friedrich Förster, Friedrich Wilhelm I. König von Preußen, Potsdam: F. Riegel, 1834/35, Karl Hans Hermann, Der Soldatenkönig Friedrich Wilhelm I, Friedberg: Podzun-Pallas, 1982 and Robert Ergang, The Potsdam Führer: Frederick William I, Father of Prussian Militarism, New York: Columbia University Press, 1941, and the former East German accounts by Wolfgang Venohr, Der Soldatenkönig: Revolutionär auf dem Thron, Frankfurt am Main and Berlin: Verlag Ullstein, 1988 and Heinz Kathe, Der „Soldatenkönig“ Friedrich Wilhelm I. 1688-1740. König in Preußen: Eine Biographie, Berlin: Verbesserte Aufl., 1978.

of rage sometimes lasting days at a time, and his obsessive and compulsive behaviour toward family, friend, and subject alike. Some of the king's conduct certainly may be attributable to the so-called royal malady of porphyria⁵ or nephritic colics and also to gout, from which he also suffered.⁶ One of the best-known portraits of Frederick William I paints him with his much-feared lacquered cane which was more than the common portrait prop for the King.⁷ This cane became his trademark and one he did not hesitate to use as a motivational tool on unsuspecting officials from time to time. One anecdote alleged "that he had cabinets furnished with large sticks, placed at certain distances one from the other, to be more convenient, according to where he happened to be, so as to apply blows to those who approached him and did not gratify his fancy."⁸ Once a bench of judges was called to the king's chambers to be questioned about a sentence they recently had rendered. After questioning the group, the King began striking them about the shoulder and face. The judges fled spitting

⁵Abe Goldberg, "The Porphyrias", in *Porphyria - A Royal Malady: Articles Published in or Commissioned by the British Medical Journal*, London: British Medical Association, 1968, pp. 66-68. Goldberg summarises by writing: "Most of the porphyrias are hereditary disorders of metabolism. Occasionally the disease may occur without any apparent hereditary cause, associated with certain toxic chemicals or alcoholic poisons. Patients may go to their doctors because of skin manifestations alone or acute attacks of severe abdominal pain, paralysis, and mental symptoms or a combination of both of these presentations."

⁶Ida Macalpine, Richard Hunter and C. Rimington, "Porphyria in the Royal Houses of Stuart, Hanover, and Prussia: A Follow-up Study of George III's Illness," in *Ibid.*, p. 49. The authors' write that Frederick William I "had 'nephritic colics' at the age of 31 in an attack which brought him to the brink of death. At 39 he had violent attacks of gout; his temper became uncontrollable, he was sleepless, and 'worried himself into melancholy and hypochondria,' had 'a fit of religious mania' and spoke of abdicating. In 1729, aged 41, he had his most serious attack with colic, insomnia, painful weakness of his limbs, and had to be wheeled about. To distract himself from his sufferings he painted and signed the pictures *Friedericus Wilhelminus in tormentis pinxit*."

⁷Antoine Pesne, *Friedrich Wilhelm I*, Oil on canvas, 1733, Berlin: Schloss Charlottenburg, Staatl. Schlösser und Gärten.

⁸Ernest Lavisse, *The Youth of Frederick the Great*, translated by Mary Bushnell Coleman, Chicago: S. C. Griggs and Company, 1892, p. 114.

out teeth as the King followed in pursuit.⁹ In another example, Frederick William I allegedly killed his own firstborn son by forcing the crown onto his head too vigorously at the crown prince's coronation and fracturing the newborn's skull.¹⁰ In one final example, the King issued an unusually cruel command whereby he forced his son, the future Frederick II, "the Great", to watch the execution of his best friend after the abused son's failed escape attempt from the country in July 1730.¹¹ His character and reputation have been noted with account after account of violent and cruel behaviour of which these are just a few examples. His violent nature often makes for compelling history and has been filled with anecdote after anecdote.

This violent behaviour was accompanied by deep religious belief. There is no doubt that religion comprised a large part of Frederick William I's character and created a curious contrast to his violent side. Mack Walker recounts the story of Frederick William I travelling to the Kingdom to investigate the corruption of native Junkers in the East Prussian *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*. One of the councillors, Schlubhut, was found guilty, but the local court controlled by the *Regierung*, who resented having one of their own condemned, intervened and so he was instead sentenced to several years in jail. When Frederick William I heard of his sentence, he declared that Schlubhut instead should be hung for his crime, an episode which underlines the king's Old Testament sense of justice.¹² Schlubhut retorted

⁹Ibid., pp. 114-5.

¹⁰Thomas Carlyle, *History of Friedrich II. of Prussia Called Frederick the Great*, Boston: Dana Estes & Company, vol. 1, 190-?, p. 22. Other historians note, however, that the first two male heirs born to Frederick William I and his wife, Sophie Dorothea of Hanover, died of natural causes as infants.

¹¹Ludwig Reiners, *Frederick the Great: An Informal Biography*, translated by Lawrence P. R. Wilson, London: Oswald Wolff, 1960, pp. 36-52.

¹²ABB, 5:1, pp. 261-2.

that "one did not hang a Prussian nobleman."¹³ After hearing this, the King ordered gallows to be built in the courtyard of the building housing the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* in Königsberg which was an agency under the direct control of the King and the primary rival to the *Regierung*. As Walker writes: "The next day being Sunday, the King went to church, where he heard a sermon on the text, 'Show mercy, that you shall know mercy', at which the King wept copiously and, no doubt, unfeignedly. On Monday he summoned the rest of the council to watch Schlubhut hang."¹⁴ This is a classic illustration of the king's puzzling character, mingling as it did extremes of religion and cruelty.

The Hohenzollerns in the eighteenth century were Calvinist, as the family had been since it officially converted in 1613. Like his father, however, Frederick William I continued Hohenzollern support of Pietism. Pietism, a German form of English Puritanism, underpinned many of the economic, religious, and educational policy reforms introduced by Frederick William I. He believed that every action he took was judged by God. This was as true for his personal conduct as much as it was for his devotion to the people over whom he ruled. As Koch writes, "the prosperity of the state was a sign of divine approval; given Prussia's fragility, positioned in the midst of great powers, the task of the monarch was that his every action be an example to his subjects lest divine approval be withdrawn."¹⁵ This was certainly the attitude which underlay the king's reforms in East Prussia. Fritz Terveen has cited a report from the Königsberg *Regierung*, the body of native noblemen with the greatest authority over the affairs of the Kingdom at the time of Frederick William I's accession, which happens to have

¹³Mack Walker, *The Salzburg Transaction: Expulsion and Redemption in Eighteenth-Century Germany*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992, pp. 80-1.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 81.

¹⁵H. W. Koch, *A History of Prussia*, New York: Dorset Press, 1978, p. 82.

explained their resistance to one of the king's plans to build and staff churches and schools in the Kingdom in early 1722. Not only is it important in showing the resistance of the native elite to Frederick William I but it also explains the king's strong sense of his religious mission. Frederick William I's marginalia on one document noted this religious mission as well as his negative conception of the East Prussians in general: "This is nothing [more] than the *Regierung* wanting to keep this poor land in barbarous suffering," noted the King, who went on to say that "... if I build and improve the land and I do not make any Christians, so help me all is for nothing...."¹⁶

His religiosity was deeply affected by his education during childhood in Calvinist theories of predestination, most notably by his Huguenot teacher, Philippe Rebeur.¹⁷ This upbringing created his lifelong fear of his own salvation. Because of the severe negative affect he believed this had on him, he forbade the teaching of the doctrine of predestination to his own children, who were also raised in the Calvinist faith.

The King lived a considerably less elegant lifestyle than not only his predecessor and father, Frederick III/I, as is often noted, but also his son and successor, Frederick the Great. Under Frederick III/I the Hohenzollern Monarchy had acquired a large-scale court and the representational culture to match, modelled on those of Louis XIV at Versailles. Frederick William

¹⁶Fritz Terveen, Gesamtstaat und Retablissement: Der Wiederaufbau des Nördlichen Ostpreussen unter Friedrich Wilhelm I, 1714-1740, edited by Profs. Heimpel, Walther Hubatsch, Kaehler and Schramm, vol. 16, *Göttinger Bausteine zur Geschichtswissenschaft*, Göttingen: Musterschmidt Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1954, p. 93. "Dieses ist nichts, denn die Regierung dieses arme Land in Barbarei behalten will, denn wenn ich baue und verbessere das Land und iche mache keine Christen, so hilfet mir alles nit...." See also Terveen, Gesamtstaat und Retablissement, pp. 86-92, which describes the rise of Frederick William I's key Pietist advisor and administrator for educational reforms in the kingdom, August Hermann Franke. See also, James Van Horn Melton, Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 46-48.

¹⁷Carl Hinrichs, "Friedrich Wilhelm I," in Preussen als historisches Problem, p. 44.

I's first action upon his accession was to impose stringent economies, reducing sharply the number of court personnel and dismissing many from their posts. The royal court was a shadow of its former self between 1713 and 1740, as the King concentrated scarce resources upon building up the army and the administrative structure which supported this. Frederick William I's court was frugal and simple, in sharp contrast to that of his own father. He felt most comfortable relaxing with his key advisors and leading Junkers in the so-called Tobacco College, in sparsely furnished and austere surroundings. There they would smoke tobacco, a royal monopoly at the time, as well as discuss recent and past events and perhaps even official policy. This was a distinct difference in personal pleasure than more lavish rulers before and after his reign.

Much of what is described above was probably due at least in part to his strong Calvinist upbringing, although his reverence for military culture and discipline was also crucial. Certainly before his accession to the throne there was not the expectation that he would be a philosopher king like there was with his son, Frederick II. Rather, Frederick William I was less supportive of such things as arts and sciences and operas, ballets, masks, etc. primarily, it seems, for religious reasons.¹⁸

This should not be taken as an implication that Frederick William I was unintelligent or that he lacked the desire to increased education among

¹⁸Richard Dietrich, editor, *Die politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern*, vol. 20, *Veröffentlichungen aus den Archiven Preussischer Kulturbesitz*, Köln and Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1986, pp. 222-3. For example, Frederick William I noted as much in his instructions for his successor: "Mein lieber Suxessor sey wohll versichert, das alle glück[lichen] Regenten, die Gott für die Augen haben und keine Metressen, es beßer zu Nennen Huhren, haben und ein Gottsehliches lehben führen; diße Regenten wierdt Gott mit allen weldt[lichen] und geist[lichen] sehgen beschütten. Als bitte ich Meinen lieben Successor ein Gottsehliges Reines lehben und wandellen zu führen und seinen Lande und Armeé mit guhten excempell vorgehhen, nicht Sauffen und freßen davon ein unzügtiges lehben herr kommet, Mein lieber Successor mus augh nicht zugehben das in seine Lender und Prowincen keine Komeden, Operas, Ballettes, Masckerahden, Redutten gehalten werden und ein greu[el] davor haben, wiell es Gottlohse und Teuffelichts ist, da der Sahtanas sein tempell und reich vermehret werden...."

his subjects. The King listened to music and from time to time even painted. From his writings, one easily may get the impression that the King lacked basic intelligence. Frederick William I was, after all, a king who not only wrote illegibly but moreover, apparently could not construct a grammatically correct sentence in any language.¹⁹ As we shall see in Chapter Six, these were requirements the King demanded of a would-be administrator and something in which he personally took a decisive interest with regard to a candidate's appointment. Incidentally, this example also underlines another important theme of this study, that of the deep personal involvement by the King at even the lowest level of government. In regard to this theme, one need only examine the manuscript material to realise that Frederick William I must have been a voracious reader of administrative documents as check marks and various notations are consistently found on material relating to seemingly insignificant matters. The King was extremely widely read in official documents and personally aware of the administrative issues of his reign. He was also far from unintelligent, despite impressions to the contrary conveyed by studies of his rule.

This was demonstrated by Frederick William I's role in the modernisation of education in the Hohenzollern territories. Not only did he work to improve agricultural techniques through research and education at the estate farm level but he also sought to build elementary schools with compulsory attendance, establishing new departments in both Pietist and Cameralist studies, for example. Although there was some success for the King in these areas of reform, there was also a great deal of resistance and lack of success. As will be discussed in later chapters, the reasons for these failures range from Junker resistance to lack of adequate funding for

¹⁹For more on this subject, see Hermann Georg Hummrich, "Beiträge zur Sprache König Friedrich Wilhelm I von Preussen," Ph.D. Dissertation, Greifswald, Adler, 1910. Hummrich analyses, in quite an interesting manner, Frederick William I's use of grammar through his writings and marginalia, etc.

projects, to poor implementation procedures of the projects. Nonetheless, the issue of education was taken seriously by Frederick William I.²⁰

²⁰Wolfgang Neugebauer, Absolutischer Staat und Schulwirklichkeit in Brandenburg-Preussen, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1985; James Van Horn Melton, Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria, pp. 44-50.

The General Directory in its Context

Before the establishment of the General Directory in 1722/23 most governmental institutions in the Hohenzollern monarchy dealt with the affairs of a single territory. There were separate administrations for Brandenburg, East Prussia and the other territories. Only two central administrative agencies with a remit covering all the Hohenzollern lands existed in Brandenburg-Prussia. Both were concerned with matters of revenue. The General Finance Directory (*Generalfinanzdirektorium*), oversaw the extensive royal domains, attended to agrarian matters and the collection of taxation. The General War Commissariat (*Generalkriegskommissariat*), provided essential administration for the army and the fiscal revenue upon which it depended throughout the various Hohenzollern territories.

As the two agencies found their responsibilities frequently overlapped, competition between the two to extract the limited means available from the same sources grew. Inevitably the divergent aims of the two bodies clashed. Frederick William I sought to resolve this conflict when in 1722-23 he merged the domain and commissariat offices into the *General-Ober-Finanz-Kriegs-und-Domänen-Direktorium* or General Directory, by which name it will hereafter be designated, bringing the county and tax councillors in the provinces under the authority of the newly established War-and-Domain Chambers (*Kriegs und Domänenkammer*). Frederick William I wanted a central authority to oversee military and financial matters as well as other more general "police" functions throughout the various territories.

The term police, as it is used here, incorporates more than present-day conceptions of law and order.²¹ It is employed in its wider sense, familiar in the early modern period — along the lines of Marc Raeff's explanation: "Police had the connotation of administration in the broadest sense, that is, institutional means and procedures necessary to secure peaceful and orderly existence for the population of the land (that is, territory)."²² One of the primary goals of the early modern *Polizeistaat*, in the words of Gerhard Oestreich, was "to keep the community thriving so that the subjects may prosper in wealth and property and that everything hindering the common good may be prevented. The subjects for their part have two obligations towards the ruler, respect and obedience."²³ The General Directory was seen as the strong institution through which these areas could be administered more effectively.

The General Directory was organised in a collegial manner. This had been a favourite administrative practice for Frederick William I's government prior to its establishment and was repeated in that body

²¹For an overview of the term "Polizei," through the period under consideration, see Hans Maier, *Die ältere Deutsche Staats- und Verwaltungslehre*, Munich: C. H. Beck'sche, 1980, pp. 92-105. In particular, this is Maier's chapter entitled "Polizeiliteratur und Polizeiwissenschaft bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts," which traces the term from its earliest beginnings through its use and meaning in the eighteenth century when its definition began to narrow closer to the present day definition.

²²Marc Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600-1800*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983, p. 5.

²³Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, edited by Brigitta Oestreich, H. G. Koenigsberger and David McLintock, *Cambridge Studies in Early Modern History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, pp. 155-156. This is an English translation of Oestreich's, *Geist und Gestalt des frühmodernen Staates: Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1969. One of the most comprehensive interpretations of the term police, in Oestreich's view, dates from the mid-sixteenth century and is found in the political testament of Dr. Melchior von Osse. Police for Osse "was identical both with the government and with the object and nature of the community as a whole." See, Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, p. 156. Raeff's definition of police, however, should be considered as an up-dating of Oestreich's and is a definition that is, therefore, closer to the one used in this thesis. Marc Raeff, however, gives less weight to the economic aims and functions stressed by Gerhard Oestreich.

consistent with the king's practice. The idea of shared responsibility was not new in the government of the Hohenzollerns. It was increasingly used by Frederick William I and may be directly traced to his own experiences while crown prince and to his father's managerial style of reliance upon single individuals, which was apparent throughout the government - from his continued use of first ministers to departmental heads to the central administrative officials in the territories. Although the collegial style of government was not unique to the Hohenzollerns, indeed it was used in France with more success, for example, it appears to have been mixed with a lack of oversight of lesser officials that resulted in governmental venality and breakdown when in place in Brandenburg-Prussia.

Offices in the collegial organisation were not headed by a single responsible minister at the apex of a single college or department. Brandenburg-Prussia had no principal head for a specific area of administration in this period. A group was responsible for the administration of a department that often covered several areas, primarily geographical but also of government business. For instance, it was not until 1728, that Frederick William I established a single body to conduct diplomacy and advise him on foreign affairs.²⁴ There was a slow evolution towards single-function departments headed by one official with clearly-defined objectives and hierarchies. Therefore, with collegial government, a number of individuals were responsible for wide areas of government and reported to the King; there was not simply one minister in charge of one area of policy with a support staff dedicated to that function of administration full-time. With this form of government organisation at the

²⁴Peter Baumgart, "Zur Gründungsgeschichte des Auswärtigen Amtes in Preußen, 1713-1728," *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel und Ostdeutschlands*, vol. 7, 1958, pp. 229-248.

very heart of Hohenzollern authority, a sense of collective responsibility among the college members quickly became established.²⁵

As this study will demonstrate, although the collegial style of government encouraged a search for consensus among college members and a sense of *esprit de corps*, it also frequently fostered conflict among officials throughout the administration. Jurisdictional conflicts among East Prussian authorities at both the higher and lower levels of government continued unabated — something which the establishment of the General Directory was intended to end. In fact, however, as a result of the General Directory, new conflicts arose between Berlin and the Königsberg *Regierung*, the highest authority in the administration of the towns and countryside of the Kingdom at Frederick William I's accession. As this dissertation will contend, this suggests that the introduction of the General Directory in East Prussia had significantly less impact upon the development of absolutism within the Kingdom than some historians have suggested.

The new conflicts added an additional dimension to the traditional jurisdictional disputes between civilian and military authorities. New questions arose relating to the legality of one authority taking control of a particular type of business. Which authority would judge tax offenders? What positions were open to non-native East Prussians? Who should appoint local officials? There were even jurisdictional disputes about jurisdictional disputes. Who, for example, should decide such clashes over ultimate authority, Berlin or Königsberg? With such strong resentments and controversies simmering over who should govern and how government should function into the 1730s, it is evident that Hohenzollern authority in

²⁵See for example, Dorwart, The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia, p. 222, fn. 7.

the Kingdom still was far from securely established by the final decade of Frederick William I's reign.

The Historiographical Tradition

The prevailing view among previous historians has been that the establishment of the General Directory in 1723 was the single most essential and vital initiative for the development of Hohenzollern absolutism. Traditional scholarship viewed the new institution of the General Directory as the agent of inevitable bureaucratic modernisation, which, once established, swept aside and superseded established agencies of government, in the Kingdom as elsewhere. These scholars contended that an inefficient and outmoded framework of territorial government was destroyed by Frederick William I, who replaced it with a new modern administrative system, of which the centrepiece was the establishment of the General Directory in early 1723.

The traditional approach to Hohenzollern government, for East Prussia as well as for the monarchy's other territories, indirectly owes much to the theories of the great sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920). It was firmly established in studies of eighteenth-century Brandenburg-Prussia primarily by the writings of historians such as Gustav Schmoller (1838–1917) and Otto Hintze (1861–1940). Both men were contemporaries of Weber and both were strongly influenced by his writings, which contributed to seminal studies of Brandenburg-Prussian government. In Weber's unfinished Economy and Society, the two chapters concerning "Domination and Legitimacy" and "Bureaucracy" constitute his fundamental discussion of administrative organisations.²⁶ It is no coincidence that his discussion of "structure of

²⁶Weber, Max, Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology, translated by Ephraim Fischhoff, Hans Gerth, A.M. Henderson, Ferdinand Kolegar, C. Wright Mills, Talcott Parsons, Max Rheinstein, Guenther Roth, Edward Shils, and Claus

dominancy" is of direct relevance and importance for his following chapter on bureaucracy.²⁷ Here, he sets out his criteria for centralisation which, when he discusses bureaucratisation, leads him to the notion of routinisation of administration and what is considered his "ideal type" of bureaucracy. This the historian Rudolf Vierhaus notes as requiring a modern professional bureaucracy, permanent appointments, guaranteed salaries, pension rights, secure career structures, clearly laid-down responsibilities, and employment under public law.²⁸

This approach was enshrined in the bulky volumes of the Acta Borussica, the major printed series for Brandenburg-Prussia's eighteenth-century internal history.²⁹ There are thirty-four volumes in forty parts to the Acta Borussica series that cover the years 1701-1786. The original series was published between 1892-1980 and a reprint of the series was published in 1986 and 1987. There are sixteen volumes in twenty parts to the primary Acta Borussica series on administration that covers, very briefly, the reign of Frederick III/I and is primarily devoted to the reigns of Frederick William I and Frederick the Great. In addition, there are several additional volumes which lie outside the main administrative series. These include an

Wittich, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, 2 volumes, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.

²⁷Ibid., vol. 2, p. 941

²⁸Eckhart Hellmuth, "Conference Report: The State in the Eighteenth Century Britain and Germany in Comparative Perspective. Joint Conference of the German Historical Institute London and the Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel, held in Wolfenbüttel, 2-5 October 1992," *Bulletin*, London: German Historical Institute, vol. 14:2, 1992, p. 31.

²⁹Acta Borussica. Denkmäler der Preußischen Staatsverwaltung im 18. Jahrhundert, edited by Gustav Schmoller, Otto Krauske, Victor Loewe, Wilhelm Stolze, Otto Hintze, M. Hass, W. Peters, Ernst Posner, Wilhelm Naudé, August Skalweit, Karl Heinrich Kaufhold, F. Frhr. von Schrötter, Peter Baumgart, Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, Hans-Jürgen Gerhard, Gerd Heinrich, New General Editors of the Historischen Kommission zu Berlin: Wilhelm Treue, Peter Baumgart, Hans-Jürgen Gerhard, Gerd Heinrich, Stefi Jersch-Wenzel and Karl Heinrich Kaufhold, 15 volumes, Berlin: Preußischen (formerly Königlichen) Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1892-1980 (Reprint 1986/87).

Ergänzungsband published in 1905 which contain the letters of Frederick William I to the *Fürsten* Leopold zu Anhalt-Dessau and cover the years 1704-1740. There are four volumes under the title of *Getreidenhandelspolitik* that were published between 1896 and 1931; three volumes in five parts are under the title of *Handels-, Zoll- und Akzisepolitik*, and were published between 1911 and 1928; four volumes were published between 1904 and 1913 covering *Münzwesen* in the eighteenth century; two more volumes covering *Münzwesen* between 1806 and 1873 were published in 1926; the first three volumes of the Acta Borussica project appeared in 1892 and were given the title of *Die Preußische Seidenindustrie im 18. Jahrhundert und ihre Begründung durch Friedrich den Großen*; a volume on the *Wollindustrie* appeared in 1933.³⁰ The amount of work for the editors was immense as the number of volumes alone suggests. In fact, due to the work load required of the historians involved in the Acta Borussica project, there was a considerable personal health risk. Otto Hintze, for example, found that by the end of his stint in the project, his eyesight was so badly damaged from reading so much manuscript material, often in difficult eighteenth-century script, that it would never fully recover.³¹

The Acta Borussica is fundamentally a collection of printed documents and document summaries, although there are also some important editorial introductions. The aims of Schmoller, Hintze, and the other editors of the series are clear. They wanted to reveal the origins and

³⁰For more detailed information see the individual volumes themselves and there is quite a good summary of the volumes in Wilhelm Treue and Cosima Möller, Die Acta Borussica – Denkmäler der preussischen Staatsverwaltung im 18. Jahrhundert – zwischen Ihrer Gründung im Jahr 1887 und der Reprint-Ausgabe von 1986/87, Historische Kommission zu Berlin, Berlin, Gerhard Baucke, Beiheft Nr. 10, 1987, pp. 39-46.

³¹Otto Hintze, The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze, Felix Gilbert and Robert Berdahl, editors, New York: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 13. Gilbert notes (p. 4) that Hintze had to give up his professorship at the University of Berlin due to illness of which failing eyesight was a part when he was fifty-five years old.

development of the Brandenburg-Prussian administration, military, justice, and economic systems.³² Not only is this clear through their selection of documents and document summaries but also through the essays some of the editors included in the series. Hintze, in particular, published a massive and authoritative survey of Brandenburg-Prussia in 1740 and how it had evolved, especially under Frederick William I.³³ The location of this collection of detailed essays — at the conclusion of documents pertaining to the reign of Frederick William I — was intended to assess the historical importance of that reign and also to act as an introduction for the start of documents included in the Acta Borussica for the beginning of Frederick the Great's reign.

Schmoller and Hintze, through their work on the Acta Borussica, established not merely the study of Brandenburg-Prussian government but also how the subject itself is approached. As Kurt Breysig has noted, Schmoller located the entire influence of government in the official acts of the Hohenzollerns. Schmoller relied on these edicts exclusively for his research, which, upon publication, became the last word of historical analysis of Brandenburg-Prussia's domestic history during the eighteenth century.³⁴ Hintze collaborated with Schmoller for the colossal endeavour of the Acta Borussica project that began in 1887. Throughout the planning stages, Schmoller, Hintze, and the other editors found they were unable to fit all the documents they wanted into the volumes, so the decision was

³²A similar comment is presented in the introduction to Wilhelm Treue and Cosima Möller, Die Acta Borussica - Denkmäler der preussischen Staatsverwaltung im 18. Jahrhundert - zwischen ihrer Gründung im Jahr 1887 und der Reprint-Ausgabe von 1986/87, p. 12.

³³In particular, see, ABB, 5:1, pp. 3-55, 291-326.

³⁴Kurt Breysig, Aus meinen Tagen und Träumen. Memoiren, Aufzeichnungen, Briefe, Gespräche, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1962, p. 33. Cited in Wilhelm Treue, Die Acta Borussica - Denkmäler der preussischen Staatsverwaltung im 18. Jahrhundert - Zwischen Ihrer Gründung im Jahr 1887 und der Reprint-Ausgabe von 1986/87, p. 10.

made to summarise them. Ultimately, many thousands of pages were not included at all.³⁵ Exactly as the Urkunden und Aktenstücke zur Geschichte des Grossen Kurfürsten and the Politische Correspondenz Friedrichs des Grossen were intended to trace the development of Hohenzollern foreign policy and administration, the Acta Borussica was intended to document the development of Brandenburg–Prussian domestic administration and internal policy.³⁶

Schmoller and Hintze focused on the description and analysis of central government and its formal institutions. As a result, Brandenburg–Prussia is usually viewed as the prime example of a strong early modern state which typifies the kind of professional government which reached its peak in the Enlightened Absolutism of the later eighteenth century. The establishment of the General Directory fits neatly into this interpretation, and it has helped to establish this view at the very heart of studies of eighteenth-century Brandenburg–Prussia.

This attention to formal structures as an outlet for professional government, efficient administration, and good civil administrators, in general, is evident in most historical scholarship since the late nineteenth century. Leopold von Ranke, who also paid considerable attention to the formal structures of administration, had earlier established the dominant direction for later writings. In the words of G. P. Gooch, Ranke “depicted the King [Frederick William I] as the founder of the efficient Prussian administrative machine.”³⁷ Ranke himself wrote a nine volume “introductory survey” of the history and rise of Brandenburg–Prussia which

³⁵Wilhelm Treue, Die Acta Borussica – Denkmäler der preussischen Staatsverwaltung im 18. Jahrhundert, see in particular, p. 13.

³⁶Hintze, The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze, p. 6.

³⁷G. P. Gooch, History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century, Boston: Beacon Press, 1962, p. 86.

was published between 1847 and 1848. In fact, Gooch notes that Ranke was the first to use the documents currently held in the *Geheimes Staatsarchiv* in Berlin.³⁸

Schmoller and Hintze were influenced significantly by Ranke. One may even consider their work and views of the importance of domestic affairs as an adaptation of the contemporary notion of the primacy of foreign policy, which was established by Ranke and which were abundant in the historical writings of the day and saturated by the influence of Ranke.³⁹

The attention to formal structures is exemplified by more recent studies, notably the well-known English language survey by Reinhold Dorwart, whose study covers the administrative history of Frederick William I and is very much in the tradition established by Schmoller and Hintze.⁴⁰ This is so both in his choice of subject and in the perspective he brings to the study of Brandenburg-Prussian government. He comments, for example, in his preface that he places "constant emphasis on the part played by the development of a centralised, absolutist public administration in the creation of an organically-united state of Brandenburg-Prussia."⁴¹ His monograph was, in reality, a summation of the German literature and uncritically incorporated all its perspectives. Dorwart's work remains among the most comprehensive examinations of this period of

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹For more on this see, for example, Felix Gilbert's introduction to *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*, especially, pp. 6 ff.

⁴⁰Reinhold August Dorwart, *The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953; reprinted by Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1971.

⁴¹Ibid., p. vi.

Brandenburg-Prussian history in any language and is certainly the best-known to an Anglo-American readership.

In another study, Hans Rosenberg has also placed particular emphasis upon the formal structures of government and power as they relate to the social composition of administrators. He has been less impressed, however, by the formal procedures or so-called bureaucratisation of the Brandenburg-Prussian administration and administrators than Dorwart and more aware of the importance of the personal contribution of Brandenburg-Prussia's state servants.⁴²

Bureaucracy, Aristocracy and Autocracy has contributed greatly to the debate surrounding the notion of Germany's unique development, or *Sonderweg*. More important for this present study, however, is that Rosenberg has, as William Hagen has pointed out, added to the social history of Brandenburg-Prussia "in the sense that it focused on the social composition of the governing elites of the Kingdom of Prussia as they were transformed and realigned through the rise of the absolutist regime."⁴³ It is precisely in this way that Rosenberg differs from the work of Dorwart. In this way, Rosenberg has been able to establish that officials continued to dominate the administration and operation of Hohenzollern government throughout the eighteenth century, rather than being subsumed in a bureaucratic Leviathan. Winkler, writing on Rosenberg and his "Prussia book," summarised Rosenberg's conclusions the following way: "[t]he servants of the king become a group whose power finally is superior to that

⁴²Hans Rosenberg, Bureaucracy Aristocracy and Autocracy: The Prussian Experience, 1660-1815, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1958.

⁴³William W. Hagen, "Descent of the *Sonderweg*: Hans Rosenberg's History of Old-Regime Prussia," *Central European History*, vol. 24:1, 1991, pp. 30-31. Hagen also notes (p. 30, fn. 11) Hans-Ulrich Wehler, among others to the place of Rosenberg in the *Sonderweg* debate. Hans-Ulrich Wehler, editor, Sozialgeschichte Heute: Festschrift für Hans Rosenberg zum 70. Geburtstag, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1974.

of the king: the core of a power elite composed of high officials, the officers corps, and the landed Junkers, whose most important political function consisted in keeping liberal and democratic tendencies from holding sway."⁴⁴

Rosenberg's view has gained a strong following, especially among historical sociologists.⁴⁵ William Hagen notes that Rosenberg's attention to the establishment of what he considered to be bureaucratized state structures led by Brandenburg-Prussian Junkers "transcended Weberian fears that the modern bureaucratized state would block or corrupt the liberal-democratic self-government of civil society."⁴⁶ This was, in a sense, the framework from which Rosenberg worked.

In general, the traditional approach exemplified by the scholars mentioned above (except for those who follow Rosenberg) concludes that Frederick William I's attempts at reform in East Prussia were a striking success. It contends, in other words, that the King won a notable victory over the selfish and blinkered territorial elites that was a natural consequence of the struggle between central government pitched against provincial authority. The future, this view contends, lay with the power of the monarchical state. It argues that, because Frederick William I believed he needed to establish order and thus required to increase Hohenzollern authority in the Kingdom, he in turn reduced the scope of East Prussian provincial authority and interests.

⁴⁴Heinrich August Winkler, "A Pioneer in the Historical Sciences: Hans Rosenberg 1904-1988," *Central European History*, vol. 24:1, 1991, p. 12.

⁴⁵See, for example, Hans-Eberhard Mueller, Bureaucracy, Education, and Monopoly: Civil Service Reforms in Prussia and England, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984; Hagen, "Descent of the Sonderweg," p. 31.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

Those scholars who followed more or less uncritically the perspectives of Schmoller and Hintze frequently exaggerate the extent, speed, and manner in which the Hohenzollerns established their authority over East Prussia. This is especially so for the reign of Frederick William I. His authority over the East Prussian elite was never established like a "rock of bronze,"⁴⁷ as the King himself proudly proclaimed. There was no conscious battle of traditional late feudalism versus new absolutism, whether in Frederick William I's distinctive vision of this or otherwise. In general, this is a problem with older and traditional views of absolutism, which assumed the effectiveness of royal wishes and believed that these could easily be translated into effective initiatives at the local level.

Ideas about the rapid creation of Hohenzollern authority developed too easily within the traditional view because the strength and complexity of Frederick William I's opponents are not fully recognised. In short, Schmoller and Hintze show the operation of government using a far too narrow and one sided approach and assumed - rather than demonstrated - the ability of central administration to overcome provincial resistance and to intervene at the local level. This skews the true nature and operation of East Prussian government in this period. Officials in Berlin or Königsberg, and even at more local levels, for example in Prussian Lithuania (the easternmost districts of the Kingdom), all had a role in the success and failure with which Hohenzollern authority was established in East Prussia. Until recently, research on the operation of government within Prussia for this period usually reinforced Schmoller and Hintze's interpretation of central, formal institutions and structures as the characteristics of Brandenburg-Prussia as an early modern nation state.

⁴⁷GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpr., II-Materien, Nr. 1577, fol. 197. "... ich komme zu meinen zweig und stabiliere die suverenitet und fetze die krohne fest wie ein Rocher von Bronse und laße die herren Juncker den windt von Landtdahge..." See also, ABB, 2, p. 352.

The evidence for this, upon which the traditional view depends, is the mass of documents originating from Berlin that expose and confirm the centralist perspective, often the same ones incorporated into the Acta Borussica. One particular problem with relying solely upon these documents is that they do not reflect effectively what was happening at the provincial and, even more, local levels: usually because officials in Berlin or Königsberg were ignorant of them. Many of the historians who depended upon these documents did not stop to question and examine what the provincial authorities thought of the reforming initiatives. In other words, how did the East Prussians react, and did they resist and even reject Berlin's measures? If so, which measures and how typical was the rejection? This was the case with events as important as the royal coronation in 1701 and its recognition afterward through to the establishment of the General Directory in 1723 and beyond into the following decade.

Therefore, a source like the Acta Borussica is reliable and helpful only in finding answers to a narrow set of questions particularly about government at the centre, whether in Berlin or Königsberg. Although the series is especially helpful in revealing the aims of policy, it is not the only place in which to find answers about the nature and operation of government in Brandenburg-Prussia, especially the provincial government and local administration. Much of the background to the many regulations stemming from Frederick William I is illuminated when using a wider range of manuscript material which can help determine not only how administration was intended to operate, but how government actually worked in practice. There is evidence to suggest that many of Frederick William I's orders and regulations for East Prussia were ignored as well as challenged, resisted, and/or not fully implemented.

Recent research, to which this study contributes, has demonstrated that Frederick William I was unable to hammer East Prussia into submission

simply through the establishment of the General Directory or any other institutional apparatus, tax, or other method. East Prussian influence in the kingdom's own government proved enduring, as did the participation of the Kingdom's elites in administration — as this thesis will demonstrate.

Fritz Terveen⁴⁸ and, much earlier, August Skalweit⁴⁹ published important monographic and archive-based studies which concentrate upon individual areas within East Prussia at this time. Both examined particular events associated with the devastation and rebuilding efforts as a result of a plague in 1709/10. Their work, however, does not delve into the political disputes on the provincial level as they, too, tend to focus on the role of central agencies and individuals. These studies were built upon to some extent by Walter Mertineit in his brief but comprehensive summation of Skalweit and Terveen.⁵⁰ Although he made use of manuscript material not all of which appears to have been consulted by either Skalweit or Terveen, he essentially focused on the person of Frederick William I and the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*, rather than other important and influential forces within the Kingdom such as the *Regierung*, and therefore his study remained very traditional in approach. One should remember, however, that Mertineit provides a good survey and was intended only as an introduction to his study of administration during the reign of Frederick the Great which is the primary focus of the book. It is not and does not aim to be a detailed study of East Prussia under Frederick William I.

⁴⁸Terveen, *Gesamtstaat und Retablissement*.

⁴⁹August Skalweit, *Die ostpreussische Domänenverwaltung unter Friedrich Wilhelm I und das Retablissement Litauens*, Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 1906, in Gustav Schmoller and Max Sering's, *Staats- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Forschungen*, vol. 25:3, 1906.

⁵⁰Walter Mertineit, *Die fridericianische Verwaltung in Ostpreußen* Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1958, pp. 31-39.

A few relatively recent studies which focus on East Prussia in the eighteenth century have questioned the traditional path Brandenburg-Prussian historical writing has taken for this period. Hannelore Jühr has recognised Frederick William I's role in the activities of district officials.⁵¹ The King's reforms at the district level, however, not willingly accepted or easily implemented. Change of such magnitude necessarily took time, especially since the local elite was so entrenched within the agencies of East Prussian administration. In a more recent study, James Leonard Roth has examined the East Prussian royal domain managers, the *Domänenpächter*, during the eighteenth century.⁵² Roth shows the importance of these less formal royal agents who played key roles in the operation of East Prussian government. His research begins with Frederick William I's innovative land lease program whereby the King leased the substantial royal domains at fixed rents and for fixed periods. Rents were assessed by potential productivity as well as yields in an attempt to improve royal income. Roth traces the individual and collective role of the East Prussian *Domänenpächter* in the agrarian and economic recovery of East Prussia and the rise of this group within the social order of the period.

The impact of the elite and the military was another significant component to the operation of government in this period and an important dimension of the development of society in the Brandenburg-Prussian absolutist state. In this regard, Otto Büsch has had a major impact with his pathbreaking study of the militarisation of early modern Brandenburg-

⁵¹Hannelore Jühr, "Die Verwaltung des Hauptamtes Brandenburg/Ostpreussen von 1713 bis 1751," Berlin: Ernst Reuter Gesellschaft, Ph. D. Dissertation, Berlin: Free University, 1967.

⁵²James Leonard Roth, "The East Prussian Domaenenpaechter in the eighteenth Century: A Study in Collective Social Mobility," Ph. D. Dissertation, Berkeley: University of California, 1979.

Prussia.⁵³ Wolfgang Neugebauer wrote more recently about the *ständische Latenz*, that is, combinations of formal and informal structures of government in the East Prussian territory that were relied upon by Frederick William I.⁵⁴ Neugebauer is among the freshest of recent voices on eighteenth-century absolutism as he brings to the forefront the independent tradition of East Prussians and the limits of absolutism in the Kingdom. He has contributed significantly through his explorations of the broader, less institutional nature of early modern government. Although Neugebauer's *Politischer Wandel* is a revision of how absolutism operated in East Prussia, he shows this primarily through an examination of the continued domination of the affairs of the Kingdom by the Junkers in a way that is reminiscent of Otto Hintze.

Due to the status and territorial extent of the Polish state since the First World War, historians from within Poland have added unique perspectives in an attempt to counterbalance the quite distinct German approach.⁵⁵ It was directed essentially at showing the Polish character of the region: in contrast to its German, asserted by historians of *Ostforschung* who dominated German research centres and universities dedicated to the study of Eastern European history.⁵⁶ This was especially true between the

⁵³Otto Büsch *Militärsystem und Sozialleben im alten Preussen, 1713-1807: Die Anfänge der sozialen militarisierung der preußisch-deutschen Gesellschaft*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1962.

⁵⁴Wolfgang Neugebauer, *Politischer Wandel im Osten: Ost- und Westpreussen von den alten Ständen zum Konstitutionalismus*, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1992, pp. 65-86.

⁵⁵Karin Friedrich, "Facing Both Ways: New Works on Prussia and Polish-Prussian Relations," *German History*, 15:2, 1997, pp. 256-267. The following discussion of the Polish contribution is based upon Friedrich.

⁵⁶Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. As Friedrich notes, Burleigh "analyses the use of history as an ideological weapon by the expanding institutional network of *Ostforschung*, but ignores the Polish side of the story." Karin Friedrich, "Facing Both Ways," p. 257, fn. 3.

years 1933 and 1945, and more generally during the first half of the twentieth century. These views which resulted in years of polarisation were increasingly moderated, first by the Polish historians, whose "initial anti-German tendency of Polish works on the Baltic, combined with a Marxist, anti-bourgeois agenda, was increasingly overcome during the progressive liberalisation of the Polish historical profession from the 1970s which reached its climax after the political changes of 1989."⁵⁷

Other recent studies tend not to examine directly the broader role of government during this period, giving less emphasis to bureaucratic themes. In particular, Richard Gawthrop⁵⁸ and Philip S. Gorski⁵⁹ have recently advanced the argument that Pietism, virtually by itself, shaped the political culture of Brandenburg-Prussia and led to its formation and rise as an early modern nation state. There is no doubt that these studies as well as those mentioned earlier, have merit. However, most assert the operation and nature of government to be dependent upon a single factor or group, above all the King himself or religious leaders. The research upon which work like Gawthrop or Dorwart, for example, is based needs to be examined

⁵⁷Friedrich, "New Works on Prussia and Polish-Prussian Relations," p. 258. This approach has been adopted by several German historians in recent decades. Those historians who grew-up in this novel situation have produced a new generation of scholars who as Friedrich notes, have gone far to "introduce a new spirit into German research on the Prussian past..." (p. 259). In her dissertation Karin Friedrich focused on the burghers and to some extent, other elite in Polish Prussia, Karin Friedrich, "The Other Prussia." Although this dissertation focuses primarily on what would become of the Hohenzollern province West Prussia, after 1772, and the period just prior to the reign of Frederick William I, it is nonetheless an important study of the traditional elites in the wider Prussian region. Most importantly, Friedrich is able to incorporate more than the traditional sources to show the traditions and independence of this area as well as the importance of Poland and distrust of the Hohenzollerns through the eyes of the native elite.

⁵⁸Richard L. Gawthrop, Pietism and the Making of Eighteenth-Century Prussia, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

⁵⁹Philip S. Gorski, "The Protestant Ethic Revisited: Disciplinary Revolution and State Formation in Holland and Prussia," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 99, 1993, pp. 265-316. Gorski, admittedly, considers Pietism to be one of at least three factors contributing to the formation of the early modern state.

in conjunction with each other and each put into context. These studies all contain contributing factors to the emergence and impact of government in Brandenburg–Prussia which makes defining one factor, as the sole element in Brandenburg-Prussia's development, impossible. This study will build upon their thesis by examining crucial manuscript material on the operation of government in East Prussia.

The Sources for this Study

The expansion of government under Frederick William I, who established several new agencies and reconstituted others and increased the number of administrators who relied upon written correspondence and reports ensure that the records for this period are especially full. These abundant sources, therefore, make this dissertation possible. This study is not simply a rejection of traditional perspectives and the arguments of past works. Rather, it builds upon them and seeks to examine government activity in the broadest sense of the term. Here, more than just the orders of the king in his cabinet at Potsdam or a Berlin official's report stemming from a General Directory decision will be utilised and incorporated. East Prussian government had more functions and dimensions than are expressed in studies which focus only upon the central administration. These will be more closely examined. This dissertation also examines in detail areas and topics which were excluded in previous studies, such as the significance of the numerous jurisdictional conflicts, general administrative confusion, and the extent and effectiveness of change in the context of the complex layers of the native provincial East Prussian administration.

The traditional view, moreover, was also the product of a restricted range of unpublished sources. Much of the manuscript evidence was not readily accessible, especially to Western researchers, between the 1930s and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent unification of the two Germanies. As a result of recent political changes, historians can now re-examine, in a fairly complete manner, all the relevant evidence.

Between 1945 and 1993, the great part of the primary manuscript sources was located in two German state archives, one in the former East German town of Merseburg, the *Zentrales Staatsarchiv*, and the other in Berlin-Dahlem, the *Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz* after being moved there from Göttingen in the 1980s. Soon after the Berlin Wall fell in November, 1989, the documents located in Merseburg were again easily accessible to scholars from the West after a long period when access had been difficult. More important, however, was the re-unification of the archives in 1993, restoring the situation which had prevailed until the end of World War II. This means that a scholar can now examine fairly complete series of documents in one place. It permits the researcher to examine not only what was happening on the local and provincial level but simultaneously developments in the central administration. Prior to 1993, the two sets of sources were separate and, as mentioned, the Merseburg material only became fully available to scholars from the West after 1989. The often unexpected history of the various archives within the two Germanies has been the subject of its own study, most notably by Kurt Forstreuter.⁶⁰ In light of the recent events and Forstreuter's interesting and helpful work, his book on the history of the archives is worth updating.

Central to this study have been eight collections. Except for only a few items, there are a series of *Findbücher* which index these collections. Most of the *Findbücher* are hand-written although some are typed.⁶¹ The collections include the records of the *Etatsministerium* which contain much

⁶⁰Kurt Forstreuter, *Das Preußische Staatsarchiv in Königsberg: Ein geschichtlicher Rückblick mit einer Übersicht über seine Bestände*, *Veröffentlichungen Der Niebersächsischen Archivverwaltung*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1955.

⁶¹Like James Roth, I believe the indexes that pertain to East Prussia date from before World War II and thus were prepared in Königsberg at the former state archives in that capital. See Roth, "The East Prussian Domaenenpaechter in the eighteenth Century," p. 16.

of the day-to-day correspondence of the Königsberg *Regierung*, which, as mentioned earlier, was the highest authority in East Prussia at the accession of Frederick William I. The 142 subject headings that make-up this collection range from general topics to documents covering a particular geographical district within East Prussia. There are for example, orders from Berlin, copies of orders, reports of a variety of topics, and correspondence between various authorities. These are particularly important as they provide a sense of what was occurring between various provisional elites in regard to certain matters. These also help fill-in the East Prussian perspective on several of the reforms undertaken by the king from Berlin.

Of no less importance are the so-called *Ostpreußische Folianten* which shed light on local administrative matters handled by the *Regierung*. In particular, this collection was helpful in exploring what, where and when correspondence was sent as well as to whom. There are also records indicating every document and piece of correspondence that was received by the *Regierung* organised by date. This was helpful in not only determining whether or not the *Regierung* received a document that, for example, may also be found in another series or the records of the *Etatsministerium*, but it is also helpful in determining other records for which an original does not exist anymore.

The remaining collections focus primarily on central administration. Repositories 3, 4, 5, and 8 were helpful in this regard although they are relatively small in comparison to other collections. They are also the collections that were available to the West and have been well researched. A vast collection of documents focusing on central administration are found in the manuscript material of the General Directory and Repository 7. These are the major contribution of records that were for long unavailable to historians outside the former Eastern bloc. Both contain significant material about the workings of central administration and in particular, the less

recognised material surrounding the operation of the General Directory in this period.

CHAPTER 1

The Kingdom of East Prussia: Geography, Economy and Society

A Kingdom within a Composite State

The extraordinary geographical diffusion of the dynasty's territories was an important restriction upon Hohenzollern state building in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At the close of the seventeenth century, Brandenburg-Prussia was a conglomeration of distinct and physically separate territories that stretched from the Rhine River in the West of Germany to the Memel River far to the East. Some impression of the distances involved is conveyed by the fact that Königsberg, the leading city of East Prussia, is today Kaliningrad which lies close to the Baltic Sea in the territory of the former Soviet Union. What made this situation particularly complex and potentially troublesome for the Hohenzollern rulers was that each block of territory had its own system of government, representative institutions, political traditions, legal system, dialects and even languages, and existing and long-established authorities. These states within a state successfully opposed almost all attempts until the eighteenth century by the Hohenzollern ruler to impose his will on their territory and especially anything approaching a unified administration which covered all the dynasty's possessions and made them a single political body overseen by the Hohenzollern ruler.¹

¹See below, Chapters Two and Three, for a much fuller discussion of this point.

When Frederick William I ascended the throne in 1713, he set into motion a fresh series of reforms that were designed to establish Hohenzollern authority and to bind his widely-scattered territories together. The problems which this disunity posed the Hohenzollern rulers, and Frederick William I in particular, in implementing effective reforms were not unique to Brandenburg-Prussia. The Hohenzollerns ruled over a "composite state" of the kind that was normal in early modern Europe.² In fact, throughout Europe most states were composite states in the early modern era.³ Composite states were primarily monarchies comprised of separate territories which were not necessarily geographically continuous like those of England and Wales, Piedmont and Savoy, or Poland and Lithuania. Another state's territory or a sea often fragmented countries like those autonomous areas of the Habsburg monarchy in Spain, Italy and the Netherlands, those of the Hohenzollern monarchy of Brandenburg-Prussia or, indeed, England and Ireland.⁴ What is so important to remember in light of the example Koenigsberger gives, are the unusually vast distances between the various blocks of territory that comprised Brandenburg-Prussian state.

East Prussia was gradually elevated in status after the sixteenth century and eventually added the title of kingdom to the Hohenzollerns' multitude of titles in 1701. The recognition of East Prussia as a kingdom was a considerable achievement and largely due to the political astuteness of Frederick III/I and his advisors. The title of king brought [Frederick III/I

²See for example, J. H. Elliott, "A Europe of Composite Monarchies," *Past and Present*, no. 137, 1992, pp. 48-71 and H. G. Koenigsberger, "*Dominium Regale* or *Dominium Politicum et Regale*: Monarchies and Parliaments in Early Modern Europe," in *Politicians and Virtuosi*, H.G. Koenigsberger, editor, London: Hambledon Press, 1986, pp. 1-25.

³H. G. Koenigsberger, "*Dominium Regale* or *Dominium Politicum et Regale*," p. 12.

⁴*Ibid.*

and the subsequent] Hohenzollern rulers significantly more prestige amongst the other states of Europe. The reign of Frederick III/I has largely been ignored by historians, being regarded as insignificant in the growth of Brandenburg-Prussia as compared to the reigns of the Great Elector, Frederick William I, and Frederick the Great. The founding of a royal title in East Prussia by Frederick III/I and the way it was linked to the Hohenzollern state will be examined more fully in Chapter Three. Briefly, however, it was a variation of a union described as *aeque principaliter* whereby the territory maintained its distinctive laws, privileges, and was "treated as a distinct entity."⁵

As we shall see in the following chapter, this was the strategy pursued by the Great Elector after he gained complete sovereignty over East Prussia in 1660. After years of negotiations, an agreement was reached between the native elite in East Prussia and the Elector and Duke, Frederick William in 1663. In this period of East Prussian history we can further define the nature of the composite state by using the three periods in the formation of the German territorial state identified by Gerhard Oestreich.⁶ These, he asserts, are, firstly, the primitive or early form of *ducal* rule in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Here, there were essentially two levels of authority, one at the local level and the prince alone as ruler. Secondly, there was the first stage of the early modern state, which he calls the "finance state" of the sixteenth century. This is the stage in which we find East Prussia in the early-eighteenth century, and will examine this more

⁵J. H. Elliott, "A Europe of Composite Monarchies," pp. 52-53. Elliott quotes here Juan de Solórzano y Pereira who wrote about the idea of *aeque principaliter* in the seventeenth century. For sources on Juan de Solórzano y Pereira noted in Elliott's article, see p. 53, fn. 14.

⁶Gerhard Oestreich, *Geist und Gestalt des frühmodernen Staates*, pp. 277-289. See also, Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, pp. 187-198. The following discussion is based on this work and quotations are cited from the English edition translated by David McLintock.

closely in a moment. Thirdly, there was a later development of the "finance state" which was primarily to be found during the seventeenth century. Oestreich notes that this third stage which incorporates certain military, economic, and administrative developments, was never reached in several small German territories. It appears that East Prussia in the eighteenth century gradually resembles but does not fit completely into Oestreich's third type. Nevertheless, as we will see, there are elements that are consistent with its development into a "finance state."

In Oestreich's second stage of early modern state development, there is a connection between the word "state" and financial administration. In Brandenburg, the term "cameral state" emerged. The negotiations with the territorial estates who in East Prussia voted the duke money were increasingly important. This essentially amounted to the ruler seeking to get the Estates to levy taxes upon their inferiors. Should a tax become introduced or extended it was never to place the provincial ruling elite or other Junkers under any financial obligation. Rather, the burden fell upon the peasants in almost every case. The local administration in the Duchy (and later Kingdom after 1701) was controlled by the native Prussian authorities, who were responsible for collecting the taxes voted by the Estates. There was no princely or other central authority in East Prussia to ensure the financial obligations were met after the Hohenzollern ruler secured their assent. Otto Hintze considered this a form of "state" administration. The collection of taxes was exacted by "organs not directly responsible to or exclusively dependent upon state authority."⁷ In other words, there was an informal institution that carried out much of the day-to-day operation of financial administration at the local level. Moreover, such

⁷As quoted by Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, p. 192. Oestreich does not provide the precise citation from Hintze's writings.

administrators were not under the authority of the central administration of the Hohenzollern ruler but rather, the native corporate structures of the province. The provincial elite were ultimately in control of finances, being responsible not only for tax collection but also, for transferring the revenues to the Hohenzollern duke. This system of administrative authority existed in East Prussia until the early eighteenth century.

Furthermore, financial administration and authority was not all that the East Prussian Estates controlled. They also were responsible for affairs of justice. East Prussia for example, had its own code of laws and legal system. The highest court of appeals in the territory was in the hands of the established elites. There was, for example, no way to appeal a legal decision outside East Prussia or to even the courts of the Holy Roman Empire as was possible in other Hohenzollern territories. The policies for education and religion were also controlled by the East Prussian institutions. These are further examples of areas of policy which Oestreich finds characteristic of the second stage of state development. At the time of Frederick William I's accession in 1713, East Prussians exercised a considerable extent of self-government. This situation was replicated in varying degrees in the other Hohenzollern territories, as throughout Europe.

Oestreich notes that in the sixteenth century this level of autonomy was in decline across much of Europe. It survived, however, for more than a century in East Prussia. The reasons for this provide another theme in this study. As we shall see, in the early eighteenth century, the Junkers of East Prussia retained their own local administration and legal structures, which they still dominated. The endurance of the Kingdom's native elite ^{was} in a period when other, more central, authorities were beginning to emerge. Therefore, one of the patterns we will encounter is that of parallel institutions. That is, the authority and institutions of King Frederick William I existed side-by-side with the rule of the East Prussian native

authorities. At times their aims could be identified, but most often they were not. This study will investigate the degree to which informal, non-institutional methods were used in military administration during in the eighteenth century.⁸

Subsequent chapters will explore how the manner in which the Kingdom was ruled came to be challenged by the King: something that marked a fundamental change in the direction and attitude of Berlin toward the Kingdom. Prior to this change in status in 1701, East Prussia was an important source of dynastic prestige and to a lesser degree resources. Thereafter, its importance was greatly enhanced because of the royal title and became the basis of Brandenburg-Prussian prestige and power, especially for Frederick William I: this is key to this study as the second King tried to increase control over the Kingdom. The new status meant that the territory gave increased prestige and significance in both domestic and foreign affairs. For the King, no longer could he accept such an independently-governed territory that literally was the holder of his crown. The Hohenzollerns would not be considered kings with a semi-independent kingdom but rather, there would exist a kingdom ruled by their king. This would have significant consequences for the Hohenzollern influence in that part of Europe especially with Poland, Sweden, and other Baltic states.⁹ Moreover, for much of the first half of the eighteenth century, East Prussia

⁸Gerhard Oestreich, *Geist und Gestalt des frühmodernen Staates*, p. 286. Oestreich notes, however, the following: "Aber eine gleichwertige eigene ständische Verwaltung für das Militär wie früher für das ältere Schuldenwesen entstand nirgends." I believe Oestreich is correct in stating that a provincial administration led by the Estates never emerged for larger issues of the military. It should be noted that this is part of his third and final type of state development. However, this issue will be examined further in Chapter Seven.

⁹Sir Richard Lodge, *Great Britain & Prussia in the Eighteenth Century: Being the Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford, Lent Term, 1922*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923, pp. 6-28.

was in poor condition and Frederick William I strove to remedy this situation for religious, economic and political reasons.

Overcoming the physical separation was a crucial factor in the emergence as a great power of Brandenburg–Prussia, which remained a composite state throughout much of the eighteenth century. This more than anything else, is what makes its development so unique in early modern Europe. The Hohenzollern name and the ruling dynasty were all that linked the territories together, even as late as 1713. It is remarkable that this dynastic link not only survived as long as it did but actually developed by the mid–eighteenth century into an assortment of territories ruled over by a more or less centralised administration based in Brandenburg’s capital, Berlin, which emerged as the nucleus of Hohenzollern authority.

A message sent from Berlin to Königsberg, for example, normally took about seven days. Should a reply have been necessary, then this was at least another week to be received. This limited Berlin’s inability to react quickly and thus restricted the degree of control which the Hohenzollern ruler could exert. It also strengthened the independence in administrative matters of the established authorities within East Prussia by maintaining the relative isolation.¹⁰

One of the factors mentioned earlier was the various language barriers that existed in East Prussia. It would seem that the peasant population primarily spoke either Polish or Lithuanian as their mother tongue. German was a second language, known by few peasants. All official business, however, was conducted in German. The East Prussian Junkers appear to have spoken German although they certainly must have known some Polish and Lithuanian like the peasant population. All of this

¹⁰See, for example, Chapter 4.

is exactly as would be expected with the Slavic origins of the peasant population and then the imposition of Teutonic ruling caste in the region.

The Kingdom quickly rose in prominence within Brandenburg-Prussia after 1701. East Prussia was separated from the core Hohenzollern territory of Brandenburg by several hundred miles of Polish territory. The new Kingdom was approximately 3145 square miles in size and this was only some 117 square miles smaller than electoral Brandenburg and the Mark which made up the entire territory of Brandenburg.¹¹ By the end of Frederick III/I's reign in 1713, after the devastating plague of 1709-10, the East Prussian population of approximately 440,000 slightly out-numbered that of Brandenburg.¹² In the late seventeenth century the population had been approximately 400,000 or about thirty people per square mile.¹³ The growth of the territory was significantly hampered given the devastating impact of plague in 1709/10. As this was a significant event in the history of this period for East Prussia, this will be the subject of further detailed study in a subsequent chapter, as well as providing an important theme throughout this entire study.

¹¹Schmoller, "Die Verwaltung Ostpreussens unter Friedrich Wilhelm I," p. 47. Schmoller states that East Prussia was approximately 672 Prussian square miles which was approximately 25 Prussian square miles smaller than the electorate Brandenburg and the Mark. F. L. Carsten, The Origins of Prussia, Oxford: Oxford University Press (Clarendon), 1954, p. 202. East Prussia had approximately 600 people per Prussian square mile. There were approximately 2,700 homes. Franz Engel, compiler, Tabellen alter Münzen, Maße und Gewichte zum Gebrauch für Archivbenutzer, Schaumburger Studien, Im Auftrage der Historischen Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Schaumburg, Rinteln: Verlag C. Bösendahl, Heft 9, 1965. Engel states that one Prussian mile equals 7532 meters (4.6801 miles).

¹²Carsten, The Origins of Prussia, p. 202.

¹³Population figure (400,000) from Schmoller, "Die Verwaltung Ostpreussens unter Friedrich Wilhelm I," p. 66. Also in, Carsten, The Origins of Prussia, p. 202; Square mile ratio (600) from Gustav Schmoller, Umriss und Untersuchungen zur Verfassungs-, Verwaltungs- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte besonders des preussischen Staates im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert, Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1898, pp. 570.

Land and Agriculture

By the early eighteenth century, East Prussia, was a relatively poor, overwhelmingly agrarian region which exported grain and grain-based products through its principal port, Königsberg, and to a much lesser extent, Memel in the far north, still the only sizeable ports and towns. The nature of agrarian production in the Kingdom determined its prosperity and also its social structures.

Land management was one key element in the East Prussian economy, based as it was upon agriculture. The quality of the soil was both critical and a significant limitation. Parts of East Prussia had marginally better quality soil than Brandenburg, though whether this was true of the inland regions of the Kingdom is problematical. It is important to remember, however, that most of East Prussia lay north of the 54th parallel and thus farther north than any other portion of the Hohenzollern lands except for some parts of Pomerania and the Mark Brandenburg.¹⁴ This meant that the growing season in East Prussia was far shorter. Additionally, the soil was clay based and when planting took place in the spring, "it could change in a very short period of time from an impassable mire to a brickhard surface impervious to the plough."¹⁵ James Roth, in his dissertation, has shown through the use of archival material from later in the eighteenth century, that although rainfall was often good in the

¹⁴Roth, "The East Prussian Domaenenpaechter in the Eighteenth Century," p. 36. Roth, however, does not account for Pomerania although it clearly was farther north.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 36.

Northeast of the Kingdom, there was inadequate irrigation.¹⁶ It appears as though adequate systems to irrigate the land were not developed until later. Most other areas of East Prussia had more mixed soil and land conditions. The Masurian lake district, in the South-East of the province, was dominated by swamps, while in other regions the soil contained a high concentration of sand.¹⁷ East Prussia was in need of an infrastructure program if these conditions for agricultural production were to be improved. The Hohenzollerns were the only ones who could reasonably finance such a program but this was never given consistently high enough priority to re-direct capital and efforts in this direction.

In general, both farming and commerce remained distinctly primitive in the first half of the eighteenth century. It was probable, for example, that fruit was scarce except in areas open to trade routes. Fruits and vegetables were not grown in East Prussia and there were in most areas no windmills or watermills and this meant that a staple like corn was still being ground by hand using stones.¹⁸

The northern regions of the Kingdom were able to take advantage of a transportation infrastructure that had developed in the seventeenth century along with Königsberg's Baltic trade, but only if the weather was

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹⁸Schmoller, "Die Verwaltung Ostpreussens unter Friedrich Wilhelm I," pp. 48-49. Schmoller's assertion about the absence of fruits and vegetables, however, does not appear probable as it once did. For example, Karin Friedrich has recently quoted Hieronymus Roth, a seventeenth-century native East Prussian opposed to Hohenzollern influences, who retorted in 1660 that Poland was willing to give the East Prussians to the Hohenzollerns without much thought as if they were "like apples and pears." Although one may not be able to adequately argue from Hieronymus Roth's statement that fruits were not held to be as scarce as Schmoller suggests they would have been, one can at least argue that they were not completely absent from East Prussian commerce and life. See Karin Friedrich, "The Other Prussia," vol. 2, p. 461. Schmoller, however, probably underestimated the number of windmills and watermills as well as the ability of the East Prussians to grow vegetables. Nonetheless, it was likely that improvements were needed.

good and the crops were not ruined by the severe Baltic storms.¹⁹ Even with this possibility, bringing goods to market was extremely difficult and at times, impossible. The backwardness of transportation routes and the lack of adequate communications continued to be apparent in the eighteenth century. The importance of this consideration will be apparent throughout this study. As we shall see in subsequent chapters communication between various authorities was slow.

During the reign of Frederick William I considerable efforts were made to remedy this situation. Two improvements in particular brought about some improvement in the infrastructure, although this remained rather backward. First, the primary rivers that flowed into the Baltic Sea, namely the Pregel and *Vistula*, were made more navigable by dredging and widening and, secondly, locks were built at appropriate locations.²⁰ Furthermore, a system of rafts to help move materials down rivers were used. The situation was improved but at a tremendous cost for the King. Another area, however, that continued to need improvement in the early eighteenth century was timber and timber trade. Frederick William I increased the exploitation of the royal forests but this was not enough, likely in part, due to the continued lack of adequate infrastructure. In addition, the King took initiatives to improve the paths which were the primary land transportation routes. According to Schmoller, the King issued an edict on 30 August 1720 providing for the maintenance of such paths which was arguably just as important as the initial clearing and building of such routes.²¹ This went far in allowing East Prussians to develop postal routes

¹⁹Roth, "The East Prussian Domaenenpaechter in the Eighteenth Century," p. 36.

²⁰For a brief account, see Schmoller, "Die Verwaltung Ostpreussens unter Friedrich Wilhelm I," p. 63.

²¹*Ibid.*

with regular deliveries as well as improved trade routes. For the King, he now had the ability to intervene more directly in people's daily lives although this remained limited. The *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*, the only royal institution in the Kingdom with any tangible authority at his accession was now better able to ensure tax collection was received from more people. In addition, butter and livestock deliveries were able to be made for export to Brandenburg, for instance. Flax was once again being produced and at a level that was marketable. These improvements to the infrastructure, however, were not enough. New centres of trade with more production were critical to the long-term survivability of the inland areas of the province, for example, many areas outside of Königsberg. One step the King took was to promote villages that had commercial growth potential. Discussions began in Berlin among the King's top advisors in 1722 about what should be done to improve this situation. Several East Prussian villages were promoted to new status in 1722, namely, Tapiau, Ragnit, Biala, and Stallupöhnen. Others would be added to this list in the following years: Pillkallen in 1724, and Gumbinnen and Schirwindt in 1725. The theory was that if smaller trade zones were created they would promote local and even regional trade in crafts, agriculture, and other forms of commerce with the area surrounding the larger village or town. This, however, failed and often the area surrounding the town which was promoted was unable to be sustained.²² Furthermore, the administration of the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* was re-organised, as ^{we} will see in subsequent chapters, into two departments. One continued to be run from Königsberg and the other, was based in Gumbinnen and catered to the eastern districts which were

²²Michael North, "Miasto, domena i okolice w Prusach Książęcych (Na przykładzie miasta i domeny Ostróda w XVI i XVII w.)," *Zapiski Historyczne*, vol. 52:1, 1987, pp. 69-78. This is based upon figures cited within the article as well as the German language summary provided following the article.

still unable to recover from the devastating plague that began in 1709. In support of these last reforms, hundreds of homes were built, trades and professions were supported, new citizens were invited, most notably the Salzburg Protestants in 1732. All of this was part of what is known as the rebuilding of East Prussia, the so-called *Retablissement*. Although the entire reform effort cannot be considered a failure, it was not a success. The lack of an adequate infrastructure meant that neither agriculture or industry could thrive.

With the decline of East Prussia's economic condition yet maintenance of its remarkably strong social structures, the Hohenzollerns attempted to alter these conditions and the social *status quo*. The reform attempts begun primarily after 1640 formed the basis for the eighteenth-century *Polizeistaat* and will be examined next during the reign of Frederick William I's grandfather, Frederick William, the Great Elector.

Landownership and the Domain Lands

After its spectacular sixteenth-century prosperity, East Prussia gradually went into economic decline, primarily with respect to its grain trade during the reign of the Great Elector. A majority of the land in the Kingdom was royal domain. That is to say, it was directly owned and controlled by the Hohenzollerns themselves, who either farmed it directly or leased it out. In the early eighteenth century, over half of the entire area of East Prussia was royal domain.²³ The very large amounts of land controlled by the Hohenzollerns was the most important difference between this territory and the other parts of Brandenburg-Prussia.²⁴ Revenue from the domain was critical to Hohenzollern income and, unlike many other European rulers, the ruling family was actually able to enlarge their royal domains during this period. As we shall see, this was achieved largely through measures undertaken by Frederick William I that brought back under Hohenzollern control the many farmsteads that had been annexed over the years by local Junkers. Although most early modern European rulers had significant lands of their own, which they farmed or leased out, the Hohenzollerns had an exceptional amount of domain lands. These estates were scattered throughout their territories, but were especially numerous and significant in the Kingdom.

²³Roth, "The East Prussian Domaenenpaechter in the Eighteenth Century," p. 19. Schmoller, however, states that domain lands constituted roughly one-third of the total East Prussian territory, "Die Verwaltung Ostpreussens unter Friedrich Wilhelm I," p. 44. This is a different figure than used by Roth who notes the percentage was as high as one-half. See below. In addition, see Hartmut Harnisch and Gerhard Heitz, editors, Deutsche Agrargeschichte des Spätfuedalismus, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1986.

²⁴Roth, "The East Prussian Domaenenpaechter in the Eighteenth Century," p. 19.

The East Prussian domain farm is one example where this decline was felt most strongly. "Ducal management of the domain," as Roth points out, "was haphazard and inconsistent."²⁵ The region's productivity varied dramatically throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and has been attributed in large part to ineffective and inadequate administration on the part of the Hohenzollerns at the local level to oversee the royal domain farms. In short, the domain lands were underutilised and ineffectively managed.²⁶ This was one of the few areas over which the Hohenzollerns had administrative control on the local level in East Prussia. Added taxation, for example, was also seen during periods of war in towns and on farms which made life for East Prussian peasants particularly difficult.²⁷ Plague, famine, war, and the billeting of troops severely hampered local lives as well. By 1684, one in ten East Prussian land holdings were abandoned and Königsberg, although exempt from many of the taxes levied by the Great Elector, saw port tolls and duties consistently raised to the point where port activity moved away from Königsberg and westward to Danzig and Riga.²⁸ In 1630, for example, some 400 ships sailed westwards from Königsberg but twenty years later, the number of ships sailing out from the port had fallen by half to around 200.²⁹

²⁵Ibid., p. 20.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Francis Carsten, Geschichte der preußischen Junker, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988, pp. 37-39

²⁸For a general discussion of the rise of East Prussia's ports in the sixteenth century, see Stanisław Gierszewski, "Port w Królewcu - z dziejów jego zaplecza w XVI-XVII wieku," *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie*, vol. 199:1, 1993, pp. 53-60 and Zenon Guldon and Jacek Wijaczka, "Związki handlowe ziem litewskich i białoruskich z Królewcem w świetle rejestrów celnych komory grodzieńskiej z lat 1600-1605," *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie*, vol. 199:1, 1993, pp. 21-31. This is based upon the English language summaries provided in *Acta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 70, 1994, pp. 201 and 202. See also, Carsten, The Origins of Prussia, p. 226.

²⁹Ibid.

Königsberg, and to a lesser extent, Memel were East Prussia's two towns of any size and importance. But East Prussia, like the Brandenburg heartland of the Hohenzollern monarchy, was overwhelmingly rural and agrarian. Broadly speaking, there were three types of land ownership in East Prussia. The west of the province was primarily in the direct control of the landed nobility, known as the Junkers (though this designation would finally become established only during the nineteenth century). Sprinkled throughout the Kingdom were a number of independent and economically prosperous free peasants or *Cölmer*, the descendants of earlier colonists, who owned their own land or held it on favourable leases; this group held estates amounting to approximately 15 per cent of the Kingdom.³⁰ The royal domain lands described a moment ago constituted a majority of the agricultural land in East Prussia and was directly owned and controlled by the Hohenzollerns.

During the eighteenth century, the domains were vigorously defended by the Hohenzollerns, against predatory noblemen and burgers, underlining their importance. On 13 August 1713, shortly after his accession, Frederick William I issued his famous declaration concerning the inalienability and indivisibility of royal lands. This was essentially a declaration of intent, unifying on paper all the Hohenzollern territories. The achievement of real consolidation and unification would have to wait for further reforms and another Hohenzollern ruler.

Throughout much of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it appears clear that East Prussian estates had been alienated to the point where the Great Elector calculated, in 1656, that the loss in revenue from these leased domains was at 1.6 million talers.³¹ Roth used the term

³⁰Ibid., p. 161.

³¹Hans-Helmut Wächter, "Ostpreußische Domänenvorwerke im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert." *Jahrbuch der Albertus-Universität Königsberg* Supplement 19, 1958, pp. 169 and

“pawned”, which seems unlikely in its literal sense. More probably these lands were leased out on extremely advantageous terms to Junker creditors. Nonetheless, one historian has noted that poor lending practices amounted to roughly one-half of the duke Albrecht’s debts in the mid-sixteenth century.³² Any record of the transaction was often destroyed or otherwise lost. Generations of informal leases that changed hands over the course of time combined with poor record keeping and communication on the part of the individuals involved or authorities in charge of record maintenance contributed to the loss of a large number of domains which had been originally under direct supervision of the Hohenzollerns. The land then came into the possession of the Junker. Nevertheless, this is generally viewed by historians as an example of how the Hohenzollerns were willing to risk long-term financial stability and gain for immediate and short-term gain that came with immediate cash but little else. The Great Elector was the first to attempt to reverse this situation during the second half of his reign. It was, however, Frederick William I who made the greatest change and took a consistent approach which emphasised more the long-term productivity of the royal domains as a source of income to the crown.³³

In addition, in the Kingdom of East Prussia, Frederick William I sought to reclaim the many acres of land that had slipped into private hands over the years. At the same time, the King implemented measures to maximise revenue from the domains, as Roth demonstrates, by introducing more effective farming techniques and structured domain estate leases. Not

176. Cited in Roth, “The East Prussian Domaenenpaechter in the Eighteenth Century,” p. 31, fns. 38 and 39. This actually was down from earlier in the century when losses were calculated to be as high as 2 million talers.

³²Igor Kąkolewski, “Nadużycia i korupcja w administracji Prus Książęcych w połowie XVI wieku,” *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie*, vol. 1, 1993, pp. 11-20. This is based upon the English language summary provided in *Acta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 70, 1994, p. 203.

³³This is the focus of Roth’s dissertation.

only were improvements made to farming techniques and equipment used but the King also instituted measures to lease domain estates only to qualified estate managers or so-called *General-Domänenpächter*.³⁴

³⁴See Chapter 5, pp. 207-13.

Gutsherrschaft and Peasant Society

In the overwhelmingly agrarian Kingdom of East Prussia, the dominant social and agricultural system was that of *Gutsherrschaft*. This was "a system of market-orientated demesne farming based on serf labour."³⁵ *Gutsherrschaft* was the social structure of Junker authority on the domain and other estates in East Prussia from the sixteenth century onwards. It provided the paternalistic framework on Junker estates and ducal lands where 80 per cent of the peasants lived.³⁶ This had the effect of giving the estates considerable autonomy within the larger East Prussian state — yet not to the extreme that many historians have suggested. On their estates, the Junkers had authority over land, legal institutions and authorities, and

³⁵Edgar Melton, "The Prussian Junkers, 1600-1786," in H. M. Scott, editor, The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries vol. 2, Northern, Central and Eastern Europe, London: Longman, 1995, p. 76. This section is primarily based upon Melton's work, James Roth's dissertation cited earlier, and the following: Edgar Melton, "Gutsherrschaft, in East Elbian Germany and Livonia, 1500-1800: A Critique of the Model." *Central European History*, vol. 21:4, 1988, pp. 315-349; Wilhelm Guddat, "Die Entstehung und Entwicklung der Privaten Grundherrschaften in den Ämtern Brandenburg und Balga (Ostpreussen)," Wissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Geschichte und Landeskunde Ost-Mitteleuropas. Im auftrage des Johann Gottfried Herder-Instituts, Hans-Jürgen Karp, editor, Vol. 96, Marburg/Lahn: J. G. Herder-Institut, 1975; William W Hagen. "Seventeenth-Century Crisis in Brandenburg: The Thirty Years' War, the Destabilization of Serfdom, and the Rise of Absolutism." *American Historical Review*, vol. 94:2, 1989, pp. 302-335; Harnisch and Heitz, Deutsche Agrargeschichte des Spätfudalismus; Friedrich-Wilhelm Henning. "Bauernwirtschaft und bauerneindommen in Ostpreussen im 18. Jahrhundert." *Jahrbuch der Albertus-Universität Königsberg*, Beihefte XXX, 1969; Arthur Kern, "Beiträge zur Agrargeschichte Ostpreußens." *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preußischen Geschichte*, vol. 14, 1901, pp. 151-258; H. Plehn, "Zur Geschichte der Agrarverfassung von Ost- und West-preussen," *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preußischen Geschichte*, vols. 17/18, 1904/1905 and; Hans-Helmut Wächter, "Ostpreußische Domänenvorwerke im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert," *Jahrbuch der Albertus-Universität Königsberg*, Supplement 19, 1958, pp. 1-186.

³⁶Melton, "Gutsherrschaft in East Elbian Germany and Livonia, 1500-1800," p. 341.

general "police" functions (of the wider sense of the word) and "constituted a 'private law state' *vis-à-vis* the dynastic 'public law state.'" ³⁷

In general, the East Prussian nobility was a stratified nobility: at its apex stood a relatively small elite of titled families, *Grafenfamilien*, then the middling nobles and finally the numerically-preponderant poor Junkers who sometimes were little different from the peasants beside whom they worked in the fields. The *Grafenfamilien*, "the families of the counts and earls," held considerable tracts of land and dominated political office in East Prussia.³⁸ However, the majority of the nobility could not be counted among this elite. They often worked the land personally and sometimes held no land at all. In some cases they served as lesser officials in the provincial government especially at the local level.

Although it has been the historical tradition to consider *Gutsherrschaft* as a variation or form of *Grundherrschaft*, the agricultural institution found in Western Europe where the only possessions overseen by the Hohenzollerns were the Westphalian territories, a more recent study by Heinrich Kaak has pointed out that the two forms were actually more independent than previously considered and that each formed separate and varied traditions.³⁹ One of the primary reasons for this was the differences in legal status of the peasants who worked the farms. In general, it may be stated that where peasant labour was in higher demand, such as in East Prussia,

³⁷Rosenberg, *Bureaucracy, Aristocracy and Autocracy*, p. 43.

³⁸Koch, *A History of Prussia*, p. 47

³⁹Heinrich Kaak, *Die Gutsherrschaft: Theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Agrarwesen im oselbischen Raum*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991. Kaak follows the discussion from the nineteenth century through the primary works of the period through to the present day. See also, Henning Borcke-Stargardt, "Grundherrschaft-Gutswirtschaft. Ein Beitrag zur Agrargeschichte," *Jahrbuch der Albertus-Universität Königsberg/Pr.*, Würzburg: Holzner Verlag, Vol. 10, 1960, pp. 176-212.

the legal status of peasants was less restrictive and more closely in line with *Gutsherrschaft*.⁴⁰

There were two fundamental types of *Gutsherrschaft* which could be found in East Prussia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. First, there was personal serfdom, or *Leibeigenschaft*, which existed only in southern and eastern regions of the Kingdom. These peasants were tied to an estate unless given permission to leave by the landlord. Melton contends that there were two types of "unfree" peasants, those in hereditary servitude and those in personal serfdom, "the differences between these two categories," he notes, "are not entirely clear."⁴¹

There were also free peasants. In fact, approximately forty percent may have been free peasants, i. e., not subject to serfdom. These peasants were given the right to marry, enter into fixed term land leases with landlords, to pursue legal action, among others. In other areas of East Prussia, however, peasants were not subject to personal serfdom but rather, a form of servitude to their plot of land, known as *Untertänigkeit*. *Untertänigkeit* was not unique to East Prussia but this type of servitude was of a harsher variety as it became hereditary, or so-called *Erbuntertänigkeit*. As Edgar Melton notes, "the peasant who occupied a servile farmstead in East Prussia or Pomerania might remain personally free, but children born on that farmstead earned hereditary servility, which meant that they could not leave the estate without permission of the seignior."⁴² Therefore,

⁴⁰Hartmut Harnisch, "Peasants and Markets: The Background to the Agrarian Reforms in Feudal Prussia East of the Elbe, 1760-1807," translated by Bernd Feldmann, Richard J. Evans, and William W. Hagen, in *The German Peasantry: Conflict and Community in Rural Society from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*, Richard J. Evans and W. R. Lee, editors, New York: St. Martin's Press, pp. 37-70.

⁴¹Melton, "Gutsherrschaft in East Elbian Germany and Livonia, 1500-1800," pp. 332-333.

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 323.

Gutsherrschaft forced a majority of peasants into some form of servitude but was by no means universal.

The form of East Prussian *Gutsherrschaft* probably was less oppressive than in other areas of Eastern Europe due in part to the consistent and relatively low economic position of the majority of East Prussian Junkers in the early eighteenth century. This was principally because the peasant labourers on noble estates in the Kingdom were able to negotiate better contracts than in other parts of the region due to a shortage of labour and were able to move to another farmstead after their labour contract expired although this number remained low. Many historians have noted the ways in which landlords attempted to tie peasants to their estates, but it appears that such attempts were unsuccessful in the seventeenth century and were not attempted in the eighteenth century. In addition, East Prussian agriculture remained extremely varied throughout the early modern period. Often, the Junkers themselves were obliged to carry out the estate work responsibilities, since they were unable to hire labourers, and a chronic shortage of labour persisted in the Kingdom until the late eighteenth century. East Prussia was struck by population losses, from the Northern War of 1655-60 to the plague of 1709/10, and this was the principal reason for the shortage of labour. Many impoverished East Prussian Junkers did not have a significantly higher economic standing than many of the peasants. The labourers also often held significant estate responsibilities in combination with lord of the estate such as hiring between two and six labourers as well as maintaining "large, well-stocked farmsteads, averaging sixty acres, with twenty head of livestock."⁴³

Nevertheless, it should be noted that over 60 per cent of the rural population were landless servants and farmworkers in East Prussia. Even

⁴³Ibid., p. 105.

among these peasants, who were under the supervision of elites, there was professional and social stratification. On this point, Edgar Melton writes that "the peasant with his farmstead occupied a pivotal position within the system of *Gutsherrschaft*, but it was the position of a labour broker, not a labourer."⁴⁴ That is, some peasants were acting as the intermediary between the Junker and labourer. They carried out the administration of the day-to-day operation of the estate for the Junker or for himself in some cases. The Kingdom, for example, had fourteen categories for hired hands, "from plough team leaders at the top, to serving maids and stable hands at the bottom," notes Edgar Melton.⁴⁵ In other words, there existed in East Prussia a complex series of hierarchical relationships that began at an estate's stable and concluded in the provincial government or so-called *Regierung*, and even Frederick William I's private *Kammer*. There was a mutual interdependence and together comprised a linked structure that Frederick William I was hard pressed to alter.

Each peasant on an East Prussian estate was normally allotted, on average, 84 acres of arable land a considerable amount in this period.⁴⁶ This meant that in return for the land allowance, resident peasants owed the estate Junker anywhere from one to ten days of work on the estate per week. If ten days per week were owed to the Junker then the peasant was required to provide at least one more worker. Such workers came to be hired by the resident peasant farmers. These work loads and hiring of additional labourers has given historians significant insight into the peasant social

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*

⁴⁶Friedrich-Wilhelm Henning, *Dienste und Abgaben der Bauern im 18. Jahrhundert*. Stuttgart: G. Fischer, 1969, pp. 16-17. Cited by Melton, "The Prussian Junkers," p. 331. Melton cites 85 acres or about 2 Flemish hides (*Hufen*) which converts to approximately 17 hectares.

structure as the peasant became a "labor broker." This, then, was an additional layer of farm management under the authority of the resident peasant. Almost all estates in East Prussia relied on hired hands during the first half of the eighteenth century. The number of acres and days of service provided varied across the Hohenzollern lands which the following table demonstrates.⁴⁷

Table 1.1
Average Farmstead Acres and Required Days of Service in the Eighteenth Century

Territory	Avg. Acres	Days of Service to be provided by the estate peasant/ other to be provided	other
Brandenburg	84	2-3 days per week	n/a
East Holstein	60	4 workers every day/2 teams of horses	Avg. of 13 horses per farmstead
East Prussia	84	1-10 days per week	n/a
Estonia	50	4 days per week	3-4 horses and 6-7 cows
Mecklenburg	55	3 workers/2 teams of horses	2-4 horses and 3-9 oxen
Swedish Pomerania	60	3-4 days per week/ but often 5-6 days per week	7-8 horses and 3-4 oxen

Although it is difficult to generalise about the East Prussian agrarian social structure, a few important and relevant points can be made. There was one fundamental factor that differentiated East Prussian peasants from one another, namely whether or not they occupied their own land.

Landless peasants made up a considerable proportion of the overall peasant population and often worked as hired hands directly for estate Junkers as well as far richer land holding peasants, as discussed earlier. Before about 1725, one-third of the estates in East Prussia relied on landless hired workers where the Junker employed them directly. It seems likely

⁴⁷Ibid.

that the number of hired hands increased during the rest of the eighteenth century.

Hired hands generally would work under one year contracts after which they were free to leave or, if both parties agreed, stay on by signing another contract. The types of jobs varied enormously and in turn formed a social hierarchy within the landless peasant population, from serving maids up to ploughmen. Peasant society was founded on legal contractual agreements, though the full extent to which the rule of law prevailed is difficult to determine. The numerous levels within peasant society meant there was a degree of social mobility although it is difficult to measure this with any precision. The upper levels of the landless farm workers were similar, if not the same as that of the peasant land holder. A small plot of land and quantity of seed was offered as a portion of the higher level wages and extended to approximately ten per cent of the East Prussian landless peasant population. Although a slightly different classification and wage scale existed throughout the Hohenzollern territories, it should be noted that in Brandenburg and Pomerania approximately 50 to 60 per cent of this population were small landholders.

In addition, migrant workers, *Tagelöhner*, played a significant role during seasonal harvests. These workers lived in the small East Prussian towns and largely subsisted on earnings from the annual harvests. These workers were an eighteenth-century form of today's migrant farm worker found in the United States. Earnings often came in the form of cash, or of payment-in-kind, which acted as insurance against rising prices for food, above all, bread. Yet, payment-in-kind hindered modern financial methods from developing, especially an entirely monetary economy.

Therefore, this form of *Gutsherrschaft*, as it existed in East Prussia, was a complex agricultural and social system. The effectiveness of free peasants who did not hire out for labour and those that did has been studied to some

degree. In general, a freeholder earned four times the net monetary income of an estate peasant. This was primarily due to the fact that the estate peasant had to hire labourers, pay higher taxes, pay higher rent and had to support a larger number of livestock. Yet, as Melton notes, "*net production was nearly twice as large on the farmstead of the seigniorial peasant as on that of the freedholder's.*"⁴⁸ The reason for this is basically that the estate peasant farmer had more to support and the free peasant had little incentive yet could produce half as much and earn four times what the estate peasant earned. The expenses of an estate-peasant, e. g., taxes, rent, and wages, were much higher than on the freeholder's, and the ability to support these shows that *Gutsherrschaft* was economically efficient.

Finally, *Gutsherrschaft* increased productivity of the estate. It also expanded the "wage labor force," thus making the estate peasant a critical component of the rural economy. The estate peasant produced more grain and hired more workers than anybody else. This is a critical factor because the estate peasant did not necessarily produce more for market reasons but rather, for his household. Edgar Melton believes that this argument significantly expands on the traditional interpretation of the supposed conflict between Junker and estate peasant. The estate peasant was in a position of authority not only over his household but also over hired labour and authority was diffused down the ranks of hired labour. It was actually the hired labourers who carried the largest burden of work on the estate. The manorial estates, then, were broken down into smaller private holdings where as an East Prussian Junker noted in the early eighteenth century, "the peasant stands on his farmstead like the steward of a small estate."⁴⁹

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 342

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 345.

Most of Europe's peasants in the eighteenth century paid cash toward rent instead of labour obligations. Much of Eastern Europe developed differently than Western Europe and increasingly tied the peasant closer to the estate until emancipation in the nineteenth century — if not *Gutsherrschaft* itself, than a variation of it.

The Urban Sector

The Kingdom's only major town was Königsberg with a population in this period was between 30,000 and 40,000, which made it much more populated than Berlin which had around 10,000 to 12,000 people.⁵⁰ Danzig, in neighbouring Polish Prussia, however, was even larger with around 50,000 people.⁵¹ Königsberg, the East Prussian capital, emerged at an early stage as the duchy's principal port and administrative centre. East Prussia's only other town of any size was another port, Memel. Around 1700, there were only six other East Prussian towns with populations exceeding 500 people.⁵² Moreover, there were only about two dozen towns with populations over 500 in the corridor of territory between Königsberg and Berlin. There was no town over 500 people between Königsberg and Danzig while Danzig and Stettin were the only towns over 10,000 people between Berlin and Königsberg.⁵³ These numbers rise during the eighteenth century but primarily in East Prussia. Around 1800, East Prussia claimed about twenty-five towns with populations exceeding 500 people, a few of which

⁵⁰Gustav Schmoller, Preussische Verfassungs-, Verwaltungs- und Finanzgeschichte, Berlin: Verlag der Täglichen Rundschau, 1921, pp. 45-47. Also cited in Carsten, The Origins of Prussia, p. 203, fn. 3.

⁵¹Ibid. Carsten cites P. Simpson, Geschichte der Stadt Danzig, vol. 2, Danzig: A. W. Kaferman, 1913, p. 463, who estimates that the population of Danzig was 50,000 in the early seventeenth century and; A. Zimmermann, Versuch einer historischen Entwicklung der märkischen Städteverfassungen, vol. 3, Berlin: F. Dümmler (Trowitzsch und Sohn), 1837/40, pp. 93, 118, who notes Berlin had a population of no more than 10,000-12,000 people.

⁵²Erich Keyser and Heinz Stoob, editors, Deutsches Städtebuch. Handbuch städtischer Geschichte, 5 vols., Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1939 (reprint 1974). Cited in Jörn Sieglerschmidt, "Social and Economic Landscapes," in Germany: A New Social and Economic History, Vol. 2, 1630-1800, Sheilagh Ogilvie, editor, London: Arnold, p. 27.

⁵³Ibid.

ranged between 5,000 and 10,000 people. The population numbers between Berlin and Königsberg, however, do not appear to change to any significant degree.⁵⁴ Although the population increase in the Kingdom is discernible between 1700 and 1800 the rise never met the expectations of Frederick William I or his successors and much of the land remained under-utilised and staffed despite vigorous attempts by the Hohenzollerns at repopulation and agricultural reform throughout the century.

Importantly, Königsberg was politically quasi-democratic, at least by the standards of the seventeenth century. There were three constituent towns that made up Königsberg (Altstadt, Kneiphof, and Löbenicht), and were represented by three colleges of town aldermen, three courts, and the guilds and crafts, i.e., commons of each of the three towns. Each of the three constituent towns also had their own separate councils and other governmental bodies.⁵⁵ Essentially, these were oligarchies that were comprised of self-perpetuating groups of merchants that exercised control over most urban affairs. Decisions were based on majority vote with the minority vote having the "right of contradiction" and could bring their case before the East Prussian diet.⁵⁶ This arrangement allowed the burghers a great many privileges. Besides being wealthy, they were also politically influential and as Carsten notes, "did not hesitate to oppose the duke and the nobility as if they were an independent Estate."⁵⁷ Technically they only constituted part of the third Estate where they sat alongside the smaller towns. The fact that majority voting was used within the third Estate,

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 28-29.

⁵⁵Carsten, *The Origins of Prussia*, p. 203.

⁵⁶Hugo Rachel, *Der Grosse Kurfürst und die ostpreussischen Stände*, *Staats- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Forschungen* XXIV, no. 1, 1905, pp. 89-91; Carsten, *The Origins of Prussia*, p. 203.

⁵⁷Ibid.

however, meant that the smaller towns were often overruled due to their fewer numbers.⁵⁸ Königsberg's burghers, though, were not able to hold out during the more serious tax and revenue struggles which developed between the Hohenzollern nobility, and quickly became victims of this conflict.⁵⁹

During the sixteenth and parts of the seventeenth centuries, Königsberg's importance as a port in this part of the Baltic was second only to Danzig, which was by far the largest.⁶⁰ Königsberg developed a seaborne trade for the export of the major products of the area that principally comprised the hinterland of East Prussia but also included Prussian Lithuania and even north west Russia and Royal Prussia (Poland) as well as Byelorussia.⁶¹ The principal exports from the region included rye, hemp, flax, malt, tallow, wax, potash, livestock and amber.⁶² Products such as salt, herring, wine, tobacco, sugar, and spices were also imported through Königsberg.⁶³ This prosperous trade contributed greatly to the city's status and influence in the territory, though by the second half of the seventeenth century it was beginning to decline. Königsberg developed as a significant

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Hugo Rachel, *Der Große Kurfürst und die ostpreussischen Stände 1640-1688*, pp. 94-96. See also Carsten, *The Origins of Prussia*, p. 204.

⁶⁰Henning Graf von Borcke-Stargardt, "Grundherrschaft-Gutswirtschaft. Ein Beitrag zur Agrargeschichte," *Jahrbuch der Albertus-Universität Königsberg/Pr.*, vol. 10, Würzburg: Holzner Verlag, 1960, p. 176. Also noted in Carsten, *Origins of Prussia*, p. 202.

⁶¹See for example, Gierszewski, "Port w Królewcu - z dziejów jego zaplecza w XVI-XVII wieku," pp. 53-60.

⁶²Borcke-Stargardt, "Grundherrschaft-Gutswirtschaft. Ein Beitrag zur Agrargeschichte," p. 176; Guldon and Wijaczka, "Związki handlowe ziem litewskich i białoruskich z Królewcem w świetle rejestrów celnych komory grodzieńskiej z lat 1600-1605," pp. 21-31

⁶³Ibid.

counterweight to help balance the political influence of the nobility.⁶⁴ In the late seventeenth century it had over eighty different crafts or guilds.⁶⁵

Wheat was arguably the most critical crop for East Prussia throughout its history. As mentioned, the Junkers owned and ran their estates which essentially made them farmers or plantation owners. The link the Junkers had with wheat was important and in turn, an important link with the Hanseatic League. This region of Europe was a noteworthy corn and wheat producer. The port cities of Stettin in Pomerania, Danzig in Polish Prussia, Riga in Livonia, Königsberg and Memel, in East Prussia depended on this production and export trade.⁶⁶

⁶⁴Schmoller, "Die Verwaltung Ostpreussens unter Friedrich Wilhelm I," p. 44.

⁶⁵Ostpreussische Folianten, vol. 702, no. 114. Cited in Carsten, Origins of Prussia, p. 203.

⁶⁶Koch, A History of Prussia, p. 35.

CHAPTER 2

East Prussia and the Great Elector

The Link with the Hohenzollerns

The two generations which preceded Frederick William I's succession in 1713 had seen little effective challenge to the quasi-independent position of East Prussia within the Hohenzollern Monarchy. The dynasty in Berlin had not contested the traditional degree of self-government which the native elites had enjoyed, and this was to be one factor in the resistance which Frederick William I would subsequently encounter as he strove to extend his authority in the Kingdom. Berlin's control had at times been very limited indeed during the first century of Hohenzollern rule in East Prussia.

Historians acknowledge that one notable example of the state-building which occurred throughout Europe after the Thirty Years' War was provided by Frederick William of Hohenzollern (1640-1688), known as the "Great Elector".¹ In the aftermath of the war, Frederick William managed to develop foreign and domestic policies that enabled him to recover some political independence, build up a powerful army and shape his scattered and fragmented territories, which were spread out over eight hundred miles from Jülich West of the Rhine to East Prussia on the Baltic Sea, into a

¹See the standard biography, Ernst Oppenorth, Friedrich Wilhelm. Der Große Kurfürst von Brandenburg. Eine politische Biographie, two vols., Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1971-78.

stronger German state. Although Brandenburg–Prussia remained at best a minor state at Frederick William's death, he has been credited with laying the first foundations for its subsequent rise to great power status, which came about in the eighteenth century during the reign of Frederick the Great. Yet his achievements can too easily be exaggerated in light of Prussia's subsequent history. One should remember that fundamental to his significance is that he survived and kept the scattered territories together.

The Rule of the Teutonic Order

It is important to sketch some of the developments within the territory prior to the Great Elector.² The territory of East Prussia had only been a duchy of the Hohenzollern rulers of Brandenburg since 1618. Prior to that, as far back as the thirteenth century and under the control of the Knights of the crusading Teutonic Order, there had been a "German" influence since about the year 1225. The Order essentially had received the opportunity to conquer the land between the rivers Vistula and Memel without tax or any other burdens either to the Emperor or the Pope who authorised their conquest of expansion into the region. This was a small reward for the difficulties encountered in establishing control. There was an initial period of strong resistance to Christianity and to the rule of the Teutonic Order by the pagan Slavonic tribe of Prussians living there. By about the middle of the thirteenth century, however, the dominance of the Order in Prussia was apparent, although it was not secured for another half a century. It was the Teutonic Order that demanded complete submission of the former Prussian nobility to the point where many became serfs, while others were deported from their native villages. Feudal obligations were introduced and enforced as never before in the region. This situation provides the origins of the position of the peasantry and nobility in

²Neitmann, Klaus, "Die preußischen Stände und die Außenpolitik des Deutschen Ordens vom 1. Thorner Frieden bis zum Abfall des Preußischen Bundes (1411-1454)," in Ordensherrschaft, Stände und Stadtpolitik: Zur Entwicklung des Preußenlandes im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert, edited by Udo Arnold, Lüneburg: Verlag Nordostdeutsches Kulturwerk, 1985, pp. 27-79; Hartmut Boockmann, Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas: Ostpreußen und Westpreußen, Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1992; Christian Krollmann, Der deutsche Orden in Preussen, Elbing: Preussenverlag, 1935. These works form the basis of this section. See also Carsten, Origins of Prussia, Chapter 5 and Koch, A History of Prussia, Chapter 1, for a brief account.

subsequent centuries, as set out in the introduction to this study. It is important to remember that the socio-economic composition of the Teutonic Order was never completely clear. There was not, for example, the total domination of the nobility over the peasants, or the Order over church or state affairs inside Prussia. All were influential in varying degrees, with the exception of the native Prussian peasantry. Yet these divisions did not lead to internal conflict or strife of some kind. Instead, the Order managed to expand and increase its influence over Prussia. The Duchy was unique in the entire Baltic region for the degree of domination exercised by the all-powerful nobility. It was only in the fourteenth century that the Order emerged as the dominant authority over Prussia.

With the internal threat reduced a new and external danger emerged, that of the Christian powers, most notably Prussia's neighbour, Poland. The Grand Master of the Teutonic Order (*Hochmeister*), the highest official in the Order in the early fifteenth century, Ulrich von Jungingen, confronted the Poles and Lithuanians at the battle of Tannenberg on 15 July 1410.

Outnumbered almost two-to-one and using outmoded tactics on the battlefield, the Teutonic Knights suffered a disastrous defeat. This major loss was combined with the start of a recurring agricultural and economic decline that would last into the fifteenth century. The end result of these series of disasters was the inability of the Order to make promised payments to the Poles after Tannenberg.

In addition, the Order faced its most serious internal conflicts to date. In an agreement which was intended to quell all of the difficulties, the Order established the Estates, the so-called *Landesrat* in 1412. Its members were drawn exclusively from Prussia's urban and rural elite and primarily were charged to vote appropriate taxation in order to pay the Duchy's debts to the Poles. When this body was established, it was hoped that it would also alleviate some of the internal divisions starting to affect the Order's

coherence. Although the problems continued, and even worsened, the *Landesrat* survived in recognisable form into the eighteenth century as the Duchy's Estates. The territory, however, became divided in 1466. At the Peace of Thorn in October 1466, after the notably unsuccessful 'Thirteen Years' War' with Poland, the Order had ceded sovereignty over many areas to the Polish King. In particular, Poland received Pomerellia, the Kulmerland, Marienburg, the area surrounding Christburg and Elbing, as well as the Bishopric of Ermeland. The Order secured the impoverished and less productive areas of Pomesania and Marienwerder but most importantly, the significant block of territory of East Prussia. In addition, the leader of the Order, the Grand Master, was obligated to swear allegiance to the Polish King as the territory became a Polish suzerainty as a result of the settlement. For approximately the next forty-five years, there was a continual struggle for full sovereignty of East Prussia between the Order and Poland.

After the Margrave Albrecht of Hohenzollern was elected Grand Master in 1511, he refused to swear his allegiance to his uncle, the Polish King, John Sigismund. This was by far the strongest act of defiance by the Order since the war that ended in 1466. The resistance faltered, however, and by 1521 negotiations between the two sides began. During the following four year period, the settlement talks required Albrecht to travel to Germany where he came in contact with Luther, Erasmus, and other leaders of the Reformation.³ Albrecht's slow acceptance of the Reformation, which by this time had been spreading throughout East Prussia, meant the dissolution of the Order. One of the main objectives of Poland had been the

³Bernhard Lohse, "Albrecht von Brandenburg und Luther," in *Erzbischof Albrecht von Brandenburg (1490-1545): Ein Kirchen- und Reichsfürst der Frühen Neuzeit*, edited by Friedhelm Jürgensmeier, Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Josef Knecht, 1991, pp. 73-83; Peter Walter, "Albrecht von Brandenburg und Erasmus von Rotterdam," in *Erzbischof Albrecht von Brandenburg (1490-1545)*, pp. 102-116.

destruction of the Teutonic Order which meant there was now more latitude for compromise. The King of Poland proposed that in return for the dissolution of the Order, East Prussia would become a Polish duchy with Albrecht as its hereditary ruler. Although this was not acceptable to all the Knights of the Teutonic Order, it was the basis for the settlement that was adopted in April 1525.

This improved the political standing somewhat of both the former Grand Master, now "Duke of Prussia" and the territory in foreign affairs. It also gave significant new authority to the East Prussian elite to the point, one may argue, that they were directly involved in foreign policy objectives. This is also the start of the relationship between the Duchy's ruling elite and the King of Poland. The Estates could now state their grievances directly to the King which they would do not only under the Duke but also with future Hohenzollern rulers.

The Hohenzollerns took the title of Duke essentially by default and by the failure of heirs. Through a series of deaths and subsequent regencies, the Hohenzollern ruler of Brandenburg became regent, and then Duke of East Prussia from 1618 onwards. It was in this year that John Sigismund, Elector of Brandenburg, formally became sovereign ruler of East Prussia (as Duke). Therefore, in the reign of the Great Elector, there was still a sense of novelty about the links between East Prussia and Berlin, forged only a quarter century before. The independent minded Estates that we have seen develop, particularly during the sixteenth century, would play important part in the history of the territory for the next hundred years.

The Rule of the Great Elector

The Great Elector attempted to establish supremacy in his territories mainly through administrative means when he became the Hohenzollern ruler after his father, George William, died in 1640. Frederick William exerted influence by strengthening the role of the military and raising taxes — increasing his troops to 22,000 men, and securing in the principal territory of Brandenburg, in 1653, the right to raise taxes without the consent of the Diet. At first this was for six years but it became permanent, primarily due to a subsequent war between 1655-60. These years of conflict, the so-called 'War of the North' with Sweden and Poland as its largest combatants, were also important in the history of East Prussia. The Great Elector first fought in alliance with Sweden and defeated the Polish army in 1656 at the battle of Warsaw. Although he was a vassal of the Polish King, he recognised that he would probably lose East Prussia altogether should he fight on the side of Poland. Therefore, he aided Sweden and after victory was secured over Poland, he allowed the Swedish King, Charles X (Charles Gustavus) to use East Prussia as a Continental base from which to prepare for future battles. In addition, the Great Elector shared in the territories revenues much as he did with the former overlord, the King of Poland.⁴

When war broke out between Poland and Sweden again later in 1656, both sides were in need of Brandenburg-Prussia's support. It was in this second period of the war that Frederick William was able to negotiate for full sovereignty over East Prussia. Sweden agreed to the Great Elector's

⁴This was secured through the Treaty of Königsberg in January 1656.

demand in return for his support but complete recognition of his full sovereignty was not guaranteed by either Warsaw or Vienna. It was Imperial politics and Vienna's need for Frederick William's vote as Elector of Brandenburg in the Imperial election of 1657 that finally brought the Great Elector to have his army fight along side of the Polish King, John Casimir. The Habsburgs were able to exert sufficient pressure on the King of Poland that he finally agreed to recognise full and hereditary sovereignty of the Hohenzollerns over East Prussia. This was secured by the Treaty of Wehlau in September 1657. The war, however, ended with the Peace of Oliva in 1660. The Great Elector, although delighted about securing full sovereignty over East Prussia was less than pleased with the Oliva settlement which forced him to relinquish Vorpommern to Sweden.

Within East Prussia, however, Frederick William's efforts met with uneven success. Although his legal supremacy in these lands was formally recognised, *de facto* authority proved considerably more difficult to establish. East Prussians were not eager to surrender autonomy to which they were accustomed. The situation of succession in the Duchy and tensions between Frederick William and the Estates was reported

by Lisola, the imperial envoy to Poland who was also the negotiator between the elector of Brandenburg, East Prussia's Estates and the King of Poland, John Casimir (ruled 1648-68). In one report, Lisola commented on the intertwining of the issues of religion, sovereignty over East Prussia and the relationship between the Estates of East Prussia, its Duke and the Polish King. There was, Lisola, wrote:

"strong aversion against the Elector in the whole Duchy of Prussia, not just among the Catholics but also among the Lutherans and the common folk ... they all plan rebellion as soon as possible, mainly because of religion, and because the Elector aims at gaining sovereignty over Prussia, to subject it to the arbitrary power of his ministers from Brandenburg and to abolish all privileges ... the fifth reason is the

fact that the Elector joined the Swedish party without the consent of the estates, thereby provoking the revenge and the hatred of the Poles against them.”⁵

Twelve years earlier in 1648, however, the Peace of Westphalia restored peace to Germany, after a generation of fighting. The settlement strengthened the position of princes and weakened imperial authority, acknowledging that a German ruler had sovereignty within his or her territories, known as *Landeshoheit*.⁶ With the treaties of Osnabrück and Münster, moreover, German princes such as Frederick William, at last secured legal recognition of the right to conduct their own foreign policy, *de jure* recognition of what they had for long possessed *de facto*.⁷ It should be said this was true only to the extent that German rulers did not work against the interests of the Emperor, though this restriction was in practice of little importance.

Following the conclusion of peace at Westphalia in 1648, the Great Elector possessed more territory than any other prince of the Holy Roman Empire except the Habsburgs.⁸ However, East Prussia lay outside the Holy Roman Empire and was not subject to imperial authority in any way and was accustomed to having autonomy in local affairs. Unlike Brandenburg and the other western territories, the Thirty Years' War had not affected East Prussia, which had been largely isolated from the fighting and consequent devastation. The Duchy was accustomed to enjoying considerable

⁵J. Vota [pseud. for Onno Klopp], *Der Untergang des Ordensstaates und die Entstehung der preußischen Königswürde*, Mainz: Kirchheim & Co., 1911. Cited in Friedrich, "The Other Prussia," p. 450. Lisola's reports of 1656.

⁶Michael Hughes, *Law and Politics in Eighteenth Century Germany: The Imperial Aulic council in the Reign of Charles VI*, Woodbridge: Boydell Press (The Royal Historical Society), 1988, pp. 16-17.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁸E. A. Beller, "The Thirty Years War," in *The New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. 4 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, p. 354.

autonomy in local affairs, and resisted many of the changes attempted by the Great Elector.

Religion was one particular realm within which Frederick William was not entirely successful in exerting his influence. Although German princes were officially granted more influence over the religious complexion of their territories after the Peace of Westphalia, this did not ensure that their subjects would meekly accept their influence. In East Prussia, the Hohenzollerns met with resistance when attempting to enforce their own religious preferences on the territory.

The Reformation in East Prussia was part of the secularising carried out by Albrecht von Hohenzollern in 1525, and so preceded that in Brandenburg. The Hohenzollerns' of Brandenburg themselves accepted the Lutheran Reformation after 1539 with the accession of Joachim II. Brandenburg became primarily Lutheran with the Rhineland territories of Cleves, Mark, and Ravensberg developing as the only Calvinist enclaves.⁹ Elector John Sigismund (1608-1619), however, secretly converted to Calvinism in about 1606, two years before he became Elector, while his youngest brother, the Margrave Ernst (1583-1613) was the first to openly practice the Reformed religion in 1610.¹⁰ This conversion was central to Brandenburg-Prussia's Second Reformation. Throughout the later sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century, the Hohenzollerns attempted to impose their distinctive brand of Calvinism onto their Lutheran subjects. With considerable determination, they supported and encouraged Calvinist campaigns to convert their subjects but not by force - which is an important

⁹See the recent study by Bodo Nischan, *Prince, People, and Confession: The Second Reformation in Brandenburg*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994. See also, Reihnold A. Dorwart, "Church Organization in Brandenburg-Prussia from the Reformation to 1740," *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 31:4, 1938.

¹⁰Nischan, *Prince, People, and Confession: The Second Reformation in Brandenburg*, p. 83.

distinction: especially at this period. What is surprising, however, is that Calvinist rulers left most of their population Lutheran. The East Prussians with the strong aid of Polish King Sigismund III always were successful in preventing Calvinism from gaining a foothold in the territory. The Hohenzollerns themselves converted to Calvinism from Lutheranism while many of the territories over which they ruled remained Lutheran, including Brandenburg and East Prussia.

East Prussia was acquired as an hereditary possession (subject to Polish suzerainty) in 1618, a gain which approximately doubled the amount of territory under Hohenzollern control. In addition, Brandenburg and East Prussia were linked more than ever.¹¹ The commitment of East Prussians to Lutheranism, however, was strong and the Hohenzollerns' attempts to change this were resisted from the start. Königsberg became a hotbed of anti-Calvinist writings by the Lutheran clergy while other areas of the Duchy showed equally strong signs of resistance.¹² Not only did the clergy resist but so too did most other groups within East Prussian society. It was this lack of grass-roots support that prevented the successful conversion of East Prussia.

The East Prussian elite was also a major obstacle to any successful conversion to Calvinism. Its power was seen in a major series of political gains. The Junkers had forced Duke Albrecht in 1542 to allow the nobility to select the four highest officials in East Prussia, known as the *Oberräte*. In 1566 their influence was apparent in the adoption of a new "constitution" which confirmed the traditional right to place only native East Prussians in positions in central and local government. Moreover, if the Estates believed

¹¹Ibid., p. 169.

¹²Ibid., pp. 170-175 and especially, pp. 211-217 upon which the following topic is based.

that their rights were not being respected by the Hohenzollerns, they had the right to appeal to the King of Poland. The Hohenzollern ruler held the title but little else within the Duchy. The Estates strengthened their position even further when, in 1609, they secured confirmation of the right to ratify all decrees affecting the status of the territory. By the point at which John Sigismund became ruler of East Prussia in his own right, the Duchy had significantly strengthened control over its own affairs.

The Struggle with the Estates

East Prussia's sense of its religious and political distinctiveness remained as strong a generation later, as the Great Elector was to discover. In East Prussia as in the other territories, the Hohenzollern ruler attempted to modify the existing social hierarchy in order to extend Hohenzollern authority and also to fill the power vacuum created by the Reformation. This was not a particularly easy task since the Hohenzollerns did not possess a royal crown until 1701, and thus lacked the symbols of majesty which the kings and queens enjoyed and exploited in France or even England. In addition, the ruling family of Brandenburg-Prussia were relatively impoverished. Most importantly, however, even during the first half of the eighteenth century, the Hohenzollerns did not rule over a coherent block of territory, as for example, was the case in France. Instead, they ruled over a group of separated territories which were widely scattered across Germany and Western Poland.

Although the Great Elector acknowledged limitations upon his authority within his principal territory of Brandenburg, outside the Electorate his power was even more limited, being shared with influential Estates and other local authorities in the various territories. Previous rulers had often made concessions to the Estates and local authorities, and even foreign powers, in order to support the Hohenzollern court. Frederick William and subsequent Hohenzollern rulers attempted to strengthen their role as territorial princes and recover what previous rulers had pawned, traded or sold which left the Hohenzollerns financially and administratively weak. This is what Carsten has called the "complete disintegration of public

jurisdiction and administration in Brandenburg and Pomerania.”¹³ One example of how this was attempted in East Prussia was with the royal domains. Although the Great Elector could not reclaim the unfavourable land leases under contract in East Prussia, he attempted to ensure that there was better supervision over his domain lands. There was protest from within East Prussia as one might expect but since most all of the Great Elector’s changes were “procedural” and did not alter the “formal structure” of native territorial authority, there was little claim that long-standing traditional rights were taken.¹⁴ It appears, however, that this did not improve control or production to any significant measure. In general, East Prussia was only different until the fifteenth century. Thereafter the territory also began to decline both politically and economically, coming to resemble the other Hohenzollern lands.

The East Prussian Estates held two basic objectives that they sought to secure from Frederick William in the 1650s. They first wanted to obtain the Elector’s formal confirmation of their local and Estate authority. Second, they sought recognition of their privileged status in the social order. Both aims were conservative, as the East Prussian nobility sought to maintain the status quo. Frederick William, however, seized the opportunity presented by the war of 1655-60 to take control of wider issues facing a territory like the Duchy of East Prussia. External enemies such as Sweden, Poland and even Russia now threatened East Prussia’s vulnerable position and there was a need to protect the Duchy from external threats. Frederick William and the nobility recognised at mid-century that they were mutually

¹³Carsten, *Origins of Prussia*, p. 100.

¹⁴Joachim Krause, “Die kurfürstliche Verwaltung im Herzogtum Preußen am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Bonn: University of Bonn, 1973, p. 87. Cited in Roth, “The East Prussian Domaenenpaechter in the Eighteenth Century,” pp. 32-33.

dependent, whether they liked to admit it or not. This dawning recognition provided the basis for their negotiations.

In the seventeenth century, and particularly in the post–Thirty Years’ War period, the competitive states-system demanded a stronger military, especially for a state like Brandenburg–Prussia with extended borders and vulnerable and attractive territories. Frederick William believed Brandenburg–Prussia’s political credibility was derived from the strength of its army. The Great Elector’s familiar quotation underlined this: writing in his Political Testament, “Alliances are indeed good, but forces of one’s own are still better, upon them can one safely rely, and a man is of no consideration, when he himself is poor and has no troops; I myself have become considerable by my own efforts in accordance with this precept.”¹⁵

What many members of the nobility did not take seriously enough, however, was that although they were politically strong, they were widely scattered across the various territories. In any case they pursued essentially provincial interests and never established the ability to combine with their counterparts in other provinces, in order to jointly resist changes in territorial government which were imposed by the Hohenzollerns and which would have reduced their roles. Had they achieved this, it would have made the unified Estates a threat equal to that posed by any foreign power. Geographical separation lay at the heart of this failure to co-operate. Indeed, the geographical diffusion of the nobility prohibited, to any large extent, any unified and concerted resistance to changes imposed by the Hohenzollerns from far-away Berlin.

The nobility proved to be relatively secure in their own estates from any outside influence, electoral or otherwise. A Junker from the Kurmark,

¹⁵Richard Dietrich, editor, *Die politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern*, Vol. 20, *Veröffentlichungen aus den Archiven Preussischer Kulturbesitz*. Köln and Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1986, p. 191.

expressed the situation throughout the Hohenzollern lands when he wrote that the nobility wished to see "the threads in the hands of him who governs us, and he must pay due regard to what we want, for we shall make things hot for him if we cannot see where he puts our money...."¹⁶ While East Prussia remained a Polish fief, it was "all too well mixed with all internal affairs of Poland."¹⁷ Many of the reasons for this have already been explored in the discussion of the territory's early history. What is important here is that the landed nobility of East Prussia looked to the Polish aristocracy as a model for which to strive - they did not look to Brandenburg. This was a potential threat to the Duke because of the influence and aspirations of Polish nobles. The poverty and weakness of the Polish *szlachta* was more apparent to contemporaries. Some magnates were powerful, but most nobles were independent and exerted influence, no more. East Prussians also looked to Poland for support as the Duchy's Estates did not recognise Frederick William's full sovereignty as Duke even though this was conceded to him after the war of 1655-60 in the treaties of Labiau and Wehlau and confirmed by the peace at Oliva in 1660.¹⁸ Polish recognition meant that the East Prussian Estates could no longer count on Warsaw's support if their privileges were threatened. The Estates, however, continued to look to the Polish King for support and resisted the Elector who resorted at times to military force to get his way.¹⁹

It is important to remember that from the early thirteenth century, Poland had had enormous influence upon what became the realm of East

¹⁶Hintze, The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze, p. 42.

¹⁷Schmoller, "Die Verwaltung Ostpreußens unter Friedrich Wilhelm I," p. 43.

¹⁸Rachel, "Der Große Kurfürst und die ostpreussischen Stände," pp. 26-27. Cited in Carsten, Origins of Prussia, p. 209-10.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 207-209.

Prussia and on the people, especially the members of the Teutonic Order. Poland's influence had been formalised over East Prussia in 1454 with an act of union. Although this introduced new laws in the territory, it also left the most important economic, political, and administrative authority to the East Prussians themselves.²⁰ In short, it is not surprising to find that throughout the reign of the Great Elector, the Duchy's Estates continued to look to the Polish King for protection of their rights that were under attack from an unfamiliar and what they considered "foreign" Hohenzollern ruler. Frederick William's representative, Otto von Schwerin, reported the following to his master in regard to the East Prussian Estates in 1661: "Your Electoral Highness would not believe to what extent the Polish crown is dear to their hearts, and how they all seek their good in this connection, so that they insist on maintaining some recourse to Poland."²¹ The significance of this comment is also crucial because it was only a year after the Great Elector secured full sovereignty which was difficult for the Estates to accept as will be demonstrated in the subsequent section with respect to the Königsberg leader, Hieronymus Roth. In 1677 and 1678, the Polish King, John Sobieski, reconfirmed the Hohenzollern sovereignty over East Prussia mainly because the Polish King was too busy fighting with the Turks and Tartars in the South and could not risk the diversion of attention and resources to get further involved in any clash with the Hohenzollern Elector.²² Thereafter, Frederick William did not have to contend with the Polish King directly about the status of the Duchy.

Native East Prussians fully controlled their territory's administration. This was a fundamental tradition and right, and had been firmly fixed when

²⁰Friedrich, "The Other Prussia," pp. 44-56.

²¹Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 460.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 463.

Frederick William became their new Duke in 1640. It should be made clear that this was also the situation elsewhere in the Elector's lands. The *Indigenatsrecht*, or 'right of the native born', a statute that stipulated that only natives, usually noblemen, of the province could hold office in the government of that territory, is the best example of the type of privilege to which East Prussians were accustomed and in which Hohenzollern government acquiesced.²³ This was the foundation of the continuing degree of East Prussian independence and self-government: it was a formidable obstacle against any extension of Berlin's control, as this thesis will demonstrate. Native noblemen could be guaranteed to resist any centralising initiatives, and to uphold the traditional privileges of their own territory. Native East Prussians, for example, were the only ones permitted to serve in the Königsberg *Regierung*, the highest authority in urban and rural East Prussian government at Frederick William I's accession in 1713. In addition, the so-called *Zünfte* or guilds of Königsberg held exclusive control over trade and commerce.²⁴ The *Zünfte*, are another example of where the *Indigenatsrecht* privilege was applied. The East Prussian Estates regarded this privilege in 1657 as "the whole country's but, above all, the indigenous nobility's greatest benefices."²⁵

²³The *Indigenatsrecht* was of crucial importance to the East Prussians. But naturalisation could be used as it was in Brandenburg, for example, as a way round this. The degree to which this was used in East Prussia appears non-existent for their traditional institutions. A detailed study of its evolution and implementation in East Prussia has not been undertaken. For some useful comments on this process in a Polish Royal Prussian context, see Zbigniew Naworski, "Indygenat W Prusach Królewskich (1454-1772)," *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne*, vol. 35:1, 1983, pp. 31-58.

²⁴Hugo Rachel, "Handel und Handelsrecht von Königsberg," *Forschungen zur Brandenburgische und Preussische Geschichte*, vol. 22, 1909, p. 113. See also, Carsten, *Origins of Prussia*, p. 203.

²⁵*Urkunden und Aktenstücke zur Geschichte des Kurfürsten Friedrich Wilhelm von Brandenburg*, Berlin: Reimer, vol. 15, 1894, p. 402. Cited in Rosenberg, *Bureaucracy, Aristocracy, Autocracy*, p. 53.

The Great Elector held a quite distinct view of how the Duchy should be governed, and he expected to have more effective control over the territory than the East Prussians, who were used to the former and much looser arrangement with an additional link to Poland, wished him to exercise. The Great Elector held a notion of rule, grounded in his view of sovereignty, that clashed with that of the Prussians. In 1661, he faced the “unusual and unheard-of demand by the Estates that they be freed of their obligation as subjects if he did not respect their immunities and rights.”²⁶ Frederick William could not understand why he had to recognise the traditional rights of the East Prussians in order to secure their compliance, since these rights went counter to his ideas of sovereignty.

Although the Estates played a very important role in the government of the Duchy, the most important administrative body was the *Regierung*, which was intended to oversee the King's interests in East Prussia. The two most important matters which it supervised were the administration of justice and the royal domains. In fact, the *Regierung* saw itself as the principal East Prussian authority. It was also the principal vehicle for the upholding of native control over the Duchy's government. Through its distribution of responsibilities to other authorities in the territory, East Prussian and personal interests prevailed. The power and privileges which this conferred acted as the basis for the East Prussian elites' control over government and administration. Even after 1713, as this thesis will demonstrate, Frederick William I found it very difficult indeed to overcome the *Indigenatsrecht*, and this was a critical factor limiting his authority in the Kingdom.

²⁶Rachel, “Der Große Kurfürst und die ostpreussischen Stände, 1640-88.” Cited in Friedrich, “The Other Prussia,” p. 456.

This then, was a primary obstacle to any increase in Frederick William's authority in East Prussia. The Duchy was governed primarily by the "all-powerful" *Regimentsräthe* within the Königsberg *Regierung*. The four High Councillors, the so-called *Oberräte*, who made up this group often ruled without the Elector's signature and were the "highest officials of the duchy."²⁷ In short, they were the elite among the local noblemen. According to Schmoller, the *Regimentsräthe* had unlimited power.²⁸ During the peak of their power, nobody was permitted to talk to the Duke/Elector without their permission and no one was allowed to write to him without the stamp/seal of the *Kanzler* on the document.²⁹ Part of the reason why the Hohenzollern rulers, as Dukes of East Prussia, were so politically weak was that the *Oberräte*, although technically appointed by the Hohenzollerns, were in practice appointed by the other local native elite in the Duchy.

The nobility also dominated the board of district councillors (*Landrat* or *Landratskollegium*) which controlled public administration. According to Otto Hintze, these district officials "behaved and ruled" similarly to their counterparts in Poland, the so-called *Starosty* (*starostwa*).³⁰

Important decisions were made by three Estates; representatives of which made up the "small *Consilium*." The small *Consilium* comprised the four *Oberräte*, the *Hauptleute* of the four most important *Ämter*, and the mayors of the three separate urban communities that together made up the

²⁷Carsten, *Origins of Prussia*, p. 205.

²⁸Schmoller, "Die Verwaltung Ostpreußens unter Friedrich Wilhelm I," p. 43.

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰Otto Hintze cited in Walter Hubatsch, *Frederick the Great: Absolutism and Administration*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1975, p. 325. For an account of the Polish nobility in this period, see Robert Frost, "The Nobility of Poland-Lithuania, 1569-1795," in *The European Nobilities in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, vol. 2, *Northern, Central and Eastern Europe*, H. M. Scott, ed., London: Longman, pp. 183-222, and in particular, p. 199.

major port and administrative centre of Königsberg. Decisions were by majority vote and the nobility significantly outnumbered the representatives of the burghers, i.e., the three mayors. Although outnumbered, they still had influence and limited the authority of the Junkers.³¹

One other important reason why the East Prussian Junkers did not completely dominate the territories' important decisions was because of the importance of Königsberg as a trading centre. Königsberg was not just the largest port in East Prussia but it was also far larger than any port in Brandenburg when that territory actually secured a port of any size in the mid-seventeenth century. Königsberg's commercial importance that of its burghers was widely recognised. Both the East Prussian Junkers as well as the Hohenzollern rulers accepted this and therefore shared their influence with the burghers of Königsberg.

Frederick William was only allowed to bring a few of his personal friends and reform minded *Beamte* into the province. He was never able to influence the affairs of the Duchy as his support never reached a majority. Those continually looking to the King of Poland for support constituted about half of the opposition of the landed interests.³² Thus, Frederick William's authority in the rural areas was as limited, exactly as it was in Königsberg. The nobility controlled the rural areas and constituted the second Estate. The clergy did not constitute a separate order in the tri-cameral East Prussian Estates. As the influence of the towns declined, the power of the Junkers rose. Some of the reasons for this was due to the Reformation which resulted in the elimination of the clergy from the Estates.

³¹Carsten, *Origins of Prussia*, p. 205.

³²Schmoller, "Die Verwaltung Ostpreußens unter Friedrich Wilhelm I," p. 44.

In order to maintain the tri-cameral system, the Junkers were divided into upper and lower nobility.³³

The first estate consisted of twelve *Landräte* or local officials who were given life appointments by the ruler who was instructed as to the choice he might make by the local nobility.³⁴ This group constituted the leading families of the Duchy. Until 1660, any dissenting Estate could take an appeal to the King of Poland.³⁵

The period of war between 1655 and 1660 took a toll on East Prussia because it was substantially fought in the Duchy. Between one to thirteen cities and 249 to 260 market towns and villages were burned. Throughout East Prussia, 500 to 23,000 people were killed and another 5,300 to 34,000 were taken prisoner and carried into captivity. An additional 8,000 starved on the resulting epidemic.³⁶ In the 1670s, the war with Sweden would take equally as great a toll. This was a considerable loss for the province as the total population was between 350,000 and 450,000.³⁷

³³Carsten, *Origins of Prussia*, p. 165.

³⁴Rachel, "Der Große Kurfürst und die ostpreußischen Stände 1640-1688," pp. 86-87. Cited in Carsten, *Origins of Prussia*, p. 204.

³⁵Rachel, "Der Große Kurfürst und die ostpreußischen Stände 1640-1688," pp. 206-207; Schmoller, *Preussische Verfassungs-, Verwaltungs- und Finanzgeschichte*, p. 62. Rachel cited in Carsten, *Origins of Prussia*, p. 204.

³⁶Schmoller, "Die Verwaltung Ostpreußens unter Friedrich Wilhelm I," p. 45; Sławomir Augustowicz, "Najazdy tatarskie na Prusy Książęce (1656-1657. Legendy i fakty," *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie*, vol. 3, 1995, pp. 233-247. All the higher figures except for the number of villages destroyed are attributed to Schmoller while the lower figures and the higher figure for the number of villages destroyed correspond to the research of Augustowicz cited in the English language summary in *Acta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 74, 1996, pp. 216-17.

³⁷Carsten, *Origins of Prussia*, 202, fn. 4. The following topic based on pp. 207-210. Carsten states the following: "Using the death figures from 1688 to 1699, the earliest known ones, F.W.C. Dieterici, 'Über die frühere und die gegenwärtige Bevölkerung...', *Mittheilungen des statistischen Bureau's in Berlin*, iv, 1851, p. 230, estimated the population of Prussia as over 500,000 at the end of the seventeenth century. But this figure is almost certainly too high.... O. Behre, *Geschichte der Statistik in Brandenburg-Preussen*, 1905, p. 198, working backwards from the census figures of 1740, estimated the population as 358,000 in 1688."

The years of war between 1655 and 1660 critically impacted the future of East Prussia. As noted earlier, the war established complete Hohenzollern sovereignty over East Prussia. The peace agreement was guaranteed by Sweden and Poland in the treaties of Labiau (with Sweden) and Wehlau (with Poland) which were confirmed by both states at the peace of Oliva in 1660. After 1660, there was common recognition of full Hohenzollern sovereignty over East Prussia by Brandenburg's neighbours. The East Prussian Junkers, however, did not formally recognise Hohenzollern sovereign authority until after the meeting of the 1661/3 Diet. The crucial significance here is that from this point forward, if the East Prussian nobility found their privileges threatened, legally they had been deprived of an appeal to the King of Poland, and thus they could not play the Brandenburg-Prussian Elector off against their former overlord.³⁸ This does not mean that they did not try, as it is clear the Estates did attempt to do this into the 1670s. Almost as soon as the ink was dry on the treaties in 1660, Frederick William began trying to levy taxes directly in East Prussia and raising Königsberg's port duties. To enforce vigorously this newly secured full sovereignty, Frederick William established the War Chamber, the so-called *Kriegskammer*. Through this agency the military now enforced and collected taxation for the Elector.

From this point forward there was a decline which lasted through to the early decades of the eighteenth century. The East Prussian population suffered considerably, both from the ravages of armies and from natural disasters which devastated the land and the population. Between 1660 and 1662, harvests failed. Add to this the burdens of increased taxation which were becoming increasingly difficult to meet and the added impositions of administrative corruption. The population grew frustrated and blamed the

³⁸Ibid.

Duke/Elector for their difficulties. The Estates were not consulted either by Sweden or Poland about the recognition of Frederick William's sovereignty and the Estates initially refused to recognise this, until the Diet of 1661-63, as noted above. They continued to believe they held their traditional authority and that it would be recognised by Poland.

Encroachment by Berlin upon areas of the Duchy's authority began during this period, but encountered considerable resistance by the native East Prussian elite. The years after the signature of peace at Oliva in 1660 is often viewed as the start of the Hohenzollerns' effort to establish their authority in the province. This period is significant for two reasons. First, is that the long dormant and previously ineffective military administrations in East Prussia were now revived to oversee virtually all aspects of the taxation that was levied in order to support the Hohenzollern army in East Prussia. The Estates were no longer entrusted with financial administration, which was now given to the new territorial military *Kommissariat* who were under the *Generalkriegskommissariat* located in Berlin.³⁹ Soldiers were used to carry out the monthly collections, if necessary, forcibly.⁴⁰ This became an established foothold of authority which was later exploited by Frederick William I to circumvent the local authorities, especially when it came to financial matters in the Kingdom. However, it was very rare that a Hohenzollern ever was able to impose a policy on East Prussia against determined local opposition, as later chapters will make clear.

The second reason why the peace at Oliva in 1660 was important was that many East Prussian authorities did not, in the end, recognise these new bodies (the provincial *Kommissariat* and the *Generalkriegskommissariat*) since they were staffed by non-native East Prussians. Centuries-old privileges

³⁹See Appendix A, p. 352.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 208.

were firmly embedded into the East Prussian traditional elite's government and society. In other words, the new institutions were a way round the *Indigenatsrecht*.

The consequence of these two factors was the development of competition between the new agencies under Berlin's direct control and the province's traditional authorities.

The Duke summoned a Diet in May 1661. He intended this meeting of the Estates to be a forum for the East Prussian authorities to recognise formally his sovereignty. The Diet, which lasted two years, in fact became a gathering in which the Estates spelled out their demands for recognition of their established privileges and sought redress of their grievances, namely, troop withdrawal and the heavy taxation in the form of excise and tolls which was used to support these troops and was viewed the native elite as damaging to the East Prussian economy. In addition, the early 1660s saw successive crop failures and grain prices soared. As noted earlier, this was particularly true in the 1660s. The combination of these factors meant that resistance against the Hohenzollerns grew and the Elector "was pilloried as the greatest tyrant and enemy of the people."⁴¹ Since the East Prussian nobility did not yet formally recognise the Elector's sovereignty, they continued to believe that their traditional rights, where violated, would be protected by Poland. At one point during the sermon with which the Diet opened, the preacher, who was presumably chosen by the Elector/Duke, declared forcibly that privileges were nothing more than private laws.⁴² Such statements, as well as others, only inflamed the Estates still further.

⁴¹In particular, the price of corn rose drastically. *Urkunden & Aktenstücke*, IX, Number 1, p. 139 (October, 1660). Cited in Carsten, *Origins of Prussia*, p. 209.

⁴²GStAPK, Ostpreussischen Folianten, no. 672, fols. 19, 23-26, Königsberg, 1661, Landtags-Predigt, Bey der Zusammenkunfft der Gesambten Löblichen Stände des Hertzogthums Preussen ... gehalten Durch christia Dreiern...." See also Carsten, *Origins of Prussia*, p. 210.

The 1661-63 Diet in East Prussia is comparable to some degree to the well-known Brandenburg diet of 1652/3. The traditional historiography approaches both these meetings as a compromise between the ruler, Frederick William and the Estates by which the ruler was granted limited taxation over the territory in return for accepting the Junkers' dominance in the countryside. This traditionalist view is most notably seen in the writings of Francis L. Carsten and Hans Rosenberg.⁴³ In brief, they both view the "compromise" between the ruler and the social elite as permitting the elector to raise and support his standing army with the tax revenue generated with the Estates' permission. This, in turn, necessitated its own administration which was the precursor to "bureaucratized autocracy" which was to emerge by the later eighteenth century.⁴⁴ Although the present section is based to some degree on this view, there are others, as we shall see that provide a more complete explanation. For example, the peasants, it is suggested, became even more oppressed and operated in a more than ever restricted environment after the Thirty Years' War under the Junker. It was the elector who had given his approval in return to this supposed increase in domination at the local level. This view has been challenged by William Hagen who, in a study of Brandenburg, has modified the conclusions of both Carsten and Rosenberg.

William Hagen has correctly noted that the compromise theory which applied to the core Hohenzollern territory of Brandenburg, has prevailed because of the historical writing tradition which focuses on what

⁴³Carsten, Origins of Prussia and Rosenberg, Bureaucracy, Aristocracy and Autocracy: The Prussian Experience 1660-1815.

⁴⁴Otto Hintze, "Die Hohenzollern und der Adel," in Regierung und Verwaltung: Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur Staats-, Rechts- und Sozialgeschichte Preussens, Gerhard Oestreich, editor, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht in Göttingen, 1967, p. 39; Hintze, Die Hohenzollern und ihr Werk: Fünfhundert Jahre vaterländischer Geschichte, Berlin: Paul Parey, 1915, p. 205. See also Hagen, "Seventeenth-Century Crisis in Brandenburg: The Thirty Years' War, the Destabilization of Serfdom, and the Rise of Absolutism," p. 304.

he calls "the political history and sociology of the central government and the corporate nobility."⁴⁵ Hagen argues for the Brandenburg province in an essentially similar way to the argument advanced here as well in the first chapter through more detailed local studies, that a clear majority of peasants were socially and financially in better condition than both Rosenberg and Carsten believed. Hagen further argues that there was distinctive stratification within the peasantry of Brandenburg. This study endorses Hagen's modification in this respect, and will expand on this theme in the subsequent chapters that focus on the early eighteenth century and the reign of Frederick William I in East Prussia.

In East Prussia, however, the grievances put to Frederick William during throughout the diets of 1661/3 were more sharply focused and forcibly articulated than in Brandenburg, and focused squarely on fundamental notions of government. Throughout the 1640s and 1650s, the East Prussian Estates had been able to frustrate most all of Frederick William's attempts to control the territory. One particular initiative was that of taxation. Frederick William as Duke responded to this resistance by placing military forces around Königsberg and increasing the number of officials who staffed certain of the Berlin-controlled tax collection agencies located in the Duchy, principally the *Kommissariat*. The landed Junkers, for example, forced their own tenants not to pay the primary rural/land tax, the excise, while all mills not on royal domain land or otherwise not directly under the Duke's immediate control were pressured not to charge the excise on the services which they rendered.

In a relatively short period of time, the Estates were able to demonstrate to Frederick William that they could continue to disrupt severely the operation of government and in particular any tax schemes of

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 306.

which they disapproved. In addition, to force corrective action on the Great Elector's behalf would have taken considerably more resources of personnel and money than he had at the time. Frederick William was forced to pull away the number of soldiers and *Kommissariat* officials in the territory. In addition, virtually all taxation aside from the excise was reduced to pre-Thirty Years' War levels.⁴⁶

The resistance continued, however. The Diet only came to an end in 1663 after the arrival the Great Elector in person, who was preceded by a sizeable military force which now posed a significant direct threat. It was not used for anything beyond intimidation, as a compromise was reached before the use of force became necessary.

The continuation of the excise, together with general concern over the powers the Elector/Duke would hold if they recognised his sovereignty, began to split the opposition. Naturally, since the excise was only collected in the towns it impacted primarily upon the burghers, who were most vocal in their resistance. Their leader in Königsberg, Hieronymus Roth, remained firm in his belief that since the East Prussians had never been under the direct rule of any sovereign, the Polish King could not "cut off a free people without their consent."⁴⁷ More importantly, the Estates continued to look to days past when they complained to the Polish King that the Hohenzollern Duke "had left them 'with merely a shadow of the ancient happiness that our forefathers enjoyed on the basis of their liberties.'"⁴⁸ Again in 1661, while "negotiating" with Frederick William on an agreement, they were also writing to the King of Poland asking again to be Polish subjects.

⁴⁶Carsten, *Origins of Prussia*, p. 211. It is assumed Carsten means the Thirty Years' War as he simply states "pre-war rates."

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 213.

⁴⁸Quoted in Friedrich, "The Other Prussia," p. 448. The following topic is based on Friedrich, pp. 449-460.

Roth continued his protests on behalf of the Duchy throughout the three-year long diet. He also represented the voice of Königsberg against Frederick William. His essential argument was the fundamental one. He believed that in 1454 the Estates of East Prussia voluntarily subjected themselves to the rule of the King of Poland. Therefore the Hohenzollerns as Duke were acting illegally especially since Frederick William had unilaterally broken the agreement which established Poland as the protector of East Prussia's rights. The Estates were, in other words, saying that their approval to any transfer of sovereignty was essential for it to be entirely valid. When the Duchy became a hereditary possession of the Hohenzollerns', this changed their status without their consent. Not only did Frederick William not re-confirm their traditional rights and privileges but he broke the link to their centuries-old protector, the King of Poland. Roth and the Estates, therefore, eventually were forced to agree to the Duke's demands.

One of the fundamental changes that Frederick William made to his administration of East Prussia was the introduction of the office of territorial governor (*Statthalter*) in 1657. The first governor to be appointed was Bogusław Radziwiłł (1620-1669) in October 1657. He not only oversaw the Great Elector's interests in Königsberg but also Warsaw where he was able to utilise his Polish-Lithuanian family's influence. Radziwiłł was born in Danzig but later lived in various places throughout the region and travelled widely as a teenager, for example to France, England, and the Netherlands where he studied, before settling in Königsberg. In addition, he fought with his regiment on the side of Sweden during the first part of the 1655-60 war which was problematic for him and the Polish side of his family who were of royal lineage in the Kingdom.⁴⁹ Radziwiłł was also responsible for

⁴⁹Krollmann, *Altpreußische Biographie*, vol. 2, pp. 530-531.

ordering the military into Königsberg during the 1663 diet. Although this last point made him particularly unpopular within East Prussia, it was not the most important factor for resistance to his appointment. More importantly, he was an unacceptable choice as governor to the East Prussian elite because he was born outside the Duchy. Thus, his appointment by the Great Elector was in deliberate disregard to the *Indigenatsrecht*.

Furthermore, his appointment as governor was an attempt by Frederick William to establish a permanent ducal presence in a territory that was physically remote from the core territory of Brandenburg. Its capital, Berlin was where Frederick William, even though Duke of East Prussia, was required to spend most of his time. The personal presence of the ruler was crucial in the seventeenth century when political authority was personal and individual but which was now removed. By appointing a loyal official such as Radziwiłł, the Great Elector attempted to bridge the gap in his personal authority within East Prussia. The East Prussian Estates viewed Radziwiłł's appointment as a threat to their leadership and authority in the territory. The issue of an East Prussian governor became the most significant threat to traditional authority in the Duchy and therefore was resisted strongly by the Estates, who complained vociferously. Radziwiłł, although disliked for his religious orientation - he was a Calvinist - probably found that the dislike of him was more due to his title and role, rather than to him personally. The Great Elector was now actively and directly involved in the affairs of the Duchy, and the post of governor highlighted the fact that the province was not independent. That is, Frederick William was the reigning Duke and their sovereign, but - more crucially - he was usually absent: Brandenburg was still the most important Hohenzollern territory. These issues were particularly important to the East Prussian elite, who could not accept his near-permanent absence and the down-grading of the Duchy which this implied. This was especially so since all correspondence, including their

grievances, was now required to go through the governor in Königsberg. No longer was there even a direct link to their Duke in person, nor to the former suzerain, Poland's King. They were made to feel threatened that they would soon no longer be recognised as the highest authorities in East Prussia.

The burghers, who were numbered in the thousands, appear to have resisted the final decision to recognise the Hohenzollern Duke to the end and complained that such a decision could not be made by such a small number of noblemen. In addition, the two noble-Estates agreed to a tax which would be levied in the towns and was therefore opposed by the burghers. After first seeking protection from the Polish King, then trying to defend parts of Königsberg from the Elector's blockade and likely attack, and the subsequent arrest of Roth for treason, the organised burgher resistance collapsed. Frederick William contributed substantially to his own success but his subordination of the Estates also resulted from the lack of support from the Polish King and the Polish nobility who were unorganised in their opposition to what was happening to their counterparts in East Prussia. The Estates felt abandoned by Poland, which had firstly handed over sovereignty, and secondly was preoccupied at this moment with its own domestic problems.

In the end, the first two chambers of the Estates were willing to grant the excise for a further three years only on the condition that excise administration would be restored to the control of native East Prussians, that is to say, the Estates themselves. When the Great Elector agreed that this settlement was satisfactory in mid-1663, some portions of the burgher Estate continued to object unavailingly to the settlement of the issue.

The consequences were broadly similar to those of the Brandenburg diet of 1652/53 and it is for these reasons that it has been viewed as a compromise. In practice rather little had changed and the Estates were

more protective than ever of their position and rights. Yet the Elector was now able to support a peace time army in the Duchy by means of taxation. This was acceptable only as long as the Estates were not asked to support the army for wars outside of the territory, especially when it concerned disputes in Germany and within the Holy Roman Empire. The East Prussian Estates did not believe they should have to support wars which did not directly affect them, that is to say conflicts in which Frederick William engaged as Duke of East Prussia (and not as Elector of Brandenburg, or Duke of Cleves, etc.) The War of 1655-60 was clearly an East Prussian war, as the support of the Estates attested. This issue again came to the forefront in 1672 when the Great Elector went to war against Louis XIV's France. Two years later, the Elector occupied Königsberg by military force and imposed taxation through intimidation on the town. As Carsten boldly notes, "the days of burgher independence were over."⁵⁰ This verdict is, however, exaggerated. There was undoubtedly a major breakthrough for Hohenzollern authority in East Prussia but the burghers continued to enjoy a monopoly in commerce and retained a measure of political independence well into the eighteenth century. The landed Junkers were still in the same position and due to the need for peasant labour detailed in the previous chapter, with respect to *Gutsherrschaft*, the peasants, although many were oppressed, were as a group less oppressed than has traditionally been argued.

The reason many see the 1670s as a period when the Great Elector finally defeated the Estates of East Prussia is because financial administration, after the period when it returned to the Estates after the Diet of 1661-63, was once more in the direct control of the Elector through the

⁵⁰Carsten, *Origins of Prussia*, p. 221.

Generalkriegskommissariat.⁵¹ This is significant because the *Kriegskommissariat* was filled with non-natives and was thus under the direct control of the Elector. The *Kommissariat* (as the agency that operated within East Prussia came to be known) was of critical importance to the Great Elector during periods of warfare when financial resources were crucial. Even in periods of peace, the *Kriegskommissariat* officials remained in place albeit with a more limited role.

It is in the last years of the Great Elector's reign that one can begin to see growing administrative rivalry between Berlin and Königsberg. The *Kommissariat* remained consistently loyal and obedient to the Elector and would not recognise the authority or obey the orders of the *Regierung* or any other traditional East Prussian authority. Conversely, the *Regierung*, and in particular the *Hauptleute*, who traditionally controlled local government and administration, refused to recognise the authority and instructions of the *Kommissariat*.

Moreover, one can also begin to see how Hohenzollern authority, especially when it came to financial matters, began to supersede and take over portions of the authority of the traditional East Prussian elites. This was particularly so in central government. Local government, however, remained clearly in the hands of the traditional elite. The consequences were seen in the contrasting situations which prevailed in the government of the Duchy's towns and in the rural hinterland. The Great Elector had managed to increase his authority significantly over particular administrative agencies which operated in the urban area of Königsberg. In the more rural areas, Frederick William was able to establish his authority in one important area in particular, tax revenue collection, but in general, these gains were more modest than that which occurred in the Königsberg area.

⁵¹Also known as the *Kriegskammer* or *Kommissariat*.

In addition, the Estates, although not rendered useless, were divided⁵⁰ that no united opposition was attainable.

In the end, both the urban burgher elite and the urban and landed nobility lost some of their traditional political independence but retained much of their social privileges and status. Their loss of political independence and, to a large degree, financial authority, was less complete since they retained a monopoly of administrative positions in most agencies. The Junkers could ill-afford to oppress the peasants and disrupt a social structure that had for long existed and which only recently has been recognised as more efficient than traditionally believed.⁵² In this sense, their self-interest was paramount. It is possible that the Junkers were more closely aligned with the peasants and burghers during the 1660s and more concerned about working out a compromise with them than they were with Frederick William.

The reign of the Great Elector had seen an attempt to extend and realign power within East Prussia. The struggle between the nobility and Frederick William's new authority was not an all-out war of annihilation against the nobility.⁵³ Frederick William was instead attempting to establish a new and quite different political structure which inherently mandated that the nobility should give their whole loyalty and service to the Hohenzollern ruler and abandon traditional links with Poland. When the Great Elector was blocked in his attempts by the traditional territorial elites, the Elector attempted to set up parallel authorities to those of the Duchy's established elites. The Hohenzollern army was crucial to such success as he achieved. It removed many of the internal and external threats to Hohenzollern authority. The army "served as a kind of iron hoop which

⁵²Hagen, "Seventeenth-Century Crisis in Brandenburg," p. 335.

⁵³Schmoller, "Die Verwaltung Ostpreußens unter Friedrich Wilhelm I," p. 46.

forced the various formerly separate territories together to form a larger centralised state.”⁵⁴ The weakness of the Elector in the 1640s was based on noble fear of losing their traditional rights and privileges, especially financial control over East Prussia. Frederick William established better control of these lands which were geared to bring in more revenues, which they only modestly succeeded in doing, and more significantly the Domain *Kammer* had the goal of being entirely independent on the *Oberräten*.⁵⁵ It was occasionally through a sizeable military presence, often placed in the separate territories that Frederick William was able to force his policies through. By 1661, Frederick William’s authority was not unquestioned, but certainly more effective than it was in 1640. Nonetheless, the situation might have been very different had the King of Poland and/or the Polish nobility have decided to defend the East Prussian Estates.

By the end of Frederick William’s reign, the Junkers continued to possess all powers on their own estates and retained their influence in the territorial assembly, yet the state was becoming only slightly more financially secure with increased tax revenues. In 1688, the Great Elector was nowhere near an absolute authority in East Prussia as the local elite continued to dominate the operation of territorial government. The Duke/Elector had extended his powers over taxation, that was all.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*

CHAPTER 3

East Prussia, Frederick III/I, and the Plague

Frederick III/I and East Prussia

Frederick III/I's reign (1688-1713) often has been characterised by historians as a stagnant period in a series of reigns considered to be an inevitable progression toward domestic administrative consolidation and eventually, international power which began with the Great Elector, in 1640 and ended during the reign of Frederick II, the Great. The reign of Frederick III/I, in stark contrast to this progression, has been seen particularly as a reign dominated by court favourites and by apparently trifling gains, such as the opportunistic improvement of the Hohenzollern status among other European rulers with the recognition of a royal title based upon the territory of East Prussia. The heavy reliance on a single minister and court favourites has been seen as a significant break to that which the Great Elector worked to establish, more centralised administrative institutions. In short, the years between 1688 and 1713 are seen as a pause in the development of a strong monarchy.

After he ascended to the throne in 1688, Frederick III/I continued the trend, from rule by privy council toward rule through cabinet and collegial government. Leading administrative historians have cited Frederick III/I's importance in terms of his commitment to these institutions, but have

mentioned little else. His reign, however, was critical to the rise of the state and growth of absolutism for another critical reason. Namely, Frederick III/I's political achievements in having the Duchy of East Prussia elevated and recognised as a kingdom of the Hohenzollerns by other European monarchies as well as by the East Prussian elite was critical in the rise of Brandenburg-Prussia. His reign should not be passed over as simply a period of rule by favourites or important for the Hohenzollerns' solely on the international scene. The fact that the title was recognised by the East Prussians, albeit with much resistance, was a significant achievement in a reign that went far to further set the foundation for the development of absolutism.

There is little doubt that the two ministers of Frederick III/I played a principal part in his reign, which as a result, can be divided into two distinct periods. First, were the years of Eberhard von Danckelman and second, the period of Colbe von Wartenberg.¹ Consideration of their wider political role has more important significance than usually recognised particularly with regard to relations with East Prussia. Frederick III/I's reign helps explain why the crown was secured, how it was secured, and why its location and establishment were important for Brandenburg-Prussia as a whole and for East Prussia in particular.

The internal circumstances that confronted Frederick III/I in East Prussia around the turn of the Eighteenth Century were not only formidable but also potentially dangerous for his sovereign power over the territory. This was, however, only a part of the challenge he faced. The external circumstances must also be considered. Both the Great Elector and Frederick III had for long sought a royal title not so much from within

¹Carl Hinrichs, "Kronprinz Friedrich Wilhelm I. Ostpreußen und der Sturz Wartenbergs," *Altpreussische Forschungen*, 16, 1939, pp. 207-245; See also, Dorwart, The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia, p. 24.

Brandenburg–Prussia but rather, from outside powers, namely the Holy Roman Emperor. A royal title needed external approval especially from the Holy Roman Empire. Frederick III/I's efforts began in earnest four years prior to his crowning of 1701. It was in 1697 that Frederick III once again recognised his position among the second tier of European Powers and this drove his ambitions. All around the Hohenzollerns there were formerly minor rulers gaining significant royal titles. This was part of the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century vogue. For example, by the early ^{years} of the century, Frederick III saw his brother-in-law rise to be King George I of England, the Duke of Brunswick became the Elector of Hanover and the Elector of Saxony became the King of Poland. The Hohenzollern ruler recognised the international recognition that came with a royal title.²

After the Peace of Ryswick in 1697, Frederick III began a concerted effort to improve his position within Europe and employed subsidies to gain those ends. He felt slighted after the conclusion of peace at Ryswick particularly because he was not paid the complete subsidy amount he was promised for his efforts principally on behalf of the Holy Roman Emperor and William of Orange. The amounts were simply not paid and/or were withheld. In addition, Frederick III believed he should have received the principality of Orange as well as the guarantee of a royal title.³ In regard to the Orange lands, it was not until the death of William III of Orange in 1702, that the Orange Succession was resolved. Frederick III/I was granted sovereignty over the lands as he was his closest living relative to the late William of Orange. At the time, this raised the issue of Frederick's³ succession to the English throne³ which he had a claim, and on this point Hintze writes

²For several other examples, see Johann Stephan Pütter, *Historische Entwicklung der heutigen Staatsverfassung des deutschen Reichs*, vol. 2, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1788, p. 389-90.

³Hintze, *Die Hohenzollern und ihr Werk*, p. 272.

that the English essentially looked elsewhere.⁴ As the lands were near France, it was Frederick's desire to keep these lands after 1702 that assured Brandenburg-Prussia would stay in the war to its conclusion. As the war pitted most all of the German states with Spain and the Netherlands against France, it was the inability of Brandenburg-Prussia to negotiate with the stronger powers that demonstrated Frederick III's position among the lesser German rulers. There was, however, an uneasy break between Berlin and Vienna for the year after the Ryswick peace. All diplomatic ties were broken.

The Emperor, in November, 1700, again sought Frederick III's support with the offer of a subsidy treaty. A multitude of other minor events came together to allow Frederick III to exploit this subsidy treaty to its fullest. Although the agreement on subsidies were at the heart of the agreement, other factors were involved. There was even mention of Frederick's conversion to Catholicism in order to keep a better balance of power within the Empire as well as the region, i.e. Poland. This, however, was not pursued for long although in light of the manuscript material, it appears noteworthy.⁵

Between the Peace of Ryswick and the subsidy treaty of 1700, there was a significant change within the Brandenburg-Prussian administration. Eberhard von Danckelman, who was Frederick III's chief minister, was dismissed in disgrace soon after his return from Ryswick. The lack of success earlier in the year at the peace negotiations — it was suggested he was not strongly enough in favour of a royal title and therefore did not push as hard as he could have to make this known to the other participants — as

⁴Ibid.

⁵Max Lehmann, editor, *Preussen und die katholische Kirche seit 1640*, in *Publicationen aus den K. preussischen Staatsarchiven*, Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1878, I, pp. 367-384. This section is entitled: "Die Krone."

well as his being linked to court intrigues and financial corruption all became too much for both Frederick III as well as for his wife, Sophie Charlotte who exercised considerable influence over policy decisions. Those surrounding the Elector, above all the Electress, were able to persuade him that Danckelman had usurped many of his powers as a ruler. Other factors, such as the example of Louis XIV of France was important as an ideal of personal monarchy.

There is no doubt he had extraordinary authority for an advisor in his position and whether these were recognised as appropriate until it became politically advantageous to use the charges of corruption and usurpation of Frederick III's authority against Danckelman is open to debate, but it seems likely. Nonetheless, in Frederick III/I's Testament of 1688 he warned (seemingly himself) not to give too much authority to one individual which no matter the intentions of Danckelman appears to have been the case with him. Perhaps here he was thinking not only of his own reign but also that of his father, the Great Elector, who initially found himself in a similar difficult position with the favourite Schwartzenberg.⁶ However, with Danckelman, there was, in general, full discussion of most affairs with the principal administrators and often with the ruler. Danckelman, it appears was able to manipulate final policy decisions within such political discussion. Or, one might say, a powerful minister was anathema to a king - who wanted to rule personally, on the model of Louis XIV after 1661.

Frederick III/I's reign was one of unusually high expenditure at court when compared to his Hohenzollern predecessors. This was an additional reason foreign subsidies were sought by Frederick III. One example that will be elaborated on below was the coronation in Königsberg in 1701. Subsequent costs after 1701 for the new royal Berlin Court meant

⁶Schwartzenberg had been removed by 1641.

tremendous financial hardship during the last decade of Frederick III/I's reign. There was a continuous need to raise money for expenditures of the court even before the royal title was gained. Danckelman was a voice of moderation. It was likely he was able to limit spending to some extent but it was clear he was unable to control all finances, especially the personal expenditures of Frederick III. Finally, Berlin traditionally was pro-Imperial, and as such would enter wars on the side of Vienna in the period. This was particular the case during the years of 1688-1714.

As the reasons why the royal title was secured as well as how it was secured have been discussed, it is now important to consider the internal factors and operation of government both in Berlin and East Prussia during this period which often focused on the Berlin court. Danckelman was a competent administrator and advisor to Frederick III. Yet, it was his inability to deal effectively at Ryswick on the one hand and operate within the Berlin court on the other that he was able to succeed with Frederick III's confidence. This was also the basis for his later dismissal. He was, nonetheless, apparently hard working on all matters.

Danckelman's concentration on the administrative affairs at court in Berlin and other international matters were what allowed the East Prussian government to be left to the traditional provincial elites. East Prussia, one should remember, was remote from the wars of Louis XIV. In addition, Brandenburg-Prussia was neutral in the Great Northern War until 1714. This is important in showing that the traditional patterns of authority could reassert or re-establish themselves.

The fundamental problems Frederick III confronted in his administration and finances date back to the first years of the seventeenth century. In 1604, the Hohenzollern ruler John Sigismund, had made the Privy Council the primary central organ of Brandenburg's governmental administration, and some form of the privy council lasted more or less as the

technical centre of government and administration in Brandenburg for approximately the next one hundred and twenty years: until the creation of the General Directory, in effect. The privy council had been established at the start of the sixteenth century to deal with foreign affairs, that is Hohenzollern dynastic affairs which fell outside Brandenburg but within the Holy Roman Empire. Hohenzollern territorial affairs in the seventeenth century grew in importance. John Sigismund hoped that a privy council would bring order among the anticipated territorial gains, namely Cleves, Mark, and Ravensburg (secured in 1614) and East Prussia (in 1618).⁷ The privy council played an important organisational and governmental role during the sixteenth century but to consider it as “the principal instrument of centralisation of the administration of the Hohenzollern possessions” as Dorwart claimed, is probably an exaggeration.⁸ The privy council did not convert “the individual states, *Einzelstaaten* into first a united state, *Gesamtstaat* and then, in the eighteenth century, into a unified state, *Einheitsstaat*” in the way that Dorwart suggested.⁹

The Great Elector re-invigorated the privy council after a dormant period during the Thirty Years’ War when the war council, *Kriegsrat*, assumed precedence in government. After 1640, matters of importance also continued to be decided upon in his own chamber, or so-called *Kabinett*, with just his few closest advisers. With other less important matter, however, the collegial system was developing and this system became a gradual trend within central administration in the early modern period.

During the first nine years of Frederick III/I’s reign, Danckelman took control of the privy council which, as noted, was the theoretical main

⁷Dorwart, The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia, p. 9.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., pp. 9-10.

administrative body which linked and ruled over the far flung territories. Under the Great Elector, the privy council had been reorganised in 1651 to divide the business affairs into quasi-departments. With this development, many of the decisions were left to council members although, the most important decisions, continued to be considered by the Hohenzollern ruler from within his own *Kabinett*. "The privy council was becoming a judicial tribunal while the offices of finances, war, and foreign affairs, were becoming separate from the council."¹⁰ Danckelman attempted to alter the privy council administration in the 1690s which allowed him to place himself in control. Government administration in Berlin began seeing a division of labour. It was by no means a bureaucracy. This government organisation made the privy council a consultant to the top council members. That is, the actual council members decided finally on all suggestions at their departments before passing on the recommendation to the ruler. Frederick III/I's privy council covered most other areas. The administration of central affairs remained in this structure until the establishment of the General Directory in 1723 under Frederick William I.

In 1698 government business took up three or four hours of Frederick's day which was an increase from ten years before at his accession. This is partly due to the fact that after Danckelman's fall in 1697, he was set on being personally more involved with his administration. Soon, however, the elector found himself overwhelmed. In March, 1698, he commented to his daughter, Sophie, that there was "daily so much to do that there was either none or hardly any time left."¹¹ This is often used to represent his lack of drive and stamina that was so evident in his father, son, and grandson. Frederick III/I had serious health problems that often made him

¹⁰Frey and Frey, *Frederick I: The Man and His Times*, p. 74.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 85.

physically weak and this is perhaps a better reason for his lack of stamina. Whatever the reason, the traditional view is that this provided an opportunity for a new minister to emerge and gain the confidence and ultimately, the upper hand of Frederick. This, however, was not easy as Frederick III was involved with his administration on a day-to-day basis. In addition, it does not totally account for his achievements.

Frederick III/I's detailed and regular attention to matters of government was carried out in the mornings when he was given an account of that day's letters and dispatches by his secretary. Frederick most often delegated detailed questions of business to certain courtiers who would go off and work on the matter and report back to him in the privy council. Afterwards he would personally preside over the privy council. Here the King would meet with a few of his select advisers to consider major issues of state.¹² This would normally last no more than an hour and after he would go back to his chamber and give his orders for the day. Aside from occasional casual talk before dinner with his prime minister or his early evening entertainment in the Tobacco College, his routine varied little. This daily pattern was maintained as much as possible even when travelling. All of this meant that Frederick III was working on and was involved with the day-to-day operation of government as it was then executed in the Seventeenth Century.

Under such an administrative arrangement, however, the court became filled with jealousy and in-fighting in order to win Frederick's favour. The English representative in Berlin, Thomas Wentworth (Baron Raby) wrote that "revolutions happen daily in the council of our little court, for what is advised one day and agreed on by one party of councillors is

¹²Dorwart, *The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia*, p. 7.

obstructed and altered by the next day by another party.”¹³ This often paralysed the court and ultimately government. Sophie Charlotte noted that her husband had “the strangest court in the world.”¹⁴

Colbe von Wartenburg (1643-1712) emerged as a principal advisor to Frederick III after the fall of Danckelman. Wartenburg was a native of Hesse and first entered Brandenburg administration in 1688. He had the confidence of Frederick III until the crown prince, Frederick William I took the initiative in an investigation that uncovered serious administrative corruption in which Wartenburg was implicated.¹⁵ However, soon after Wartenburg’s emergence he quickly dismantled many of the administrative structures that Danckelman established within the privy council in order to eliminate the administrative structures that had set himself and Frederick III/I at an disadvantage. All of this, not coincidentally increased his personal power. In fact, he went even further and by directing Frederick III’s regulation of 22 July 1698 “eliminated the privy council completely from political matters.”¹⁶ With the fall of Danckelman, the privy council stopped being the central point of policy formulation. Wartenburg saw his chance to gain considerable influence over Frederick III. He placed others within his clique in the position that Danckelman’s circle formerly held and thereby filled the top ranks with his supporters.

¹³Frey and Frey, Frederick I: The Man and His Times, p. 71.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Dorwart, The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia, p. 225. Dorwart notes of Wartenburg: “A man of no administrative talent, he advanced himself by means of the boudoir, by flattery, and by diverting the court from boredom. He did not join the intriguers of 1697 but when Danckelman fell, it was Wartenberg to whom fell the mantle of the first minsiter. Never a member of the privy council, he directed Brandenburg policy for thirteen years from his office of lord high chamberlain. By getting the royal title for his master in 1701....”

¹⁶Ibid., p. 28.

Frederick III, in 1698 was ruling from his *Kabinet* when he relegated all important issues to a *Staatsconferenz*, a few councillors who formed a cabal, Colbe (Count Wartenburg), Albrecht (Count Barfuss), Fuchs, and Schmettau.¹⁷ With it and primarily through the *Staatsconferenz*, however, Wartenburg gained Frederick's confidence and proceeded to dominate affairs of the state with an annual salary of over 100,000 talers.¹⁸ The cabal now reviewed all reports and decided the business of importance. As Dorwart notes, it was by a regulation of 2 December 1699 that this body was restricted more to important "state affairs".¹⁹

In addition, the *Staatsconferenz* was slowly becoming more dedicated to foreign matters. One of the unexpected developments in this period of Frederick III's reign was the administrative rise of Heinrich Rüdiger von Ilgen. It was Ilgen who emerged as one of Frederick William I's most, if not the most, trusted advisors in the early decades of the eighteenth century. But during the reign of Frederick III, he was from the late 1690s onward more and more entrusted with important matters, and in particular those of international politics. By 1702, Ilgen, along with Wartenburg, were the two most trusted advisors to Frederick III. Both were able to meet with the new King directly and not through secretaries or other advisory councils or individuals.²⁰

Wartenburg procured from Frederick a written statement that declared he would never be held accountable for his official actions. This

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁸Robert Freiherr von Schrötter, "Das preussische Offizierkorps unter dem ersten Könige von Preussen," *Forschungen zur brandenburgischen und preussischen Geschichte*, vol. 26, 1913: p. 110. Cited in Linda Frey and Marsha Frey, *Frederick I: The Man and His Times*, p. 86. For all officers in 1711/12, see Förster, *Friedrich Wilhelm I. König von Preussen*, vol. 1, pp. 54-70. Compare to the salaries under Frederick William I, pp. 179-191.

¹⁹Dorwart, *The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia*, p. 28.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 29.

was out of fear of the consequences Danckelman suffered. Frederick III clearly valued Wartenburg's role as advisor and this was most evident when Wartenburg received the order of Black Eagle. He was only the second to receive this with Frederick III/I's own son, the crown prince and future Frederick William I being the first. Most all of Wartenburg's personal success was gained without a solid administrative or political basis and ultimately his authority derived from Frederick III/I's personal support.

Frederick III/I ruled through this group that was led by Wartenburg. The group met and decided away from Frederick who communicated with them via private secretaries. Therefore, there were no established channels and secretaries became important to the function of government. Wartenburg exploited this link to his advantage by communicating his views directly to Frederick and by-passing the other officials altogether. With important matters, this meant the group was by-passed and Wartenburg gained primary influence with the King. The established departmental organisation became abandoned by Wartenburg's personal link with the King. The role of the privy council declined even further in this period and was further usurped by Wartenburg. The privy council continued to meet but the King's group in the *Staatsconferenz*, decided on important matters. Those not connected with the members of *Staatsconferenz* did not accept this quietly.

The international scene, however, kept the *Staatsconferenz* busy. In particular, Frederick III's quest for a royal title was at the forefront in the last years of the century. Negotiations in regard to a royal title came to their peak in 1700 when it became apparent that France was not going to accept a negotiated settlement of the Spanish Succession question, but that Louis XIV would uphold Charles II's (of Spain) will which awarded the Spanish throne to the French Bourbon claimant. In such an event, the Habsburgs would need Brandenburg-Prussia's support in a struggle with France. It is

at this point that another subsidy treaty was proposed to the Hohenzollern ruler. The decision to support the Emperor and thus Austria apparently was not a unanimous decision among Frederick III's principal advisors although Wartenburg was in favour. In particular, Bartholdi, Ilgen, and Fuchs initially raised questions about the likelihood that the Emperor would agree to grant the royal title to Frederick III. In addition, the title would cost Brandenburg-Prussia too much monetarily as well as politically. Frederick III took care with his response to their concerns and paid particular attention to the issues of Brandenburg-Prussia's "dignity" as well as the financial restitution that would need to be paid to the Emperor.²¹ Droysen notes that this document put an end to any opposition to the prospect of seeking the royal title.²² Frederick III's commentaries on why he believed Brandenburg-Prussia not only deserved recognition but indeed had the right to hold a royal title has the tone of little thought to future Hohenzollern rulers. Frederick III stated his case that of course he would be king but at the same time he would as always be a good "*Vasal des Reichs*."²³ He mentioned nothing about how this would be guaranteed especially for future Hohenzollern rulers.

²¹Several pages of Frederick III's response in facsimile form as well as a complete transcription of the response can be found in Eduard Heyck, *Friedrich I. und die Begründung des preußischen Königtums*, Bielefeld und Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1901, found between pages 32-33. Frederick III notes, for example, on page 14 of his response: "Meine meinung ist auch daß ich vohr allen Dingen des Keyzers approbation versichern will. Ich wil auch respecta meiner Chuhr und im Reich habenden Lande mit meinen Mit Churfürsten in Collegial versamlungen nictes neues pretendieren Es müste aber die Königliche Dignitet auf Preußen, weil Ich alda Souverein bin fundieret, und bey den Preußischen Landtständen dahin gebracht werden, daß dieselbe als aus eigenem Bewegnüß Mich ersucheten die Königliche würde anzunehmen,...."

²²Johann Gustav Droysen, *Geschichte der Preußischen Politik*, vol. 4:1, "Friedrich I. König von Preußen," Leipzig: Beit und Comp., 1867, pp. 214-217.

²³Heyck, *Friedrich I. und die Begründung des preußischen Königtums*, document found between pp. 32-33, this citation from page 15 of Frederick's response to his advisors.

Nevertheless, the Emperor as well as the European states not in the Holy Roman Empire agreed to recognise the royal title. It was on 6 August 1700 that a courier delivered two dispatches to Frederick III from Vienna containing the final agreement of all the involved party states. The first package contained a contract for Frederick III to sign from the Western states binding him to his intentions and restitution. The second dispatch contained the Emperor's approval for the royal title.²⁴ In exchange for the royal title, Frederick was required to contribute ten thousand men in support of the impending war with France, the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1713/14). He was also required to pay over one-hundred thousand talers to the Emperor as well as drop all claims to subsidies promised to him in the past. In all future elections within the Holy Roman Empire, Frederick III/I was to support the Habsburgs. Finally, he was not entitled to use the title King "of" Prussia but rather King "in" Prussia. Although this was a technical distinction it had supporters from various sides. For example, Poland was still in possession of Polish Prussia which had historical roots to the Hohenzollern portion of Prussia. The accepted title distinguished to some degree that Frederick III/I was King in East Prussia and not King of all of Prussia, including the Polish region. In another view, this was a slightly more precise term within the Empire. It defined the Hohenzollern title as pertaining to only that part of Brandenburg-Prussia that rested outside the jurisdiction of the Holy Roman Empire. In particular, this was because kings could make titled nobles, which the Emperor wanted to uphold as a Habsburg monopoly within the Holy Roman Empire, therefore

²⁴Ibid., p. 39. Heyck writes that "und am 6. August ritten die Kuriere mit zwei hochwichtigen Schreiben aus den Thoren Wiens: in dem einen lehnte die Wiener Regierung den Beitritt zu dem Vertrage der Westmächte ab, das andere kündete dem Kurfürsten von Brandenburg die Zustimmung des Kaisers zur Annahme des königlichen Titels an." No other information is available about these documents.

Brandenburg-Prussia secured the title and associated privileges only within East Prussia.

The Royal Title and Coronation

The negotiations with the Emperor and other Continental states were no doubt the most critical aspect in Frederick III's quest for a royal title. There was, however, another side to the issue of the royal title which is often not mentioned by historians in discussions of the title. That is the East Prussian view of not only the prospect of a title but also of the negotiations. Outside the territory, the East Prussian elite presented their objections to the Emperor while inside the territory, there was public objections to the change in status. Therefore, Frederick III had considerable objections and resistance to gaining a royal title from both outside and within Brandenburg-Prussia.

The East Prussians were no less resistant during the reign of Frederick III than they were under his father, the Great Elector. Frederick III's negotiations with Leopold I were conducted without the direct input of the East Prussian elite. They, in turn, had little or no influence on the negotiations.²⁵

Moreover, as Frederick III was able to win over the support of the Emperor, as well as the other Northern powers, he was clearly unable to win over the support of the East Prussians. There is no doubt that for generations many East Prussians considered the Hohenzollerns heretics as they were Calvinist and therefore their rule over East Prussia illegitimate, no matter the title they held. In short, the house of Hohenzollern was considered foreign and of the wrong religion.

This matter went beyond the issue that the Hohenzollerns had converted to Calvinism from Lutheranism while most East Prussians

²⁵For the following section, see Friedrich, "The Other Prussia," pp. 497-523.

remained Lutheran. There was also the issue of sovereignty that was established centuries before. Frederick III considered the East Prussian threat serious and recognised that he needed the East Prussian elites' support for the title as well as that of the Emperor and other states. These issues had to be resolved if Frederick III was to successfully have the title recognised within his own state.

Frederick III sent one of his strongest native East Prussian supporters, Christoph von Dohna, to try and persuade the other East Prussian elite that Frederick III's quest for a title was the right course for them as well in probably late 1700 or early 1701. The fact that a member of the Dohna family was involved in this matter is not surprising. Not only was the Dohna name one of the most prominent family names in East Prussia in the eighteenth century but it had been for prior centuries. Several members of the Dohna family had been crucial agents of Hohenzollern power in East Prussia.²⁶ Dohna had enough success to be able to report back to Frederick III that a majority of the *Regierung*, including the four *Oberräte* and *Burggrave* of Königsberg, would recognise his title should he receive it. In addition the *Landräte* also pledged their support of recognition. As Karin Friedrich acknowledges, however, one cannot say how strong this support was, as on several previous occasions all the East Prussian elite groups mentioned above objected to the question of recognising a Hohenzollern title of King for East Prussia primarily because of the religious question as well

²⁶See, for example, Volker Press, "Das Haus Dohna in der europäischen Adelsgesellschaft des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts," in *Reformatio et Reformationes: Festschrift für Lothar Graf zu Dohna zum 65. Geburtstag*, edited by Andreas Mehl and Wolfgang Christian Schneider, Darmstadt: Technische Hochschule Darmstadt, 1989, pp. 371-402. Press notes briefly, however, that the relationship with the Hohenzollerns was increasingly strained during the course of Frederick William I's reign, because, he writes "die familiären Beziehungen waren gegenüber der Staatsmacht zurückgetreten, in Preußen war sogar der Hof verkümmert, eine Basis jenes Verbindungsnetzes, von dem die Dohnas getragen worden waren." This is an important proposition that will be followed-up in subsequent chapters.

as the issue of Hohenzollern sovereignty. As short as only a year prior to the coronation, the East Prussian elite protested and refused to pay the contribution tax being levied in the rural areas. In addition, they protested the Great Elector's plans to build new Calvinist churches in the primarily Lutheran East Prussia. The opposition to Hohenzollern influences, political and religious, were for long a point of contention between Berlin and Königsberg. In response to Karin Friedrich, it must be suggested that no matter how weak or even short-lived the support was for the royal title, Frederick III/I did receive the support he needed when it counted most from those who held sway over the internal affairs of the new Kingdom.

The East Prussian response was particularly strong and enduring after the title was granted and the coronation ceremony. The expensive ceremony was especially abhorrent as was the act of Frederick III crowning himself. Much has been made of this act by historians as primarily a testament to the secular nature of the title. There was more, however. For example, the influence the Swedish rulers had on the Great Elector and Friedrich III. Frederick III's coronation was a "spectacle of Baroque glorification" and an imitation of Charles XII's self-coronation as King of Sweden in 1697. In addition, the ceremony was executed in such a manner as to "enhance the status of the monarchy."²⁷

The coronation itself appears to have been steeped more in political significance than religious. The event took the air of an elaborate religious event, however. Religion had played a significant part of most other

²⁷Friedrich, "The Other Prussia," p. 499. Friedrich notes that "[t]he influence of the Swedish model not only Frederick III, but also on his father, has usually been underestimated. Remarks by the Great Elector, such as "ich schnarch die brüder (von Königsberg) jetzt an auf schwedische Manier, ob schon mir nicht allzeit wohl dabei ist", have been neglected (Jörg Jacoby, Bogusław Radziwiłł. Der Statthalter des Großen Kurfürsten in Ostpreußen, Wissenschaftliche Beiträge no. 40, Marburg: Herder-Institut, 1959, p. 151.) Friedrich goes on to cite primary sources that describe the East Prussian coronation sent back to Berlin by the British diplomat, Lord Plantamour.

coronation ceremonies in Europe. In all but a few, the ceremony and actual crowning was performed by a member of the ruler's church. Frederick III found himself in an awkward position during the planning stages of the ceremony. He was Calvinist and the crowning was to take place in Königsberg which was by and large Lutheran. There was no way he could accept the crown from a Lutheran and there was no way in which the East Prussians would accept the title given under Calvinist authority. When in the end Frederick III crowned himself as King and his wife, as Queen, he skirted the issue. In addition, he attempted to show all of Europe as well as the new Kingdom itself that he was not only the new King but also the source of authority. The Hohenzollerns while Dukes in East Prussia had virtually complete sovereignty already and the title changed, some argued, little in practice.²⁸ Dohna, who later became involved in a debate through pamphlets on whether the title was legal, noted that the right of a sovereign duke is "to answer to no one under the sun except God."²⁹

Karin Friedrich has explored the resulting propaganda debates and concluded that the native nobility were less and less able to resist the image of Frederick III/I that had been created. In one of the first published narratives of the coronation, which had more than one reprinting, Johann von Besser established what was to become the standard interpretation of the ceremony and its implications for future Hohenzollern kings:

²⁸Ibid., p. 501. See also, whom Friedrich quotes, Peter Baumgart, "Die preußische Königskrönung von 1701, das Reich und die europäische Politik," in Preußen, Europa und das Reich. Edited by Otto Hauser. Köln, Wein: Böhlau, 1987, p. 79. "Kings who receive their power from the estates of the realm wear their royal insignia only after being anointed .. but your Majesty, whose royalty was not founded on the will of the estates ... but on the example of the most ancient kings, on its own foundations, did not have to consider such a thing, as You previously possessed already the full set of Regalia due to Your sovereignty." This is a quote from Johann Christian Lünig in 1701.

²⁹He went on to use Bodin and Pufendorf as support to his argument. See Friedrich, "The Other Prussia," pp. 507-8 who cites Franz Lüdtké, Polen und die Erwerbung der preußischen Königswürde durch die Hohenzollern, Bromberg: Richard Krahl, 1912, Anhang, p. 10.

"Since once upon a time, Prussia was a kingdom, ... it was jealous of its neighbors who were monarchs; its people, like the children of Israel, were moved by the glory of neighboring kingdoms, wailing 'give us a king so that we can be like others' ... but all this has been helped by Your Majesty's coronation. Prussia has become not only royal Prussia, but a kingdom itself."³⁰

The native East Prussians were made to feel important, in fact, superior, which permeated the Estates and urban elites in Königsberg. In short, the mythical Borussican kingdom was used to legitimate the new Hohenzollern royal title. As a result, much of the former resistance as well as the nobilities' attempts to seek refuge from the Polish King were "no longer mentioned," according to Friedrich.³¹ The official portrayal of Frederick III/I was as a Prussian.

There is little doubt that this was the case. Friedrich has linked well these ideas with the events and ideas that were occurring in Polish Prussia. It seems clear there was an impact on both Polish Prussia and East Prussia. One must wonder, however, in light of the following chapters, the actual extent that the Hohenzollerns were able to reduce resistance to their rule in the Kingdom through these types of portrayal. It had certain value in legitimising the new crown but as we shall see in the remaining chapters, resistance flourished. Therefore, the Hohenzollern myth that was promoted has its place in this study but it must be seen in light of other factors as well.

In order to receive the support of the native clergy, Frederick III arranged for two local religious officials to become bishops in order for them to perform the post-crowning "anointment." Frederick III/I noted after the ceremony that the role of religion in the ceremony was important in gaining the recognition as a "real" king within Europe, yet it really had little

³⁰Ibid., p. 511.

³¹Ibid., p. 512.

religious significance.³² In addition, Frederick III/I commented that his crown was equal in stature to any of those of Europe.³³ To Frederick III/I it was the achievement and recognition of the royal title that was important and not how it was fulfilled. That is, all monarchs ranked the same in status. Power, however, was another matter.

There were complaints, resistance and outright obstruction to the royal title. Many of these came from within East Prussia but a significant number came from outside, principally from Poland.³⁴ It was not until 1764, a full sixty-three years after the crowning that the last diet (*Sejm*) in Poland voted recognition of the Hohenzollern title over East Prussia.³⁵ This was, significantly, long after the end of the union with the Electorate of Saxony who were rivals of Brandenburg-Prussia. The Polish King had recognised the title in 1701 and the diets were unable to unite and mount a significant objection themselves.³⁶ Within East Prussia, however, these objections

³²Baumgart, "Die preußische Königskrönung von 1701," p. 79. See also Friedrich, "The Other Prussia," p. 501.

³³Baumgart, "Die preußische Königskrönung von 1701," p. 75. See also Friedrich, "The Other Prussia," pp. 502. Baumgart notes: "*damit in summa zwischen S[eine]r Churfürstlichen Durchlaucht und anderen europäischen Königen, in specie denen Königen von Schweden, Denemarck und Pohlen in der Titulatur und anderen ehrenbezeugungen kein unterscheid mehr bestehe.*"

³⁴For those inside East Prussia, see Friedrich, "The Other Prussia," pp. 504-23. Although it is outside the scope of this study, Friedrich traces the literary and in general, written accounts of protest against the Hohenzollerns. In general, it is sufficient here to note that this opposition was significant and wide-spread across the new kingdom.

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 502.

³⁶Part of the reason for this might be because of bribes given to them by Frederick III/I as well as the fact that King Augustus II of Poland had shown signs that he wanted a stronger monarchy against the diets. Therefore, some of the diets looked to Frederick III/I for support against this from occurring — presumably because Frederick III/I would be opposed to a stronger Polish king in the region as well. See *Ibid.*, p. 503.

appear to have been less prevalent starting after the middle of Frederick William I's reign or roughly after 1730.³⁷

After the conclusion of the East Prussian coronation in 1701, affairs in the central administration were in the forefront again. Back in Berlin, the former privy council leaders worked to restore "the point of control of all government and administration to the council or to a commission selected from it by the Elector."³⁸ This they failed to do and Wartenburg's domination over central affairs appears to have increased as he was named prime minister. Wartenburg was now structurally supported in an established administrative organisation.

Wittgenstein, who controlled all domain land, including the vast amount in East Prussia, and General Field Marshall Wartensleben were representative of the type of corruption that occurred in the uppermost levels of Hohenzollern administration. Wartenburg, Wittgenstein, and Wartensleben, known collectively as the - 3-W's - were able to place their interests ahead of the other advisors at court. In addition, they were able to block the interests of other principal advisors, for example, Ilgen. They regarded the territories, East Prussia for example, only as a source of immediate revenue and constantly levied taxes there to help with the showy undertakings at Frederick III/I's Court that ranged from Frederick William I's three week wedding celebration, to the coronation of his father as king on 18 January 1701, to the palace in Berlin for Sophie Charlotte.³⁹ All of these were expensive and severely strained royal finances and pushed the King into debt. The breaking point came in 1709.

³⁷This is consistent with this study which will suggest in the following chapters that Frederick William I was only beginning to establish his authority after 1730.

³⁸Dorwart, *The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia*, p. 28.

³⁹Roth, "The East Prussian 'Domaenenpaechter' in the Eighteenth Century," p. 37.

East Prussia in Crisis, 1709-1713

By 1709, East Prussia experienced a major crisis with a plague epidemic and the onset of a famine.⁴⁰ Although Frederick William I had been involved with matters of state prior to 1709 - primarily with regard to royal domain affairs and the military - the plague in East Prussia was the most important event to involve Frederick William I personally, and especially with those matters which concerned the Kingdom. Up to this point, the government in Königsberg, and more particularly, the East Prussian Domain Board, were struggling with a financial crisis and were not able to receive guidance from Berlin.⁴¹ Not only was Berlin pre-occupied with the War of Spanish Succession but also, within East Prussia, the problem existed that so many people were dying within such a short amount of time, that there was not just economic and social disruption but virtually complete breakdown. Therefore, not only was there a lack of effective administrative structures between officials in Berlin and East Prussia but also, there was a breakdown of many existing structures and agencies within the territory itself. Even the local officials, including the domain officials fled infected areas. One of the solutions sought by the remaining Domain Boards was to levy more and more taxes on the remaining domain peasants who were less and less able to meet their financial demands.⁴² If East Prussia was not losing its peasants to the

⁴⁰The best account of the plague can be found in Wilhelm Sahn, Geschichte der Pest in Ostpreussen, Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1905. In addition, see the following: Roth, "The East Prussian 'Domaenenpaechter' in the Eighteenth Century, pp. 37-38; Terveen, Gesamtstaat und Retablissement, p. 17-19 and Skalweit, Die ostpreussische Domänenverwaltung unter Friedrich Wilhelm I und das Retablissement Litauens, p. 10.

⁴¹Terveen, Gesamtstaat und Retablissement, p. 17.

⁴²*Ibid.*

plague or famine, then the outright desertion of farmsteads was adding to the population depletion. As Roth notes, there was a drop in the productivity on the domains and as a result the territory's tax revenues fell which in turn, caused a cycle of deterioration to both the general infrastructure but more crucially to the East Prussian domain.⁴³

Furthermore, it should be noted that in the opinion of Otto Hintze, it was the period of Wartenburg that the crown prince, the future Frederick William I, took the initiative to consolidate authority under his own direction.⁴⁴ This primarily focused on domain administration, a matter of the affairs of state that he would devote much time to reforming after his accession in 1713.

The plague that began to spread in about 1709 in East Prussia is the most important factor in this region's history in the early eighteenth century. It was what defined the territory for generations afterwards. Families were destroyed or at best, fled and became separated, virtually all farming was destroyed, government in the infected areas had broken-down as government officials fled. It was virtually total social, economic, and political disintegration.

Although the precise origins of the East Prussian plague are uncertain, it is traceable from Western Europe through Warsaw and Poland from about 1702.⁴⁵ After it took hold in East Prussia, starting in about 1709, it reached Königsberg by August of that year but was most devastating in the eastern districts of the province until about 1711. The Poles took strict precautions with regard to burning anything associated with an infected person and having a four to six month quarantine period. In addition, there

⁴³Roth, "The East Prussian 'Domaenenpaechter' in the Eighteenth Century," p. 37.

⁴⁴Hintze, *Die Hohenzollern und ihr Werk*, p. 267.

⁴⁵Sahm, *Geschichte der Pest in Ostpreussen*, pp. 35-43.

was a complete break by Poland with East Prussia. Bridges and roads were destroyed, boats were destroyed on rivers flowing between the two, etc.⁴⁶ The concern soon after 1708 also was shared by East Prussians who placed their own restrictions on links with Poland as the plague was becoming more widespread there. The harsh winter of 1708/9 and subsequent poor harvests fostered the spread of disease. One official noted in his diary that it was only on 15 May 1709 that the first ship arrived into the Königsberg harbour after an unheard of hard winter there. The official goes on to note that "the ground still had been so full of ice at that time that no grass could appear and around the day after Easter (*Pfingsten*) no flowers had been seen."⁴⁷ As a result, poor nutrition from a lack of adequate food, combined with diseased water, generally poor hygiene, the air and most of all rodents, all combined to help the plague's spread. Finally, the plague was not the only epidemic that affected the region in these years. Tremendous losses were also attributable to typhoid, dysentery and small pox. Königsberg implemented strict measures with regard to quarantine although the degree to which these were followed outside the city is not known.

More than 241,000 people died as a result of the plague and famine, which was more than a third of the total East Prussian population.⁴⁸ Eighty percent of these deaths were in the north east province of Prussian

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 36. On 21 July 1708 the *Amthauptmann* in Ragnit reported the following: "Die Brücke darneben ist in Stücke gehauen und in den Fluss geworfen. Item so sind auch die Nebenwege vergraben." Sahm cites GStAPK, EM 107b which is a relatively large assortment of manuscript material that relates specifically to matters of the plague.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 41.

⁴⁸Sahm, *Geschichte der Pest in Ostpreussen*, p. 150. Sahm calculated that in 1709 total deaths reached 58,338; in 1710, the total was 173,508; and in 1711, 9325 people died as a direct result of the plague. Similar figures of total deaths cited in Terveen, *Gesamtstaat und Retablissement*, p. 18; Skalweit, *Die ostpreussische Domänenverwaltung unter Friedrich Wilhelm I und das Retablissement Litauens*, p. 10; Roth, "The East Prussian 'Domaenenpaechter' in the Eighteenth Century," p. 38.

Lithuania, the region which contained most of the royal domain peasants.⁴⁹ This directly affected the court in Berlin since this was the area where the crown's workers and production most suffered and was the source of its income from the domain/peasants in East Prussia.

The plague reached Königsberg in the middle of August 1709.⁵⁰ In Königsberg, by March of 1710, 18,000⁵¹ residents had died from the plague while 6,500 fell sick and another 8,437 fled.⁵² As soon as the plague began to spread westward from Lithuania, the domain councillors fled from Königsberg.⁵³ The administration quickly lost control over the local domain officials, who kept for themselves the grain surpluses sent to East Prussia as relief for the starving peasants.⁵⁴

The East Prussian government was paralysed as a result of the 1709 crisis of plague and famine.⁵⁵ For many years prior to the crisis, the Königsberg government, i.e., the *Regierung*, and more particularly, the East Prussian Domain Board was not able to receive assistance from Berlin.⁵⁶ This was partly due to inadequate administrative structures that were complicated by Berlin's pre-occupation with the Spanish Succession War. And the instructions they did receive were often not in East Prussia's best

⁴⁹Terveen, *Gesamtstaat und Retablissement*, p. 18; Roth, "The East Prussian 'Domaenenpaechter' in the Eighteenth Century," p. 38.

⁵⁰Sahm, *Geschichte der Pest in Ostpreussen*, p. 48.

⁵¹Schmoller, "Die Verwaltung Ostpreußens unter Friedrich Wilhelm I," p. 46.

⁵²Terveen, *Gesamtstaat und Retablissement*, p. 18.

⁵³Roth, "The East Prussian 'Domaenenpaechter' in the Eighteenth Century," p. 38.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Sahm, *Geschichte der Pest in Ostpreussen*, passim.; Terveen, *Gesamtstaat und Retablissement*, pp. 17-19; Skalweit, *Die ostpreussische Domänenverwaltung unter Friedrich Wilhelm I und das Retablissement Litauens*, p. 10; Roth, "The East Prussian 'Domaenenpaechter' in the Eighteenth Century," pp. 37-38.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 37.

interests but rather for the immediate interest and need of the Berlin court. The Domain Boards were forced to levy more and more taxes on the domain peasants in order to cover the King's debts and court. The peasants were less and less able to meet these demands.⁵⁷ The central government in Berlin was quite unable to respond adequately to the crisis.

Communication with East Prussia had always been particularly difficult. The plague made connections even more difficult. As Terveen notes, the poor traffic network "virtually cut off [East] Prussia from the rest of Europe let alone one another's nearby neighbors."⁵⁸ This was only improved in the eighteenth century primarily through improvements to the transportation network in order to exploit more fully the resources of the area, namely linseed, flax, yarn, hemp, smoking tobacco and snuff and coarse salt.⁵⁹ This poor communication network allowed more control of governmental administration by local nobility.

The plague and famine that followed after 1709 gave the crown prince and his party the opportunity to move into the offensive against the Wartenburg regime, whom for long the crown prince had been opposed.⁶⁰ The principal ministers, namely Wartenburg, Wittgenstein, and General Field Marshall Wartensleben focused attention on East Prussia, as mentioned, on ways to bring in more tax revenue. These plans were often not well grounded. "While most governments were setting aside resources to cover an emergency or catastrophe," writes Michaelis, the government of

⁵⁷Ibid.; Terveen, *Gesamtstaat und Retablissement*, p. 17.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 13.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Carl Hinrichs, "Kronprinz Friedrich Wilhelm I., Ospreußen und der Sturz Wartenbergs," *Altpreussische Forschungen*, 16, 1939, pp. 207-245.

Frederick III/I "did nothing."⁶¹ The issuing of directives for immediate gain by Berlin was to show them to be writing a prescription for disaster.

Frederick William I, as crown prince, became leader of an opposition party (*Kronprinzpartei*) in Berlin during the plague crises of 1709/10 and this party, helped assure Wartenburg's fall.

Wartenburg's position was not filled after his fall. In addition, it was at this time that more and more responsibility devolved upon the crown prince. This was in part because of his father's declining health and in part because his father simply wanted to prepare his son for the task he faced.

On 16 February 1711 and after two years of unsuccessful harvest resulting in further east Prussian devastation, famine, and plague, the Dohna commission was appointed by the King named after Count Christoph Dohna, a member of one of the most prominent East Prussian noble families. An initial investigation reported little and left more questions unanswered about the causes and continued effects of the plague than it answered. The crisis became too large for Frederick III/I to ignore.

The King took action to start this royal enquiry after the initial provincial authority's self investigation placed blame on deep poverty, overburden due to military and tax obligations, and loss of capital from the *Hofkasse* that was never traced. This initial report had four signatures. Ironically one of the signatories was Wittgenstein who was against the commission in principle and in the subsequent report to the King would be accused of "personal enrichment at the expense of the state."⁶²

Dohna was an early ally of the crown prince and he personally went to express his support to Frederick William after the disaster became known

⁶¹Wilhelm Michaelis, "Die Staatskrise Preußens in den Jahren 1709/10. Der Ruin des Landes, seine Ursachen und der Reformbeginn," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht*, 24:3, March 1973, p. 157.

⁶²*Ibid.*, p. 159.

and shared his opposition to Wartenburg. Dohna had been made a Real Privy Councillor after aiding in Danckelman's fall but left his position in 1702 because of his opposition to Wartenburg's regime. It was in this period that he started his close alliance with Frederick William I.⁶³

After the Dohna Commission was appointed, it was sent to Königsberg to take over authority of local administration until the situation could be brought under control.⁶⁴ This group was also to investigate the causes of the disaster in East Prussia. From Königsberg, the Commission reported to Berlin that there were two reasons that were increasing the disaster's effects. Those peasants who were surviving the famine and plague were looting and acquiring property of plague victims and often would then become infected themselves. This, the commission thought was the minor cause and a result of the "low cultural level of the Lithuanian peasants."⁶⁵ The commission found that the plague was a "convenient excuse to cover up the complete disorganisation of provincial and local administration."⁶⁶

When the commission tried to examine the domain estate account books for 1709–1710 that were left behind by the fleeing Königsberg domain councillors, it was able to find records for only three of 79 estates. Whether or not these accounts had ever been submitted was difficult to determine since the board's registry was partially eaten by mice. This then was the

⁶³Dorwart, The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia, p. 227, fn.29.

⁶⁴Terveen, Gesamtstaat und Retablissement, p. 19.

⁶⁵Terveen, Gesamtstaat und Retablissement, pp. 19-21; Skalweit, Die ostpreussische Domänenverwaltung unter Friedrich Wilhelm I und das Retablissement Litauens, pp. 11-18. Cited in Roth, "The East Prussian 'Domaenenpaechter' in the Eighteenth Century," p. 38.

⁶⁶Ibid.

state of the domain administration, a critical source of revenue for the House of Hohenzollern in East Prussia at the accession of Frederick William I.⁶⁷

Another important conclusion found Wittgenstein involved with much of the corruption as noted above and it subsequently led to his and his supporters' fall. Kameke became Wittgenstein's successor but only as the president of the *Hofkammer*⁶⁸ and *Schatullwesens*.⁶⁹ He was later made *Staats und Kriegsmeister* under Frederick William I but dismissed in 1718 "in the highest disgrace"⁷⁰ as a result of the Klément intrigue.⁷¹

This, then, was the general condition of the government in East Prussia at the accession of Frederick William I in 1713. The Dohna Commission had made a reasonable attempt at finding the causes of the plague and the reasons for its continuation. However, the government remained inactive in paralysis, unstable and incompetent. To have stability and competence in the territory, the East Prussians would pay, what was for them, a high price. And for the King, Roth notes one last important result:

The Hohenzollerns were unable to exploit their landed patrimony in the province because they lacked an effective administrative apparatus to prevent local noble officials from misappropriating domain revenues. This situation was tolerable only because the rulers' expectations relative to the domain and its potential were low. The reign of Frederick William I marked a significant change, both in attitude and in action.⁷²

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Under Frederick William I the name changed to the General Finance Directory

⁶⁹Michaelis, "Die Staatskrise Preußens in den Jahren 1709/10," p. 159. The Schattule was primarily found in the core Hohenzollern territory of Brandenburg and was a tax received from each Ämter in the form of payment-in-kind.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹See Chapter Six, p. 253.

⁷²Roth, "The East Prussian 'Domaenenpaechter' in the Eighteenth Century," pp. 38-39.

A large portion of the blame for the rapid collapse of East Prussia after the plague first struck and its enduring impact rests with the continued exploitation and corruption of Wittgenstein and Wartenburg. In late 1710 and early 1711, the crown prince successfully used his influence to curb some of the problems Frederick William I saw at court. His experience of witnessing corrupt favourites taking control of large areas of government was seen by the young Frederick William as an abdication of kingship. The King subsequently noted as much in his instructions to his youthful successor, the future Frederick the Great. Frederick William I explained:

Your finances must be managed by yourself and alone and the command of the army ordered by yourself and alone and the two matters arranged alone; then you shall have authority in the army through command and the love of your officers and civil servants because you alone have control of the purse, and you shall be respected and admired by the entire world by you being such a wise and honourable ruler. May Almighty God help you. Amen.⁷³

Although Frederick William I had close personal advisors none were as powerful as those under previous Hohenzollerns. Frederick William I saw himself as his best personal advisor. Moreover, no particular minister or favourite, except possibly Heinrich Rüdiger von Ilgen, ever secured the dominant position under Frederick William I that various men had enjoyed at his father's court.

At the level of central administration in Berlin, Frederick William I embarked on a more centralised approach to administration and government in general beginning in 1709. This was a change in a long standing Hohenzollern attitude toward administration especially in East Prussia. Frederick William I was not, however, able to significantly alter the traditional administrative workings and what he did accomplish occurred

⁷³Written, Potsdam, January 22, 1722. Dietrich, editor, *Die politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern*, Berlin: Böhlau, 1986, p. 224.

slowly. In East Prussia, at least, the King merely alerted the East Prussian nobility, who were to find their territorial authority subject to change. In short, Frederick William I was not yet king.

Frederick William I's personality was important but such overwhelming attention by historians to this facet of Brandenburg-Prussia in this period leaves much of his reign open for investigation. His personal will and own actions alone could not have completed this development and nor could he change Prussia into a body with a Prussian *Geist*.⁷⁴ The army, cameralism, the Junkers, Pietism, the ruler's drive and abilities to change, better communications, etc., all came together under Frederick William I and appear to be shaped initially by the events of 1709/10.

Frederick William I grew up being instilled with values of "Prussian growth" and "Prussian development" especially since he was often exposed to government affairs from an early age.⁷⁵ For almost ten years before his accession to the throne, Frederick William I took part in the highest levels of Hohenzollern government, military and finance. Much of what Frederick William I learned about kingship came relatively early in his youth while still crown prince. He was introduced to the day-to-day operation of Brandenburg-Prussian government starting at age thirteen when in 1701 he began to attend meetings of the high level advisory to the King, the so-called *Geheime Rat* (Privy Council), and became a formal participant a year later. Here the Crown Prince was witness to the deficiencies of central administration and its inability to effectively operate at the territorial and local levels. In 1703, he began to take part in the *Geheime Kriegsrat* (Privy War Council), an agency established by Frederick William I's grandfather,

⁷⁴In regard to this point and Pietism, see Richard L. Gawthrop, "For the Good of Thy Neighbor: Pietism and the Making of Eighteenth-Century Prussia (Spener, Francke, Frederick William I)." Ph. D. Dissertation, Indiana University, 1984, p. 2.

⁷⁵Gerhard Oestreich, *Frederick William I. Preußischer Absolutismus. Merkantilismus, Militarismus*, Göttingen: Musters Schmidt, 1977, p. 12.

the Great Elector, which oversaw all military treasuries as well as all matters surrounding supply and administration of the army. Also at age thirteen he was given his first practical military experience when he took command of his own company of cadets. The active involvement in high-level operations of government and military on a day-to-day basis was to prove valuable experience for him in the administration, financial, technical, and tactical aspects of managing and controlling the military after he would become king. He was introduced to the responsibilities of personal financial management when he received the austere palace located South-East of Berlin, *Schloß Wüsterhausen* as a Christmas gift from his father in 1698 (age 9). Although this palace would provide a lifetime of comfort to him, it also obliged him at a relatively young age to personally manage his household budgets, the structural maintenance, and a staff which were all necessary for the smooth operation of his household. He gained while a young prince, therefore, an exceptionally intense level of exposure and involvement in high level governmental, military, and financial matters which were to influence his actions as king. He had become well-versed in the details of kingship and the decision making process due to his close personal involvement in the matters of the Hohenzollern government.⁷⁶ This was not an education that was forced upon him but rather, an upbringing that developed and instilled a unique knowledge for detail.⁷⁷ As crown prince, Frederick William I saw "the practical fundamental weakness that a new Prussian monarchy faced."⁷⁸ Frederick III/I did not oversee his own financial affairs and left these in the hands of his leading ministers who

⁷⁶Wolfgang Neugebauer, *Die Hohenzollern*, vol. 1, *Anfänge, Landesstaat und monarchische Autokratie bis 1740*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 1996, pp. 192-197 passim.

⁷⁷Oestreich, *Frederick William I. Preußischer Absolutismus, Merkantilismus, Militarismus*, p. 26.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*

frequently took improper advantage of their position. For example, *Oberkammerherr* · *Reichsgraf* Colbe von Wartenberg sought the crown prince's support in intrigue but Frederick William I often was able to avoid becoming involved.⁷⁹

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p. 27.

CHAPTER 4

Frederick William I's First Decade, 1713-22

The East Prussian *Regierung*, 1713-1722

Administrative reform during Frederick William I's reign was a continuing process and not a single event. A series of significant innovations in government were introduced throughout the reign. The supervision over the collected revenues from the territorial domain administrations shifted away from the *Hofkammer* to the new collegially organised General Finance Directory on 27 March 1713. In the very next year (1714) there was an important change in the control over the East Prussian *Kommissariat*. In 1716, the so-called Waldburg Reforms established a *Kommissare* for the Kingdom's urban affairs which was staffed almost exclusively by officials who were born in East Prussia. And in 1723, all the Hohenzollern's lands experienced the administrative changes that accompanied the setting-up of the General Directory. The King established a department for foreign affairs in 1728, the so-called *Auswärtiges Amt*. Smaller changes followed, for example the addition of central administrative departments for Religious and judicial affairs, both in 1738.

Within East Prussia itself, the King continued the policy he began in Pomerania and divided the East Prussian *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* into

two administrative units in February 1723.¹ One agency was located in Königsberg and held administrative jurisdiction over the Kingdom's Western regions. The other agency was based in Tilsit in the eastern district of Gumbinnen and covered the so-called Lithuanian and Polish districts in the east of the Kingdom.² This administrative re-structure was a practice used with other agencies outside the Kingdom and first adopted at the start of Frederick William I's reign.³ None of these innovations — not even the setting up of the General Directory — on its own fundamentally altered East Prussian administration. Their cumulative effect, however, was to change permanently both the institutional framework of government and the way in which it operated. The reforms which Frederick William I attempted to impose upon East Prussia were occasionally stringent, but they were not always fully implemented. The outcome and results of such reforms will be the subject of subsequent chapters. This present chapter will examine the operation of government during the first decade of Frederick William I's reign: coincidentally the ten years before the setting up of the General Directory. In particular, by highlighting the continuing importance of the East Prussian *Regierung*, the traditional nature and functioning of government in the Kingdom will be demonstrated. It will also clarify the impact of the King's reform efforts upon the established elites of the territory.

The native East Prussian elite governed more or less completely at Frederick William I's accession in 1713. The innovations attempted by the

¹GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpreußen, II-Materien, Nr. 1843. ABB, 4:1, pp. 55-64. This follows the separation of financial affairs under the General Finance Directory in East Prussia in 1714 which were subsequently reunited prior to the establishment of the General Directory in 1723.

²See Map, p. viii, and Appendix F, pp. 380-84.

³See the material cited in the first footnote.

Great Elector had had little permanent impact, and the Kingdom's native elites had consolidated their power during the reign of Frederick III/I.⁴ Their authority was institutionalised principally in the Königsberg *Regierung* whose members often governed without reference to Frederick William I and the royal authorities in Berlin.⁵ They made up the supreme governing body in East Prussia at Frederick William I's accession. The *Regierung* was integral to the operation of virtually every aspect of government. The advances against local administration made by the Great Elector, particularly in financial affairs, had often been supervised by or associated in some way with the *Regierung*.⁶ The *Regierung* also continued to supervise a number of agencies that were responsible for royal domain lands, exercised authority over many civil, fiscal, and military affairs, as well as the selection of administrative personnel, and most significantly, over affairs of justice.⁷ In practice, they supervised officials and their work at almost every level of government within the Kingdom.

The two most important matters supervised by the *Regierung* were justice and the Domain Board.⁸ Its members, the four *Regierungsräte* or *Oberräte*, came from the four so-called *Oberräte Hofämter*,⁹ namely the

⁴See Chapters 2 and 3.

⁵See Appendix A, p. 352. Organisational chart detailing Central and East Prussian government between the accession of Frederick William I in 1713 and the establishment of the General Directory in 1723.

⁶See above, Chapter 2.

⁷See Appendix A, p. 352.

⁸Some affairs, however, were under the authority of the district captains, *Hauptamt männer*, for example, the judicial magistrates.

⁹Sometimes these officials are called *Ober- und Regimentsräte*, although since the late seventeenth century, the nomenclature *Oberrat* became customary. Also known as *Hofämter*. See Richard Eydtkuhnen Ecker, "Die Entwicklung der Königlich Preußischen Regierung von 1701 bis 1758," Ph. D. Dissertation, Königlichen Albertus=Universität zu Königsberg i. Pr., Königsberg: Buch- und Steindruckerei Otto Kummel, 1908, pp. 9-10.

Landhofmeister, the *Oberburggraf*, the *Kanzler*, and the *Obermarschall*. In extraordinary cases, the *Regierungsräte* were “obliged” to call in and question the *Hauptleute* of the four oldest and highest ranking East Prussian districts: Amt Brandenburg, Amt Schaaken, Amt Fischhausen, and Amt Tapiau.¹⁰ In addition to the *Hauptleute*, the *Regierungsräte* in certain cases consulted the mayors of the three towns that made up the city of Königsberg: Altstadt, Kneiphof, and Löbenicht.¹¹

The nobility of East Prussia were usually not as wealthy as Junkers of other Hohenzollern territories. One might expect that since East Prussia had marginally better soil than Brandenburg and Pomerania, and since the Kingdom was largely an agrarian based economy, that the East Prussian nobility would have been more prosperous. In addition, the East Prussian Junkers had been liable on occasion to direct taxation (unlike elsewhere) and this worsened their financial position.¹² There was, however, a larger lesser nobility. In addition, the continuing practice of partible inheritance maintained relative poverty.

Prospective members for the *Regierung* would only be considered if they were noble and most importantly, of East Prussian birth.¹³ A broader point here is not merely the influence of the *Indigenatsrecht* but also the traditional mode of government through local noblemen. Although the office of *Regierungsräte* conferred considerable political and social prestige, it was a post that brought no salary but with fees, perquisites of office and so forth, as will be discussed later. It remained an authoritative bastion of

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²See the discussion of the *Generalhufenschuß* below, pp. 143ff.

¹³Ecker, “Die Entwicklung der Königlich Preußischen Regierung von 1701 bis 1758, p. 9.

native views and a fundamental source of authority well into Frederick William I's reign. An East Prussian Junker believed he was the natural ruler of the territory, he had a duty to assist in its governance, and this idea was supported by noble control over the powerful *Regierung* that was filled only by men of similar East Prussian native birth. The *Regierung* as the highest territorial authority generated respect through its corresponding elevated standing within East Prussian society. To a member of the *Regierung*, his social pre-eminence was directly related to his administrative position: each reinforced the other. A *Regierungsrat* saw himself first and foremost as the upholder of law and order.

It was not until the 1730s that a reduction in the power of the *Regierung* can be detected. Before this time, Frederick William I attempted to check the authority of the *Regierung* by elevating that of a rival administrative body: the royal *Kriegs und Domänen Kammer* and, presumably, by the *Kommissariat*.¹⁴ This was a characteristic strategy of would-be absolutists all over Europe. It was, however, only partially successful. The native East Prussian elite remained a political and social force at least until the end of Frederick William I's reign because the Kingdom's Junkers were able to retain much of their administrative authority and income, and in particular, to maintain social and administrative dominance. East Prussian government and society were based on the arrangement that the Junkers were in complete control of rural affairs and the administration of justice, while local burgers controlled urban affairs, particularly in the towns which made up Königsberg.

The status of the Junkers came from their dominance over government, which in turn enabled them to collect and control taxation. They themselves traditionally were totally exempt from paying direct

¹⁴See below, Chapter Five, pp. 213ff.

taxation except in certain wartime years which set them even further apart from those who did. Their status was partly diminished through the introduction of the *Generallhufenschoß* in 1715, a tax on the nobility but one that only kept them in check to a certain degree. The *Generallhufenschoß* was part of a larger round of reforms outlined in 1715 by Karl Heinrich *Erbtruchseß* und *Graf* von Waldburg, a former high ranking officer in the Hohenzollern army, who set out his proposals in a report to Frederick William I.¹⁵ Waldburg was a *Generalleutnant* and *Amthauptmann* in Amt Angerburg. After serving in the Saxon army, he joined the Brandenburg-Prussian service in 1705 shortly thereafter he was badly wounded in Flanders and left the army altogether. He returned to East Prussia where he took over the *Verweserschaft* in Amt Marienwerder and Riesenburg in 1711. His rise in Frederick William I's favour seems to have begun during the plague of 1709/11 when he was one of the very few native East Prussian officials to protest against the disorganisation and corruption in territorial administration. One of the projects he carried out for the King was the introduction of the *Generallhufenschoß*. He went on to become the first native East Prussian to head the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* in 1721. In short, he emerged as one of, if not, the most important native East Prussians to work with the King on many of his most significant reform projects in the Kingdom.¹⁶ Many of the reforms in which Waldburg was involved and especially the *Generallhufenschoß* were resented by the East Prussian nobility. Complaints about this tax continued from its introduction well into the 1730s.¹⁷ The successful introduction and implementation therefore was slow in its realisation and never met the initial expectations of Waldburg or

¹⁵ABB, 2, pp. 294-295.

¹⁶Krollmann, *Altpreußische Biographie*, Vol. 2, p. 747.

¹⁷Neugebauer, *Polititischer Wandel im Osten*, pp. 71-72.

the King.

Historians have traditionally explained Brandenburg–Prussian government by dividing it into four broad functions: military, fiscal, judicial, and general administrative. This approach to the actual operation of Hohenzollern government in East Prussia can be misleading, since there was considerable overlap both of personnel and of function between these various areas of policy. The individuals who carried out their duties in one of these areas were often involved in at least one other at the same time and responsibilities frequently overlapped. Some individuals, especially those at the local level of government, had responsibilities covering virtually all the judicial, fiscal, military, and administrative affairs of their area. In the eighteenth century, moreover, salary was not related to rank but was instead tied to the number of positions held. An official's remuneration therefore comprised all the separate salaries attached to each separate position held.¹⁸

These arrangements encouraged neglect and even corruption, since so many of the day-to-day functions of government were controlled by one nobleman. According to Weill, "[t]his, it might be added, was the main reason why so many ministers occupied such an odd assortment of positions, for the assignment was primarily made because of the emolument which went with the position with the minister's previous occupation or experience."¹⁹

Throughout Frederick William I's reign and particularly during its

¹⁸Herman Weill, *Frederick the Great and Samuel von Cocceji: A Study in the Reform of the Prussian Judicial Administration, 1740-1755*, The State Historical Society of Wisconsin for the Department of History, Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1961, p. 12.

¹⁹*Ibid.* See also, Adolf Thiesing, "Die Geschichte des preussischen Justizministeriums," in *200 Jahre Dienst am Recht: Gedenkschrift aus Anlass des 200-jährigen Gründungstages des Preussischen Justizministeriums*, edited by Franz Gürtner, Berlin: R. V. Decker's Verlag, 1938, p. 32. This is the same Franz Gürtner who was the Reich's Minister of Justice for Nazi Germany in the 1930s.

early years, the *Regierung's* administrative roles altered by a series of edicts and other instructions. These changes, however, were gradual and often had little effect in practice on the *Regierung's* actual operation. The *Regierung* slowly altered not merely its institutional, i. e., formal, structures but also its informal networks and agencies as well as its administrative practices. The informal as well as formal governmental roles of the traditional East Prussian elites — the Junkers and, to a certain extent, the urban authorities — were crucial to the day-to-day operation of government, and to the evolution of society in the territory.

The historian Wolfgang Neugebauer has recognised this wider interpretation, drawing attention to the 'latent Estates government,' or so-called *ständische Latenz*, through which East Prussia was governed.²⁰ *Ständische Latenz* was a combination of formal and informal structures of government in the East Prussian territory upon which Frederick William I relied. Institutional structures were accompanied by personal networks. Neugebauer gives most emphasis to the independent tradition of Prussians and the limits of absolutism that this broadened interpretation of government reveals. These combinations of formal and informal structures of government in the East Prussian territory not only existed but were relied upon by Frederick William I. One notable example was continued Junker control over estate peasants. As the government of Frederick William I only contained several hundred officials for all the Hohenzollern territories, it was critical that other networks of authority be utilised. On the East Prussian Junker estate, virtually all functions traditionally associated with the state were carried out by the Junker lord. These included the administration of law and order which included enforcement of the law and

²⁰Neugebauer, *Politischer Wandel im Osten*, pp. 65-86. Also, see Edgar Melton, "The Prussian Junkers, 1600-1786," p. 92 whose translation of the term *Ständische Latenz* is used here.

exactment of justice, selection of the local preacher and, particularly after the finalising of the Cantonal System in 1733, military recruitment, training, maintenance and discipline. Neugebauer in fact places considerable emphasis upon the traditional nature of East Prussian government and administration in explaining the achievements of Frederick William I and his predecessors. Therefore, absolutism developed in the territories outside of Brandenburg in an environment which contained a complex array of diverse and independent powers.²¹

The King's "core bureaucracy" for central government, as Edgar Melton notes, was relatively small and numbered less than a thousand for all the territories during the reigns of Frederick William I and Frederick the Great.²² This left Frederick William I dependent in practice upon the local Junker at the provincial and/or local level. This was especially true in the remote East Prussian territory. As the Kingdom was far from Berlin, the considerable distance highlighted the difficulties of efficient government as directed from Brandenburg's capital. Frederick William I's effort to sustain the operation of East Prussian government left the King no other option than to utilise and often leave in place existing authorities and traditional political and social structures. The obstacles to the establishment of a new tier of government forced Frederick William I to rely on established elites.

As a result of the King's wide-ranging administrative reforms, not only Hohenzollern authority grew in this period. Traditional East Prussian authority also increased. Many areas of central authority were 'strengthened' which, in turn, allowed native East Prussian influence in the territory also to increase. In a sense, the centralisation and de-centralisation

²¹Neugebauer, *Politischer Wandel im Osten*, pp. 65-85.

²²Melton, "The Prussian Junkers 1600-1786," p. 92. Melton notes that this was particularly the case during the Silesian Wars of Frederick the Great.

went hand-in-hand. Frederick William I had to permit an enhancement of native authority not only to increase his own authority but simply to have government work.²³ This suggests that Frederick William I recognised the limitations upon his authority and tried to circumvent these.

Edgar Melton argues that “Hohenzollern absolutism went hand-in-hand with an increase in the power and activity of the nobility at the local and provincial levels.”²⁴ I agree that one way in which Hohenzollern absolutism developed was by increasing the power of the Junkers, but believe that Melton overstates the extent to which Frederick William I held sway over the Kingdom in the early part of his reign. This developed over a rather longer period — an argument that will be developed below.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

Frederick William I's Early Administrative Reforms and their Impact in East Prussia

One of the first decrees issued by the King, dated 3 April 1713, restructured his Privy Council, which had been crucial to the operation of Hohenzollern government under Frederick III/I. Frederick William I did so in a way that placed his closest principal advisers, the so-called Real Privy Councillors, in a position which would give them more direct supervisory authority over the various territories ruled from Berlin.²⁵ All military, ecclesiastical, feudal, financial, judicial and other matters in every Hohenzollern territory were assigned to a particular Real Privy Councillor, who had a broad oversight of such affairs, rather than direct personal control over them.²⁶ East Prussia was assigned to Heinrich Rüdiger von Ilgen, who, born a commoner,²⁷ started his career as a Cabinet Secretary under the Great Elector and became under Frederick William I "as close as any one official to being a principal minister for the state."²⁸ The great mathematician and philosopher Leibniz first recommended to the Great Elector that Ilgen be recruited for Hohenzollern administration in Berlin. Ilgen had studied law and political science and trained for the diplomatic service in Minden. His rise within Hohenzollern administration was swift

²⁵The decree is printed in ABB, 1, no. 131, pp. 384-385. See also, Dorwart, The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia, p. 40

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷Rosenberug, Bureaucracy, Aristocracy and Autocracy: The Prussian Experience, 1660-1815, p. 85.

²⁸Dorwart, The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia, p. 227, fn. 28.

under the Great Elector. He started as a secretary to the head of peace negotiations with France in 1678, Franz von Meinders. The next year, he became Privy Secretary in the Privy Council Chancery. He then moved to become privy *Kammersekretär* in 1683. It was, however, under Frederick III/I that Ilgen was appointed as a Privy Councillor and took a leading role in regard to foreign affairs. In the words of Dorwart, "he was the only surviving figure, after 1697, from the reign of the Great Elector who had a clear understanding of Brandenburg's foreign policy."²⁹ Though Wartenburg was believed to exercise considerable and perhaps dominant influence over foreign policy during the reign of Frederick III/I, Ilgen also wielded considerable influence at court over diplomatic matters and especially the negotiations for the royal title. This did not go unnoticed by the new King who promoted Ilgen in 1701 to Real Privy Councillor, ennobled him, and sought his advice personally thereafter on matters of state. After the fall of Wartenburg in 1711, Ilgen became the most influential official. His loyalties, however, were devoted to the crown prince and he did not seek to become a chief minister in the manner of Danckelman or Wartenburg.³⁰

Frederick William I's accession was quickly followed by a significant reform affecting the *Hofkammer*. It had originally been established and organised to supervise the territorial domain boards (*Kammern*). Although the *Hofkammer* was thought to be the agency that linked all civil financial matters of the various territories, its officials were not able to achieve that goal.³¹ The *Hofkammer*, however, was transformed into the General Finance Directory on 27 March 1713 and given collegial authority in the central

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹See, for example, *Ibid.*, p. 116-117.

administration. This was an attempt by Frederick William I to cut costs by having the numerous sub-authorities act not as separate and autonomous agencies but as bureaus supervised by the head of the General Finance Directory, who was a Real Privy Councillor and directly responsible to the King. As will be seen below, this was one source of the General Directory set up in 1723.

Frederick William I chose another close ally from the time of the *Kronprinzipartei*, Ernst von Kameke, to head the enlarged General Finance Directory. Prior to this appointment, Kameke had a long career in Hohenzollern administration dating back to the reign of Frederick III/I when he had been postmaster general and a Real Privy Councillor. In the latter position, he oversaw the affairs of the domains, forests, and hunting in all the Hohenzollern territories. This had given Kameke the opportunity to witness at first hand much of the disorganisation and corruption associated with that reign and particularly the ascendancy of Wittgenstein. Kameke's observations and his subsequent expressions of disapproval to the crown prince, the future Frederick William I, brought him closer to the crown prince's clique and contributed to the dismissal of Wittgenstein.³²

In his new position, Kameke went so far as to draft budgets for the territorial agencies, such as the *Kammern*, for the first few years of Frederick William I's new reign. In particular, the General Finance Directory was meant to unify all civil sources of revenue, including those of domains, mint, customs, forests, and postal affairs. Except for postal affairs, the other agencies were to submit their budgets and accounts quarterly.

A second department was added to the General Finance Directory and Johann Andreas Kraut was placed at its head. Kraut was specifically to oversee the East Prussian *Ämter* as well as the financial administration in the

³²*Ibid.*, p. 124.

territories of Mörs, Lingen, and Tecklenburg as well as the affairs of amber excavation along the Elbe River and in East Prussia. The former three territories made up of what was known as the 'Orange territories' or those territories that were gained by Frederick III/I as a result of succession inheritance in 1706, to which Gueldres was added in 1714. Kraut, too, reported to the Privy Council with matters concerning these territories.³³

This remained the formal institutional structure of central administration until 1723 when the General Finance Directory was merged with the General War *Kommissariat* to form the General Directory.³⁴ The setting-up of the General Finance Directory, therefore, can be considered a fundamental reform for the development of a centralised financial administration, particularly when viewed in the light of the later changes of the 1720s and 1730s. The General Finance Directory is conventionally and currently seen as a precursor to the establishment of the General Directory which is considered the peak of administrative centralisation in eighteenth-century Brandenburg–Prussia. The establishment of the General Directory, however, probably has as much to do with the General Finance Directory's conflicts with the General War *Kommissariat* as it does with any logical plan to centralise further the financial affairs of the Hohenzollerns. This will be considered more fully in subsequent chapters, which will also examine its relationship with pre-1723 East Prussian institutions.

The War and Domains Chamber (*Kriegs und Domänenkammer*) was intended to work in conjunction with the General Finance Directory and held equal status to it within central administration. The War and Domains Chamber, however, often found itself at odds with the General Finance

³³Ibid., p. 127. See also p. 61 for a brief description of the Orange Tribunal which refers to the Orange Succession.

³⁴See Chapter Six.

Directory. Importantly, the War and Domains Chamber had been marginally more successful operating among resistant traditional authorities in the territories. Although they had a relatively minor presence in East Prussia in 1713, the War and Domains Chamber nonetheless were responsible for several financial agencies and discharged a wide range of duties. This was primarily achieved through the subordinate authorities which were known as the *Kammern* or *Kommissariaten*. These provincial administrative structures have often been regarded by historians as the primary institutional structure to which authority shifted away from the *Regierung* and in favour of royal officials.³⁵ This was the ultimate result, but it did not occur overnight. The transition came about after many years of political in-fighting and produced some unexpected results. *Kammern* officials directly reported to the established rival of the General Finance Directory, the *General Kriegs Kommissariat*.

The office of *Kommissariat* had been in existence since well before the Great Elector. It was founded for the Brandenburg–Neuburg army in 1609 for use in Jülich.³⁶ Four *Kommissariaten* originally acted in an official capacity as the quartermasters to each regiment there. Their duties included: mustering, ordnance supply for the artillery, *Vivres*, munitions, weapons, all staples of the magazines, and fortification materials.³⁷ The *Kommissariaten* began, primarily in the 1630s, to spread into the territories of

³⁵Eduard Rudolf Uderstädt, "Die ostpreußische Kammerverwaltung, ihre Unterbehörden und Lokalorgane unter Friedrich Wilhelm I. und Friedrich II. bis zur Russenokkupation (1713-1756)," part 1, "Die Zentralbehörden," *Altpreußische Monatsschrift*, vol. 50, 1913, pp. 586-603 passim; Dorwart, *The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia*, pp. 175-180.

³⁶Siegfried Isaacsohn, *Geschichte des preußische Beamtenthum vom Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts bis auf die Gegenwart*, vol. 2, p. 161.

³⁷*Ibid.* Although he does not define *Vivres*, Isaacsohn presumably means the food and fodder for the army to carry with it, as distinct from the grain, etc., which went into the magazines.

the Elector. This was, however, to be an extended process.

The *Kommissariaten* were from an early point established as the body that collected the *Kontribution*, the rural tax with military origins that was in place by the accession of the Great Elector in 1640. The *Kommissariat* would take on significant importance during the Thirty Years' War, 1618-48. In a sense, the *Kommissariaten* were the glue of the Brandenburg-Prussian military establishment. They oversaw the many small yet important details which were essential and crucial for mounting a war effort: the provision of men and food, the collection of revenue, as well as the general problems of supply. Therefore, they developed into an institution that was used principally to collect military taxation. Yet they were active in more areas than simply military tax affairs as they also were involved in duties of finance and limited oversight of military revenue collection. These officials became more and more involved in tax-collection from organising a war effort. They were rendered more important and their role expanded as the size of the army expanded under the Great Elector.

The *Kommissariaten*, however, were not introduced into East Prussia until approximately the mid-1680s. As will be discussed below, many of the duties carried out by the *Kommissariaten* in other territories at this time were left with the traditional East Prussian authorities, namely the *Amthauptleute*.³⁸ Therefore, the *Kommissariaten* did not become established in East Prussia during the seventeenth century. The primary obstacle to the *Kommissariat* was that the East Prussians had established structures for revenue collection. This was due to the strong entrenched authority of the *Amthauptleute* who carried out many of the duties of *Kommissariaten* officials in other territories. It was not until the two years between 1714 and 1716

³⁸Only passing mention is made in the traditional historical interpretation of these reforms, see, for example, *Ibid.*, p. 162 and Schmoller, "Die Verwaltung Ostpreussens unter Friedrich Wilhelm I," pp. 40-71.

that the *Kommissariat* were ϕ, χ, λ in the Kingdom.³⁹ The *Amthauptleute*, however, did not have the same ties to nor were they as dependent upon the Hohenzollern ruler as the *Kommissariaten*, whose loyalty and reliability were therefore stronger.

There is no doubt that some primary military revenues in East Prussia, as in other territories, had been in the control of the Hohenzollerns since the reign of the Great Elector.⁴⁰ Control over the *Kontribution*, the rural tax, had for long been essentially in the hands of the four *Oberräten* of the Königsberg *Regierung*.⁴¹ The individual *Ämter* were, more or less, in charge of supplying that which the regiments supplied themselves in other territories. Day-to-day military administration in East Prussia was thus rather de-centralised. The *Regierung* and the three Estates in Königsberg discussed, authorised and appropriated military supply, procedure, and revenue. Many of the day-to-day functions concerning these responsibilities were carried out by the *Amthauptleute*. This was in contrast to the rather more direct administration which prevailed in Brandenburg.

The issue of tax collection became particularly acute in the early years of Frederick William I's reign. Even though the *Regierung* acquiesced in and supervised some preliminary land survey's required for the successful introduction of the *Generallufenschoß*, a direct tax upon the nobility in East Prussia, actual revenue collection proved far from easy for the King. This new tax was introduced by Waldburg, who was both a native East Prussian and loyal to the King. It was the first such tax successfully levied upon the notoriously independent-minded East Prussian Junkers. In addition to

³⁹Ibid., pp. 50-55.

⁴⁰See Chapter One.

⁴¹Isaacsohn, *Geschichte des preußische Beamtenthum vom Anfang des 15. Jahrhunderts bis auf die Gegenwart*, II, pp. 181-82.

being principally a property value tax on the nobility, it was one in which the East Prussian Junkers had very little influence or voice. The excise and *Kontribution* were the two traditional revenues which supported the East Prussian government.

This has long been considered by historians as one of the young King Frederick William I's early successes in reforming the nobility and in particular, the East Prussian Junkers. This is especially the case since the *Generallhufenschoß* is the origin of Frederick William I's *rocher de bronze* statement noted in Chapter One.⁴² The *Generallhufenschoß*, as innovative and forward-looking as it was for the time, could not reform the territorial institutional structures, poor revenue-collecting infrastructure, improve the King's treasury, and subject the nobility to so significant a direct tax all at the same time. For the King, however, no compromise was possible.⁴³

The *Generallhufenschoß* was severely resisted by the East Prussian Junkers for decades after its introduction in 1714. For this was the first tax to be directly assessed on the East Prussian nobility. This challenged the nobility's assumption that it provided military service, rather than direct taxation which the common people paid. It was a tax that certainly must have proved difficult for Frederick William I to collect as it was based on the value and estimated productivity value of noble-held land. The fact that estates had been traded, sold and otherwise transferred made the job of determining who owned how much land difficult to determine and thus revenue collection virtually impossible. In addition, Frederick William I also had to control the obstinate opposition of the nobility against the tax.⁴⁴

⁴²GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpr., II-Materien, Nr. 1577, fol. 197.

⁴³See also Rudolf Braun, "Taxation, Sociopolitical Structure, and State-Building: Great Britain and Brandenburg-Prussia," in Charles Tilly, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, p. 275.

⁴⁴Terveen, *Gesamtstaat und Retablisement*, p. 23. See also, Michael Erbe, *Deutsche Geschichte 1713-1790: Dualismus und Aufgeklärter Absolutismus*, Stuttgart:

Frederick William I's great survey of the land to determine the property holders and the values took years. Many of the Junkers who were in possession of these Hohenzollern domains treated them as if they were their "private property" and they had security over these lands since they were in almost total control of the official administrative positions.⁴⁵ To give one an impression of the changes undertaken, the tax assessment of the *Graf Dohna* increased from 2,000 Gulden to 6,000-7,000 Gulden annually.⁴⁶ *Dohna* as well as other members of his family had been a close allies of Frederick William I and indeed an integral part of his government in various capacities. The introduction of this tax, however, strained the family's relationship with the King.⁴⁷

Although many historians appear to believe this was one of the King's successes with respect to East Prussia,⁴⁸ far too little is known about the actual introduction of the *Generalhufenschoß* and its exact results. What is known is that it was resisted throughout much of Frederick William I's reign. This was important in relation to reforms after 1714 and will be touched upon in subsequent chapters devoted to post-1723 reforms of Frederick William I. One further point about this tax was that it was linked to the allodialisation of the province. Frederick William I urged thereafter that the noble estates which according to feudal law was more similar to present day trusts, had been simply loaned by the sovereign ruler (*Landesherrn*) to the possession of the entire noble family, were to be

Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1985, p. 149.

⁴⁵Carsten, *Geschichte der preußischen Junker*, p. 32.

⁴⁶Schmoller, *Preußische Verfassungs-, Verwaltungs- und Finanzgeschichte*, p. 102.

⁴⁷Volker Press, "Das Haus Dohna in der europäischen Adelsgesellschaft des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts," pp. 398-400.

⁴⁸Hintze, *Hohenzollern und ihr Werk*, pp. 295-6, views its introduction as the high-point of Frederick William I's endeavours.

transferred to the nobleman's ownership.⁴⁹ One practical result for the King also benefited the army as it meant that a monetary payment (based on the nobleman's number of horses) was thereafter made to his *Kriegskasse* rather than the customary provision of an actual horse or service. The nobility were afterwards free to sell off an estate or include it in an inheritance contract.⁵⁰ East Prussia was the last territory to have this officially introduced (in 1732) as a result of decades-long resistance to its introduction in the other territories.⁵¹ Furthermore, since it was based on a territory's natural wealth, East Prussia, one of the poorest territories and most resistant to reform, would naturally be among the last to have seen this introduced. In 1717, Frederick William I formally abolished the feudal bond for all the territories except East Prussia which were not made allodial until 1732. The delay was because the likely revenue generated was projected to have been less than that of the other territories in relationship to the high level of resistance among the Junkers. Thus, taxation was only one aspect. The basis of a noble family had been its link to an estate. These reforms threatened this relationship for all members of a noble family except for the Junker who would be named sole owner. In theory there was nothing to stop traditional system by having the Junker owner maintain the family link through inheritance contracts which some apparently drafted. This practice, however, does not appear to have been popular during the eighteenth

⁴⁹Victor Loewe, "Die Allodifikation der Lehenunter Friedrich Wilhelm I," *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preußischen Geschichte*, vol. 11:2, 1898, pp. 41-73 passim; Büsch, *Militärsystem und Sozialleben im alten Preussen, 1713-1807*, p. 84.

⁵⁰Hintze, *Hohenzollern und ihr Werk*, pp. 295-6; Robert Berdahl, *The Politics of the Prussian Nobility: The Development of a Conservative Ideology, 1770-1848*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988, p. 23.

⁵¹*Ibid.*; Victor Loewe, "Die Allodifikation der Lehenunter Friedrich Wilhelm I," p. 73.

century.⁵² One may suggest that the *Generallhufenschoß* went far for allodialisation to be introduced into the Kingdom which occurred relatively late in Frederick William I's reign, in 1732. Due to the tax and improved administration, the King was better able to maintain a close watch on land transactions even if he was not able to control the transactions directly. And Otto Büsch noted that it was only after years and indeed decades of opposition from the nobility that the sums to be paid were firmly set for the various provinces. In the case of East Prussia this was ten talers in 1733 which was a sum well below that of other provinces and one might add, four to six years later than other provinces were assessed.⁵³

The increased role of the *Kommissariat* after 1716 had an impact on revenue raising in East Prussia. There was a change in the methods of collection which will be discussed subsequently, but first, under Frederick William I there were new practices and what the King had hoped would be better accountability. He brought the *Kommissariat* under closer supervision from Berlin and this was partially responsible for improved accountability and helps explain their increased involvement in East Prussia.⁵⁴

The most significant reforms of the *Kommissariaten* had been carried out during the reign of the Great Elector. This point has been stressed by historians and has been particularly emphasised by Rudolf Braun in his comparative study of taxation in Britain and Brandenburg-Prussia.⁵⁵ Braun

⁵²Ibid.; Robert Berdahl, *The Politics of the Prussian Nobility*, p. 23.

⁵³Büsch, *Militärsystem und Sozialleben im alten Preussen, 1713-1807*, p. 84. Büsch cites Konrad Bornhak, *Preußische Staats- und Rechtsgeschichte*, Berlin: Carl Heymanns Verlag, 1903, pp. 153ff. In addition, see the discussion of the relationship of the nobility to the military in Chapter Five, pp. 216-18 and Chapter Seven, pp. 329-42 of this study.

⁵⁴GStAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 25.

⁵⁵Braun, "Taxation, Sociopolitical Structure, and State-Building: Great Britain and Brandenburg-Prussia," pp. 243-327. Two additional examples can be found, for example, in the writings of Gustav Schmoller, Otto Hintze, and F. L. Carsten. See, in particular, Schmoller, *Preussische Verfassungs-, Verwaltungs-, und Finanzgeschichte*, p. 142, 159;

severely overstates his own point about the extent to which the Great Elector was able to establish his authority over the East Prussian territorial elite, the Junkers. "The traditional governmental bodies of the provincial territories," Braun comments, "were gradually stripped of their rights, functions, and obligations; they saved only part of their judicial functions."⁵⁶ This clearly was not the case for the Duchy and then Kingdom of East Prussia up to and even throughout much of the reign of the Great Elector's grandson, Frederick William I. The East Prussian Junkers were able to maintain many of their rights and functions because of the inability of the Hohenzollern rulers to overcome the isolated and firmly established nature of government in the Kingdom.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the Great Elector did attempt to introduce such structures throughout the various far-flung Hohenzollern territories. The Great Elector was able to fix two distinct branches of the *Kommissariaten* with separate duties and responsibilities. Having two branches of *Kommissariaten* allowed the Hohenzollerns after the Great Elector to build upon the two functions over which they had more control, the control over the actions of individual mercenary commanders and the practical and logistical minutiae of supporting and servicing the troops. The collection of taxes for this military was undertaken by the *Kriegskommissariaten*. The other, non-military, tax collectors, the so-called *Land-* or *Kreiskommissariaten*, were nominated by the *Regierung* in Königsberg and then traditionally received rubber-stamp approval by the Hohenzollern ruler. These *Kommissariaten* were working in the sole interest

Hintze, *Die Hohenzollern und Ihr Werk*, pp. 188-254, and F. L. Carsten, "Die Entstehung der Junkertums," in *Moderne Preußische Geschichte 1648-1947*, Otto Büsch and Wolfgang Neugebauer, editors, vol. 1, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1981, pp. 276-7, 278-81; See also Carsten, *The Origins of Prussia*, pp. 202-228.

⁵⁶Braun, "Taxation in Britain and Prussia," p. 270. See also Carsten, *The Origins of Prussia*, pp. 202-228 upon which Braun appears based or at least accepts Carsten's argument without reservation.

of the East Prussian elite even though their appointment was subject to the approval of the Hohenzollern ruler.

As explained in chapter two, the Great Elector was able to expand slightly the jurisdiction and authority of these *Kriegskommissariaten* as long as it pertained to military affairs but he had little impact on the entrenched system of appointments for the *Landkommissariaten* who represented the interests of Königsberg and not Berlin.

Frederick William I ordered the *Regierung* to complete and report upon its revenue collection on time. In addition, the *Kommissariat* was to work directly with local *Ämter* officials who were themselves to inform the *Kommissariat* about their revenues and financial affairs. This attempted reform makes clear that Frederick William I was serious about securing what he believed to be his fair share of East Prussian revenues.⁵⁷ What was at issue here was a minor debate about when the *Kontribution* was “surrendered”, i. e., handed over to the King’s government. The *Regierung* suggest that by the fifth of the month following collection whereas Frederick William I demanded it sooner — by the twenty-first of the month during which it was collected.

At various points during this period, then, two systems of administration can be seen working side by side. They were simultaneously in conflict with each other. On the one hand the *Kommissariat* was attempting to work its way into local supervision over the *Ämter*, while on the other hand, the *Regierung*, as the traditional authority over the local administrators, was actually collecting the revenue. Moreover, it was working with the local *Ämter* in many of the same ways the *Kommissariat* was now ordered to follow by Frederick William I. Duplication and ill-

⁵⁷GSAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 25, fols. 3-3 Rückseite and fols. 11-13 Rückseite, 24 July 1724. In addition, see ABB, 3, p. 152, ¶ 2. The records are incomplete as to when they were actually collected and turned over to officials of the *Kommissariat*.

defined roles often led the traditional authorities to clash with the newer royal administrators. The consensus among historians has for long been that the East Prussians and in particular, the *Regierung*, were steadily to lose their predominant authority over the Kingdom at every new reform measure introduced by the King. This study questions that view. The jurisdictional disputes and their aftermath make clear the limited extent to which this was true. The major reasons for the disputes and Frederick William I's lack of success with respect to reform in East Prussia are examined in the next section.

Patterns of Conflict, 1713–1722

The issue of administrative and legal reform was at the root of the numerous jurisdictional clashes between the traditional territorial and military authorities and the emerging royal government. The conflict between the established governing bodies and the new institutions set up by Frederick William I in the Kingdom is often understated. The members of the *Regierung* believed they had a great deal at stake and disputed a wide range of reforms to long-standing functions and privileges which favoured them. The process by which the crown secured the upper hand was far from complete by 1723. Contrary to the verdict of Dorwart, the reforms of Frederick William I were not in operation by that date and in fact took a much longer period to become established.⁵⁸ Dorwart articulated the prevailing view when he commented that "... by 1723 they [the new, and presumably, royal institutions] were fully formed; the jurisdiction of each was fixed; and the period after 1723 reveals a lack of complaints and orders dealing with conflicts of competence and with the encroachment of one office upon the jurisdiction of another."⁵⁹ And according to Koch:

[t]he provincial diets, the strongholds of the Junkers, were allowed no other function than implementing the King's ordinances. But to ensure that even at that level no obstacles would be placed in his way, he deprived the diets of their administrative effectiveness by appointing his own officials at all administrative and executive levels of his kingdom."⁶⁰

Otto Hintze commented that the government of Frederick William I

⁵⁸Dorwart, The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia, p. 34.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

⁶⁰Koch, A History of Prussia, p. 82.

“marked the perfection of Absolutism.”⁶¹ Hintze also noted that under the government of Frederick William I the territorial elites, “in all provinces, except Cleves and Mark were reduced to only a semblance of their traditional form.... And not only with respect to the political meaning but also the administrative effectiveness of the *Stände* under Frederick William I was ended.”⁶² This was simply not the case and all of these historians have overstated the speed at which Hohenzollern absolutism developed and became established, particularly in East Prussia.

The eventual integration of East Prussia’s local nobility into the Kingdom’s royal government was the result of an extended process. There were significant tensions between the East Prussian Junkers and Berlin which went well beyond the rather widespread obstruction to central authorities and were not only due to local sentiment and particularism. In addition, a distinctive lack of loyalty to Berlin was evident not simply during the first two decades of Frederick William I’s reign but actually continued throughout the 1730s. Certain links between the King and officials in Berlin and the East Prussian elites were strengthened. This was particularly evident in the recruitment of officers in the military.

Officers’ commissions, which were available on an increased scale, were distributed by the King to members of the East Prussian elite, and in this way Frederick William I and the Kingdom’s Junkers gradually became reconciled. Frederick William I was only able to maintain a list of all noblemen in the Kingdom on a regular basis after about 1738 which were recorded in his so-called *Vassallen Tabellen*. This was an extended process, however, as commissions were only slowly accepted. For example, there are accounts of resistance to military service among the nobility around the

⁶¹Hintze, *Die Hohenzollern und ihr Werk*, p. 280.

⁶²*Ibid.*, p. 281.

start of Frederick the Great's reign in 1740.⁶³ In particular, their grievances referred to the mandatory enrolment of younger sons of the nobility into the recently established military cadet academies. This apparently was not the rejection of state service (*Staatsdienst*) as such, but the rejection of being compelled to attend the academies coupled with the inability to gain permission for foreign travel or study.⁶⁴ For government administration, the degree of local sentiment was unusually strong and the closer links which were to be seen later in the century were certainly not evident before 1723. The same tensions that characterised Frederick William I's first decade continued thereafter and these will now be discussed.

The East Prussian *Kammer* and *Kommissariat* administration was at the centre of the most significant change in East Prussian government in the early years of the new reign. Indeed, phrases such as "radical new order" and "most important new innovation" are used by Terveen to describe the king's decree of 25 September 1714. This edict altered the superior authority over the East Prussian *Kammer* and *Kommissariat's* administration, which passed from the control of the East Prussian *Regierung* to officials in Berlin.⁶⁵

As a result of this decree, the *Kammer* administration, for the first time, was freed of its principal dependence upon the *Oberräten* (i.e., *Regierung*) and the *Geheime Hofkammer*.⁶⁶ Instead, from 1714 onwards, the East Prussian *Kammer* administration was instructed that, in all but exceptional cases, it should refer directly to the Berlin-based General

⁶³Carsten, *Geschichte der preußischen Junker*, pp. 44–45.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 44. Furthermore, the king declared that "nach hohem Gefallen entweder in Militär- oder Zivildiensten employieren könnte." Although this was not a particularly new tactic on behalf of the Hohenzollerns, it had yet to be successful. The fact that Frederick II reiterated it here shows this. It should be noted that significant changes in this regard did occur under his rulership.

⁶⁵Terveen, *Gesamtstaat und Retablissement*, p. 23.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*

Finance Directory.⁶⁷ The General Finance Directory now was led by Christoph, *Burggraf und Graf zu Dohna*. He was a native East Prussian with many years of military service and established loyalty to the King. He had earlier been a significant supporter of Frederick William I, when the crown prince worked to oust Danckelman. Dohna advanced his administrative positions in both domestic and foreign affairs after 1713.⁶⁸ In the first point of his instruction, Frederick William I declared: “The two presidents are dependent only upon His Royal Majesty himself, the General Finance Directory, and the Graf von Dohna; they should take no note from the *Regierung* or from anyone else in the world.”⁶⁹

It appears that the East Prussians separated issues of military organisation and finances from their traditional rights and privileges with respect to government administration. In 1716, the Waldburg reforms established a *Kommissare*, who was to oversee urban affairs. The tax responsibilities of the *Kommissariaten* were to be soon transferred to the reconstructed *Steuerraten* who acted in urban areas in exactly the same way as the *Kriegs- und Domänenkammer* were supposed to operate in the countryside.⁷⁰ One should remember that rural affairs continued to remain largely under the direct supervision of the East Prussian *Regierung*. East Prussian towns had seen the *Kommissariat* prior to 1716, as mentioned earlier, but their only functions had been billeting of troops and the excise, i.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*

⁶⁸Krollmann, *Altpreußische Biographie*, Band I, p. 142. See also, Dorwart, *The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia*, p. 227, fn. 29.

⁶⁹ABB, 2, p. 47. Berlin, 25 September 1714. “Die zwei Präsidenten haben keine andere Dependenz als Sr. Königl. Majestät selbst, das Generalfinanzdirektorium und den Grafen von Dohna, sonst von keine *Regierung* und Niemanden in der Welt.” See also Terveen, *Gesamtstaat und Retablissement*, p. 23.

⁷⁰Juhr, “Die Verwaltung des Hauptamtes Brandenburg / ostpreussen von 1713-1751,” p. 119. See also, ABB, 5:1, p. 261.

e., taxation matters. The *Kommissariaten* superseded the duties of deputies from the nobility and took charge of military taxation until 1722.⁷¹ This appears to show a moderate increase in Frederick William I's authority during the early years of his reign. The king's action was really only a continuation of an initiative which his grandfather, the Great Elector, had unsuccessfully attempted several decades earlier.

The military treasury, the so-called *General Kriegs Kommissariat*, was responsible for the collection of taxes in the rural areas which made up most of East Prussia. The *Kriegs-* and *Steuerkommissar* and the *Landrat* supervised fiscal administration at the territorial level for the *Kommissariat* which in turn was under the overall authority of the *General Kriegs Kommissariat* located in Berlin. These local administrators were the "executive arm" for the central college of the *General Kriegs Kommissariat*, whose instructions they were supposed to carry out.⁷² This was another of Frederick William I's early reform which slowly and over a longer period of time altered the traditional administrative order in East Prussia yet at first was within areas of government and the military which he already controlled.

⁷¹Juhr, "Die Verwaltung des Hauptamtes Brandenburg/ ostpreussen von 1713-1751," p. 137.

⁷²Dorwart, The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia, p. 148.

The Reglement of 1716 and East Prussia

Though the above mentioned initiatives were undoubtedly important, there was one group of reforms introduced in 1716 which became the basis for many of the later political struggles during Frederick William I's reign. These highlight the fundamental issues at stake for the King and for the East Prussian *Regierung*. On 6 May 1716, little more than three years after Frederick William I's accession, he issued a *Reglement* or regulation to the *Kommissariat* in East Prussia.⁷³ The essential point of the decree was its declaration of the administrative supremacy of the *Kommissariat* over the *Regierung*. It was to have sole supervisory authority over all commercial affairs, manufacturing, general military matters and the drilling, billeting, and provisioning (*Proviand*) of soldiers, in addition to the collection of the excise and *Kontribution* taxes, accounting and auditing affairs (*Rechnungssachen*) and the establishment of colonies.⁷⁴ It was both a confirmation as well as a notable expansion of the *Kommissariat's* administrative authority.

The Königsberg *Regierung* viewed the *Reglement* of 1716 with the inevitable suspicion of a long-established provincial authority for a newcomer. For centuries, the East Prussian *Regierung* had been the sole administrative agency for the territory, dealing with almost every matter of concern. Suddenly, the King was attempting to reduce not only that role but, moreover, their traditional native rights, the so-called *regalia*. With this

⁷³GStAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 16, fols. 9-12 Rückseite, Berlin, 6 May 1716. "Reglement für das Commissariat im königreich Preußen."

⁷⁴Ibid. See also ABB, 2, p. 228.

Reglement, the King delegated the *Kommissariat* superior to the *Regierung*. Ludwig von Ostau, a member of the *Regierung*, noted as much when he complained on 29 July 1716 that within the document it is “insinuated” that the *Kommissariat* has, in a sense, the upper hand.⁷⁵ Ostau had moved up through the ranks of the East Prussian government. He had begun his career as *Hauptmann* to Neuhausen and Labiau in 1693. By 1706, Ostau was *Landesdirektor* and *Hauptmann* in *Amt* Brandenburg, East Prussia, one of the four most prestigious posts but below the *Regierung*. On 13 May 1710, Frederick III/I had approved the recommendation for his appointment as *Preueßischen Kanzlers*. This appointment was imposed over the initial recommendation of the *Regierung*, who had nominated Friedrich Wilhelm von Canitz.⁷⁶ Canitz, however, was instead appointed to the Prussian *Tribunal*, the Kingdom’s supreme court. Ostau’s final appointment was in 1718 as president of the Prussian *Commerciens Collegiums*. He died nine years later on 2 November 1727.⁷⁷ Ostau’s career nonetheless flourished and he was firmly entrenched in the traditional East Prussian system and may be regarded as representative of the *Regierung* as a whole.

Before continuing the discussion of the further importance of the *Reglement* of 1716, it is necessary to sketch the way in which appointments were made in early modern Brandenburg-Prussia. There were several ways in which administrators were appointed, as will be demonstrated in

⁷⁵GStAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 16, fol. 19, 29 July 1716, draft response to *Reglement* of 6 May 1716, signed by Ostau.

⁷⁶ABB, 1, p. 103, fn. 2. Born in 1656, Canitz became a district captain in Lötzen in 1684. Four years later, he switched to the Tapiau district and thereafter he became the *Landesdirektor* and district captain of *Amt* Brandenburg. He moved further up the ranks of East Prussian administration after 1706 when he became *Obermarschall* in May 1706 and *Oberburggraf* in 1711. He died on 22 January 1719.

⁷⁷ABB, 1, pp. 102-103, in particular, p. 103, fn. 3. In 1706, he became *Landesdirektor* and district captain in *Amt* Brandenburg, immediately after Canitz’s tenure in these positions.

subsequent chapters. The transfer of an office through purchase was not unheard of in East Prussia but this appears to have been limited to the most high-ranking Junkers. In addition, there was nepotism, the succession of son, nephew or other relative, which was fairly common for many posts and a critical way in which recruitment of officials was carried out. There was not the negative connotation with nepotism as a method of administrative recruitment as there is in the present day. Nepotism was one of the few ways in which administrative training could take place as a result of universities continuing their focus on religious and legal training and the absence (until 1770) of qualification examinations for potential administrators.⁷⁸

There were important aspects of the implementation of the *Reglement* of 1716 which appear to be consistent within the conventions of eighteenth-century administrative practices, that of simple opposition to any innovation. For example, after the *Reglement* was sent to the *Regierung* in 1716, Ostau and the other *Regierung* members continued to question likely “collisions,” that is to say clashes of authority between the *Regierung* and *Kommissariat* as a result of the *Reglement*’s ill-defined sections which concerned how and when edicts were to be dispatched (*expedition*). There was immediate disagreement about which authority was responsible for the publication of the *Reglement* itself.⁷⁹ Frederick William I had to respond several times over a period of months to this basic issue: these affairs, he declared, were now under the sole control of the *Kommissariat*.⁸⁰ The *Regierung* was concerned about the infringement of their rights by the King

⁷⁸This is a topic that is equally important in the section covering local appointments in chapter 5.

⁷⁹GStAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 16, see for example, fols. 25-26 Rückseite, 13 July 1716.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, fols. 27-47 Rückseite. In particular see, fols. 40-45 Rückseite, Declaration of 25 January 1717.

over this edict. The monarch, in their view, had attempted to move the location of authority from the *Regierung* to the *Kommissariat*. This concern revealed the fundamental tension between the old and new authorities. This was, at first sight, a classic administrative struggle for supremacy. It was also an early example of the kind of more intense conflicts which would multiply subsequently.

This order was an early and direct attempt by Frederick William I to remove some of the *Regierung's* most prized privileges and functions. In addition, it also sought to undermine the *Regierung* by reinterpreting and destroying the compromise arrangement which had evolved under the Great Elector, by which the Estates, or *Stände*, maintained overall administrative control, but were subject to the overall supervision and thus direction of the *Kommissariat*.⁸¹ It was now laid down that the *Regierung* was to authorise and execute all decrees from the *Kommissariat*.⁸² In addition, regulations and citations, together with other formal instructions and documents, were to be drawn-up by the *Regierung* but needed to be authorised by the signature of the *Kommissariat* president.⁸³ If a dispute arose, the King declared that the *Advocatum Fisci*, the local solicitor to the treasury, was to judge. The *Advocatum Fisci* had traditional strong ties to the Hohenzollerns.⁸⁴

Berlin's authority was not everywhere extended. Frederick William I

⁸¹For a traditional view of this, see, Otto Hintze, *Regierung und Verwaltung: Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur Staats-, Rechts- und Sozialgeschichte Preussens*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, band 3, 1967, p. 328. For a more recent interpretation with emphasis on Brandenburg, see William W. Hagen, "Seventeenth-Century Crisis in Brandenburg," pp. 302-335.

⁸²GStAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 16, fol. 9 Rückseite, Section I; See also, ABB, 2, p. 372. But, as before, the *Regierung* was able to retain the same authority as the *Geheimer Staats=Collegium* which was located in Berlin.

⁸³*Ibid.*, fol. 10, Section V.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*

also confirmed the *Amthauptleute* as overseers of local troop billeting and provisions or repast, so-called *Servous*. This was in addition to their established judicial authority over the nobility and the peasantry, *Kölmer* as well as the hereditary serfs of their district(s). They also had supervision over tax affairs and police functions, in the wider sense of the term.⁸⁵

At first reading, Frederick William I's *Reglement* of 6 May 1716 may appear to be only a confirmation of the limitations of the Kingdom's traditional authorities, particularly in financial matters. Those parts of the instruction which dealt with the ordering and collection of fees, among other matters, indeed, curbed local initiative. In these cases, the *Amthauptleute* had to work alongside the rural tax collectors which were under the direct authority of the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*, the so-called *Commissarius Loci*, as well as the magistrates of the towns.⁸⁶ The orders, once again, were to be issued by the *Regierung*, but the signature of the *Kommissariat* president was needed to give force to them.⁸⁷

This is precisely how Frederick William I was able to expand slowly the authority of the *Kommissariat*. The traditional structure of the *Regierung* remained in place, but it came to be overlaid and thus supplanted by the superior authority of a new institution, which was under Berlin's direct control. In this way continuity in established structures of government masked the new realities of governmental control in the Kingdom. This *Reglement*, in particular, highlighted the increased significance of the *Kommissariat* during the reign of Frederick William I and its administrative supremacy in a growing number of important matters within the Kingdom.

At least two dispatches between Königsberg and Berlin crossed in

⁸⁵Hintze, *Regierung und Verwaltung*, p. 323-4.

⁸⁶This is discussed more fully in Chapter Five.

⁸⁷GStAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 16, fols. 10-10 Rückseite, Section VI.

delivery over this *Reglement* in 1716. A message sent from Berlin to Königsberg normally took approximately seven days to arrive. This partially explains why many issues raised by Frederick William I's edict were not quickly resolved. Around two weeks was the usual time it took for a despatch to be sent and a reply received. This case appears not to have been different except that the *Regierung* issued messages without first waiting for a response. Perhaps this is an indication about how concerned and impatient the *Regierung* had become over this issue. The urgency indicates that they wanted to communicate as quickly as possible. In addition, they also believed the King would consider their views, but they were to be disappointed. It was very unusual for messages to cross in this way. This reveals the hope, and even belief, of an established administrative agency that it could persuade the King to change his mind. The fact that the *Regierung* wrote again, itself extraordinary, reveals their fears and the pressure they were under. The *Regierung* throughout this period normally waited for a response before engaging in further correspondence with Frederick William I on the same issue.⁸⁸

The correspondence between the *Regierung* and Berlin continued throughout 1717 over the "collisions" and how each side believed there could be a resolution. The *Kommissariat* and *Regierung* complained more and more about perceived intrusion in the other's affairs.⁸⁹ In a royal declaration of 25 January 1717, Frederick William I stated his intention, for the second time at least, that "all of the misunderstandings [should] thoroughly be done away with", and that all colleges would serve in "good

⁸⁸*Ibid.* See also, ABB, 2, p. 377. 6 May 1716. There appear to only be a handful of cases such as this.

⁸⁹GStAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 16, fols. 40-45 Rückseite, Declaration, 25 January 1717. See also, ABB, 2, pp. 502-505.

harmony and direct their energies to the common goal.”⁹⁰ His words were completely disregarded by the *Regierung* in Königsberg.

In March 1717, a dispatch to the King by an official, P. Schrere, returned to the question of administrative innovation. The writer noted that during his forty years of service to the Hohenzollerns, all decrees from the *Wirklich Geheime Räte* (Real Privy Councillors), had not required to be authorised by means of the seal of the *Kommissariat*.⁹¹ In fact, since the *Reglement* requiring that documents officially pass through the *Kommissariat* was announced on 6 May 1716, many documents which were supposed to be co-signed and sealed by the *Kommissariat* had not been.⁹² In other words, the king’s instructions were simply being ignored and flouted in East Prussia. To skirt around the issue, the *Regierung* listed several excuses and even suggested that the *Kommissariat* seal was damaged and could not be used. This was surely a transparent lie. There is no evidence that the seal was damaged. The *Regierung* held that not only was the 1716 decree an invasion of their traditional authority but also, that it was an inefficient means to govern and administer the territory. This latter claim was in fact a more serious objection. East Prussian government and authority were threatened by grid-lock. Since each and every document issued by the *Regierung*, however routine or trivial, needed the approval of the *Kommissariat* and even the affixing of its seal, governance would not only slow due to the extra time required but in all likelihood might grind to a halt.

The real issue of course was the *Regierung*’s fear that it would lose its

⁹⁰GStAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 16, fol. 35 Rückseite. See also ABB, 2, pp. 507-508, Berlin, 25 January 1717. “Declaration einiger Punkte des preußischen Commissariats Reglements.”

⁹¹Ibid., fol. 47, 17 March 1717, correspondence from P. Schrere to Frederick William I.

⁹²Ibid.

ultimate authority over territorial affairs in the Kingdom and would be relegated to the status of a secondary authority. According to the 6 May 1716 decree, a document was unofficial unless it had the *Kommissariat* seal and was signed by officials from that body and from the *Regierung*. That the seal and thus the arrangement for joint signatures were not utilised, demonstrates the fact that for some time and to a large extent government in East Prussia continued to operate in established ways. The *Regierung* continued to appeal to the King in the name of tradition. Its members still were more loyal to the traditions of the East Prussian elite and Kingdom than they were of the new structures imposed by the crown. The fact that in practice they continued to operate as they had in the past is important and demonstrates not only where their loyalties rested but also underlines the extent to which Frederick William I was unable to impose his authority by a simple assertion of royal will. The King was now confronting the same powerful social and administrative structures and traditions that, most notably, his grandfather had encountered before him.

The conflict and rivalry between the *Kommissariat* and *Regierung* was not limited to the higher levels of East Prussian government and to relations between Berlin and Königsberg. Much of the political strife between them took place at the lower provincial and local levels. In these areas as well, Frederick William I attempted to rule personally and directly, though this attempt was bound to end in almost complete failure. As in the higher echelons of government, the debates and conflicts set in motion by the *Reglement* swiftly reached the more local levels of East Prussia.

The *Regierung* continued to express its concern about other sections of the 6 May 1716 *Reglement* to Frederick William I. Each section of the decree addressed a precise issue of the Kingdom's government and

administration.⁹³ Aside from asserting a predictable concern for the supremacy of traditional administrative authority, the *Regierung* also advanced the argument of efficiency. It noted that “now, and for some days, the *Kommissariat* has been prolonging the *Regierung*’s work.”⁹⁴ This issue is best summed up in the words of the members of the *Regierung* themselves on 26 October 1716:

“That which so far is totally clear, is that the *Kommissariat* have not pretended about their cognition. We suggest to Your Royal Majesty in all submission ... that you will consider making the choice ... not to extend their department further, therewith allowing dependence on continuing greater confusion.”⁹⁵

It is clear that Frederick William I allowed the *Kommissariat* to expand their detailed role in the territory in later years, although this may not have been deliberate. The *Regierung* attempted to dissuade the King from using the *Kommissariat* as he planned as well as from expanding upon decreed authority. The *Kommissariat*, as it appeared to the *Regierung*, were overstepping their declared powers. Frederick William I did little to restrain the *Kommissariat*, save in a few particular cases. It was inevitable that there would be a series of such clashes, as the *Kommissariat* tried to define its own role.

To what extent was the *Kommissariat* consciously going beyond Frederick William I’s decree, not only to resolve particular cases but as a deliberate attempt to curb the *Regierung*’s authority in the territory? In addition, to what extent was the King aware of the *Kommissariat*’s expanded

⁹³The issue, for example, of “*Chur und Wahl*” of the Magistrates in East Prussia. This is expressed here in GStAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 18, fols. 7-8 Rückseite. It is more relevant to the *Kommissariat*’s role in conjunction with the *Amthauptleute*. The *Regierung* and *Kommissariat* continued to clash over this point into late 1719. For example, see ABB, 3, pp. 210-11, “Bericht des Preußischen Commissariats,” Königsberg, 20 November 1719.

⁹⁴GStAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 18, fol. 9.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, fol. 11.

role in East Prussia and was it quietly sanctioned and even explored as a potential source of future policies for the territory? In other words, did Frederick William I — consciously or otherwise — set in motion a conflict between the two bodies and their personnel? The *Regierung* began to argue that not only was the *Kommissariat's* new role causing confusion, but that they were also acting as if they possessed more authority than had actually been granted to them. This is especially true in the individual *Ämter*, for example, Insterburg.⁹⁶ The *Regierung* claimed that the *Kommissariat* were “pretending” to have more authority than they actually had been prescribed and were ever widening the competence of their office.⁹⁷

The opposition of the *Regierung* to the *Kommissariat's* increased role was three-fold. First, that authority was expanded in the affair of the excise collector in Kreutzburg-Kalau, a man named Hintz. Second, in the affair of a handworker in Marienwerder, who attacked a pharmacist and his mother, there was another increase. The third and final increase was in the affair of the towns of Riesenburg and Marienwerder. The *Regierung* suggested they would not permit the *Kommissariat* to continue obstructing their authority in these cases, which they believed were firmly in their jurisdiction and confirmed by the King through previous edicts. They argued that their loss of traditional authority, which was reducing the effectiveness of royal government in the Kingdom, was a secondary consequence of Frederick William I's decrees.

Administrative infighting of this kind continued to break out during the next few years.⁹⁸ During the few years prior to the founding of the

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, fols. 26-28. See also, EM 121e, Nr. 19, pp. 1-4a, Relation from the *Regierung*, 28 December 1716.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, fol. 26 Rückseite. See also GStAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 19, fols. 1-4a.

⁹⁸There are several similar cases of jurisdictional conflict not detailed in this study. For example, see ABB, 3, pp. 149-52, “Schriftwechsel mit der Preußischen Regierung und dem Commissariat”, 12 March through 24 July 1719; p. 164, “Immediatbericht des

General Directory in 1723, the jurisdictional disputes ranged from the selection of personnel to royal domain affairs to tax collection responsibilities to judicial authority. The King continued to recognise the *Regierung's* authority over judicial affairs which were interfered with by *Kammer* officials.⁹⁹ After Frederick William I restated that the *Regierung* was to hold complete jurisdiction over judicial matters within the Kingdom, the *Kammer* and *Regierung* apparently continued to quarrel over whether there was justification for the *Regierung* to have made a complaint.¹⁰⁰ The following year, however, the *Kammer* objected to the *Regierung's* apparent interference in royal domain affairs which were supposed to be under the authority of the *Kammer*. The *Regierung* notified the King that they were not aware that his authority had been given to the *Kammer* in this matter. What was happening was that the *Regierung* continued to operate in all matters of government administration that it had previously controlled, and only relinquished jurisdiction or authority when specifically ordered to do so by the King. The *Regierung* was forcing the *Kammer* and Frederick William I to sustain royal authority on a case-by-case basis. When the *Regierung* reported back to the King on 27 February 1719, that they were unaware of their jurisdictional transgression, Frederick William I revealed his sentiment in favour of the authorities under the direct control of Berlin when he noted in the margin of the *Regierung's* report: "I support the *Commissariat* and the *Kammer* against the *Regierung* and against all. Frederick William."¹⁰¹

Generalkriegscommissariats", Berlin, 26 April 1719; pp. 169-70, "Erlaß an die Preußische Regierung", Berlin 20 May 1719; pp. 364-5, "Erlaß and die Preußische Regierung", Berlin, 12 September 1721.

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 48-49, "Erlaß an die Litthauische und die Deutsche Kammer in Preußen", Königsberg, 27 June 1718. Precedence is cited back to May 1715.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, p. 142. "ich suttendir[e] Comissa[riat und] Kammer ge[ge]n Regierung und gegen alles FW."

These years saw a perceptible hardening of the royal attitude. By 1721, Frederick William I's attitude and approach had become more unyielding and assertive than it was at his accession in 1713 or at the time of the *Reglement* in 1716. For example, on 28 October 1721, the King bluntly ordered the *Regierung* not to meddle in the affairs of the *Kommissariat*.¹⁰² This order did not suggest any particular intrusion and only related to those affairs that belonged to the *Kommissariat*.¹⁰³ It was brought about by a specific incident no doubt communicated by the *Kommissariat* although the details are not clear. The King was not so accommodating where the *Regierung's* complaints were concerned. Yet, no matter what the king's attitude was, he was unable to terminate the administrative confusion in East Prussia.

By 1721, the *Würklich Geheimen Etats Minister Grafen von Truchess von Waldburg* had been ill for some time. The *Regierung* apparently saw the absence of the king's highest East Prussian official as an opportunity to regain some of its lost authority, and picked what appeared an opportune moment to continue the clashes with the *Kommissariat*. In the *Regierung's* response on 4 November 1721 to Frederick William I's late October 1721 order (asserting the supremacy of the *Kommissariat*), its members declared that their involvement in *Kommissariat* affairs was by no fault of their own although they did not deny that it had occurred. They continued by stating that what was not known by the King was that the *Kommissariat* has encroached into one of their affairs first.¹⁰⁴

Clashes between the *Regierung* and *Kommissariat* thus continued long after 1716. Five years after the 1716 *Reglement*, the *Regierung* were

¹⁰²GStAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 30, fol. 2.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., fol. 1.

unreconciled to their loss of power and status. In effect, they continued to pursue an administrative guerrilla war against the new authority of the *Kommissariat*. This underlines that the absolutist intentions of Frederick William I were often of limited impact in practice.

Reform and Legal Inaction, 1713-1722

Law was one of the principal functions of government in the eighteenth century. The administration of justice was as large, if not larger, than those areas of state activity previously discussed, notably taxation and supplying the army, and also one of the primary functions carried out by the *Regierung* in East Prussia. Its importance, in the eyes of the members of the *Regierung* as well as the King, was partly due to the significant profits it generated. Upholding a basic level of law and order was important, but — as elsewhere in Europe — most punishments took the form of fines rather than imprisonment, and thus were a welcome source of income to the state and its servants.

There is also a relevant wider point. The early modern period, for most historians, is the period at which the traditional judicial style of government is replaced by a more modern, administrative mode as the tasks and functions of government expanded. This evolution was still in its infancy in the early decades of the eighteenth century. In the words of Samuel E. Finer, "law had a particular, indeed a paramount, sanctity."¹⁰⁵ The most important "reinventions" of the early modern period was probably Roman law "whose study ... provided the first subject-matter that differentiated universities from clerical study-halls."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵Samuel E. Finer, The History of Government from the Earliest Times, vol. 3, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 1298.

¹⁰⁶Quotation cited from the review of Finer in Edward N. Luttwak, "How Bean, Lentil and Chick-pea ruled: Finer's lucid catalogue of human governments," *Times Literary Supplement*, vol. 4926, August 29, 1997, p. 6. Furthermore, several other places of study appear during Frederick William I's reign. For example, the king introduced and formalised military instruction in 1714, established youth cadet academies in 1717, and founded a chair of cameralist studies at the Universities of Halle and Frankfurt an der Oder

In general, the administration of justice in East Prussia was not modernised in the early eighteenth century and had a structure and an ethos that were quite independent and distinct from that of the central government based in Berlin. For the East Prussian Junkers, authority over the administration of justice was vigilantly protected from Hohenzollern reform initiatives. It must be remembered, moreover, all Hohenzollern territories had their own legal frameworks. At Frederick William I's accession, the Königsberg *Regierung* was the key institution through which justice was administered in the Kingdom. There were four distinct levels of courts located throughout East Prussia. The territory had its own high court of appeal located in Königsberg, the *Oberappellationsgericht*, which was distinct from the court of the same name located in Berlin. In addition, Königsberg held the Kingdom's supreme court of first instance, the so-called *Tribunal*. In ordinary civil cases, there were three basic paths of justice each with a separate court. If the case related to a business or was in some way commercial in nature and between non-nobles, the district *Amt* was the court of first instance with the board (*Kammer*) acting as appeal court. In other cases involving both nobles and non-nobles, the *Regierung* became the civil court. If a Junker brought a case, then the *Amt* was the court of first instance with the *Regierung* acting as appeal court. From here it was possible for a final appeal to the *Oberappellationsgericht*.

Further centralisation of judicial affairs were not in the vanguard of Frederick William I's administrative reforms in East Prussia. "No effort was made," writes Dorwart, "nor is it likely that an effort would have succeeded against territorial opposition, to create, before 1713, a uniform, supreme court for the united state (*Gesamtstaat*), a court which would have been the next logical and accepted instance above the superior courts of the

territories."¹⁰⁷ Few measures were ever attempted, and it would have been so widely resisted by most East Prussians who staunchly opposed almost all the attempts made by the King to meddle in their legal affairs that failure was almost certain. Frederick William I's reform efforts stopped short of attacking the judicial independence of the Kingdom. In particular, no attempt was made to interfere with the civil justice dispensed by the East Prussian *Regierung*. Frederick William I implicitly acknowledged that there were limits to his administrative and political power. In theory, the *Oberappellationsgericht*, gave Frederick William I supreme control as he was King in East Prussia. That supreme control of justice, which any definition of sovereignty would have encompassed, lay beyond his practical reach. Given the centrality of law to government and the key role of judicial matters, noted earlier, Frederick William I's exclusion is extremely significant especially for a King with such an Old Testament sense of justice. This has not been addressed in a direct manner by historians. The King appeared to make an implicit decision or admission that his authority in East Prussia was limited and that he could not secure direct administrative control over the legal system. Frederick William I was able to reform areas of government administration as has been shown, but he was not able to make progress in all areas in which he desired to reform. He left the *Regierung* the profitable and powerful administration of justice while subjecting some other areas of their control to the *Kommissariat*.

A few initiatives were attempted, however, at the very beginning of Frederick William I's reign. First, on 21 June 1713, a mere four months after he came to the throne, the young King published his *Allgemeine Ordnung die Verbesserung des Justizwesens betreffend*.¹⁰⁸ Since East Prussia still remained

¹⁰⁷Dorwart, *The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia*, p. 58.

¹⁰⁸ABB, 1, pp. 515-533. Berlin, 21 June 1713.

on the fringes of the Hohenzollern Monarchy and had its own strong judicial institutions and traditions, this edict remained a dead letter there. Second, the King sought to reform judicial training. He established a legal faculty at the University of Halle on 18 June 1714.¹⁰⁹ Clearly this would stimulate the establishment of a more standardised legal system throughout the Hohenzollern territories. Again, however, one must remember that East Prussia had its own legal structures in the form of the *Regierung* which was staffed exclusively by members of the native elite. Moreover, the Kingdom had its own university at Königsberg. East Prussia was not ignored, however. Justice in the Kingdom was closely scrutinised by *Geheimer Justizrat* Samuel von Cocceji at Frederick William I's instigation — a sign of the King's royal intentions.

In April 1717, Frederick William I established a commission to investigate and present suggestions for reform of the judicial affairs of the Kingdom. Samuel von Cocceji was instructed to lead this enquiry and was sent to Königsberg in August 1718. His mission was unsuccessful, but this did not hinder his subsequent rise to prominence first under Frederick William I and then under his successor, Frederick the Great. Judicial reform was always notoriously slow and difficult at this period, and Cocceji's failures reflected this. It is perhaps because of this reality that his report to Frederick William I not only detailed the prevailing abuses but also put forward ways to institute future reform. In the end, this report had little impact and the control of traditional authorities over the Kingdom's legal system largely continued, unhindered by Frederick William I. Instead, the King began to use individual appointments to extend royal influence, rather

¹⁰⁹The university at Halle was a relatively new university as it was established by Frederick William I's father in 1694. It was also the favourite institution of higher learning for the Hohenzollern rulers. It was, for example, also a key location for the study of Pietism and Cameralism, both of which were highly influential on the Hohenzollerns' religious, administrative, and economic attitudes in this period.

than seeking to alter the fundamental structure of East Prussian judicial institutions. By appointing officials who were or would become loyal to him alone, Frederick William I avoided many of the complications and resistance aroused by efforts to change administration structures. The King noticed the scale of the changes Samuel von Cocceji thought were necessary ^{but was not} ostensibly committed to implementing them, ^{and} instead worked to extend his control through the existing legal structures. This effectively condemned judicial reform to failure, and instead the *Regierung* continued to hold the upper hand. In 1721, he published his *Revidirtes Landrecht des Herzogthums Preußens*.¹¹⁰ This report essentially set out the obstacles to reform within the existing legal system as well as a broad proposal for a codification of the Kingdom's laws. Again, any reform of judicial affairs in East Prussia clashed directly with the established and powerful rights of the native elites, and — predictably — nothing was achieved. Cocceji would go on to have a successful career under both Frederick William I and Frederick the Great. He is considered the primary driving force — as well as a significant compiler — behind the development which culminated in the *Allgemeines Landrecht*. Prior to this achievement, however, he served as chief of justice in Brandenburg-Prussia under Frederick William I after his appointment on 5 November 1737. He later headed another commission to study potential judicial reform in 1739, which led to his *Novum Systema Jurisprudentiae Naturalis et Romanae* which was published on 21 May 1740 shortly before the death of Frederick William I.¹¹¹ The king's reforms did little to change the judicial structures in the Kingdom even though both Waldburg and Cocceji

¹¹⁰See also, ABB, 3, p. 312. Erlaß an Cocceji, Berlin, 15 March 1721; Schriftwechsel über die Änderung der Justizpflege in den Preußischen Ämtern, pp. 418-428, 1 December 1721-30 January 1723.

¹¹¹Based on Hattenhauer, *Allgemeines Landrecht für die Preußischen Staaten von 1794*, p. 871.

noted several times there was a need to improve the slow, expensive, and unreliable state of justice in the territory.¹¹²

Occasionally, the nature of a particular case meant that it had to be considered by two separate courts — one overseen by the *Regierung* and one overseen by the *Kommissariat*. Judicial clashes, in other words, inevitably arose as a consequence of the 1716 *Reglement*, and the *Regierung* sought to defend its established position against the encroachments of the *Kommissariat*. The attempt by the King to supervise some of these judicial issues caused the *Regierung* to appeal, claiming this restricted their traditional rights as well as causing confusion and unnecessary disputes.¹¹³ For example, cases that normally would be heard by the *Regierung* in Riesenburg and Marienwerder, were now heard by the recently established authorities of the King and *Kommissariat* in Königsberg. This was seen by the *Regierung* as an infringement of their traditional rights and the fact that they were seen to be taken over by the *Kommissariat* made the matter all the more irritating for the East Prussian elites. The King was able to claim jurisdiction due to the two towns' long-standing relationship to the Hohenzollern family which had been established by treaties. Although these two towns were considered East Prussian since 1466, they were located outside the geographical borders of the Kingdom but nonetheless were possessions of the Hohenzollerns. They were traditionally overseen by the administrative agencies for the district surrounding Königsberg even though they were nearer to the district of Mohrunen. A case such as this

¹¹²ABB, 3, pp. 57-58, "Instruction Coccejis zur Verbesserung der Rechtszustände in Preußen", Berlin, 30 Juli 1719; pp. 115-121, "Schreiben Coccejis an Plotho. Zustand der Justiz in Preußen", Berlin, 1 January 1719; p. 312, "Erlaß an Cocceji. Bearbeitung des Preußischen Landrechts", Berlin 15 March 1721; pp. 313-316, Erlasse an die Preußische Regierung. Einführung des neuen Preußischen Landrechts, Berlin, 15 and 25 March 1721, and; pp. 364-5, "Erlaß an die Preußische Regierung. Publicirung des Landrechts", Berlin, 12 September 1721.

¹¹³See, for example, GStAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 19.

appears fairly unusual. It reveals, however, that the King was willing and determined to work his way into East Prussian affairs in even the most minor of cases, here using the town's special status. Even in such small cases his success was limited.

The absence of a separate Hohenzollern judicial apparatus in the Kingdom meant that the *Regierung* was the natural and traditional supreme legal authority. As a result of the cases mentioned above, the *Kommissariat* tried to claim jurisdiction under the two town's special status and history in several future cases. By precedent the *Regierung* retained jurisdiction, but the claims advanced by the Hohenzollerns were now upheld.¹¹⁴ On 31 January 1717, Frederick William I ordered that the *Regierung's* demand for jurisdiction over the two cases be refused. The *Kommissariat* was to have superiority in this jurisdiction.¹¹⁵ A separate court presumably had to be established by the *Kommissariat*, though detailed information on what was done cannot be discovered. This, however, was not the end of the dispute. There is evidence of at least one other long-standing contested case which lasted into 1717 and was not resolved until late in that year.¹¹⁶

In late October 1716, the *Regierung* complained about the "great confusion" concerning judicial affairs which would inevitably result from the king's *Reglement* concerning judicial reform in East Prussia of 6 May 1716.¹¹⁷ Again, the *Regierung* predictably blamed the *Kommissariat* for delaying or otherwise obstructing justice. This case involved the town of

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, fols. 3-4a and 12-15 Rückseite.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, fols. 17-19 Rückseite.

¹¹⁶GStAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 21.

¹¹⁷GStAPK, EM 121 e, Nr. 18, fols. 3-12 Rückseite, 26 October 1716.

Tilsit located in the north east of East Prussia.¹¹⁸ Its details remain rather sketchy. We know it concerned a formal complaint by the widow of the *Landgraffen* who held high posts within the Kingdom and who alleged that the *Regierung* was obstructing or deliberately delaying action in regard to a trial in which she was involved.¹¹⁹ This case already had lasted over four years and was being further prolonged by the added procedural responsibilities which were placed upon the *Kommissariat*, together with its other delaying tactics which appear to be deliberate.¹²⁰

The fact that this case had lasted four years was not in itself unusual. Many cases took far longer to be decided, with the risk that defendants might go bankrupt and be unable to pay any damages awarded. Lawyers would try to have the case thrown out on a technicality, or to prolong the trial for as long as possible.¹²¹ What is surprising was that the *Kommissariat* was involved and contributed to further delays.

The case's subject matter was in itself relatively insignificant. What is important and interesting, however, is that it became the source of a major debate concerning the role of the *Kommissariat* in East Prussian affairs and in particular, its ascendancy over the *Regierung*. The case itself appears to have quickly lost any importance it may have had. It became submerged by the broader issue of jurisdictional disputes between old and new authorities in East Prussia.

It is clear that the *Regierung* resisted even the smallest intrusions into its own judicial competence. It successfully upheld its traditional judicial

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, fols. 1-1 Rückseite, Waldburg's Rescript to the Magistrate of the town of Tilsit.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, fols. 1-1 Rückseite.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, fol. 3 Rückseite.

¹²¹ABB, 2, p. 114. In Waldburg's report to Frederick William I, he notes that cases have even lasted thirty years.

rights and privileges by articulating more fundamental, general, and universal justifications for its own supremacy, rather than fighting case by case. In addition, the *Regierung* became concerned by the *Kommissariat's* efforts to appoint a new judge in Insterburg, the district in which the town of Tilsit was located.¹²² The *Regierung* believed that it alone had the right to recommend such appointments, which traditionally had been within its preserve. In addition, the King attempted this in a remote region of East Prussia presumably because it might be easier to succeed there than in the *Regierung's* own stronghold of the Königsberg area. The *Regierung* continued its argument by noting this and the disruption to judicial affairs that it claimed would continue throughout the territory as long as the King continues to intrude in their affairs. They asked that their departments remain "free," that is to say not subject to interference by Berlin or its agencies.¹²³

Such clashes were in practice inevitable, but now, it appeared as if the King was also trying to undermine the *Regierung's* control over judicial appointments. The *Regierung* may still have controlled the administration of justice, but control over individual appointments was apparently being sought by the King in Berlin. The extent to which Frederick William I was successful will be examined later.¹²⁴ The *Regierung*, however, continue to protest that these changes represented unnecessary confusion and that the traditional East Prussian Collegial system should be left alone.¹²⁵ More specifically, they argued that the *Kommissariat* should not meddle in judicial affairs in general or in specific private disputes such as the case noted earlier

¹²²GStAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 18, fol. 6. See also, fols. 7-7 Rückseite.

¹²³Ibid., Point 6.

¹²⁴See Chapter 5.

¹²⁵GStAPK, EM 121e, Nr. 18, fol. 6.

concerning the widow in Tilsit.¹²⁶

In East Prussia, as in the other Hohenzollern territories, Frederick William I made little or no concerted attempt to reform judicial administration. The King did, however, send *Graf* Karl von Waldburg to East Prussia after his accession to investigate the complaints (*Gravamina*), with which Frederick William I was presented on his trip to the territory to accept the oath of allegiance by the Estates.¹²⁷ Waldburg's report detailed the poor condition of justice in East Prussia, and "emphasised the connection between these abuses and the low state of monetary credit in the province."¹²⁸ That is, the economy was so unstable that credit was not available due to such low repayment levels. Therefore, few would loan money because of low interest rates, particularly since it was notoriously difficult to recover debts through legal means. The repayment of debts could in practice not be enforced through the courts. As Weill notes, "[i]n numerous instances, a debtor taken to court would either be freed on a technicality, or would contrive to prolong the trial for years."¹²⁹ It should be noted that Waldburg's report focuses on the relationship between judicial inequalities and monetary credit in the Kingdom.

The King never supported an East Prussian law code although Cocceji did attempt to revise some aspects of the Kingdom's legal structures between 1718 and 1723 in a "patch work" effort which in practice had no

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, fol. 7.

¹²⁷ABB, 1, p. 522. Cited in Weill, *Frederick the Great and Samuel von Cocceji*, p. 16. Frederick William I, commenting on the poor state of justice at his accession, wrote: "ich mus leider so starg sprechen weill die schlimme Justiz gen himmell schreiet...."

¹²⁸See Waldburg's report in ABB, 2, pp. 107-122. Cited in Weill, *Frederick the Great and Samuel von Cocceji*, p. 16.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*; See also, ABB, 1, p. 114.

impact.¹³⁰ One of their recommendations for reform included a new *Hofgericht* that would be under the authority of the East Prussian *Kammer* and would have been the court of first instance for all noble cases. This would have meant the elimination of a primary function of the established elite as well as a substantial source of revenue. The *Regierung* protested loudly against these reform proposals claiming, among other things, that the new *Hofgericht* would be overwhelmed in a very short time due to the number of cases it was likely to expect. Not only was this an infringement upon their established authority, the *Regierung* claimed, but the more widely separated system of courts throughout the Kingdom — which was present under the traditional legal structure — allowed for a more even distribution of the case load. Should such a legal reform have been undertaken by Frederick William I it would have constituted a direct challenge to the *Regierung's* authority. No legal reforms of this kind were undertaken and indeed the King declared his approval for the traditional legal structures which kept matters of justice in the hands of the established elites during his travels through the Kingdom in 1722.¹³¹

Justice in East Prussia, therefore, continued to be administered through the Kingdom's own established legal structures which were completely independent of any court in Berlin. Legal jurisdiction, therefore, was central to the *Regierung's* overall authority and was part of its complaints about the 1716 decree. Although its judicial authority had not been directly attacked, it was being indirectly undermined. The King's actions occasionally challenged the *Regierung's* control of East Prussian justice but this assault was not concerted or consistent. When this happened, the *Regierung* let their opinions be heard. It is clear that Cocceji's

¹³⁰Weill, *Frederick the Great and Samuel von Cocceji*, p. 17.

¹³¹Uderstädt, "Die ostpreußische Kammerverwaltung," part 3, p. 73.

lack of success was due to factors beyond his control. Frederick William I did not provide sufficient financial resources to provide judges of quality and insulate them from the temptations of corruption,¹³² and this contributed to the persistence of old ways among the Kingdom's judicial system.

¹³²ABB, 5:2, pp. 670-671 and ABB, 6:2, p. 615. Cited in Weill, Frederick the Great and Samuel von Cocceji, p. 18. One can infer more of this point from the latter document than the former document in the Acta Borussica.

CHAPTER 5

Local Government in the Kingdom, 1713-1723

Continuity and Change within Local Government

The East Prussian noble district captains, or *Amthauptleute*, were a crucial element in the day-to-day workings of government through the final decade of Frederick William I's reign. They were a part of the local, traditional structure of power and authority in the Kingdom. Not only did they hold socially and politically prestigious positions but more importantly, the *Amthauptleute*, in the words of Juhr, "attended to all branches of administrative affairs in their district."¹ They supervised the economic matters of the domain lands, military affairs, matters of taxation, church and school affairs, legal matters, and held a key role in supervision of town administration, among other duties.² Though some *Amthauptleute* were paid, this depended on the particular post or individual circumstances as will be demonstrated. The District Captains, in other words, provided expertise that was crucial for the day-to-day operation of East Prussian

¹Juhr, "Die Verwaltung des Hauptamtes Brandenburg/Ostpreussen von 1713-1751," p. 34.

²Uderstädt, "Die Ostpreussische Kammerverwaltung. Ihre Unterbehörden und Lokalorgane unter Friedrich Wilhelm I. und Friedrich II. 1713-1756," vol. 3, pp. 55ff. See also, ABB, 4:1, pp. 317-318.

government and as a result, enjoyed considerable political and social status within the territory.

The *Amthauptleute's* central role made them the inevitable target of many of Frederick William I's reform efforts for East Prussia. The King perceived their power, like that of other territorial elites, as a threat and an obstacle to his own authority over the Kingdom. Also, this was a position dominated by the local Junkers, whose loyalty correctly was believed to lie with Königsberg and not Berlin.

The King wanted to bring the *Amthauptleute* under more direct control. In particular, he wanted more control both over their appointment and actions. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that Frederick William I's efforts to reform the local territorial elites, and especially the *Amthauptleute*, were only partially realised during the first half of his reign. Although factors such as structural reforms within central administration in Berlin and more effective enforcement of administrative decisions on the provincial level led the King slowly to implement measures that restricted the District Captain's regional or local power, his aims were often very different from what he actually achieved in practice. Only in the reign's last decade, after other reforms had been successfully introduced, was the King able to see his policy concerning the *Amthauptleute* through to an effective conclusion. Moreover, some of the policies of this period can hardly be considered as part of the planned introduction of a modern bureaucracy. They were rather the consequences of highly personal and often, arbitrary rule by the King. It is clear that other, non-institutional traditional structures continued to play their part in the regional administration of East Prussia in the early decades of the eighteenth century. Many informal and long-standing practices among the East Prussian Junkers were unaffected by Frederick William I's reforming efforts.

It is important to understand the distinct political and social environment within which the East Prussian elites operated. In general, the Kingdom's nobility were rather less wealthy than their counterparts in the other Hohenzollern territories. Like the other provinces, the Kingdom was an agrarian based economy. Nonetheless, there was a larger lesser nobility and smaller noble elite in East Prussia than in the other territories. As will subsequently be discussed more fully, this was partly due to the fact that East Prussia had partible inheritance combined with few career opportunities for lesser nobles who were often landless and existed in real poverty.

The stratification of the East Prussian nobility resulted in an elite of titled families, *Grafenfamilien*, followed by middling nobles with quite large amounts of land and a corresponding degree of political and social influence.³ These two groups enjoyed significant career opportunities. In contrast, the lesser East Prussian Junkers were, as was noted, impoverished and little different from the peasants which they worked beside in the fields. This group often worked their land personally (should it have been theirs) or served as lesser officials in the provincial government. The lack of opportunity for lesser nobility was a grievance often expressed by the East Prussian elite to the Hohenzollerns. Carsten who has also examined the manuscript material of the *Ostpreussische Folianten* covering the reign of Frederick William I's grandfather, the Great Elector, notes that in 1682 the *Oberstände*, i. e., nobility, complained that their pursuit of knightly virtues was hindered by their poverty. In addition, most East Prussian nobility found that instead of living by "books and swords", they had to "seize the

³See above, Chapter One, pp. 57-69.

plough and other peasant work".⁴ As a result of these financial restraints, many *Ämter* were unable to send their representative deputies to the *Convocations-Tagen* that discussed district matters.⁵ The complaints that the East Prussian nobility made about their poverty were also closely associated with the larger framework in which they operated, namely *Gutsherrschaft*. In addition, one additional[^] factor that was common in the early eighteenth-century Kingdom was that military careers were impossible for lesser East Prussian Junkers. It was only after the accession of Frederick the Great in 1740 that army cadet schools were further expanded. This permitted the impoverished lesser Junkers from East Prussia to send their sons to the cadet corps and thus secure a military career, hitherto impossible because of the costs involved. Prior to this and under Frederick William I, however, the Kingdom's lesser nobility had a more difficult career path. The acceptance of a military career among the East Prussian nobility, however, must be questioned in light of their resistance throughout the reign of Frederick William I and into the first years of rule by Frederick the Great.⁶

Poverty was due to the size of individual estates, reduced family income and the backward and poor agrarian system. Furthermore, many lesser nobility were not in control of the land that they worked. The number of landless Junkers in the Kingdom during the reign of Frederick William I cannot be given, as historians have focused only upon the group which held

⁴Carsten, *Geschichte der preußischen Junker*, p. 38. See also GStAPK, OF, Nr. 717, 30 July 1682, fol. 229.

⁵Carsten, *Geschichte der Preußische Junker*, p. 38.

⁶ABB, 5:2, p. 776. The editors of the *Acta Borussica* have noted that in 1718, 1727, and 1738 there were similar examples of disquiet. See also Büsch, *Militärsystem und Sozialleben im alten Preussen, 1713-1807*, p. 82.

land.⁷ We do know, however, that during the eighteenth century the total number of peasant farmers working on Junker-held land were in decline, as was the size of the farmstead, particularly the further away it was from Königsberg.⁸

There is another explanation for the general noble poverty. This partly relates to partible inheritance and the variances in wealth, social and political status among the East Prussian elite in the early modern period. It was a consequence of repeated divisions of a father's inheritance, in the past, which ensured most Junkers had small estates. The effect of such inheritance practices could, however, be mitigated in practice. Family lands in East Prussia were not necessarily divided among sons of noble families. Although in theory partible inheritance applied, the beneficiaries — almost always sons — made an agreement to keep the lands together but to divide the income which resulted. In this way some family patrimonies were kept together, at the price of some sons (and more daughters) being worse off. These differences in wealth, however, were accompanied by a gain in cohesion and family unity. Otto Hintze, F. L. Carsten, and Edgar Melton have noted the potential benefit for the more impoverished family members which meant that even the lesser and poorer Junkers held privileges and rights in the Estates. Therefore, they could come together and rally behind a particular family member who was nominated for an administrative position in the territory. Once selected, the new office holder was expected to reward those members of his family who helped him attain his position.

⁷Friedrich-Wilhelm Henning has shown for a period late in the century, however, that nobility continued to farm their own land. See, Henning, Herrschaft und Bauernuntertänigkeit, pp. 107ff.

⁸Friedrich-Wilhelm Henning, Studien zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands, edited by Johannes Hoffmann, Series A, Nr. 42, Veröffentlichungen der Forschungsstelle Ostmitteleuropa an der Universität Dortmund, Dortmund: Forschungsstelle Ostmitteleuropa, 1985, pp. 269-270.

As noted by Otto Hintze, the local conditions which existed at the end of the seventeenth century are reflected in an anonymous memorandum sent to the official in charge, von Fuchs. The author of the memorandum warned, that if someone in East Prussia obtained the position of district councillor or an administrative chief, "then his uncles and brothers-in-law are in clover; and all the little Junkers around are expected to serve the Lord district councillor and Lord Chief as an idol."⁹

The *Amthauptleute* had held considerable authority over many of the Kingdom's affairs and possessed considerable political and social influence throughout the seventeenth century. The role of lesser Junkers is elaborated upon by Hintze through the same anonymous East Prussian who also described the influence of the East Prussian nobility in provincial affairs near the end of the seventeenth century:

[T]hey themselves [had] taken over the entire board, all good has come to an end in the land, and the sovereign must at all times negotiate with these district councillors about his rights, even his very bread; so long as this goes on, the Elector will be ruler more *nomine* than *omine*. All the while the district councillors send the ball over to the high councillors and the High Councillors play it back to the district councillors; and anyone who does not tag along with this, even His Serene Highness, will have to pay for it If His Serene Highness hands over *œconomica* to the charge of these people, as it is in the hands of the Starosty in Poland, then we will have everything we want or need.¹⁰

⁹Urkunden und Aktenstücke zur Geschichte des Kurfürsten Friedrich Wilhelm von Brandenburg, Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, vol. 16, p. 1058. See also, Hintze, "The Hohenzollern and the Nobility," p. 45. A slightly different passage is in Carsten, Geschichte der preußischen Junker, p. 37. For a different English translation than that which is used here, see Carsten, A History of the Prussian Junkers, p. 29. See also, Melton, "The Prussian Junkers, 1600-1786," p. 81. Melton uses Hintze's English edition quotation.

¹⁰Quoted by Hintze, "The Hohenzollern and the Nobility," pp. 44-45. See also, Carsten, The Origins of Prussia, p. 227, and Juhr, "Die Verwaltung des Hauptamtes Brandenburg/ostpreussen von 1713-1751," p. 38. Juhr gives less importance to the continued impact of the *Amthauptleute* and tends to follow the more traditional historiography and at one point notes that these Junkers (i. e., *Amthauptleute*) had "virtually no sovereign control." Compare to Rosenberg, Bureaucracy, Aristocracy and Autocracy, p. 76, "Hence no weight was to be given to the fact that the candidate for office might be "the brother, cousin, brother-in-law, or any other in-law or client of the sponsor.'" See also, ABB, 3, pp. 577-78 and ABB, 5:2, pp. 432, 537, 564, 614 and ABB, 7, p. 649 for the Rosenberg's quote.

Though the *Amthauptleute* held authority in the later half of the seventeenth century, during the reign of Frederick William I they faced a serious challenge to their position. The attempt by Frederick William I to establish his authority over local elites only produced limited results for him in the early and middle years of his reign, and certainly achieved far less by his death in 1740 than he had expected and hoped. As a result, these officials as well as their subordinates retained a significant degree of independence and the development of absolutism was impeded and restricted.

The representatives of the nobility at the local level, the *Amthauptleute*, remained an integral force in East Prussian administration until surprisingly late in Frederick William I's reign. Even Roth notes that "[e]ven though the district captains held little more than sinecure positions after the *General Domänenpächter* assumed most of the their administrative functions [throughout the 1720s and 1730s], they still had the force of tradition to support them."¹¹ The district captains were a troublesome target for Frederick William I, and it was for this reason that there was close attention paid to them on almost every aspect of their position throughout Frederick William I's reign. The manuscript material suggests that the traditional influence of the *Amthauptleute* on East Prussian affairs had a substantial life that lasted long after Frederick William I's accession.

When a Hohenzollern became ruler it was traditional to visit East Prussia and all the other major territories to receive the traditional oaths of allegiance from the representatives of the territory and to hear any grievances which the provincial authorities might have. It was on this visit that perhaps the most often quoted words of Frederick William I's were

¹¹Roth, "The East Prussian 'Domaenenpaechter' in the Eighteenth Century," p. 121. Roth appears to base the issue of sinecure incorrectly upon Büsch, *Militärsystem und Sozialleben im alten Preussen, 1713-1807*, p. 131.

expressed, to the effect that his authority would be established like a “rock of bronze”.¹² The second part of the King's statement, however, is less familiar and reveals that he planned to allow the Junkers to continue to meet in their Estates: “... One allows the Junkers to make wind in the *Landtage*. One lets them sound off if they come around to One's own way [of thinking]....”¹³ In other words, Frederick William I was explaining that the East Prussian Junkers could vent their complaints and grievances against him in the provincial Estates (*Landtage*), since the King considered that these local agencies did not represent any challenge to his own administrative control and were thus a valuable safety valve.

Yet these same Estates had possessed significant powers. One of the most important functions of the *Landtage* had been to vote supply (*Bewilligungsrecht*). The traditional historiography suggests that this function was forfeited (*Einbüßten*) by the East Prussian elites in the early years of the eighteenth century and in this case the established view appears to be correct.¹⁴ The leader of a district *Landtage*, the *Landrat*, was selected by that district's members. It was the responsibility of the *Landrat* to oversee many of the district's military obligations as well. Although these responsibilities and functions had altered in the course of the reign of the Great Elector,¹⁵ the *Landrat* remained a protector of a district Junker's traditional or innate rights.

¹²See above, Introduction, p. 28.

¹³GSStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpr., II-Materien, Nr. 1577, fol. 197. See also, ABB, 2, p. 352.

¹⁴Neugebauer, *Politischer Wandel im Osten*, p. 65. See also Isaacsohn, *Geschichte des Preußischen Beamtenthums*, III, p. 167. Isaacsohn comments: “Daß er hier stets lebendig blieb, daß der Gang der Maschine durch kein Stäubchen, kein Hinderniß in irgend einem Theile gestört würde, das war eine zweite Aufgabe der Departements=Minister.”

¹⁵See above, Chapters Two and Three.

As we have seen, many of the military tax collection responsibilities of the *Landräte* were taken over by the *Kommissariaten* officials.¹⁶ Yet the changes in their administrative jurisdictions were not accompanied by a major alteration in the political and social position of the *Landräte*. We can trace their limited movement through the instructions of Hohenzollern rulers in which they set down the administrative, military and social hierarchy in a Table of Ranks, the so-called *Rang Reglement*. These tables were issued by Hohenzollern rulers from time-to-time, often at the start of a new reign. They set down the official order and hierarchy of posts in the Hohenzollern monarchy and applied to all provinces. Therefore, one Table of Ranks took account of provincial variations. A post with the same title and provincial status did not necessarily have the same level of rank within the Hohenzollern Table of Ranks. Often, a post in a more important territory would hold higher rank over the same post in a less important Hohenzollern province. The higher one's rank, the more political and social influence one wielded. In other words, one's place in the Table of Ranks was a measure of one's political and social importance. Frederick III/ I, for example, in his *Rang Reglement* of 15 April 1705 placed the East Prussian *Landräte* at number forty-two in a list of approximately one hundred and thirty-one.¹⁷ This is thirty places ahead of the *Landräte* and *Kommissariaten* from the other territories who were less important including Brandenburg which is striking testimony to the new importance of the new Kingdom.¹⁸ Although the East Prussian *Landräte* maintained the same position a year

¹⁶See above, Chapters Two and Three.

¹⁷GStAPK, EM 15a, Nr. 42, fol. 4. See also, ABB, 1, pp. 410-419 where the 21 April 1713 *Rang Reglement* has been published; it can also be found in Rudolf Maria Bernhard Stillford, *Ceremonial-Buch für den königlich Preussischen Hof*, Abschnitt I-XII, Berlin: R. V. Decker's, 1877, p. 13.

¹⁸GStAPK, EM 15a, Nr. 42, fol. 4.

later, their status actually improved within all the ranks of the Kingdom due to the addition of the *Grand Maitre de la Garde Robe* and the elimination of the East Prussian *Tribunalsräte* from the list.¹⁹ In other words, their net gain taking all posts from all territories remained the same but their rank improved when considering only the posts of the East Prussian territory. Almost two years later, they again rose in their rank to position number forty when several other positions were lowered.²⁰

The trend continued through the first decade of Frederick William I's reign. In April 1713, the new King increased the rank of the *Amthauptleute* significantly by twelve places, advancing them to position twenty-eight.²¹ This rise was an accidental result of Frederick William I's wider preferences and not a deliberated enhancement of their position. This is especially interesting since it is clear that the *Amthauptleute* were not part of the 'higher' levels of central administration or the King's court in Berlin. It was in this *Reglement* that we see Frederick William I's effort to eliminate the superfluous pomp associated with his father's court, which the new King detested. Positions that were largely ceremonial under Frederick III/I were lowered in rank or dropped altogether from the list in favour of those functions Frederick William I considered more important, namely military positions and important administrative posts. Incidentally, these reforms of ranks by Frederick William I were part of his streamlining of court and administration in order to support his growing military system. This was the source of the established verdict upon Brandenburg-Prussia in this era, that it was the "Sparta of the North."²²

¹⁹Stillford, *Ceremonial-Buch*, p. 18-19. *Rang Reglement* of 6 June 1706.

²⁰GStAPK, EM 15a, Nr. 42, fol. 18.

²¹*Ibid.*, fol. 30. *Rang Reglement* of 21 April 1713.

²²For a comparison of expenditures between Frederick William I and his predecessor, see Förster, *Friedrich Wilhelm I. König von Preussen*, vol. 1, pp. 54-70 which

The rank of several other East Prussian officials, such as the four *Oberamthauptleute*, was also increased significantly. Their positions were maintained at this status until at least the time of the introduction of the General Directory in January 1723. This is evident from the order for the East Prussian *Regierung* to re-publicise the *Rang Reglement* of 13 April 1713 again in 1722 and even in 1723.²³ Furthermore, all of the royal officials operating in the Kingdom, those administrators (in other words) who were under direct control of the King, occupied a very lowly place in the order of rank. For example, *Kammer* officials were listed at forty-six in rank for all officials in 1713 which was second from last, being only ahead of the members of the Queen's entourage.²⁴ In the *Acta Borussica*, however, a document is included from 1721 that pertains specifically to the order of rank for East Prussia. In this document, the *Kommissariat* and *Domänenkammer* officials, that is to say the royal agents, were placed at the same rank as the President of the East Prussian *Tribunal* and *Hofgericht* who was third from the top. This appears to have only been a temporary and unsuccessful attempt by Frederick William I to insert this group of his own officials so highly.²⁵ It proved very short-lived. As noted earlier, he ordered the *Rang Reglement* of 1713 to be re-issued in 1722 and 1723.

The wider point here is that the position of the *Landräte* as well as most other posts occupied by the East Prussian elite, may have had their administrative role reduced but their official political and corresponding

highlight the reign of Frederick III/I and pp. 179-191 which illustrate the reign of Frederick William I, pp. 179-191.

²³GStAPK, EM 15a, Nr. 42, fols. 36-37 Rückseite. The king's order of 24 December 1722.

²⁴Stillford, *Ceremonial-Buch*, p. 33.

²⁵ABB, 3, pp. 327-331, "Rangreglement für Preußen," Berlin, 25 March 1721. The editors note that this was originally contained in manuscript material of Repository 7 (Nrs. 41 and 42) now held in the Berlin archives although these documents were not found and thus, could not be examined.

social, status was stable and even enhanced at times during both the reigns of Frederick III/I and Frederick William I. Whether this was a deliberate raising of their status cannot be determined with any certainty. The general evolution within the order of ranks, however, is significant. We have seen how particular judicial and court offices fell while particular administrative and military posts rose. This may be interpreted as the King's deliberate preference for posts that carried out specific functions, above all military administration, rather than other social and/or political factors. Whether or not their enhanced status was intended as some sort of "consolation prize" for their reduced administrative role is not entirely clear.²⁶ Nevertheless, their long-standing high rank was consistent with Frederick William I's use of territorial officials. In light of evidence presented here, one can see that the continued official presence and high ranking of East Prussian officials had more to do with their continued influence and authority in the territory. At the same time Frederick William I selectively enhanced other positions which were either relevant for positions outside the Kingdom or the sphere of influence of the established elite.

The *Landräte* were among the highest members of the *Landtage* and were the representatives of the *Amthauptleute* (of which group they were members) in the *Landtage*. They originally numbered twelve, a number that lasted throughout the seventeenth century and into the early eighteenth century. By the time of Frederick William I's accession, however, the number of individuals who held the title of *Landrat* had declined to four. This was primarily due to the fact that the other *Amthauptleute* were not replaced when the incumbent died and had not been replaced during the

²⁶Wolfram Fischer and Peter Lundgreen, "The Recruitment and Training of Administrative and Technical Personnel," in *The Formation of Nation States in Western Europe*, ed., Charles Tilly, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975, p. 515.

reign of Frederick III/I.²⁷ That is, some functions were combined under one official or “retired” altogether. During the *Huldigungslandtag* of 1713, Frederick William I approved the appointment of two new *Landräte*. Their appointments, however, were approved without any day-to-day administrative responsibilities but brought the total number of *Landräte* to six.²⁸ No more were named during Frederick William I’s reign primarily because there no formal meeting of the Estates was held where and when this normally was carried out. Four *Landräte* stood out from the rest and comprised the elite within the *Landtage*. This group of four in practice held the highest status. These four were known as *Oberhauptmänner* and came from the districts of Amt Brandenburg, Amt Schaaken, Amt Fischhausen and Amt Tapiaw.

The elite status of the *Oberhauptmänner* increased during the first half of the eighteenth century. Even within those *Amthauptleute* who remained, there was a clear hierarchy. The administrator for the Amt Brandenburg was, in practice, superior to the others. This position traditionally brought with it the position of *Landrats director* who oversaw the entire *Landtage*. In addition, this position, as well as those of the *Amthauptmänner* of Schaaken and Fischhausen were given to military officers.²⁹ The remaining six *Landräte* eventually all died without being replaced, thus saving the customary salaries (*eingezogen*),³⁰ and this was the usual number during the reign of Frederick William I.

²⁷Neugebauer, *Politischer Wandel im Osten*, p. 69.

²⁸Uderstädt, “Die ostpreußische Kammerverwaltung,” part 3, pp 135-136.

²⁹Neugebauer, *Politischer Wandel im Osten*, p. 69.

³⁰Quoted in Neugebauer, *Politischer Wandel im Osten*, p. 69-70; Johannes Voigt, *Geschichtliche Notizen über den Herren=Stand*, Königsberg: Privately published, 1840, p. 23 “Die noch übrigen sechs Landräthe ließ man nach und nach aussterben, ohne daß ihre Aemter wieder besetzt wurden. Ihre Besoldungen wurden eingezogen.”

The position of *Landrat* was a post that had slightly more real work than other *Amthauptleute*, but this did not mean that actual authority rested with some other official; it did not. These positions remained important because of their status and the men who filled them. Nor was appointment to them based solely upon the wishes of Frederick William I. The *Regierung* had enduring influence over many of these appointments until the 1730s. The positions under the *Amthauptleute*, the *Amt Verweser* and *Amt Schreiber*, were part of a strong administrative infrastructure that had for long existed in East Prussia. Both of these positions were under the authority of the individual *Amthauptmann* for whom they worked. Otto Büsch has argued that from the start of Frederick William I's reign, the position of *Amthauptleute* was offered as sinecure especially for elderly or incapacitated officers.³¹ This was not strictly the case and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6. For purposes of this chapter, it is important to remember that these positions generated income as well as wielding political and social influence within the ranks of East Prussia's traditional elite.

³¹Büsch, *Militärssystem und Sozialleben im alten Preussen, 1713-1807*, p. 131. This point is also mentioned in Neugebauer, *Politischer Wandel im Osten*, p. 69.

The Domänenpächter

The royal domain lands were central to Frederick William I's reforms of the Kingdom. The King's initiatives, however, did not affect Junkers who already held such lands. Rather, the reforms revamped the way in which the King leased out those lands which he still controlled directly which had been run by the Kingdom's established authorities. His aim was to maximise revenue, for example, by improved farming methods which would lead to higher yields and rents. This was achieved primarily through the rather slow but eventually successful introduction of new domain estate managers, so-called *Domänenpächter*, as well as implementation of new "procedural rules, instructions, guidelines, and directives, designed to guarantee that the estates of the royal domain be operated exactly as the crown desired."³² Many of the regulations were incorporated into Frederick William I's Instruction for the General Directory in 1723 and based on a plan drawn up by one of the King's advisors, Friedrich von Görne, in 1719. The King followed-up the initial plan with additional regulations for the operation of the domain leasing scheme in 1725 and 1728 which reiterated the legal regulations for the domain estates. One final regulation of 1731 must also be mentioned, the detailed instruction for the introduction and implementation of improved farming methods, the so-called *Haushaltungs-Reglements* or Magdeburg farming procedures.³³ Within around a dozen years, from 1719-1730, the King had reorganised and implemented the way in which the Hohenzollerns had for long managed the domain leases.

³²Roth, "The East Prussian 'Domaenenpaechter' in the Eighteenth Century," p. 54.

³³Ibid. See Chapter Two.

This was characteristic of Frederick William I as we have seen. He sought to circumvent the established authorities in the Kingdom and tried to recover lost ground by working through a new group of officials and administrators. The manuscript material suggests that he was conscious of the role of the traditional authorities in local affairs. From conceptualisation in 1719 through its introduction in the 1720s, the new scheme essentially was not in effective operation until 1730. Yet, there is no doubt that the political and social integration of the *General Domänenpächter* started during Frederick William I's reign, albeit not at the expense of the political and social status of that group of traditional native nobility whom they were intended to emulate in form and function. Frederick William I developed an effective parallel institution to counterbalance and eventually supplant the traditional authorities' administration of the crown's estates. The royal domains were legally an area of Hohenzollern authority. Yet, in practice, the local elites had, through the years, taken control and only slowly were the Hohenzollern rulers — primarily Frederick William I — able to regain them. The rise of the East Prussian *Stände* in earlier centuries had allowed the local nobility to increase their influence over most aspects of land management.³⁴ As the Hohenzollerns increased their authority over the territory, they were for long unable to manage the domain lands effectively and directly, and therefore to draw maximum profit from them. Instead, the Hohenzollerns continued to lease entire estates to local noblemen throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This continued to limit the ruling dynasty's personal influence in East Prussia. In 1609, the East Prussian Estates demanded and received from Duke Albrecht additional power over the affairs of the territory. One important element of this

³⁴The following discussion is based largely on Roth, "The East Prussian 'Domaenenpaechter' in the Eighteenth Century," pp. 30-35.

increased authority was that East Prussian Junkers had been granted priority over non-nobles in the allocation of domain leases. These noblemen were often the administrative officials for the district in which the estates leased were located. Potential candidates were drawn from lists prepared by the supreme territorial authority that represented East Prussian interests, the Königsberg *Regierung*. Thus, in effect, this control over domain lands exemplified the *Regierung's* control of virtually every aspect of fiscal and judicial affairs on the local as well as provincial level. There was a tradition of privileges and authority over territorial affairs by native East Prussian Junkers which stretched back over a century at the time of Frederick William I's accession.

In addition, the practice had become established by which the domain estates had been used as collateral by the impoverished ruler for loans from his nobility: for the lease pledges or contracts, the so-called *Verfändung*, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.³⁵ The term *Verfändung*, however, can also incorporate the meaning 'pawn', because, as James Roth explains, "the usufruct was lost while the loan was in effect."³⁶ This became a serious problem, even though early Hohenzollern rulers made some progress to correct the domain mis-management and faulty loans. During the reign of Frederick William, the Great Elector, in 1656 the total debt from such pawnings totalled 1.6 million taler: a high figure but one which actually was a reduction from that of previous years.³⁷ Nevertheless, the rulers up to this point facilitated such pawning of their domains in order to bring in much needed revenue. Moreover, as Roth has

³⁵Kąkolewski, "Nadużycia i korupcja w administracji Prus Książęcych w połowie XVI wieku," pp. 11-20. This is based upon the English language summary in *Acta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 70, 1994, p. 203.

³⁶Roth, "The East Prussian 'Domaenenpaechter' in the Eighteenth Century," p. 31.

³⁷*Ibid.*

noted, "their willingness to give up the use of the domain shows how unimportant the domain had become as a regular and direct source of sovereign revenues."³⁸

Significant reforms began with the Great Elector although as was discussed in Chapter Two, his efforts did little to enhance Hohenzollern authority within the Duchy. He was able to establish rudimentary military supervision in East Prussia to support his standing army. This was the foundation upon which Frederick William I, two generations later, built as he strove to expand many of the fragmentary authorities, especially with respect to the royal domain lands, into parallel institutions to those controlled by the established East Prussian elite. This was an identical tactic to that employed by the King towards the power of the *Regierung* as discussed in the previous chapter.

The General Finance Directory had a significant impact upon the development of the domain lands in East Prussia. Frederick William I's authority was more direct and complete over domain affairs than almost any other sphere of the Kingdom's politics. Initially, this had been facilitated by the establishment of the General Finance Directory. At least on paper, the King took full control of the East Prussian domain board from the noble-dominated *Regierung* on September 26, 1714.³⁹ This significantly reduced the authority of the provincial government in domain financial matters and in the process, removed "stumbling blocks" to rational and regular exploitation of the royal domains.⁴⁰ In short, the King tried to break the link which had been forged during previous centuries between the ruler's domains and the provincial elites. Moreover, the introduction of the

³⁸*Ibid.*

³⁹ABB, 2, pp. 46-48.

⁴⁰Roth, "The East Prussian 'Domaenenpaechter' in the Eighteenth Century," p. 42.

General Directory improved the administration of the royal domain affairs in some measure after 1723.

The decree of September 1714 initially changed very little in practice, because the influence of the *Amthauptleute* was entrenched so firmly at both the local level of government and over the domains. The King had few officials among the various regional and local tiers of government who were able to oversee the introduction of the decree and implement it effectively. What is clear, is that in the area of the royal domains, control shifted in favour of the King less slowly than in other parts of the administration areas. Royal domain land constituted about one half of all East Prussian territory and the King, from Berlin, increasingly possessed a wider presence in East Prussia simply by being able to make more decisions about these lands.

There was a clear if at times elusive social hierarchy within the administration. The titles of the various positions are as diverse and imprecise as social definitions or labels. The implication here is that certain posts, for example, the *General Domänenpächter*, were hoping to use their positions as a path into the social status of the nobility. Many titles were included in the royal Table of Ranks but several were not which only added to the disorder.⁴¹ The general lease program, a priority for Frederick William I, established a variety of titles for the non-noble leaseholder, the *General Domänenpächter*. These leaseholders of royal domains, as a group, constituted a hierarchy which incorporated the titles of the administrative nobility. As a result, the respective titles for the *General Domänenpächter* and the Kingdom's Junkers are similar and therefore confusing. The *General Domänenpächter* could become an *Amtmann*, or an *Oberamtman*, or an

⁴¹See footnote 17.

Amtsrat. These were government titles that sounded close to those of the administrative nobility who also operated at the local level.

Such a wider royal presence, however, did not necessarily translate into enhanced political or social control or lead to an immediate improvement in the administration of domain affairs. What it did provide for the Hohenzollerns in East Prussia, in the medium and longer-term, was an excellent bridgehead from which to work outwards, to achieve greater control over East Prussia as a whole. The King may have wanted the district captains to submit completely to his authority but he was not necessarily able to force the *Amthauptleute* from their high social position. Indeed, as will shortly be seen, this was probably not Frederick William I's goal at all. The *Amthauptleute*, more than any other group however, handled the crucial day-to-day functions that directly linked them to peasants and Junkers on the estates and to members of the nobility in more elevated positions.

The East Prussian domain administration remained hampered by the enduring effects of the 1709/10 plague during the early decades of the eighteenth century. Many of the deserted farms remained abandoned throughout much of Frederick William I's reign. This brought with it drastically lower revenues and production from both the noble and domain lands upon which the East Prussian economy was based.⁴² The area to the east of Königsberg was, in particular, badly hit by the plague. This region which includes the districts of Memel, Tilsit, Ragnit, and Insterburg had suffered earlier devastations, for example, the seventeenth-century invasions by the Tartars.⁴³ This left the royal domains with two-thirds

⁴²The lower revenues and production also may have forced down rents. This also may have been the case due to a lack of lease contracts for the domain estates and/or under-utilised noble estate lands due to the general labour shortage.

⁴³Recent Polish historiography, however, has questioned the destructiveness of the Tartar incursions argued previously. For example, see Augustiewicz, Sławomir, "Najazdy tatarskie na Prusy Książęce (1656-1657). Legendy i fakty," *Komunikaty Mazursko-*

fewer peasant labourers by the end of the Great Elector's reign than they had in 1610.⁴⁴ In addition, the War of 1655-60 also took a considerable toll on the Duchy, and the lasting effects of these devastations and the plague contributed to the Kingdom's slow recovery during the eighteenth century.

Warmińskie, vol. 3, 1995, pp. 233-247. This is based upon the English language summary in *Acta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 74, 1996, pp. 216-17.

⁴⁴Mack Walker, *The Salzburg Transaction*, p. 74.

A Consolidation of Junker Power

The plague crisis also served to increase the already-considerable control exercised by the East Prussian Junkers. Many of the domain estates abandoned during or immediately after the plague crisis were confiscated by the influential and wealthy nobles who remained, and this only added to their financial potential as well as extending their control over the land. This had the effect of removing altogether royal control from the vanished estates and, in general, substantial parts of East Prussia.

Frederick William I needed to enhance his own control at the local level in order to carry out the planned improvements to the royal domains. His actions have to be considered a serious attempt to challenge the prestige and leading authority of the *Amthauptleute* and might have resulted in further administrative and governmental breakdown in a territory which brought the Hohenzollerns the highest prestige as a Kingdom. This was something that Frederick William I could not risk, given his continuing dependence upon the *Amthauptleute* as the principal figures in local government in the Kingdom. District Captains, as a group, "were the only tenuous link between central monarchical authority and that part of the population subject to direct patrimonial authority of the noble landlords."⁴⁵ Roth explains that, there was a need by the Hohenzollerns to have the established agencies continue their dominance over the day-to-day operation of administration that Frederick William I, perhaps as well as previous rulers, were willing, if not forced, to concede their own authority

⁴⁵Roth, "The East Prussian 'Domaenenpaechter' in the Eighteenth Century," p. 202.

outside the royal domain land administration.⁴⁶ Frederick William I could not immediately replace this link. His continuing dependence upon the *Amthauptleute* in the wider government of the Kingdom here limited the capacity for direct action on the domain lands.

On the private estates of the Junkers, the District Captains' responsibilities were complex and wide-ranging — here more than almost anywhere else in East Prussian affairs their authority was complete. Frederick William I, at times, did not break down the traditional structures into clearer divisions of responsibility, or as some may say, a protean bureaucracy. Rather than attacking established elites and attempting to destroy their social positions, as earlier generations of scholars believed, the King coaxed them into military careers and actively encouraged the East Prussian elite to improve their own professional development by becoming military officers. As noted above, Frederick William I made no attempt to decrease the social standing of the East Prussian Junker. On the contrary, he eventually sought to enhance it. East Prussian Junkers recognised the immediate advantages of the military for themselves as well as for the economic well-being of their estates. Presumably, there had been a strong military ethos among the Junkers, like other nobilities of the period. They viewed association with Frederick William I's armed forces differently than posts in his government. The East Prussian Junkers appear to accept their intended role in the military sphere sooner and more easily than in the King's reform of government.

Much of the explanation for this was due to the powerful position of the East Prussian Junkers which had developed most notably during the reign of the Great Elector. The Junkers had gained increased social status and personal power at the local level, especially through their virtually

⁴⁶Ibid.

complete authority within the boundaries of their own estates, and this was combined with a high measure of provincial self-government. The latter further complemented their status and power through the domination of East Prussian local administration by noblemen from the same district. This had the effect of allowing many local officials to participate in important provincial-wide decisions. The estate Junker, whether a local district official or not, held important economic, social, and political power at many levels of East Prussian society and government.

The extension of Junker authority into the military and over their peasants were to be the next stages in the evolution of the East Prussian nobility. On this point, one must agree with Otto Büsch who noted that “the military system as a social system became an expression of the political circumstances between King and nobility.”⁴⁷ The process, however, was to prove an extended one. It was only during the reign of Frederick William I that this was advanced and the reign of Frederick the Great that the relationship matured. Crucial to this integration of the Junkers into the Hohenzollern armed forces was a subsequent reform introduced by Frederick William I, the Canton Reglement of 1733.⁴⁸

This Reglement fostered the final stages of the evolution toward Hohenzollern absolutism. Prior to 1733, there was less incentive for the nobility to accept the military just as there was little incentive to accept monarchical authority. What the Canton system did was to raise the status and authority of the local nobleman even further. It placed the responsibility of recruitment solely in the hands of the local estate Junker. In short, it produced a more secure means by which the King was able to

⁴⁷Büsch, *Militärsystem und Sozialleben im alten Preussen, 1713-1807*, p. 79.

⁴⁸For a fuller discussion of East Prussian nobles and military command, see below, the section “East Prussian Junker as Military Commander,” in Chapter Seven.

raise, maintain, and train an increasing peasant based army while at the same time recruiting, maintaining, and training an officer corps comprised exclusively of the nobility. It offered a career and some income to an increasing number of noblemen: it should be remembered that the size of the Brandenburg-Prussian army almost doubled between 1713 and 1740.⁴⁹

East Prussia does not appear to be at the forefront of Frederick William I's military reforms, which the Kingdom's nobility may not have accepted as late as 1740.⁵⁰ In that year, *Graf* von Manteuffel noted that the Junkers there were ready to revolt.⁵¹ It is clear, however, that in general the Junkers became an important part of an army that virtually doubled in size during the King's reign. One may find it difficult to deny that the new military system evolved in direct relation to Prussia's society and economy

⁴⁹Jany, *Geschichte der Preußischen Armee*, I, p. 660. In order to demonstrate the growth of the army under Frederick William I, Jany provided the following table:

	February 1713	June 1715	June 1731	June 1731
Infantry	21746	35134	48967	52391
Garrison and <i>Freikompanien</i> Troops	4841	-	3650	4720
Cavalry	7737	9914	15876	17842
Artillery	527	505	1208	1208
Engineers	-	-	41	41
In the pay of Holland	5096	-	-	-
New Garrison Troops			69742 6804	76202 4832
	39947 (excluding the Red Grenadier Battalion)	45553 (excluding the red and white Grenadier Battalion)	76546	81034

⁵⁰See, for example, Jany, *Geschichte der Preußischen Armee*, I, p. 427.

⁵¹ABB, 5:2, p. 776. As cited above, the editors of the *Acta Borussica* have noted that in 1718, 1727, and 1738 there were similar examples of disquiet. In addition, see Büsch, *Militärssystem und Sozialleben im alten Preussen, 1713-1807*, p. 82.

and indeed became the component which integrated these into a coherent whole.⁵²

One of the most important functions of the Junker was his role in military recruitment, especially after the introduction of the canton system which slowly developed throughout Frederick William I's reign. On the estate, the Junker was also recruiter and commanding officer. Before the formal establishment of the Canton system of 1733, the Hohenzollern armies were based on irregular recruitment and largely consisted of a mix of mercenary forces with Prussian subjects who were often forced into military service. In particular, this was the case for peasant farm labourers. The recruitment for East Prussia had, from the reign of the Great Elector until the early eighteenth century, been left to both royal officials loyal to Berlin and local territorial elites. Since the officials loyal to Berlin often did not have the manpower to recruit in the local and distant districts, this was left to local officials.

The size of the Brandenburg–Prussian army increased notably after the turn of the eighteenth century. Frederick III/I contributed significant numbers of his military forces to the support of the Holy Roman Emperor during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713/14). As a result, there was a need to increase the size of the Brandenburg–Prussian army.⁵³ Once Frederick William I ascended the throne there appears to have been a continued drive to increase the size of the military establishment. The only link between the East Prussians and the other territories, then, was through the Hohenzollern ruler. It was the Hohenzollerns who ruled over their

⁵²Ibid., p. 84. It should be noted as well that Büsch provides a familiar discussion demonstrating the Hohenzollern rulers' belief that the nobility were the natural leaders and officers in the military ranks. See pp. 89-93.

⁵³Ibid., p. 14. See also, Max Jähns, *Geschichte der kriegswissenschaften vornehmlich in Deutschland*, Munich and Leipzig: R. Oldenbourg, 1890, pp. 1547-1549.

territory independently of his rule over other territories that were a part of the Holy Roman Empire, and in particular, Brandenburg, which held the title of Elector for the Empire.

The Appointment of Local Government Officials

Frederick William I's enduring concern with district captain appointments indicates his involvement in and attitude toward local administration within the Kingdom. It is important to remember that control over the various levels of government was often sought through individuals rather than through institutions, both in the localities as at the centre. In practice, East Prussian district captains were appointed as they were in other provinces: the nobility selected a candidate and then sent his name to the ruler for approval. The Hohenzollern rulers had always to approve officially the candidate, but hitherto this had been a matter in almost all cases of confirming the *Regierung's* choice.

The manner in which this was carried out became clearer as Frederick William I's reign went on and, indeed, changed to some degree, with the King securing greater influence over these appointments. Yet he never achieved complete control. On occasions there were lists of potential candidates and even at times an appointment was promised for the next vacancy: even where this was to a specific district. A list of potential administrators was maintained both in Berlin and at the *Regierung* in Königsberg, but appears more often to have been sent to Berlin as were 'letters of promise', that is to say, formal letters promising the reversion to a post. As this was an important aspect of East Prussian affairs during Frederick William I's reign, it will now be examined.

Though manuscript material shows that District Captains were appointed the traditional way for much of Frederick William I's reign, it is also evident that the King did secure increasing personal control and was gradually able to influence and sometimes overrule the East Prussian

Regierung. The appointment process is important in demonstrating the growing degree of personal involvement of Frederick William I in the King's government throughout the 1720s and 1730s.

During his reign the traditional appointing procedures came to be modified. The manner in which one actually secured positions such as that of district captain varied sufficiently to suggest that these were matters in which central government was deeply interested but also lacked full authority. The ways in which East Prussian officials were appointed was crucial to the functioning of government and became the means by which Frederick William I sought to extend his power throughout the Kingdom. The individuals who were placed in the lower and therefore more local levels of provincial administration, such as the *Regierung's* subordinate officials and especially those under the *Kammer*, had a considerable impact on East Prussian affairs. The way in which locals secured these positions of relative influence makes clear the transformation that East Prussian government went through in this period.

The administrative documents printed in *Acta Borussica* suggest that the King had a firm hand over the official appointment process in this period.⁵⁴ Yet manuscript material not included in the *Acta Borussica*, or surveyed by its editors, reveals a notably different picture. Unpublished documents not only reveal more about the context of the rise and fall of the East Prussian Junkers but also approach Frederick William I's approach with respect to their selection and appointment.

Appointment to certain posts remained in practice beyond the King's power, while throughout Frederick William I's reign there was considerable continuity in methods of appointment. Some traditional appointment

⁵⁴For example, ABB, 2, pp. 333-335, 18 March 1716, "Personal des preußischen Tribunals vor und nach seiner Wandlung"; See also, GStAPK, EM 15a, Nr. 10.

processes were simply ignored by the King, for example, promoting from the ranks of existing officials or appointing these men to new positions. Instead Frederick William I chose to select officials in other ways. There was never a single established method of appointment for the *Amthauptleute*, his deputy the *Amt Verweser*, or the legal clerk, the *Adelichegerichtsschreiber*. Only general guidelines existed for these groups.⁵⁵ A large proportion of the surviving archive records held in Berlin clearly demonstrate that appointments rarely progressed in a uniform way.⁵⁶ There almost always seems to have been a dispute or the rejection of a chosen candidate, even though many of these clashes were of relative little importance. Reasons for this were numerous, and appointments appear to be largely based on custom and tradition and the influence, royal or otherwise, which could be brought to bear. As a result, Frederick William I, like previous Hohenzollern rulers, was unable to control totally who gained office, whether they were qualified or not.

Posts were usually vacated by reason of death, or less frequently through promotion. One should note that during Frederick William I's reign there was no retirement age and little chance of a pensioned retirement: officials served until they died, or became so infirm that they could not carry out their duties. In many cases, the appointment to a district captain position was itself a form of army pension should one have had a distinguished military career.⁵⁷ In return, the amount of work which was expected was sometimes minimal as their subordinates, in particular, the

⁵⁵GStAPK, EM 15a, Nr. 10, fols. 1-6. For 1740, see ABB, 6:2, p. 14.

⁵⁶As a result of the transfer of manuscript material from the former central archive of the DDR located in Merseburg, all relevant records are now held in the *Geheimes Staats Archiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin*, this includes Repository 7 and the material of the General Directory.

⁵⁷Büsch, *Militärsystem und Sozialleben im alten Preussen, 1713-1807*, p. 131.

Verwesern, were expected to carry out the actual tasks of their *Amthauptmann*.⁵⁸ This may have been less true in East Prussia than in other parts of the Hohenzollern Monarchy. Appointments for the *Amthauptmann* position were not all given as sinecure positions by Frederick William I, however, and this will be discussed more fully later in this chapter.

The King worked to reform those areas that he realistically could, in order to improve his own authority and the profitability of his domain lands. The results of these changes, however, were mixed. To a large degree, Frederick William I appears to have slowly built a base of reliable support among administrators below the level of *Amthauptleute*. The lesser officials whom he selected and later promoted were often drawn from native East Prussians who were already working for those members of the nobility who served as district captains. Frederick William I in this way was seeking to extend his institutional reforms, that were limited to central institutions, by creating a tier of reliable native individuals in posts below the central agencies and repeatedly in a fashion that did not disregard the East Prussian *Indigenatsrecht* and in this way extend his own influence.

The surviving evidence makes clear that the appointment process remained surprisingly informal until relatively late in Frederick William I's reign. Until the reign's mid-point it was usual either for one official to nominate another to a post or for an existing lower level administrator to ask for a new and more elevated position. This former method appears to have been the primary way in which newcomers were selected. By the final decade of Frederick William I's reign, the methods had become more formal, and ranged from selection by a higher authority who consulted a pre-established waiting list, to asking Frederick William I directly who should

⁵⁸Ibid.

be appointed, or to have the King confirm a candidate apparently suggested to him.

In some cases there was clear nepotism. Some Junker families held administrative positions over extended periods and treated them as their own and therefore transferable and in practice hereditary. Many of these posts carried a salary, although this was not always paid. Appointments were traded and official posts were put up for sale. This was done not by the King, but rather by the current holder of the post. So, despite the rules, there was in practice venality. These practices seem to have slowly declined as the reign progressed. The King's increased personal involvement and an increased use of established short lists for potential candidates suggests that in general appointments were made after more formal procedures.⁵⁹

Certain appointments made by Frederick William I during the early years of his reign were quite exceptional and did not conform to any established or new procedure. These appointments were not of typical Junkers, but were instead drawn from the families of the Kingdom's noble elite. These were few in number but were important and will be discussed here before the more usual procedures are examined. In December, 1717, for example, the King ordered the *Regierung* to name the *Obristen Prinz Friedrich Ludwig von Holstein* to the next available position among the ranks of the *Amthauptleute*, i. e., to the *Amthauptmannschaft*.⁶⁰ The former *Amthauptmann*, Gröben, had died after a period of illness. Nowhere in this order to the *Regierung*, however, did Frederick William I specify a particular location or district. The King only stated that Holstein was to be appointed to the *Amthauptmannschaft* which could have meant anywhere in East

⁵⁹See, for example, GStAPK, Rep. 7, 18a, 19 October 1721 and Rep. 7, 18h (1686-1740), 30 August 1727.

⁶⁰GStAPK, EM 119b, Nr. 22, fol. 4, 1(?) December 1717 (Pres. 9 December 1717), signed by Frederick William I.

Prussia. This document is held with other *Amt Rastenburg* material simply because he was appointed as *Amthauptmann* for that district as it happened to be the next post which became vacant. This type of appointment became increasingly common after 1730, but had been relatively rare during the first decade of Frederick William I's reign. It was also unusual because princes were relatively rare, especially in the Hohenzollern lands and Holstein seems to have been a representative of an earlier strategy of creating a dynastic elite.⁶¹

In fact, Holstein was appointed very quickly. It appears that Frederick William I intended Holstein for the next vacancy. The Instruction of 9 December 1717 suggests that the King knew of Gröben's illness. One likely explanation is that the Frederick William I received updates about Gröben's condition via the vast network of spies. This would have allowed the King time to prepare the order for the next candidate, Holstein, even before Gröben's death. While the royal message was on its way from Berlin to the *Regierung* in Königsberg, another letter was on its way to the *Regierung* from *Amt Rastenburg*. This message reported that the *Landrat* and *Amthauptmann* von Gröben had recently died after a an extended period of illness.⁶² Although it is reasonable to assume that Frederick William I might have been aware of Gröben's illness when he sent out his order to the

⁶¹Krollmann, I, p. 286. Holstein was born in Beck Kr. Herford (located in present day Nordrhein-Westfalen) on 25 March 1653 and died in Königsberg on 7 March 1728. Holstein's military service was not limited to Brandenburg-Prussia as he travelled to France and England in 1685 after serving in several battles in the region, including Stettin where he was badly injured in 1677. In addition, he negotiated neutrality for East Prussia in the Northern War.

⁶²*Ibid.*, fol. 5, 5 December 1717, J. V. Günther to *Regierung* (appears to have been received in Königsberg no later than 8 December 1717).

Regierung, there is, unfortunately, no direct evidence to suggest that the King's order was prompted by Gröben's impending death.⁶³

Due to Frederick William I's notorious network of spies and informers, however, it was likely that this was not simply a coincidence. If the King did have advance warning about Gröben's likely death through his private information service then this would go far to help explain just how far and deep the King's own informal methods of governance penetrated into a traditionally minded territory like East Prussia. It needs to be borne in mind, however, that East Prussia was particularly difficult to govern from Königsberg, far less from Berlin, due to its lack of a communication infrastructure. Fritz Terveen has noted that East Prussia was virtually cut off from Berlin because of this.⁶⁴

There are other cases where Frederick William I appears to be informed of developments before he is formally notified by the *Regierung*. For the *Amthauptleute* or *Verweser*, notification of the title holder's death was not always regular. In addition, the agency through which such correspondence first passed^{ed} in almost all cases was the *Regierung*. This was particularly the case for appointment made to those positions directly below the *Amthauptmann*, for example, the *Verweser* or *Adelichegerichtsschreiber*, both support personnel for the *Amthauptleute*.⁶⁵ The King, in one case, intervened on behalf of one of his royal *Grenadiers* and that soldier's

⁶³GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, Königsberg, 9 December 1717. Other documents in this fascicle, dated 29 September 1717 and 11 November 1717, show the intention to give Holstein the next available vacancy.

⁶⁴Terveen, *Gesamtstaat und Retablissement*, p. 13. See Chapters 1 and 2 for more on this point.

⁶⁵Examples are numerous. A partial list of several examples that cover a range throughout Frederick William I's twenty-seven year reign can be found in the following manuscript material located in the GStAPK, EM 15a, Nr. 10, 17b, Nr. 4, 17b, Nr. 7, 96b, Nr. 5, EM 96b, Nr. 13, EM 96b, Nr. 21, EM 103, Nr. 21, EM 103b, Nr. 48, EM 103b, Nr. 49, EM 103b, Nr. 50, EM 103b, Nr. 22, EM 119b, Nr. 59, EM 126b, Nr. 5, EM 130b, Nr. 68, EM 130b, Nr. 69, EM 137b, Nr. 61, Rep. 7, Nr. 18a, Rep. 7, Nr. 18h, 1686-1740,

mother.⁶⁶ Clearly, this was a case that had for Frederick William I a long-standing and personal interest. After all, it concerned a member of his own most cherished regiment. The King seems to have left the *Regierung* and its subordinate agencies to their own devices in most cases. This is consistent with the broader theme of this study that the King used indirect action through the *Kommissariat* to weaken the *Regierung*, rather than confront it directly. It was the *Kommissariat* who interfered in areas traditionally controlled by the *Regierung*. Frederick William I directly interfered with the *Regierung* only where appointments to posts in the Kingdom were concerned.

Frederick William was far more active, as would be expected, in the selection of lesser officials in East Prussian agencies over which he had more control, above all those subordinate to the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*.⁶⁷ Only after 1725 does the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* begin to produce correspondence and other documentation with regard to those officials under the *Amthauptleute* in cases when it appears Frederick William I was directly involved.⁶⁸ The King's marginalia noted at the bottom of the General Directory's draft letter of appointment for an individual named Canitz simply noted the word, "senden", thus giving royal approval for the appointment. The names presented for appointment, however, appear to follow the traditional pattern of coming from the *Regierung* in Königsberg.⁶⁹ There are several examples of this: the appointment of the *Rittermeister* Friedrich Winckelman in Amt Balga in 1725, Captain Georg Ernst Kalau von

⁶⁶GStAPK, EM 126b, Nr. 4, fol. 52. 29 April 1715, Frederick William I to the East Prussian *Regierung*.

⁶⁷GStAPK, General Directorium, Ostpreußen, I-Bestallungssachen, Numbers 1, 2, 3, 72, 79, and 85.

⁶⁸See, for example, GStAPK, GD, Ostpr., I, Nr. 174, fol. 18.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, fols. 17-19.

Hoffe from Amt Neuhausen and Laubiau in 1727, and a person named Tettau in Amt Lyck in 1731 all followed this pattern.⁷⁰

In the case of the *Verweser* of Amt Mohrungen and Liebstadt, Fabian von Kunheim, who died on 29 December 1720, the *Adelichegerichtsschreiber*, Rudolf Major, briefly described the circumstances of Kunheim's death.⁷¹ Marginalia appears on this document which refers to other correspondence. These notes suggests that there was another candidate who wished to be considered for the position. This matter, however, already had been referred to a leading member of the *Regierung*, General Field Marshal Graf von Dohna, and additionally, through other channels, sent up for his decision.⁷²

One particular note in the margin, possibly in Ludwig von Ostau's hand, explains that the *Amtskammer* had already recommended a replacement and once again this was someone who held military rank, Lieutenant Colonel von Reichau, who had asked to be considered.⁷³ The

⁷⁰GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpr., I, Nr. 178. Here, the *Regierung* presents a candidate and it is approved in December 1725. The other cases can be found in the same repository under repository numbers 179, fols. 1-2, and 180, fol. 1. Tettau is another family of prominence in East Prussia. Not much more is known of this particular candidate so a precise determination of his background is not known.

⁷¹GStAPK, EM 96b, Nr. 5, fol. 41, 31 December 1720. See also fol. 39, because on 1 March 1721 there is another document regarding the *Adelichegerichtsschreiber* but this appears to deal more with Kunheim's will than replacement.

⁷²GStAPK, EM 96b, Nr. 5, fol. 41, 31 December 1720

⁷³Ludwig von Ostau was born (location uncertain but presumably in Königsberg) on 6 October 1663 and died in Königsberg on 2 November 1727. Ostau emerged as one of the leading native elite officials during Frederick William I's reign. He was a Swedish and Polish major as well as being appointed Kammerherr in Kurbrandenburg in 1690. In 1696, he became Hauptmann of Labiau and Neuhausen and was promoted to Hauptmann of Amt Brandenburg and Landratsdirektor in 1706. He became *Kanzler* and Privy Councillor in 1711 and president of the highest court of appeals in East Prussia (under the authority of the East Prussian *Regierung*), the so-called *Oberappellationsgerichte*. In the last decades of Frederick William I's reign, he became influential in attempting to reform the East Prussian legal system with Samuel von Cocceji. He had married into another of the most prominent East Prussian families when he married Marie Kasimire Eleonore Gräfin von Schlieben. See Ecker, *Die Entwicklung der Königlich Preußischen Regierung von 1701 bis 1758*, p. 101, fn. 1. Ecker cites manuscript material, namely, GStAPK, EM 121b. The documents surrounding Ostau have not been located and may be missing. See also, Krollmann,

Amtskammer, an agency not under the direct authority of the *Regierung* and at times its rival, had actually submitted this recommendation to Dohna, the would-be *Verweser's* immediate superior, the *Amthauptmann*.⁷⁴ This, in fact, was confirmed some five weeks later by the *Regierung* who reported to the King that as Kunheim had recently "departed," the *Amtskammer* had again recommended Reichau. From this document alone, the *Regierung* did not act as if this process were out of the ordinary. Unfortunately, the existing documents do not shed further light on the role and contribution of Reichau's supposed superior, the *Amthauptmann*, Field Marshal Graf von Dohna in this appointment. Dohna was certainly informed about the appointment but what role he played in Reichau's selection cannot be precisely determined. There is no evidence to suggest that Dohna had any direct input. Yet it is difficult to believe Dohna did not exercise influence in the selection of his own subordinate.

This decision reveals the problems a historian faces in reconstructing the process of selection. Dohna had influence if not control over the decision and exercised considerable authority in general both inside East Prussia and with the King. This is significant because the official being appointed was in rank just under Dohna and would, in practice, carry out many of his day-to-day duties, including the administration of justice. Dohna's involvement in the selection process seems, to say the least, highly likely. In addition, the five weeks the *Regierung* took to report a conclusion on this matter may be considered a quick turn-around time, suggesting that influence was brought to bear. Often the appointment process lasted several months. Once a candidate emerged via the various channels,

Altpreußische Biographie, p. 484. The death of Ostau is given brief mention in ABB, 4:2, p. 383, fn. 2.

⁷⁴GStAPK, EM 96b, Nr. 5, fol. 41. 31 December 1720.

however, the *Regierung* normally would ask for Frederick William I approval.

Approval was granted in this case, and the King ordered that Reichau should have a yearly salary of 100 Rt.⁷⁵ The dates of the relevant documents suggest that the King has already been informed of this matter and had already made a decision. Frederick William I wrote to the *Regierung* on 29 January 1721, almost a week before the *Regierung* first wrote to the King.⁷⁶ This appears to be another case where correspondence crossed.⁷⁷ The reason for this is unclear. It is clear that there were in practice two links or paths of authority to the King. The *Regierung*, the first, appeared not to have been aware of the second, the *Amtskammer*, an emerging parallel authority in the Kingdom especially in matters concerning the royal domain lands and their administration.

After the first two decades of Frederick William I's reign the King began to have more influence (although never complete control) over appointments made in the Kingdom and thus over parts of the administration. This was an incremental and extended process. He began to push men into the lower ranks who slowly rose to higher posts, thereby strengthening royal control. The situation in 1740 was different from that which had prevailed at his accession, but there was only gradual and limited change before the 1730s. Control over the appointment process, therefore, was crucial at the very level where much of the day-to-day operation of government functioned and touched people's lives.

⁷⁵Ibid., fol. 42. 5 February 1721.

⁷⁶Ibid., fol. 43.

⁷⁷See previous chapter. Not normal post but rather, sealed special (presumably diplomatic) post that was almost always used.

After Prinz Friedrich Ludwig Holstein's appointment, there was some question on the part of the *Regierung* about whether he had to take the oath of office. Before this appointment, there is no manuscript evidence that this oath was a matter of concern either for the *Regierung* or the King. It became an issue because Holstein himself traditionally administered oaths in the Kingdom. The *Prinz* let it be known, that he could not administer the oath to himself and that a *Verweser* could do the job.⁷⁸ After seeking a decision from the King, the *Regierung* asked whether or not the oath was even necessary in this case.⁷⁹ The King replied that Holstein was required to take the oath of office like all other appointed members of the *Amthauptmannschaft*.⁸⁰ Holstein, in Frederick William I's view, should not be a loyal impostor and instead should prove his allegiance through the taking of the oath.⁸¹ The oath was of more concern to the Prussian King than the issue of a lesser official administering it.

Holstein's appointment is an interesting case. Although this may well have been the first time Frederick William I took such an active role and nominated somebody in advance for the *Amthauptmannschaft*, the speed and ease with which this appointment was made is striking. Nowhere did the *Regierung* protest against the King's initiative even though it was not made in the standard way. Only two other nominations resulted from Frederick William I's personal initiative in this period, one being another Holstein.⁸²

⁷⁸GStAPK, EM 119b, Nr. 22, fol. 10. 9 February 1718, *Regierung* to the king.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, fol. 10. 9 February 1718.

⁸⁰GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50. 19 March 1718. See also, GStAPK, EM 119b, Nr. 22, fol. 14.

⁸¹GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50. 19 March 1718. See also, GStAPK, EM 119b, Nr. 22, fol. 14.

⁸²For other early appointments like that of *Prinz* von Holstein, see GStAPK, EM 17b, Nr. 5, where Friedrich Ludwig Hertzog zu Holstein was appointed as a successor to the *Amthauptmannschaft* of the most prestigious of all *Amts*, Brandenburg. In addition, GStAPK,

One possible reason for this was the high esteem the King held for the Holstein family. It was a lineage that not only served Frederick William I loyally within East Prussia but throughout the Hohenzollern territories and even in foreign states where they carried out diplomatic functions. The King did not begin to put forward candidates on a significant scale until the well after 1723. The reason for this was part of the wider context of changes during the late 1720s and early 1730s which are discussed in the next chapter.

There was a second reason why this was an unusual and striking case. Not only did an official of lower rank administer the oath to Holstein but moreover, the King appointed a prince — the leading title within the *Herrenstand* — to the lesser ranks of the *Amthauptmannschaft*. The fact that Holstein held such high social standing is a plausible explanation for the lack of protest from members of the *Regierung*, if in fact they were hostile to this appointment in the first place. There is no evidence to suggest that they were. Holstein's whole career, however, suggests that his loyalties rested more with the Hohenzollerns than with the native East Prussian elite. This is further supported by his possession of an Imperial Princely title.⁸³ Not only was he entrusted with several high positions within the Hohenzollern military establishment but he also was appointed governor of Wesel and Minden at different points in his life. During the plague of 1709/11, Holstein's ideas about policy, which mirrored those of Berlin and, in particular, the crown prince brought him into opposition to the *Ständischen* authorities in Königsberg.⁸⁴ He was to Frederick William I, perhaps, only

Rep. 7, 29 April 1719 where Gehard Friedrich Schach von Wittenow was to receive the first available *Amthauptmannschaft* position.

⁸³The details surrounding this title are unclear.

⁸⁴Krollmann, *Altpreußische Biographie*, p.286.

second in importance to Karl Heinrich *Erbruchseß und Graf von Waldburg* as an advisor.

Holstein did not receive any salary, nor is there any evidence to suggest that he bought the office. In fact, there is no evidence that the *Prinz* even paid the customary sum of approximately thirty Rt. into the *Rekrutenkasse*.⁸⁵ The King was perhaps motivated rather by the desire to insert a loyal subordinate into the *Amthauptmannschaft*. This was attractive for both Frederick William I and for Holstein himself.

A detailed examination of *Amthauptmannschaft* and *Verweser* appointments from 1713 until the early 1730s demonstrates that, although the King was always able to notify the *Regierung* that particular individuals were to be considered as candidates and — by implication — had his support, this practice did not become dominant during his reign.⁸⁶ Of particular interest are those appointments made between 1723 and 1733, which numbered at least eighteen and where the evidence enables the origins of the appointment to be determined. On five occasions (out of eighteen) Frederick William I preempted the *Regierung's* nomination. Of this five, all were appointments for the position of *Amthauptleute* and there were no appointments for the position of *Verweser*.⁸⁷ On the other hand, in the remaining thirteen cases, the *Regierung* made suggestions for

⁸⁵This raises the question, which will be considered in the following chapter, of under what circumstances offices were bought, or payments made to accompany. Furthermore, one should remember that payments made into the *Rekrutenkasse* were made by all levels of established officials in the kingdom during Frederick William I's reign.

⁸⁶Several appointments lack sufficient manuscript material to determine with any amount of certainty. East Prussian districts that lack sufficient data do, however, reflect the overall findings of districts with complete or almost complete data. The recent availability of more manuscript material at the GStAPK help determine more of the origins of certain appointments.

⁸⁷For the *Amthauptleute* see the following material located in the GStAPK: EM 96b, Nr. 5, fols. 47, 51 and Gen. Dir., Ostpr., I, nrs. 164, 223, 229; Rep. 7, Nr. 50, 8 September 1719; Gen. Dir., Ostpr., II, Nr. 163, 2 March 1726.

appointments which were accepted by Frederick William I.⁸⁸ The vast majority of these appointments, at least ten (out of fifteen), were of *Amthauptleute*.⁸⁹

The first decade of Frederick William I's reign (1713-23) had been even more strongly dominated by the *Regierung*. There are twenty-six appointments that can be reconstructed from surviving manuscript material. On a mere five occasions, three *Amthauptleute* appointments and two for the position of *Verweser*, the King took the initiative.⁹⁰ The remainder were made at the instigation of the *Regierung*.⁹¹ During the decade before the establishment of the General Directory in 1723, nineteen per cent (in fact slightly more) of appointments were made by the King. Between 1723 and 1733, however, this figure rose somewhat to almost twenty-eight per cent: not a significant increase. Royal influence was far from preponderant. Most of the appointments during Frederick William I's first decade were requested by the *Regierung*. Although there was a clear shift of control over

⁸⁸For *Amthauptleute* see the following material located in the GStAPK: Gen. Dir., Ostpr., I, Nrs. 159 (22 June 1723), 161, 165, 223, 225 (14 and 16 June 1723), 226, 227; EM 17b, Nrs. 5, fol. 1, Nr. 6, fols. 2-9, Nr. 7; OF 14702, vol. 4, fol. 134, 8 April 1723 and vol. 11, fol. 66, 16 June 1723. In addition, see Mülverstedt, "Verzeichniß der Amtshauptleute, Erbsamtshauptleute, Amtsmänner, Landrichter, Landschöppen, Ober-Kastenherren, Kastenherren, Fischmeister, Jägermeister, Mühlmeister u. in Preußen. 1525-1806," passim. For *Verweser* see the following: Gen. Dir., Ostpr., I, Nr. 178, 26 November 1725; EM 96b, Nr. 5, fols. 57-57 Rückseite; EM 96b, Nr. 5, fol. 87.

⁸⁹See Appendix D, p. 355.

⁹⁰The following materials can be found in GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, January through June 1719; EM 17b, Nr. 4, fol. 47 and Nr. 6, fol. 2; OF 1269, fol. 28; EM 137. For the *Verweser* see the following: ABB, 4:1, pp. 6-9; Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719.

⁹¹Mülverstedt, "Verzeichniß der Amtshauptleute, Erbsamtshauptleute, Amtsmänner, Landrichter, Landschöppen, Ober-Kastenherren, Kastenherren, Fischmeister, Jägermeister, Mühlmeister u. in Preußen. 1525-1806," passim; In addition, the following manuscript material located in GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpr., I, Nrs. 161, 227 (for 1726), 229; Rep. 7, Nr. 50, 20 January 1714, 5 December 1717, 15 January 1718, 1 April 1718, 12 July 1718, 8 September 1719, 23 September 1719, 27 November 1719, 7 May 1720, 19 July 1720; EM 17b, Nrs. 5, fol. 1; EM 110g, Nr. 31, fols. 4-5; ; EM 119b, Nr. 22, fol. 2 and Nr. 24, fol. 3, 25 August 1718; EM 137b, Nr. 18, fol. 7, 25 August 1718; OF 1269, fol. 15, 12 July 1718, fol. 21 and fol. 29 Rückseite, 25 November 1719.

appointments in favour of the King after 1723, his authority was still far from dominant.⁹² The *Regierung* appears to have maintained its influence in this area, albeit at a reduced level. The following table 5.1 shows the resulting totals:

Table 5.1
Appointments in the Kingdom, 1713-1733

	1713-1723			1723-1733		
	<i>Amthauptmann</i>	<i>Verweser</i>	Total	<i>Amthauptmann</i>	<i>Verweser</i>	Total
<i>Regierung</i>	13	8	21	10	3	13
Frederick William I	3	2	5	5	0	9
Total	16	10	26	15	3	18

The most common means of appointment throughout Frederick William I's reign was nomination by either the *Regierung* or *Amtskammer*, or both. The choice of a suitable candidate appears largely to have been a matter for the higher echelon of the provincial authorities. Special orders were sent to the East Prussian *Regierung* on 23 June 1710, 2 June 1724, and in July and August 1740 which set out the formal requirements for appointments, but these do not tell us very much. The first mentioned, of 23 June 1710, simply noted that the *Regierung* were to recommend "Subjectus" for the royal service.⁹³ This usually occurred after the death of the previous holder and suggestions went to the King, either via Frederick William I's primary advisor in the period prior to the General Directory, or after 1723, through the official in the General Directory responsible for East Prussia. For most of Frederick William I's reign, Creutz was the individual who advised both the King and then the General Directory on these matters.⁹⁴

⁹²See Appendix D, p. 355.

⁹³GStAPK, EM 15a, Nr. 10, fol. 1.

⁹⁴Appointments lesser in rank to a *Stadtschreiber* were general at the discretion of the *Regierung* and although disputed from time to time by the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* in the territory, Frederick William I almost always appears to have sided with the *Regierung*.

Creutz served as an auditor in the regiment of Frederick William while he was crown prince. Soon after Frederick William I ascended the throne he made Creutz a Real Privy Councillor and controller general of all civil and military treasuries. In effect, he held the highest financial post under the King.⁹⁵ He was appointed as head of the General Finance Directory in 1719 and became head of one of the four departments when the General Directory was set-up in 1723.

Appointment procedures were extended and sometimes complicated by the necessity of paying the requisite levy to the King for support of his private military ventures, above all the regiment of tall *grenadiers*. There was almost always a payment either to the King's *Rekrutenkasse* or to his *Generalchargenkasse*.⁹⁶ Payments into the *Rekrutenkasse* were not only involved for local government officials, but were made by the full-spectrum of established East Prussian officials during this period. Payments were regular and uniform across Brandenburg–Prussia and most importantly, necessary before a candidate was confirmed in his post. The contribution to the recruiting treasury was essentially a tax for potential office holders. This is not venal office, of the kind that existed elsewhere in Europe, above all, in France. It was rather a leading example of Frederick William I's fiscal opportunism, levying a tax upon a captive force of would-be administrators, and his avid search for revenue to support his military establishment. This

⁹⁵ABB, 1, pp. 322-4; see also, Dorwart, *The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia*, p. 236, fn. 27. As Dorwart notes, Creutz appeared to have the trust of the king with regard to supervision over the most important financial matters of the Brandenburg-Prussian state: he was used as "the king's watchdog to supervise the activities of the heads of the royal treasuries." If this was true, it helps explain why he was not, for example, appointed to the General Finance Directory when it was established in 1713, the most visible and highly prestigious financial post.

⁹⁶ABB, 3, pp. 429-430, 9 December 1722; Dorwart, *The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia*, p. 156. Dorwart suggests that the *Rekrutenkasse* was started by Frederick William I probably not before 1716. There is nothing in the manuscript material for East Prussia that would contradict this date.

system also suggests the anticipated income of officials, which potentially was considerable. Although salaries were not always paid, administrators received fees and perquisites from most offices.

The *Rekrutenkasse* represented the King's highly distinctive personal goals in two principal ways. First, Frederick William I's obsessive preoccupation with the recruitment of soldiers and with upholding the army's primacy within the Brandenburg-Prussian state. In particular, he was determined to secure funding for his regiment of giants, a corps of grenadiers all of whom were taller than six feet four inches. The financial resources for the recruitment and maintenance of the grenadiers came from the *Rekrutenkasse*.

Second, contributions made to the *Rekrutenkasse* were the only way for individuals to secure an office or administrative duty, short of actual ownership, and the payment followed the actual appointment, which was made in the usual way. Payments to the *Rekrutenkasse* were thus the way appointments were finalised. This was also true for promotions. Yet there is no evidence for East Prussia at this time which suggests competition among candidates, with the highest bidder securing appointment.

In practice Frederick William I fixed standard salaries and therefore, payments to the *Rekrutenkasse* for most positions. This was usually a fee that was calculated as a percentage of the first year salary; if there was no established salary, it was simply a fixed sum. This meant, for example, that an *Amthauptmann* who received an annual salary of 500 Rt. made a payment of 250 Rt. into the *Rekrutenkasse*. Those who did not receive a salary were still obliged in almost every case to pay the *Rekrutenkasse* contribution and did so based on the salary rate prevailing for similar positions.

The *Chargenkasse* was a similar type of treasury to the *Rekrutenkasse* and collected revenue that was expended on general military purposes. It was normally a significant portion of the successful candidate's first year

salary. The *Chargenkasse*, however, was merged into the *Rekrutenkasse* in 1722. For East Prussian appointments between 1716 and 1722, the successful candidate almost always had to pay into the recruiting treasury. Only in rare instances did those appointed pay to the *Generalchargenkasse* prior to the merging of the two treasuries in 1722. The candidate's retention of the payment receipt was critical to the confirmation process as well. The receipt acted as the new official's ticket that was shown for the formal appointment document to be issued. This letter, too, required a fee to be paid as there was a customary stamp tax attached to the letter. This *Stempelsteuer* was also put towards military purposes by the King. Both of these treasuries and the income generated in this way were under the jurisdiction of the *General Kriegskommissariat*.

There were other methods of appointment that did not change during Frederick William I's reign and must be mentioned. These are important in showing the nature of East Prussian government and shed considerable light on the social and political mobility, in particular, of the *Amthauptleute*, and the greater prestige of one *Amt* over another. They also reveal the extent to which certain principles of Frederick William I were not adhered to, in practice, for example payments to the *Rekrutenkasse* could be excused in individual cases while *Amthauptmannschaft* positions were bought and sold. These practices did not weaken the King's declared high interest in the affairs of the territory. In this context three specific areas are relevant: The sale of *Amthauptmannschaft* positions, trade in such positions, as well as appointments based on nepotism or similar customs.

In each of the five positions of *Amthauptmann* sold or transferred between 1716 and 1720, Frederick William I personally approved the transaction.⁹⁷ The records of these sales and transfers reveal little or no

⁹⁷GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, Spring 1716 through 22 January 1718, Finckenstein purchased *Amthauptmannschaft* from Dobreginki; 25 August 1718, Schlieben to Graf von

hesitation on the part of the King which is likely due to the fact that all five positions involved favoured individuals in the King's government. A typical response from Frederick William I normally took no longer than a few days. For example, *Oberst-Lieutenant* and *Reichsgraf* Friedrich Ernst Bernhard von Finckenstein asked to be allowed to buy the *Amthauptmannschaft* from *General Major* and *Reichsgraf* Bogislaus Friedrich von Dönhoff in July 1720. Frederick William I noted his approval in the margin, simply as: "Guht FW."⁹⁸ In general, this was how the King responded, deciding upon suggestions and requests and signalling his assent upon the documents.

The Finckenstein–Dönhoff case does not state the sale price. Similar examples, however, reveal that prices were approximately 5000 Rt.⁹⁹ The manuscript material does state that Finckenstein paid 30 Rt. into the *Generalchargenkasse*.¹⁰⁰ Finckenstein's payment had more to do with his confirmation to the position than with the sale. In a similar case, Friedrich Christoph Finck *Graf* von Finckenstein asked for permission to purchase the *Amthauptmannschaft* position from *Geheime Rat* Johann Friedrich Dobrzenki in 1716. This sale was apparently finalised on 22 January 1718.¹⁰¹

The sale of offices, such as in this case raises two important questions which cannot be answered with precision. First, although the sale of offices

Wallenrodt; *Graf* von Dohna to his son; 27 November 1719, *Graf* von Waldburg to *Graf* von Lehndorf; and 19 July 1720, *Graf* von Finckenstein from *Graf* von Dönhoff (also 22 July 1720, 28 August 1720, and 22 July 1720).

⁹⁸GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, 19 July 1720, Frederick William I marginalia next to section of request that asked if Finckenstein may purchase the position.

⁹⁹In addition, see, GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpreußen, I, Nr. 223, 25 March 1726, Draft document from the General Directory to Frederick William I. Document stated that the General Directory wanted to inform the king that *Kammerherr* Canitz paid 5000 Rt. for the *Amthauptmannschaft* to Sehesten. See, also, GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpreußen, I, Nr. 223, 23 July 1729, From Samuel Friedrich von Canitz in Sagenwalde, p. 35 Rückseite.

¹⁰⁰GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50. 28 August 1720

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, 4 May 1716.

was not exactly an appointment or sufficiently widely practised to call in question the belief that Frederick William I introduced a merit-based administration throughout all the territories, the five transfers through purchase were equal to one-third of all the *Amthauptleute* appointments made between 1713 and 1723 and again, may be a result of the favoured status of the individuals whose families were involved in royal government. The transfer of positions through purchase became more widespread after 1725.

A second point is that the subsequent path which the payments took is not clear. These were transactions between one official and his successor, sanctioned by the crown. If Frederick William I sold appointments to raise income, then the payments must have reached his own coffers in a roundabout way. East Prussian Junkers who purchased an *Amthauptmannschaft* appear to have paid their predecessor and not Frederick William I. In fact, one can state with certainty that posts purchased in this way were treated as a returnable deposit type of investment by the purchaser. This raises serious doubts, then, about the extent to which the sale of positions in East Prussia raised any revenue directly for Frederick William I other than payments to the *Rekrutenkasse* of the kind discussed earlier. It clearly did not. For example, in the district of Sehesten in the south eastern portion of East Prussia, Canitz purchased his *Amthauptmannschaft* for 5000 Rt. in 1717. When he went to sell his position in 1726, he expected to receive this amount for the sale.¹⁰² It is worth underlining that the position had not appreciated at all in value and he did not even receive an inflationary increase. Furthermore, it should be

¹⁰²GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpr., I, Nr. 223. Although this chapter focuses on the years prior to the establishment of the General Directory in 1723, Canitz's case covers both pre- and post-General Directory periods as he gained the appointment in 1717 and relinquished it in 1726.

mentioned that this example comes from 1726, a year after Frederick William I's instruction that the sale of such positions should not be sanctioned.¹⁰³ What is important here is that Canitz considered this 5000 Rt. his "capital." This was especially important to him when he was essentially dismissed from his position. Frederick William I either did not remember approving the sale, even after his decree that they were not allowed, or else, the General Directory took it upon themselves to go ahead and approve the sale. Canitz wrote to the King and expressed the hope that Frederick William I would approve the sale of this post since his original purchase was some eight years before the no-sale decree and that he demitted office while still alive, rather than dying in his post. If the sale were not permitted, according to Canitz, then he stood to lose his 5000 Rt. investment. Ultimately, it appears Canitz was allowed to recover his money.

The permanent transfer of a post was another frequent occurrence although — like the sale of an office — it was still an unusual way to gain a post. The transfer of office, as opposed to its outright sale, is even more intriguing and revealing of the nature and actual operations of East Prussian government. Such transfers were often — but not always — to a relative. Personal or family links were another way of acquiring posts. Nepotism was not a new phenomenon¹⁰⁴ either within the Kingdom or in Europe as a whole. All early modern governments depended upon clientèles and personal and family links to provide administrative personnel. Indeed, without such sources of new administrative recruits, the filling of posts would have been very difficult. Personal and family contacts were the principal means by which potential new administrators were recruited in an age when more modern paths into government did not exist. There were no entrance qualification examinations and few university graduates with

¹⁰³GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpr., I, Nr. 162, fol. 1.

administrative training in East Prussia during this period, though Frederick William I began the practice of securing recruits of the latter kind. During the first decades of his reign, the traditional sources of recruits into the administration was depended upon.

Like the rest of Europe and the other Hohenzollern territories, East Prussia during the reign of Frederick William I also employed the practice of having sons follow their fathers into government. One should remember that in the eighteenth century this practice was viewed in a less severe light than it is today. For example, the general *Graf* von Dohna wrote to Frederick William I and requested that his son, the *Obrist* Lieutenant take over from him the *Amthauptmannschaft* of Amt Neidenburg and Soldau located in the most southern part of East Prussia. The King agreed, and instructed the General Finance Directory to finalise the details of the transfer.¹⁰⁴

Furthermore, the practice of having sons follow their fathers into an office as well as the sums paid or deposited for posts lends credence to the likelihood that these offices were viewed by the family to be at their personal disposal. There is nothing in the manuscript material that suggests such a transfer was unusual, especially when it involved figures so important as the family Dohna.

The major reasons, for and against, this practice were perhaps more clear cut than where the outright sale of positions was concerned. Above all, the King undeniably could not control directly all appointments in the territory. Königsberg was difficult enough for the Hohenzollerns to manage effectively. Yet, the city's remoteness to Berlin was not the only problem Frederick William I required to overcome if he planned to establish his effective authority within the Kingdom. Frederick William I also needed to extend his power into the even more remote areas of East Prussia and the

¹⁰⁴GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50.

traditional authorities located there, notably the southern and eastern districts.

The practice of nepotism or selling an administrative title hindered the King's attempt to establish the appointment of candidates based purely on merit. Frederick William I was better able to control those officials in the *Kommissariaten* or *Kammern*, who were under more direct control. These were the institutions that often operated parallel to the institutions of the traditional elites, such as the *Amthauptleute* or *Regierung*, which were often unchallenged by the King. This had the permanent effect of re-inforcing traditional elite control.

Frederick William I clearly indicated his expectation of being closely involved in appointments although it was not always possible for him to realise his plans. This applied only to the range of institutions which he could control, underlines the extent to which traditional authority and practice endured. There are examples, as well, of families with a long history of service in one or more positions. The Dohna family, one of the most prominent families in East Prussia, is one such example. We have already seen the transfer of an *Amthauptmannschaft* from father to son in 1719 within the Dohna family.¹⁰⁵ Frederick William I approved this request in November 1719.¹⁰⁶ In 1726, another son of General Dohna, Christoph Dohna received the *Amthauptmannschaft* of Amt Pr. Holland.¹⁰⁷

For the most part, nepotism "promoted continuity and stability" in government, as Rosenberg has noted.¹⁰⁸ Such stability was nowhere more

¹⁰⁵See previous footnote.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷GStAPK, Gen. Dir., II, Nr. 163, 2 March 1726. In addition, he had to pay the customary 30 Rt. to the king's *Recrutenkasse* in this later case but whether or not he had to do so in the first appointment noted earlier in 1719 is uncertain.

¹⁰⁸Rosenberg, *Bureaucracy, Aristocracy and Autocracy*, p. 81

crucial than in the plague ravaged and remote territory of East Prussia. Frederick William I was successful with his attempts to make it known that many positions traditionally under the authority of the native East Prussians were technically royal and therefore, in the gift of the Hohenzollerns — even if only in name rather than in fact. This aided the growth of royal authority, as it linked the native elite more directly to the King.

A more practical consideration was that training for such positions was carried out by the local elite families themselves. Although this type of practical education often at odds with the King's ideas, it did contribute to the workings of government in East Prussia. There was not a short supply of administrative personnel so much as a short supply of native East Prussians of like mind to the King. Frederick William I recognised that the Kingdom remained in a fragile condition for many years after the onset of the plague in 1709. He also appreciated that the traditional authority had expanded their roles during and after this crisis.¹⁰⁹ The introduction of institutions which ran parallel to those already existing in East Prussia was one significant way Frederick William I built up his authority in the Kingdom and reduced the earlier gains made by the provincial Junkers. Yet Frederick William I could only weaken, rather than overturn, the authority of the East Prussian territorial elite.

What concerned the King, therefore, was not nepotism as such but rather the fact of established East Prussian families entrenching their power. As noted earlier, nepotism was an accepted and even necessary method of administrative recruitment in early-eighteenth-century Brandenburg-Prussia.

Transfers of administrative posts also occurred as a result of a simple trade between individuals who were not members of the same family,

¹⁰⁹See also, Chapter 4.

although this was, in general, rare and usually involved individuals of exalted social and/or administrative standing. In August 1723, for example, the *Oberst* Gerhard Ernst Graf von Lohndorf traded his *Amthauptmannschaft* of Insterburg for that of Loetzen which was held by *Etats Minister* and *Ober-Burggraf* Johann Dietrich von Kunheim.¹¹⁰ There are two further examples of such exchanges after 1723 which will be examined more closely in the next chapter. Here it is important to note that this took place with Frederick William I's knowledge and approval.

The general picture which emerges is of a hierarchy among the elite of certain coveted administrative locations. Some *Amthauptleute* did not receive a salary while those that did all received the same amount. Superficially, then, salary did not appear to be a principal reason for the trade unless one moved from an unsalaried to a salaried post which would have been a considerable incentive. It was not only a question of salary, however, but of the potential for fees and other income. Certain geographical locations most certainly brought with them increased income, above all those closest to the population centres like Königsberg.

Geographical location was always critical. The backward and continually depressed region of Insterburg — like those of Lohndorf and Kunheim which were also in the remote eastern regions — were considered remote and undesirable even by members of the native elite, who coveted those districts closer to Königsberg.

The reforms in East Prussian government in this period also meant changes for the position of deputies and lower administrative officials. The *Amtschreibers*, for example, had established themselves as the deputies to *Hauptmänner* in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They carried out

¹¹⁰GSTAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpreußen, I, Nr. 224, fols. 2, 18 August 1723. See also, ABB, 4:1, p. 285.

many day-to-day support functions under the *Amthauptleute* and *Verweser* of their district.¹¹¹ Until the enforcement of the introduction of the *Domänenpächter* scheme in the 1710s and 1720s, they often acted as the *Amtmann* in domain administration. These positions were traditionally filled through noble patronage, but merit increasingly became a prerequisite for appointment although of course. Incidentally, this is one example of a position which provided another outlet for lesser nobility to move into the ranks of the administration.

Like the case of the *Amthauptleute*, Frederick William I was also involved personally in more and more *Verweser* appointments after 1723. Before the setting-up of the General Directory, there is no specific mention of the King making such an appointment while the *Regierung* requested all eight appointments that were made before 1723. After that date, however, the manuscript material shows that Frederick William I directly instigated on four occasions an appointment for the position of *Verweser*, while the *Regierung* nominated three times. This was one administrative position over which the King managed to gain the arithmetical upper hand, and then very narrowly.¹¹²

¹¹¹Juhr, "Die Verwaltung des Hauptamtes Brandenburg/ostpreussen von 1713-1751," pp. 75-77, and, more generally Chapter 3.

¹¹²See above Table 5.1.

CHAPTER 6

East Prussia and the General Directory

The Origins of the General Directory

The setting up in January 1723 of the General Directory (*General-Ober-Finanz-Kriegs und Domänen-Direktorium*) has conventionally been seen to be the centrepiece and pinnacle of Frederick William I's administrative reform effort.¹ Prussia's king intended that the General Directory would be placed above the primary administrative authorities of the central government which were to be subordinate to it. It was to be responsible for most, but not all, of the domestic, civil and military affairs of the entire Brandenburg-Prussian state. The purpose of this new and quite distinct body was to streamline and consolidate central administration. Indeed, few areas of government were not covered by the instruction which set it up. The General Directory oversaw civil and military administration as well as the financial affairs for each of these areas.

Certain kinds of business were excluded which were nonetheless

¹See, for example, Victor Loewe, "Zur Gründungsgeschichte des General-Direktoriums," *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte*, 13, 1900, p. 243. See also, Dorwart, The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia, p. 163. See, too, Rosenberg, Bureaucracy, Aristocracy and Autocracy, p. 39. Compare these verdicts to Hintze, who has a slightly different approach and did not view the establishment of the General Directory as the zenith of authority right away but rather, as a body that, in the words of Hintze's editor, "developed into the highest bureaucratic authority in Prussia." Hintze, Historical Essays, p. 71. See also, pages 80, 82, 83, 243, 244, and 272. Remarkably, it is this older approach which seems closer to the reality of the impact of the General Directory in the kingdom.

important. The most significant such area was Brandenburg-Prussia's external policy. Until 1728, foreign affairs were handled separately from the General Directory and controlled by the King and his closest personal advisors called to his "cabinet." Prussia's diplomacy was largely controlled by Ilgen until his death in 1728. In that year, Frederick William I reorganised the handling of external policy and set up the *Kabinettsconsell* with three officials at its head in charge of foreign affairs.² After 1733, it went by the more familiar name of *Kabinettsministerium*. From 1728 to 1808, foreign policy was run through this agency which was quite independent from the General Directory.³ In a similar way, many legal, religious and, above all, military affairs were handled by separate departments which were quite distinct.

The General Directory has often been viewed as the single institution that provided the structure for Frederick William I's rule. To anticipate the argument of this chapter, however, although it contributed much as an agency of central government to the process which established absolutism, in itself it was unable to provide an institutional framework as effectively at the provincial level as it did at the central level. Primarily this was because it was, in scope and intention, only intended to reform the central institutions of Prussian government, and had at first no direct impact upon its local tier.

For the traditional East Prussian authorities during Frederick

²Reinhold Koser, "Die Gründung des Auswärtigen Amtes durch König Friedrich Wilhelm I im Jahre 1728," *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte*, 2, 1890, pp. 161-197; Max Lehmann, "Der Ursprung des preussischen Kabinetts," *Historische Zeitschrift*, 63, 1889, pp. 266-271; Hermann Hüffer, "Die Beamten des ältesten preussischen Kabinetts von 1713-1808," *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preussischen Geschichte*, 5:1, 1892, pp. 157-163; Meta Kohnke, "Das preussische Kabinettsministerium: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Staatsapparats in Spätfeudalismus," Ph. D. Dissertation, Berlin: Humboldt University, 1968; Peter Baumgart, "Zur Gründungsgeschichte des Auswärtigen Amtes in Preußen, 1713-1728," *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel und Ostdeutschlands*, 7, 1958, pp. 229-248.

³See Appendix C, p. 354.

William I's reign, the significance of the General Directory was different from the perspectives provided by later historians. It was not that it completed the unification and centralisation of Brandenburg–Prussian administration, far less that it provided the structure for the development of royal authority on the crucial provincial level. Rather, its significance for the established East Prussian authorities was that it signalled that their hold on administration was being challenged and might prove fragile. With the establishment of the General Directory, the Junkers understood that the King was determined to challenge the hegemony which they possessed at the provincial and local level. The Junkers, however, reacted surprisingly slowly, primarily because older conflicts continued after 1723 and the General Directory was not at first seen as the most immediate threat to their position. The new central agencies of government set up by Frederick William I would be introduced directly in people's day-to-day lives, although not to the extent originally or even eventually proposed. Once the East Prussian Junkers recognised the changes represented by the General Directory, the King found his authority being challenged.

The General Directory and the ruler were unable to weaken Junker authority quickly at the provincial and local level, where its impact was initially relatively limited. It is important to underline that the General Directory was set up to solve perceived problems at the centre of Hohenzollern government, covering all of the Brandenburg–Prussian provinces. In local administration, the General Directory was less effective simply because it was not intended to have any impact there, or to address the subtleties and complexities of the regional issues.

East Prussia was the crucial territory for the evolution of Prussian absolutism, due both to its size and potential prosperity, and to the fact that it provided the Hohenzollerns with their royal title. Established variables,

such as the remoteness of the Kingdom, the long-standing effects of plague and famine, together with the poor infrastructure, and its strongly territorial-minded native elite acted as significant barriers and obstacles to the development of absolutism. It was in this context that the General Directory was established in January 1723.⁴

From this point onwards, the King looked to the General Directory when assessing the effectiveness of his authority in East Prussia. The new body, however, was unable to respond comprehensively to the Kingdom's needs. Thus, it was a problem of ability to implement policies which could realise established goals and raise the standing of Frederick William I and his own subordinate officials in East Prussia. Meanwhile, the territory was for long teetering on the brink of chaos and collapse and Prussia's ruler could not risk policy failures which could lead to political discord at home and embarrassment abroad. Although there may, or may not, have been foreign policy constraints on the King's freedom of action, Frederick William I nonetheless had an image to uphold within Brandenburg-Prussia, to rulers outside his own territories and, in his own mind, ultimately to God. Nobody was more aware of this than the King himself. The conditions in East Prussia haunted Frederick William I where his attention to the territory "grew to anxiety and sometimes amounted to obsession."⁵

The General Directory was created by the unification of the General Finance Directory and the General War Commissariat. These two authorities were merged as a result of long-standing administrative and jurisdictional conflicts between them. These two agencies had initially been created by the administrative changes of the seventeenth century and the

⁴ABB, 3, pp. 575-651.

⁵Walker, *The Salzburg Transaction*, p. 75. In addition, see a good summary of the relationship between Pietism and the Brandenburg-Prussian state and in particular the religious zeal of Frederick William I in Gawthrop, *Pietism and the Making of Eighteenth-Century Prussia*.

weakening of the *Hofkammer* which these brought about. The *Hofkammer* itself had been established to oversee the provincial domain administrations, civil finances, and regalia (these profitable rights possessed by the ruler included, tolls, licenses, and mines) in 1689 during the reign of Frederick III/I.⁶ The corruption, administrative instability and confusion of the early 1700s allowed for other central agencies essentially to overtake the *Hofkammer* that provided only theoretical unity.

The result was that financial administration at the central level was overseen by separate and competing individuals at the close of Frederick III/I's reign as well as the inability of administration to act during the plague crisis of 1709/10. Shortly after his accession, Frederick William I attempted to reform many of the financial agencies. Most significantly, the several individual bodies responsible for civil financial administration had been combined into one collegial organised agency, the General Finance Directory on 27 March 1713.⁷

Collegial organisation had for long been characteristic of Brandenburg–Prussian administration. In this period, an office or department was not overseen by one minister, such as a minister of war or minister of justice. Indeed, the title of 'minister' was a formal administrative rank, not an office. It came not from being head of a modern–style ministry but rather, from the King as an award to favoured advisors. Instead, it was usual to have a small board or group of officials who held collective responsibility for the affairs of a particular territory or for a particular part of

⁶Wilhelm Altmann, "Instruktion für die Hofkammer. [1689 April.]," Ausgewählte Urkunden zur Brandenburgische–Preussischen Verfassungs- und Verwaltungsgeschichte, Berlin: R. Gaertners, 1897, pp. 82-85. First published in Urkunden und Aktenstücke zur Gesch. der inneren Politik des Kurf. Friedrich Wilhelm v. Brandenburg, part 1, vol. 1, 1895, pp. 414-417. See also, Dorwart, The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia, p. 123. One should remember that the *Regierung* also possessed such profitable rights which were also known as *regalia*. See Chapter 4, p. 168.

⁷ABB, 1, pp. 363-366

government activity. Decisions were based on consensus and officials often were involved in the decision making process of more than one area of administration. Although these men may have been called ministers, the ministerial concept of a single person responsible for a single area of administration developed later and at the earliest during the reign of Frederick the Great.

Frederick William I exercised his authority not through an established “*ministerium*” but rather in a highly personal way and directly from his own chamber, or so-called “*Kabinett*.” The various departments, boards, and directories were not ministries but a group of individuals who were, in most cases, collectively responsible for many areas of administration. The single exception to this structure were the affairs, primarily foreign policy, supervised by Heinrich Rüdiger von Ilgen until his death in 1728. He, perhaps more than any other advisor to the King, approximated to a modern-style governmental minister.⁸

Very much in this tradition, the affairs of the General Finance Directory were divided among several of the King’s advisors during the first decade of Frederick William I’s reign. Within the General Finance Directory, the issues concerning the forests were to be overseen by the *Ober-Jägermeister*, Samuel *Freiherr* von Hertevelt. The ruler’s private revenues, the so-called *Schatulle* and the income from the Orange Succession lands, were to be overseen by the *Geheime Kriegsrat*, Johann Andreas von Kraut. The postal service was under the privy councillor Grabe while affairs of *Oeconomica* in respect to the *Schatulle* were supervised by the *Geheime Kammerrat* von Görne and the *Geheime Kammerrat* Albrecht Ludwig Walter. In Dorwart’s opinion, however, Frederick William I’s particular confidence

⁸H. M. Scott, “The Rise of the First Minister in Eighteenth-Century Europe,” in *Royal and Republican Sovereignty*, Robert Oresko, G. C. Gibbs, and H. M. Scott, editors, pp. 26-27; Dorwart, *The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I*, pp. 47, 227, fn. 28.

in Kameke marked him out from the others.⁹ This judgement is based on the fact that Kameke was entrusted with the confidence of the King to oversee many of the above mentioned areas of administration, the most important of which included the domains, the *Schatulle*, the Orange Succession lands, forestry, postal service and mint affairs, as well as the state salt monopoly, mines, foundries, tolls and licenses.¹⁰

There was a notable shift in personnel at the top when, in February 1719, Frederick von Görne became head of the General Finance Directory, replacing Kameke who was discredited by a court intrigue, the so-called *Kléementschen Intriguen*.¹¹ The Klément conspiracy is one of the most important yet neglected aspects of international affairs during Frederick William I's reign and also demonstrates the scale of discontent among Frederick William I's principal advisors with his rule.

Kléément was a Hungarian who conspired with a few officials in Frederick William I's court, all of whom were apparently discontented with the King's military imperatives and the almost total disappearance of "literary men", who had been prominent under Frederick William I's father, Frederick III/I. The apparent and astonishing intention of these officials was to organise an international coalition comprised of surrounding courts as well as the Imperial authorities to overthrow Frederick William I. With definite plans and strategic maps of Berlin in hand, the two primary conspirators, Klément and his Brandenburg-Prussian contact, Lehmann,

⁹Dorwart, *The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I*, p. 125. Dorwart makes some interesting arguments on this point however he notes that Kameke's new position "took on the appearance of a collegial ministry of finance." This appears to be more of a matter of interpretation on his behalf and finds little support in the manuscript material.

¹⁰ABB, 1, pp. 363-366.

¹¹*Acta Borussica, Denkmäler der Preussischen Staatsverwaltung im 18. Jahrhundert. Die Briefe König Friedrich Wilhelms I. an den Fürsten Leopold zu Anhalt-Dessau, 1704-1740*, Berlin: Paul Perey, Ergänzungsband, 1906, pp. 31-44.

went into the capital to organise the coup. In the meantime, its ringleader, Klément, had gone to Frederick William I to divulge the conspiracy in return for money: Something that may have been his intention all along, although the evidence is unclear. He claimed that it was not his idea but rather that of the foreign powers. For a time, Frederick William I believed him, but the King soon learned the truth and rounded-up all the conspirators and had them executed.¹² There is no detailed account of a trial having taken place, although it appears Klément confessed at some point after the plot's detection by the King and his officials. Whether his confession occurred during his interrogation or in the course of a trial is not entirely clear. Görne was a native of Brandenburg where he had gained his financial experience primarily through his service as director of the *Amtskammer* in Kurmark as well as the *Hofrentei*, the civil treasury, financial administration and revenue collection authority, extending back to 1712.¹³ His rise did not end with his appointment to president of the General Finance Directory as he became a vice-president and minister in the General Directory at its creation in 1723.¹⁴

There was a change not only in the personnel at the head of the administration but also its structural competence. Görne's rise to the presidency of the General Finance Directory brought more authority and extensive functions to the agency as well as to himself. By 1718, the General Finance Directory had acquired more managerial responsibilities and

¹²Leopold Ranke, *Neun Bücher Preußischer Geschichte*, Berlin: Veit und Comp., I, pp. 175-177; Johann Gustav Droysen, *Geschichte der preußischen Politik: Friedrich Wilhelm I. König von Preußen*, Leipzig: Veit & Company, vol. 4, part 2, 1869, pp. 229-247; Hintze, *Die Hohenzollern und ihr Werk*, pp. 279-280.

¹³Isaacsohn, *Gesichte des preußischen Beamtentums*, vol. 3, pp. 47-48; Dorwart, *The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I*, pp. 110-113, 126 fn. 31.

¹⁴ABB, 3, 143-146. Reglement wegen der Geschäftsvertheilung beim Generalfinanzdirectorium, Berlin, 21 February 1719. See also, Isaacsohn, *Gesichte des preußischen Beamtentums*, vol. 3, p. 52.

possessed more independent decision-making authority than previously had been the case under Kameke. The enlarged executive authority given to Görne and his subordinate officials was evident in the fact that these men actually decided many of the affairs such as the utilisation of the forests and most importantly, the leases for the royal domain lands. No longer was the King's immediate involvement necessary on relatively minor matters. This, however, did not imply that Frederick William I did not take an active interest in lesser affairs. The King remained a keen micro-manager, although he appears to have trusted Görne to an extent that he did few other officials.

It is important to remember that the General War Commissariat, the other agency merged into the General Directory, was a military body which had its origins in the war surrounding the Cleves-Jülich succession dispute in the early seventeenth century.¹⁵ Its primary function, however, came to be the organisation and collection of the revenues from the various territories which retained independent local control over certain affairs.¹⁶

The General War Commissariat had become a particularly crucial instrument for the Great Elector after the peace of Oliva in 1660 when he was able to maintain a peacetime standing army of four thousand men.¹⁷ In addition, it was one of two agencies whose remit covered all the Hohenzollern territories and was therefore a functional rather than territorial agency of government. Its authority continued to increase during the years before 1723. Several tax collection agencies grew in size under its

¹⁵Ibid., 2, pp. 158-197 covers its development. See also, Dorwart, The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I, p. 130.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 132. Isaacsohn, Gesichte des preußischen Beamtentums, vol. 2, pp. 185-197. Interestingly Isaacsohn comments on this point that "hand in hand with the development of the *Kommissariaten* goes the *Steuerverfassung*."

¹⁷Hans Delbrück, Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte: Vierter Teil, Neuzeit, Berlin: Georg Stilke, 1920, p. 280.

auspices as well as various military treasuries which were all separate from civil and territorial authorities.¹⁸ These all became crucial reasons for the Great Elector's ability to support a standing army since revenue collection became more efficient and there was improved accountability for the ruler.

The development and the overlapping functions of these two central administrative institutions, the General War Commissariat and the General Finance Directory, led to significant jurisdictional disputes as detailed.¹⁹ In many ways, these clashes paralleled those that occurred in provincial administration.

From the start of Frederick William I's reign, jurisdictional disputes between these two bodies, and even between their sub-authorities and individuals within each institution, were particularly apparent. A major source of these conflicts was that, throughout the reign's first decade, these authorities were not given a sufficiently clear definition of their duties. Even more problematical than this, however, was the fact that an agency or individual was given collateral functions which often overlapped with another body's or administrator's duties. The two most important agencies at the central level were not distinguished purely by function, which might have avoided duplication and competition. Rather, the primary distinction which was made was whether one was a civilian or a member of the military. This allowed jurisdictional disputes between the various civilian and military authorities to emerge, and is another example of the way in which government was still traditional and territorial in organisation rather than modern and functional.

There are several cases in which *Competenzconflicte* — as these clashes came to be known — were formally reported to Berlin by territorial civil and

¹⁸Appendix A displays graphically early Brandenburg-Prussian administration under Frederick William I.

¹⁹See above, Chapters 3, 4, and 5.

military authorities in East Prussia, Magdeburg, Cleve, and Kurmark, among other practices.²⁰ Although the various authorities could agree on what needed to be decided, they differed on how and by whom such decisions should be made and executed. This primarily involved issues of tax collection, over which there were significant jurisdictional conflicts, as civil and military authorities claimed this function as their own. The jurisdictional debates, as detailed in the manuscript material, reveal an increasingly fractious tone between the parties. Interestingly, Frederick William I did not waiver from his resolve to put an end to these constant and widespread conflicts in the years before 1723.

By late 1721, the King clearly hoped for a negotiated settlement between the parties. One historian, Reinhold Dorwart, cites Frederick William I's order from 12 November 1721 in which the King instructed that a settlement should be reached by the two agencies themselves in one particular dispute in Magdeburg. Furthermore, Dorwart claims that the King was personally introducing reforms.²¹ Advocates of this interpretation concluded that the ruler was decisive, exacting, and innovative in these reforms. The King's tone and intentions, however, require to be analysed more closely. Almost all of his efforts after the setting-up of the General Finance Directory were in fact a continuation and refinement of older practices and policy decisions. The assumptions underlying Frederick William I's decisions were neither new nor original. In the following

²⁰See ABB, 1, p. 341 (*Erlaß* to the *Wirklichen Geheimen Rath* (Real Privy Councillor) von Creutz); vol. 2, pp. 178-186 (draft from the *Generalkriegskommissariat* concerning their jurisdiction), 202-204 (Magdeburg), pp. 226-228 (*Competenzedict*), pp. 310-313 (Magdeburg), pp. 371-375, and pp. 502-504 (East Prussia); Vol. 3 has numerous documents and summaries of documents in regard to the jurisdictional conflicts in many of the territories. Most of those included in vol. 3 refer to the formal conference that concluded with the *principia regulativa* and the establishment of the General Directory which is detailed below.

²¹Dorwart, *The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia*, p. 162.

passage from 12 November 1721, this becomes clear.²²

It has been declaimed and We ourselves have noticed hitherto differences between your college/board and our General War Kommissariat often about one or another affairs that have arisen, which each admittedly through correspondence and letters as well as through oral interlocations have been endeavoured, such that one or the other will not relent. Similarly, that Our Service can and must not be approved through contradictions of the Colleges under one another, but through unanimous disposition according to the fundamentals of the approved order. So that all of these difficulties may be remedied at one time, We order herewith that these Colleges meet together through deputies and consider all the affairs and discrepancies and should employ all diligence to accomplish in total from now until 1 January.

Frederick William I was well informed and he certainly was able to intervene and make a decision on this matter should he have wanted. One would think, in light of the King's personality and reputation with historians, that after eight years of disagreement and conflict between the General Finance Directory and the General War Commissariat the King would impose a decision himself or set down more precise and effective rules for the settlement of jurisdictional disputes. The King, however, did not impose a decision and instead stubbornly followed his early directive to adhere to the "fundamentals of the approved order",²³ directing the involved parties to resolve their differences by themselves, through consensus. He clearly was not eager to take matters into his own hands on either the provincial or central levels at this time.

Frederick William I's style of personal rule, which has since become synonymous with the phrase 'Hohenzollern absolutism,' was not apparent in what was clearly an important series of events, nor was it apparent at this relatively advanced stage in the King's reign. In this manner, Frederick William I maintained the direction of policy in East Prussia which

²²Translated from ABB, 3, pp. 377-378.

²³Ibid., p. 377.

inaugurated while he was still crown prince, in the aftermath of the crisis of 1709.

In early January 1713, his predecessor, Frederick III/I, had ordered that the colleges and their associated departments of the *Generalkommissariaten* and *Geheime Hofkammer* were supposed to settle any differences and work harmoniously not least because they had the “common purpose” of service to their most gracious ruler.²⁴ Frederick William I inherited this approach and continued it for over a decade without showing the decisive personal leadership and directed intervention in administrative disputes commonly associated with his style of kingship.

Negotiations began on 22 December 1721 between officials from both sides and lasted until the following spring when a resolution was issued in March 1722, the so-called *principia regulativa*.²⁵ Almost all of the principles set down in it pertained to the western Hohenzollern territories of Minden, Ravensberg, and Cleves. The disputes between the General Finance Directory and the General War Commissariat and their respective provincial representatives showed that jurisdictional disputes were not only occurring in East Prussia or in a particular region, but were widely scattered throughout the Hohenzollern territories. East Prussia at this time, however, appears to have had disputes which were more purely local in nature and did not involve officials of central administration from Berlin. Clashes between the established officials and those from Brandenburg appear to be far fewer in number in the Kingdom due to the heavy predominance of native East Prussians in administrative posts: there were fewer

²⁴ABB, 1, p. 287, 3 January 1713.

²⁵GStAPK, General Direktorium, General Department, Tit. I, Nr. 26a. See also the “Conference Protocol,” GStAPK, Gen. Dir., General Department, Tit. I, Nr. 26a. This is cited from the transcription in Stolze, “Geschichte der Gründung des Generaldirektoriums,” *Forschungen zur Brandenburgische und Preussische Geschichte*, vol. 21:1, pp. 226-230; ABB, 3, pp. 400-411.

representatives of wider Hohenzollern interests to be found in the Kingdom's government. Since more government was conducted by native elites, any dispute was more likely to be between local officials. This is one further significant difference between East Prussia and other territories — especially with respect to the establishment of the General Directory. It is an important subject which involves the East Prussian *Indigenatsrecht*, or right of the native born, and will be discussed more extensively in the following chapter.

Frederick William I found that numerous disputes continued even after the general agreement reached in March 1722. It was only after this point in his reign, a decade after he became king, that Frederick William I intervened personally when it became clear to him that the March 1722 agreement was not working. The eventual solution proved to be an amalgamation which created the General Directory. The individual responsible for the idea of the combination of the General Finance Directory and the General War Commissariat is not known, although it does not seem likely that it was an invention of Frederick William I himself. As will be demonstrated in the following section, however, many of the new institution's style and procedures for day-to-day operation are typical of the King's previous reforms, most notably the General Finance Directory.

The Establishment of the General Directory

The intention to set up the General Directory was not kept a secret. Although Victor Loewe has noted background reports of its establishment in a Viennese manuscript newsheet from as early as 10 October 1722, the idea of combining the General War Commissariat and the General Finance Directory does not appear to have been reported publicly in Berlin until 6 January 1723.²⁶ More precise information about the setting up of the General Directory appeared in the first week of January, but this was not particularly significant. Many reports of its imminent establishment were circulating by this time. East Prussia, however, was sent official notification apparently no earlier than 24 January 1723, the date noted on the Instruction proclamation sent to Königsberg from Berlin.

Whether other options than the amalgamation were considered is equally clouded in mystery. Established sources, such as the King's letters to his political confidant Leopold zu Anhalt-Dessau in these months²⁷, as well as the Instruction for the General Directory itself,²⁸ give little insight into the reasons why the merger of the two agencies into the General Directory was the chosen solution. Frederick William I did discuss his plans for the introduction of the General Directory with Leopold in December

²⁶Loewe, "Gründungsgeschichte des Generaldirektorium," pp. 242-6. On page 242, Loewe comments that this was from an unknown correspondent who handwrote a newspaper "from the quill." Loewe also noted that, at the time, this document could be found in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna. In addition, see Dorwart, The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I, pp. 164-65, also cites Loewe.

²⁷Ergänzungsband, Die Briefe König Friedrich Wilhelms I. an den Fürsten Leopold zu Anhalt-Dessau, 1704-1740, O. Krauske, editor, in Acta Borussica, Denkmäler der Preußischen Staatsverwaltung im 18. Jahrhundert, Berlin: Paul Perey, 1906.

²⁸ABB, 3, pp. 575-651; the background material and drafts of the instruction begin on p. 532.

1722 and in some detail on the 26th of that month, but no precise explanation for the change was given.²⁹ And although Leopold's role of course in the conception of the General Directory may not be significant, he was to be an important figure in East Prussian affairs later in the decade.

To state as Stolze does, however, that the setting up of the General Directory came about as a result of the jurisdictional disputes between the Provincial War Commissariat and the Domain Board over the domain lands in Minden being waged at the time, ignores two fundamental aspects of the situation during this period.³⁰ First, as detailed in previous chapters, there were other Hohenzollern possessions where Frederick William I found his authorities at odds with one another. The King was well aware of the conflicts and resistance he faced throughout his realm. Not only did Frederick William I have to concern himself with the resistance within East Prussia, he also had difficulties with reform initiatives in other territories, particularly Minden, where the established authorities and sub-officials of the General Finance Directory were at odds with the newer authorities of the *General Kriegskommissariat*. It is not surprising that the two agencies were in conflict. The General Finance Directory was focused on increased production for raw materials that would be exported. The *General Kriegskommissariat*, on the other hand, was focused on production directly for the military or consumption within Brandenburg-Prussia. This, in turn, would increase both the rural *Kontribution* tax as well as the excise tax on consumption in urban areas.³¹

Furthermore, in the west of the Hohenzollern monarchy and well

²⁹ABB, Ergänzungsband, *Die Briefe König Friedrich Wilhelms I. an den Fürsten Leopold zu Anhalt-Dessau, 1704-1740*, p. 211.

³⁰Stolze, "Zur Geschichte der Gründung des Generaldirektoriums," p. 225-237, and p. 566 (Nachtrag).

³¹Neugebauer, *Die Hohenzollern*, pp. 199-200.

after the Frederick William I's reign (between the 1740s through 1760s), such territories as Cleves, Mörs, Gelderland, and especially the new acquisition of East Friesland (secured in 1744) effectively resisted some important changes. One of the most significant instances of this resistance, which during Frederick II's reign occasionally became violent protest, concerned military recruitment and in particular, the Canton System over which clashes occurred well into the reign of Frederick II.³² These territories had strong native traditions of their own, and their acquisition by Brandenburg–Prussia meant little to the local elite when faced with Hohenzollern reforms that directly affected their own established rights and privileges.

In the second place, the General Directory was initially and primarily introduced to curb such disputes within the central administration, not among lesser officials and authorities in the localities. The problems at the local level between the General Finance Directory and the General War Commissariat were apparent, but no attempt was made to solve them in the General Directory. Instead, an exact and effective solution was provided at the central level. Beyond Berlin, the General Directory was less precise in its diagnosis, prescription, and cure of Brandenburg–Prussia's acute regional problems.

In the early 1720s, disputes like those erupting in Minden had their counterparts elsewhere. Although Dorwart states that the General Directory was the high point of reforms for the decade, its impact was limited for several years after 1723.³³ The administrative change and clarification that occurred under Frederick William I was a continuing process, not a single event. According to Dorwart, the King was able to produce financial and administrative consolidation through the introduction of the General

³²Büsch, *Militärsystem und Sozialleben im alten Preussen, 1713-1807*, pp. 36-37.

³³Dorwart, *The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I*, pp. 163-64 and p. 180.

Directory, but this was something the King had sought and worked towards from the very start of his reign.³⁴ In Dorwart's view, "dualism was succeeded by uniformity and unity; conflicting aims, by singleness of direction; administrative schism, by solidarity of interests and purpose."³⁵ This verdict is too optimistic, and to this extent misleading. There is no doubt that there was a continuation of this "dualism" throughout Frederick William I's reign and even beyond, as established agencies retained their role in government.

There was a significant link between the General Directory and Frederick William I's broader political objectives. From the very beginning of his reign, the King was determined to end Brandenburg–Prussia's dependence on foreign subsidies and the loss of political independence this entailed. He believed and strove for political and diplomatic freedom of manoeuvre which would allow him and his successors independence from any external control. It was to be upheld by an enlarged and powerful army. This would prevent Brandenburg–Prussia from remaining a pawn in European affairs as well as securing full control over its own policy. The establishment of the General Directory was seen as a way to help the King achieve this goal of self-sufficiency.

One nineteenth-century historian has cited the familiar anecdote that while crown prince and on a military campaign in Flanders, Frederick William I had been taunted by officers from other states with comments about Brandenburg–Prussia's reliance on foreign subsidies. It is said that the future King's response was to promise that Brandenburg–Prussia would support thirty thousand soldiers without subsidies.³⁶

³⁴Ibid., p. 178-179.

³⁵Ibid., p. 179.

³⁶Whether this anecdote is true or not is uncertain. See for example, the anecdote filled history of Brandenburg–Prussia by Herbert Tuttle, History of Prussia to the Accession

Whether this exchange actually occurred or not is unimportant. What is significant is that during the War of Spanish Succession, when Prussian troops had fought for allied subsidies, the crown prince had fought alongside his men. This was of particular importance and an issue about which he wrote in his instructions for his successor in 1722. He noted that if a king were to have the devotion and loyalty of his troops then that king must march and fight alongside them. Moreover, the King continued, the future king also must remember that his actions should not be for the goal of money but rather, for land and people.³⁷ Such a prize, Frederick William I believed, would add to the economic base of the state and therefore provide more resources to make Brandenburg-Prussia into a self-sustaining military power. The decisions to deploy one's own troops should not be taken lightly according to the King. "The welfare of a ruler," he told his successor, "is when your land is well populated, that is the true riches of one's possessions, when your army marches outside your territories, the excise revenue will not be a third of its level when the army is established in the provinces."³⁸ Moreover, Frederick William I had a wider aim, that of autarky (economic independence or self-sufficiency), which he believed was the only secure basis for the diplomatic freedom of action he craved.

This desire for financial self-sufficiency also was reflected in his instruction for the General Directory. Articles eight (Contribution Tax) and ten (Excise Tax) in particular had deliberate implications for both foreign and domestic efficiency and order. Frederick William I clearly stated this when discussing the Contribution.³⁹ There was joint responsibility for the

of *Frederic the Great*, Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884, p. 379.

³⁷Dietrich, editor, *Die politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern*, p. 238.

³⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 238-9.

³⁹ABB, 3, p. 591.

Contribution to some degree but individual responsibility ultimately fell upon the provincial councillors.⁴⁰

There was a significant linkage between efficient revenue collection, the military, and foreign subsidies.⁴¹ The efficient gathering of taxes was critical for the government to operate as the King had promoted autarky which necessitated a decreased reliance upon foreign subsidies. This provides the primary focus for Bruno Reuter's article on Frederick William I and the General Directory. In the first sentence, Reuter declares that the King "recognised very well that to preserve the security and independence for the state, a numerous and well trained (*wohlgeübtes*) army is necessary."⁴² Reuter claims that the failings of Frederick William I's father, Frederick III/I were to blame for the this not being carried out earlier.⁴³ This is a point that has been expanded above with respect to Frederick William I's instructions to his successor, namely, that the king's desire for economic autarky was to be the foundation for his freedom of diplomatic manoeuvre.

It was not accidental that Frederick William I placed together the sections which discussed the maintenance of the free and un-free population or the so-called, *Conservation der Untertanen*, the collection of the *Contribution* and Excise taxes, tolls and commerce, manufacturing, and paper and cartons between matters concerning "*Fouragegelder vor die Kavallerie*" and "*Anhaltung der Deserteures.*" A well organised and prosperous manufacturing and economic base would support a strong military which would render foreign

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹For example, see the Instruction for the General Directory in ABB, 3, pp. 591-592, 595. The king's discussion of the treatment of and for peasants continues on p. 667. This illuminates this point to some extent.

⁴²Bruno Reuter, "König Friedrich Wilhelm I. und das General-Directorium, *Zeitschrift für preussische Geschichte*, 12, 1875, p. 274.

⁴³Ibid.

subsidies quite unnecessary. In this connection, one must remember the crucial role of subsidies in building up the Hohenzollern army under the Great Elector.

What Frederick William I was underlining by this placement of these issues in his instruction, at one level, was that the Brandenburg-Prussian state must reach a position of economic and political self-sufficiency. Moreover, the Hohenzollern Monarchy should not be dependent on or at the mercy of other foreign powers for part of the funding of its own military forces. In addition, the King did not want to leave the same financial difficulties to his successor which had been his own inheritance from his father, Frederick III/I. In the instructions to his successor in January 1722, Frederick William I explained that a Hohenzollern ruler must have ample financial resources stored up and at hand on which to fall back if necessary.⁴⁴ In other words, he was telling his son to have a large cash reserve. Incidentally, Frederick William I left his successor some eight million talers stored in barrels in the vaults of the royal residence at Potsdam. Having such a cash reserve in turn was to be an axiom of Frederick the Great.

An increase in total revenue was crucial for Frederick William I. Section after section of the instruction for the General Directory was geared to increasing the revenue. The King clearly believed that a lean yet self-sustained government, military and society were the keys to prolonged international success for the Hohenzollerns. The King argues this in his Instructions to his Successor:

It is true, that I leave you a treasury that, at the moment, has a pretty sum of money in it. But, it is necessary for a Prince to have such money, then God preserves you for war, [and] plague. [If] some provinces totally fail [or you have a war] [they] take a lot of money, when you, however, have a well-larded treasury, you can support these disasters. You also must set

⁴⁴Dietrich, ed., Die politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern, p. 233.

aside to this treasury at least 500,000 taler per year, then you will provide a formidable army and a great treasury [for the army] in times of military mobilisation, then you can wield great respect in the world and converse with the other [Great] Powers.⁴⁵

The administrative structure of the General Directory which aimed at autarky was also crucial for Frederick William I's plans. The amalgamation of the General Finance Directory and the General War Commissariat into the General Directory produced four departments that in 1727 would be considered by Frederick William I "a supreme college or board right behind the king."⁴⁶ In fact, this was only true because Prussia's ruler named himself president of the General Directory. If one considers the *de facto* organisation and rank of the upper echelon of the administration, the privy councillors were directly below the King and immediately above the ministers of the General Directory.⁴⁷ These ministers did, however, report directly to the King about the situation in East Prussia and the other Hohenzollern territories. In other words, in 1723 and immediately thereafter, the General Directory's territorial functions were significantly more important than they had been under the General Finance Directory or General War Commissariat. This clearly is an important and often neglected point, and requires more detailed examination.

Each of the four departments was responsible for particular territories as well as particular categories of government business which covered all the Hohenzollern lands, primarily those that were economic and financial in nature. It is important to note that with regard to territorial jurisdiction, very little was changed from pre-1723 dispensations. There was a slight

⁴⁵idid.

⁴⁶ABB, 4:2, p. 140. In a matter concerning rank, the king noted on one document dated 31 January 1727.

⁴⁷See Appendix B, p. 353.

shift with the General Directory toward a functional, rather than purely territorial, system of government, but no more than that. Crucially, the General Directory retained significant provincial functions and a territorial structure in practice. Each department was headed by an official who reported directly to the King about his territorial and functional responsibilities. Each department held regular and scheduled meetings on specified days of the week.⁴⁸ They were to meet until all business was concluded. East Prussia, for example, was initially assigned to Joachim Friedrich von Grumbkow who was to meet with the officials of this First Department on Mondays. Other matters dealt with by the First Department were the affairs of Pomerania, Neumark, boundary matters and the reclamation of land by draining marshes.⁴⁹ Important affairs that remained separate from any department of the General Directory included education, religion, and affairs of justice. In fact, these were given their own agencies under the titles of the *Justizstaatsrat* alongside the *Kabinettsministerium* and under which were Spiritual and Judicial affairs.

In East Prussia, as well as in the other territories, the authority of the General Directory was introduced through the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*. They were notified of the new procedures by the General Directory. Their main task was to oversee the royal domain lands, and they became Frederick William I's agents in the Kingdom for the introduction of the General Directory.

Frederick William I set down in the instruction of December 1722 the requirement that officials appointed to the provincial agencies be not only men of good character but also they were to be good publicans and themselves have been substantial landlords as well as royal officials.

⁴⁸CGStAPK, General Direktorium, General Department, III - General Ober Finanz Kriegs und Domainen Direktorium, Nr. 1.

⁴⁹Ibid.

They were in addition to possess the ability to write well and a solid understanding of accounting and be vigilant and healthy people in general.⁵⁰ Reports were to be submitted directly from the provincial *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* officials to the departmental head of the General Directory. In the case of East Prussia, reports were to be submitted to Grumbkow for discussion on Mondays in the meeting of departmental heads. Frederick William I also intended that these territorial officials would continue to concern themselves with the management of the royal domains and, if their reports were falsified for whatever reason, the General Directory and, in particular, the department head would be held responsible.

Spying was central to this system of government. Frederick William I suggested that, besides personal correspondence, the use of informants and spies should be used to verify specific matters and conditions in the territories.⁵¹ The King specifically referred to East Prussia as an example of why and how espionage could and should be used to determine the quality of harvests, the exploitation of the land, as well as manufacturing, shipping, and trade in general. Spies provided additional reports, which enabled official versions to be verified. In addition, Frederick William I noted that the General Directory was to pay attention to what spies were saying about any organised effort among the East Prussian nobility to resist the *Generalhufenschoß*, the land based tax on the Kingdom's elite first imposed in 1715 and re-introduced in 1719.⁵²

The attention to detail demonstrated by Frederick William I in the

⁵⁰ABB, 3, p. 577, section 10.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 644. This will be examined more fully in the following section.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 644-645, article 34, section 2.

instruction was not new. The assignment of individual ministers to particular affairs was established practice within existing agencies of Hohenzollern government. A mere month after his own accession Frederick William I issued one of his earliest and most important decrees, that establishing the General Finance Directory on 27 March 1713.⁵³ This incorporated the King's notion of assigning certain officials to particular duties, and more specifically, the idea that ministers should meet on particular days to deal with their affairs, subsequently a central feature of the General Directory.⁵⁴ This exemplifies the evolutionary process apparent in the framework of the General Directory, rather than its unexpected introduction in 1723. Table 6.1 demonstrates this considerable continuity, where the primary matters for both bodies and the day which they were to be considered:

Table 6.1
The General Finance Directory and the General Directory

Day of Week	General Finance Directory, established March 1713	General Directory, established January 1723
Monday	Nothing Scheduled	Dept. Head Grumbkow: Prussia, Pomerania, and Neumark. Boundary Matters, Draining of Marshes
Tuesday	Domains/Hof-Kammer Affairs.	Nothing Scheduled
Wednesday	Krautt: Schatulle and Orange Succession Lands	Dept. Head Creutz: Minden, Ravensburg, Tecklenburg, Lingen, Rechenkammer and Provisioning of the Army
Thursday	Domains and Hof-Kammer Affairs	Dept. Head Krautt: Electoral, Magdeburg, Halberstadt, Marching/Manoeuvre Matters, Caring of the Army
Friday	Domains and Hof-Kammer Affairs	Dept. Head Görne: Gueldres, Cleves, Mörs, Neuchâtel, Orange Succession Lands, Postal and Mint.
Saturday	Grabe: Postal Matters	Nothing Scheduled

⁵³ABB, 1, pp. 363-366. In particular, article 2.

⁵⁴Ibid. In particular, article 3.

All business concerning the forests and mint were handled separately by other administrators. In particular, Frederick William I set out that *Oberjägermeister* Samuel *Freiherr* von Hertevelt was to be in charge of the royal forests. Johann Theodor Flottwell was appointed to oversee the affairs of money or so-called *Münzwesen*. Flottwell, incidentally, went on to become Privy Secretary in the Second Department of the General Directory on 23 January 1723.⁵⁵

Although it has been argued here that the idea to combine the General Finance Directory and the General War Commissariat may not have been Frederick William I's own suggestion, he was certainly familiar with the notion. The amalgamation of the two agencies was more of a trend of administrative refinement that continued to follow established precedent, that of combining existing departments to form new agencies and, by implication, followed naturally from evolution between 1713 and 1723. The General Finance Directory itself had been formed through an amalgamation of the primary civil financial agencies existing in 1713.⁵⁶

The organisation of the General Directory clearly did not imply that Frederick William I planned to diminish his own personal involvement in government or his direct participation in the particular issues which the new body handled. Figures 6.1 and 6.2 below shows a graphic representation of the differences between the General Directory and the institutions that came before it.⁵⁷ In particular, one is able to see in Figure 6.1 the amalgamation of

⁵⁵Ibid., pp. 364-365.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 363.

⁵⁷See Appendix B, p. 353, for a more complete graphical representation of East Prussian Administration after the establishment of the General Directory in January 1723. The information in the above organizational chart is based on a number of sources, notably, Manfred Schlenke, Preußen-Ploetz: Preußische Geschichte zum Hachschiagen, Freiburg/Würzburg: Verlag Ploetz, 1987, p. 43.

the General Finance Directory and the General War Commissariat which provided the basis for the establishment of the General Directory in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.1
Administration before 1723

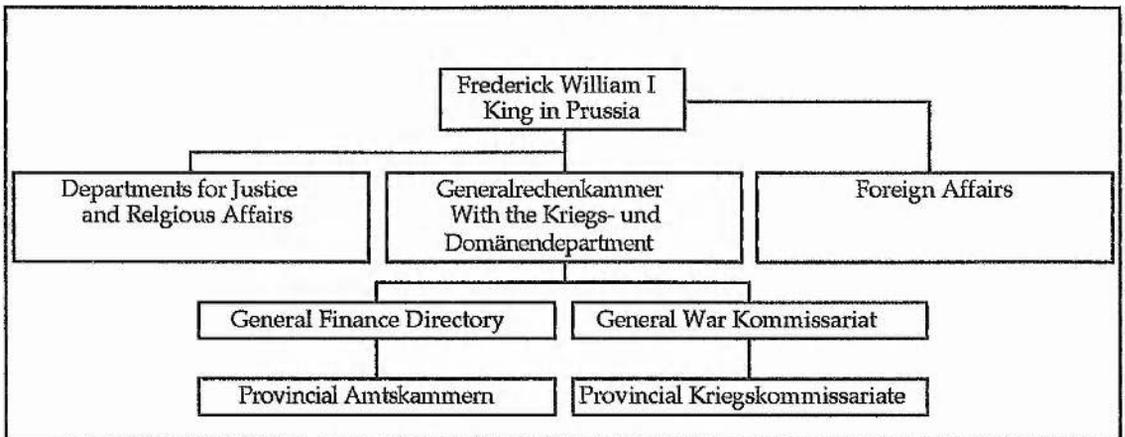
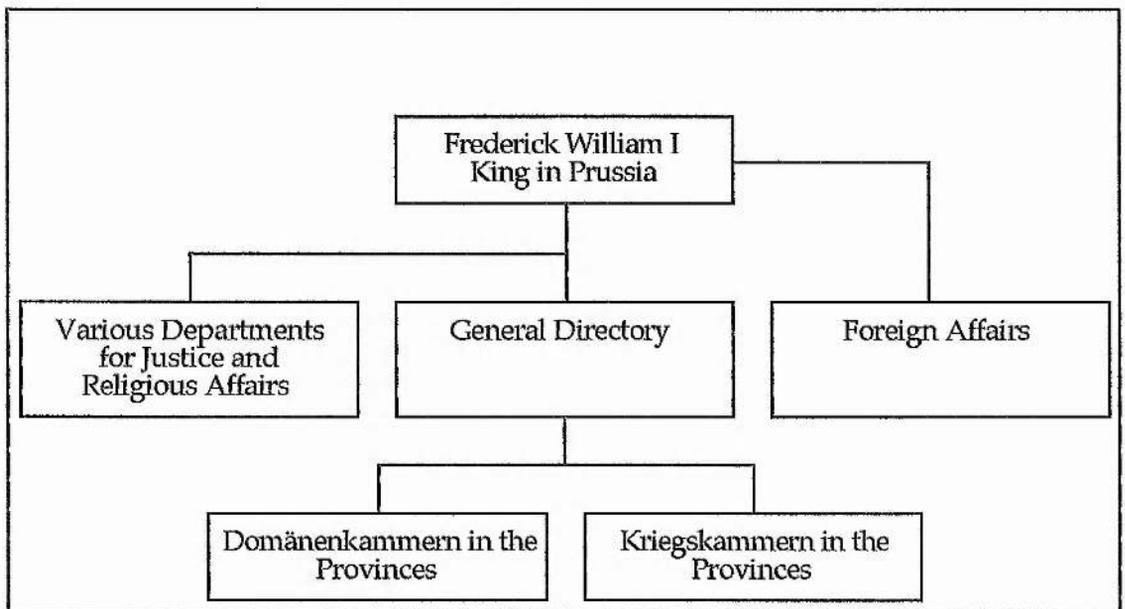


Figure 6.2
Administration after 1723



It also should be noted that Frederick William I kept many of the most important military affairs separate from the General Directory. Actual command of the army and strategic planning of military operations remained outside the competence of the General Directory, so too did some of its financial matters. Nevertheless, most all of the day-to-day peacetime administration for the military was supervised by the General Directory.

Important revenues were collected by the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* in the provinces, including East Prussia. As the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* in the Kingdom was subordinate to the General Directory, these revenues necessarily passed through the General Directory and indeed were supervised by the Department responsible for East Prussia. Frederick William I, however, was adamant about keeping finances for the military separate. In this way, its income would not become confused with finance for civil affairs or politics.

This extension of the authority of the General Directory into the Kingdom through the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*, however, at first made few significant inroads. The primary distinction between whether one was a civilian or a member of the military continued to be stressed in matters of administrative competence and allowed jurisdictional disputes between the various civilian and military authorities to continue. This will be examined in the next section.

East Prussian Reactions to the General Directory

The Königsberg *Regierung* showed no immediate concern about the General Directory when its establishment was made known by instructions sent from Berlin at the end of January 1723. In fact, there was little immediate apparent discussion by the East Prussian *Regierung* about the new body after word arrived on 12 February 1723. The jurisdictional conflicts which preceded the General Directory continued largely unabated after its establishment, though one target of the complaints had changed. The East Prussian authorities now directed their concern and frustration with the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* to the General Directory.

During 1723 and 1724 the *Regierung* only slowly began to appreciate that the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* officials were becoming a direct and increasingly powerful extension of central administration in Berlin, now controlled by the General Directory. The *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* technically held significant authority and was already diminishing that of the *Regierung* in some areas of East Prussian administration. Moreover, as the jurisdictional quarrels continued after 1723, the General Directory came to be seen as a threat by the *Regierung* when the enhanced power of its subordinate authority, the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*, was appreciated. This did not come about immediately, as it took some time for the full implications of the General Directory to become apparent within the Kingdom.

The royal instruction establishing and explaining the General Directory to the territorial governments and regional administrative authorities was followed by other initiatives concerned with its organisation which also affected the outlying territories, and, in particular, East Prussia.

The extension of the General Directory into the Kingdom, however, remained incomplete until the middle of the eighteenth century. The full and effective subordination of the regional territories to the new agency in Berlin took at least two decades to achieve.

In his initial steps for the establishment of the General Directory the King was closely involved in the appointment of relatively low level secretarial staff, a further illustration of the level of personal royal involvement in the details of government. In the acts setting it up, one can find not only important drafts of documents regarding the organisation of this new institution but also exercises submitted by potential candidates for posts as secretarial copyists. Sample documents were submitted for review and on some Frederick William I noted "poor hand," "good hand," or "this copyist will be very good."⁵⁸ These were ironic comments indeed for a King who not only wrote illegibly but moreover, could barely construct a grammatically correct sentence in any language.⁵⁹ In the eighteenth century, legible handwriting was crucial for a would-be administrator and the King took a decisive personal interest in their appointment. It underlines the degree of royal involvement at the lowest level of government, in this case the choice of secretaries.

Yet, this interest in implementing the components of the General Directory is not matched by any correspondence which demonstrates that Frederick William I was concerned with its introduction, let alone acceptance, within the Kingdom. This was also the situation among the royal officials in East Prussia, who — to judge by their correspondence — exhibited little concern about the steps needed to establish the authority of

⁵⁸GStAPK, Gen. Dir., General Department, III - General Ober Finanz Kriegs und Domainen Kammer, Nr. 4. Generally, only the top few lines of a typical edict were supplied, for example, "Von Gottes Gnaden Friedrich Wilhelm, König...."

⁵⁹For more on this subject see, Hummrich, "Beitrage zur Sprache Konig Friedrich Wilhelm I von Preussen".

the new body in the Kingdom.⁶⁰ It was, at the very earliest, a full year after the introduction of the General Directory that Frederick William I's zealous interest in appointments, like that with the copyists in Berlin mentioned earlier, came to be appreciated in East Prussia.

As mentioned earlier, the East Prussian authorities were not notified about the establishment of the General Directory — along with the other territorial *Regierungen* — until late January 1723 through the “Notifications Patent” of the 24th of that month.⁶¹ Although Frederick William I may have personally supervised the drawing up of the first draft of the General Directory Instruction, there were numerous corrections and emendations made to it by his most senior officials, Grumbkow, Creutz, Kraut, Katsch, and Görne. The final version of the Instruction reflected the significant contribution made by these high officials.⁶²

The instruction was finally ready to be sent out from Berlin by 24 January 1723. It was despatched to the various authorities throughout Brandenburg–Prussia soon after this date as the East Prussian *Regierung* received their copy ten to fifteen days afterward on 12 February. Moreover, these officials apparently made last minute corrections up to and even after final approval.⁶³ For example, a partial explanation for the delay in sending

⁶⁰This conclusion rests upon a study of manuscript material that includes notes, correspondence, and other documents that originated from both the King and his officials in Berlin and Potsdam as well as other locations and the East Prussian officials in Königsberg and elsewhere in the Kingdom.

⁶¹GSStAPK, Gen. Dir., General Department, III - General Ober Finanz Kriegs und Domainen Kammer, Nr. 4, fols. 001-004. For the printed version, see fols. 012-013 Rückseite.

⁶²*Ibid.*, fols. 001 and 008 (French version of Instruction). Much of the bundle of manuscript material that contains the various drafts of the instruction are not contained in the *Acta Borussica*. There is a great deal of important information contained in the manuscript material that is not included in the *Acta Borussica* and much of that is in this set of manuscript material.

⁶³*Ibid.*, fol. 18.

the Patent may be the last minute changes to which copy was to go to which territory as well as the time-consuming business of making several copies by hand of a relatively long and complex document. On 12 February 1723, Harold and Theile of the Berlin *Kammer* sent an additional copy of the *Notifications Patent* to various territorial officials; this was commonly done some time after the initial announcement by the King. For the territory of Neumark, revealingly the *Patent* was originally addressed to the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*. This name was crossed out and replaced with “*Regierung*”. The last minute additions and corrections did not focus on minor details in the document but dealt with larger issues, such as the reasoning behind the setting up of the General Directory.⁶⁴ On the same day, 12 February 1723, the East Prussian *Regierung* reported in an unremarkable manner, that they had received the instruction and would bring to everyone’s attention the establishment of the General Directory.⁶⁵

Overall, it does not seem to have been difficult for the East Prussian *Regierung* to accept the setting up of the General Directory. The rapid publication by the East Prussian authorities of the printed version of the *Notifications Patent*, is further evidence that they acted completely in accordance with the orders from the King, the General Directory, and the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*.⁶⁶ The *Regierung* in Königsberg was not concerned by — and certainly did not resist or protest against — the General Directory, at this point. The authorities in the Kingdom notified the General Directory in February 1723 that they would publicise the Instruction as instructed.⁶⁷ The *Regierung* quickly began to correspond with the General

⁶⁴Ibid., fol. 1.

⁶⁵Ibid., fol. 019, Königsberg, 12 February 1723. Signed by the *Regierung*, Dohna, Rauschke, Tettau, Ostau, and Wallenrodt.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., fols. 19-21.

Directory on routine and more important issues concerning the Kingdom's government, confirming that it was not immediately seen as a threat in Königsberg. Nothing in this period suggests that the *Regierung* would have increased problems with the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* and the newly established General Directory. The jurisdictional conflicts with the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* in particular lay some months in the future. For the present, the *Regierung* continued to concern themselves with the important issues and policy reforms which had arisen prior to the establishment of the General Directory. There is no evidence in the manuscript material of new conflicts during the first few months of 1723, when royal attention also focused on the other reforms under way in the Kingdom.

Since the beginning of Frederick William I's reign, the King had been pursuing initiatives which aimed to re-develop the Kingdom's infrastructure, economy, and agricultural output, as well as the administration of these matters. The majority of these reforms began in 1721 and lasted through 1728. The introduction of the General Directory was not the only innovation underway at this time. Its establishment — as significant as that may have been with the benefit of hindsight — was, in the overall context of the decade, simply one more reform which demanded the attention of the Kingdom's ruling elite. In addition, the General Directory was at first, remote from East Prussia, since it was located in Berlin. It has loomed larger in the vision of historians than it did to contemporaries, in the Kingdom as elsewhere throughout the Hohenzollern monarchy.

Many of the eastern provinces of the Kingdom were still undergoing efforts to revive their economy. This was the region of East Prussia which had suffered the most serious devastation and de-population during and after the plague of 1709. The enduring results of natural disaster were evident in the 1720s with many abandoned farmsteads remaining vacant. The King undertook reforms to re-invigorate the territory. He also pursued

a significant internal re-colonisation program primarily in the 1730s, the success of which will be discussed in the next chapter.

One of the most important reforms in East Prussia in 1723, and with more apparent significance than the introduction of the General Directory, was the dividing up of the larger districts of the eastern territory into several smaller areas, or special *Ämter*. In particular, the districts of Insterburg, Ragnit and Tilsit were targeted for sub-division by Berlin. The East Prussian Domain Commission drafted a plan for the division of the Insterburg and Tilsit districts which were sent on to the General Directory.⁶⁸ The Domain Commission was composed of *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* President von Bredow, von Schlublut, von Vefredt, von Lowenschneng, Neande, and Stollenfolt. These officials were to draw up such a plan for the King.

The division of the most eastern districts of East Prussia were among the most important reforms Frederick William I carried out in the Kingdom for two reasons. First, a general survey of society, agriculture, and the economy was taken of the area which included the proposed name of the new *Ämter*, the number of land plots or *Hufen* (*Huben*), as well as other civil and agricultural statistics.⁶⁹ Second, the Domain Commission prepared a map of the area, graphically detailing much of the information contained in the general survey such as the location and size of the villages.⁷⁰ This was to portray where each village would be located within the new *Ämter*. One

⁶⁸GStAPK, General Direktorium, Ostpreußen, III-General Department, Nr. 2141 (Insterburg), GStAPK, General Direktorium, Ostpreußen, III-General Department, Nr. 6288 (Tilsit).

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, fols. 3 Rückseite-56. One *Hufen* is approximately 17 hectares or 42 acres.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, fols. 45-46. Finding such a map directly along side its particular document is rare. This map is in excellent condition with good colour and detail. It appears many such maps were systematically separated from their original document and placed within a map collection. This one, however, remained with its corresponding documentation. However, after my review of the map, the Berlin archive staff raised the question about whether it would remain with its documentation.

result of this type of planning was that the new *Ämter* borders were drawn so that no one *Amt* had a particular advantage in resources over another. Care was taken with the type of agriculture grown in the area, the number of villages resting in each planned new *Amt*, as well as the type of individual living in those areas, for example, service personnel and farmers.⁷¹

There were therefore more immediate priorities for the East Prussian *Regierung* in 1723 than the General Directory. The Insterburg plan was submitted to Frederick William I on 26 March 1723 and became a particularly important source of discussion, upon which the *Regierung* in Königsberg reserved their position. The plan was approved and would also apply retrospectively to the King's earlier decisions approving domain leases. There were two minor problems raised, although Frederick William I simply noted that all was to remain as it was with the proposed plan and existing leases.⁷² The General Directory notified the Prussian Domain Commission of the plan's approval on 2 April 1723⁷³ while they notified the Prussian *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* of its approval a day later.⁷⁴ This is the same period as the introduction of the General Directory in the Kingdom. The final approval for the district of Tilsit, however, was not granted until the fall of 1723. The plans here were subjected to some detailed revision by Frederick William I himself.⁷⁵ The revised plan was sent to the Prussian Domain Commission on 9 October 1723 with Berlin's approval. A similar

⁷¹Service personell included *Schultzen* (high school administrator), *Pachmöhren* (leasehold estate unfree servant), *Briefträger* (letter carrier) und *Drayner* (mill worker for drainage operations), and *Warthen* (look-out, guard, or scout).

⁷²*Ibid.*, fols. 57-57 Rückseite.

⁷³*Ibid.*, fols. 61.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, fols. 62.

⁷⁵GStAPK, General Direktorium, Ostpreußen, III-General Department, Nr. 6288, 4 October 1723. General Directory to Frederick William I. The king's marginalia suggests he believed the plan to be a good one but he did amend specific portions.

document, which concerned a request for a budget for the plan, was sent out from Berlin to the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*.⁷⁶

This provides the essential context to the introduction of the General Directory. As described earlier, the authority of the new body extended into the Kingdom and other Hohenzollern territories via the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*.⁷⁷ Their role in the creation of new districts in the eastern provinces of the Kingdom had been significant before and after the establishment of the General Directory in January 1723. This was primarily due to the fact that many of those involved in the plans for the new district scheme were officials of the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*. Their authority was, at least on paper, strengthened after the establishment of the General Directory.

The role of the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* in the territories has been compared to that of the French *intendants*.⁷⁸ To suggest, however, that the functions of an official of the Brandenburg–Prussian *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* were new at the establishment of the General Directory and were modelled directly on the *intendant* system, is simply wrong. Although there are some striking similarities, there is nothing to suggest that for East Prussia there was a deliberate copying. Certainly the fact that like the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* officials, the *intendants* in France were almost always not natives of the province to which they were sent, was important to Frederick William I, but this was common in all governments of this period.

⁷⁶Ibid. 9 October 1723. On 20 October 1723, the Prussian *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* reported that they prepared a budget for the entire area that included the former districts of Insterburg, Tilsit and Ragnit.

⁷⁷ABB, 3, pp. 575–651. Interestingly, in the Instruction for the General Directory, there is no direct mention that this was the case. However, from the beginning of the Instruction, there are procedures for appointments and reports that clearly shows the role of the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* as the extension of the General Directory in the various territories.

⁷⁸See, for example, Rosenberg, *Bureaucracy, Aristocracy and Autocracy*, p. 39.

The level of authority commanded by the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* in East Prussia was less than that wielded by the French *intendants*, primarily because of the way in which they were introduced and used. They were introduced to carry out functions that had for long been under the authority of the Hohenzollern rulers and largely limited to military affairs. Their overlapping and shadowing of the affairs of the native elites came about when their role changed and marks a significant difference to their so-called counterparts in France.

French precedent is more evident in the case of another official, the Brandenburg–Prussian *Steuerrat*, who oversaw the royal collection of taxation in the provinces for the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* in a way strongly reminiscent of the *Intendant*. The authority of these men, along with that of the other crown officials in the *Kriegs- und Domänenräte*, was significant, but it was not as important as Rosenberg has suggested until at least a decade or so after the establishment of the General Directory.⁷⁹

These new officials brought with them into the provinces not just the support and control of the General Directory but, more importantly, the direct backing of the King himself. The *Kriegs und Domänenräte* were assisted by this royal support which went far to bolster their administrative confidence and their belief that they would be able to see a job through to its conclusion in the Kingdom. It is for these reasons that the *Steuerraten* and their link to the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* has suggested a parallel with the French *Intendants*.

To bolster the image and prestige of the young monarchy, Frederick William I may have attempted to echo the administrative success of France's Louis XIV after 1661. The direct links to the crown and central administration which were now established were important as well. The

⁷⁹Ibid.

King stated this clearly in the introduction to the General Directory Instruction. The King made himself the president of the new body, “in order”, he noted “to indicate more respect, authority and emphasis....”⁸⁰

More important, many East Prussian *Regierung* officials found particular difficulty with the more powerful roles and functions of the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* for two principal reasons. First, there was the simple fact that the *Regierung* and its many subordinate authorities found many of their administrative functions either shadowed or even made redundant by the activities of the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*. This was the case with revenue collection. Although it was not an immediate threat to the East Prussian authorities after the General Directory was set up, it did appear to rise to the top of their concerns approximately a year after the new body was established.

The second issue the East Prussian *Regierung* found problematical after the introduction of the General Directory were actions taken by the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* that violated the long-standing East Prussian *Indigenatsrecht*. This is a crucial theme when considering the reforms introduced into East Prussia and will be explored in the next chapter as this issue became more conspicuous in the late 1720s and early 1730s. There is no doubt, however, that Frederick William I tried to break this monopoly of provincial personnel throughout his reign and no more so than during the period after the General Directory was established.

A year before, Frederick William I had devoted a substantial section to East Prussia in his Political Testament. The first few paragraphs appear to portray the Kingdom in a glowing light and the ruler wrote with optimism about improving the position of the Hohenzollern name over the territory (i.e., enhancing his own power) as well as generally improving the condition

⁸⁰ABB, 3, p. 575.

of those living there. The succeeding paragraphs, however, suggest Frederick William I was more pessimistic or, perhaps, merely realistic about the conditions existing there in early 1722, the time at which he wrote.⁸¹ He went on to note that, indeed, he had been unsuccessful at reforming his domain lands in the Kingdom but that his recent initiatives should improve the situation. The King continued with a list of his own failures and successes, and recommendations about what his successor should and should not do with regard to East Prussia. It appears that in 1722, Frederick William I was aware of his limited authority in the Kingdom and the failures of his reforms. At the same time, however, his prescriptions and predictions for East Prussia appear over ambitious, as the next few years would make clear. These years will be the focus of the next chapter.

⁸¹Dietrich, editor, *Die politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern*, p. 227.

A Perspective on the General Directory

Within East Prussia, the introduction of the General Directory was less a threat to the traditional style of administration than to the established patterns of authority. Though its practical impact was at first limited, its theoretical implications were large. The challenge which it announced sent powerful signals to the Junkers that their role in military and administrative affairs was conditional and at the discretion of the Hohenzollerns. The independent traditions of many members of the East Prussian nobility posed a formidable challenge to the extension of state authority. These involved issues which only came to light after the General Directory had been in existence for several months. The new body was a serious effort to reform, initially, central government. Only subsequently were innovations to be introduced into the provincial administration. The General Directory was organised within the framework represented by existing agencies, that is to say, it had a collegial structure.

There was nothing new about the organisation, as has been made clear earlier. It had evolved from a long evaluation of administration carried out at the instigation of Frederick William I and with considerable input from his closest advisors. The General Directory was a central component in the evolution of Hohenzollern absolutism, but in itself it was not a complete answer to royal intentions about the government of East Prussia. Even after its introduction, similar disputes as those which had characterised pre-1723 East Prussia continued and new ones emerged.

The ubiquity of spies within Hohenzollern government reinforced this situation. Frederick William I was quite open about the existence of his spy network and, at one point in the Instruction, told the members of the

General Directory that as the King was dependent on the General Directory for correct information, the General Directory in turn must maintain its own network of spies in the territories so as not to receive false information from authorities there.⁸² With respect to East Prussia, there is perhaps no more prominent illustration than that contained in the instruction for the establishment of the General Directory in 1723. In that document, the King declared the following:

We have already (above) ordered that the Directorate shall correspond diligently with the Commissariats and Chambers, and the members of each Department with the private informants and spies to be organized in the Provinces, in order that they may be informed in minutest detail of what goes on in the Provinces, either in the Commissariat, Crown Property, financial, Provincial, or political fields; also new journals and all sorts of particulars of Provincial events. For example: in [East] Prussia ... [t]here is a secret movement among the nobles to get rid of the general tax on holdings, strong resistance to this or that edict. This or that nobleman is objecting to the land tax (*Generalluhfenschoss*).... The Royal Edicts and the substance of the instructions are carried out, or not.⁸³

It should be noted that Frederick William I had his own spies who reported directly to him scattered throughout the administration. The King also expected the General Directory, as shown here, to maintain spies, as a check upon its own officials. As a final note, it must be said that Frederick William I had successes as well as failures in East Prussia. The King had successfully collected the Excise in the Kingdom and was able to use his experience there to introduce it in other territories.⁸⁴

The establishment of the General Directory did not cure the administrative ills of Hohenzollern government in the 1720s. Indeed, its

⁸²ABB, 3, p. 613. Art. 18, § 29.

⁸³ABB, 3, pp. 644-645. Instruction for the establishment of the General Directory, Art. 34, § 2. This quotation cited from the English translation by Macartney, *Habsburg and Hohenzollern Dynasties*, pp. 307-308.

⁸⁴With the exception of Guelders, evidently due to a provision within the Treaty of Utrecht.

limited immediate impact is apparent from the fact that its introduction met less resistance from East Prussian Junkers than other royal reform initiatives. This, however, changed in subsequent years. A more clearly defined and prominent reaction by the East Prussian *Regierung* was not evident until 1724 at the earliest.

CHAPTER 7

The Impact of the General Directory

East Prussian Administration after 1723

The establishment of the General Directory opened the most productive decade for Frederick William I's administrative reforms. Many of his initiatives only started to take effect in East Prussia during the later 1720s and 1730s. Yet success, though significant, was far from complete. Many of Berlin's initiatives were only partially implemented, while other changes continued to be successfully thwarted by the Kingdom's native elite.

This chapter will examine Frederick William I's policies as they applied to East Prussia during the decade after the establishment of the General Directory. These years saw a gradual shift in attitudes on the part of the Kingdom's administrative elite and society, as a consequence of the setting-up of the General Directory. More local and regional officials found themselves responsible for a limited range of matters which they could actually influence. This advanced centralisation but also fostered more local initiative, or at least local control. These officials were ultimately subject to Berlin, but the changes to the territorial institutions which resulted from the establishment of the General Directory ultimately also gave these officials more autonomy and might be seen as a reform which produced decentralisation.

In the end, however, East Prussian government was neither fully decentralised nor bureaucratised as a result of the General Directory.

Division of labour was increasingly applied but individuals were not necessarily experts in their particular offices. Provincial authorities continued a system of patronage, as will be seen. In this respect, one may suspect that the poor communications and the general lack of infrastructure within the Kingdom permitted local authorities to remain independent to a large extent of Berlin and even Königsberg. One solution Frederick William I found for this structural backwardness was to gain more control of administrative appointments and this was to prove effective to some degree. This lack of infrastructure — as Schmoller argued — remained the biggest hindrance to the development of East Prussia after 1723.¹ Unable to force through fundamental reforms to the structure of government, the King sought to exert control indirectly through the appointment of officials.

The General Directory was the agency which the King hoped would finally overcome all these difficulties. The most obvious structural change with its establishment was that control over domain affairs and the *Kriegskammer* was united under one authority, the General Directory itself, rather than being split between two separate agencies. This change, however, did not add a new level of government since the old directing offices were simply merged into the General Directory. As a result, the organisation and structure of administration within East Prussia remained largely unchanged. More fundamental changes had been introduced two years earlier when Frederick William I merged the territory's finance and domain affairs. The General Directory, although important for those authorities which the King already controlled, had relatively little impact on the overall operation, nature, and organisation of government in East Prussia. One noticeable consequence of its establishment was that it provided an administrative structure through which Frederick William I

¹Schmoller, "Die Verwaltung Ostpreussens unter Friedrich Wilhelm I," p. 63.

could maintain that close oversight which was his personal administrative style and was suited to his attention to the smallest detail. One way in which this can clearly be seen was through the King's personal and direct involvement in appointments in East Prussia.² Once again, changes in personnel rather than new administrative structures were the means by which Berlin sought to increase its control.

The General Directory had initially been a response to the prevailing confusion in central administration. As will be seen, the King subsequently implemented refinements to the *Kriegs und Domänenkammern*, which became the primary arm of the General Directory in East Prussia after 1723. Considered within the total structure of the Kingdom's overall, let alone that of Brandenburg-Prussia as a whole, this amounted to no more than administrative fine-tuning. The intention was to adjust East Prussian government at the upper levels which the King already controlled. His reliance on the *Kriegs und Domänenkammern*, however, eventually threatened the fundamental authority of the Kingdom's elite.

The General Directory had not been introduced to challenge East Prussian traditions, and at first had little effect upon the established authorities. Before long, however, this situation began to change, as other important reforms, such as alterations to established appointment procedures, were introduced. During the 1720s and 1730s, Frederick William I was able to encroach with some success upon the territorial *Indigenatsrecht*, the most cherished East Prussian privilege. The *Indigenatsrecht* was to be found in all Hohenzollern territories and embodied

²See the material in GStAPK, Rep. 7, 18a. This was not the case for his successor, Frederick the Great. As a result of war and perhaps his desire, his attention to such matters in East Prussia was less than his father's. This also contains *Krieges und Domänenkammer* appointments as well as *Amthauptleute* and other traditional positions. There is only one signature from Frederick II on a document to *Etats* Minister Münchhausen in regard to an appointment dated 17 August 1764.

each province's particularism. In the Kingdom, Frederick William I's efforts to infringe on these rights enjoyed limited but relatively swift success, as he established new practices on the issue of appointments.

Traditional rights and privileges gave the East Prussian elites almost total control over the type and, more importantly, origins of persons who filled vacancies both in local and royal administration. Natives of East Prussia had dominated the Kingdom's administration at all levels during the first decade of Frederick William I's reign. A native of the territory of Brandenburg or Cleves, for example, was not legally permitted to hold an administrative position in the Kingdom. This situation gradually changed and, by the end of Frederick William I's reign a clear shift was evident. The reforms associated with the General Directory fostered considerable changes through the appointment of individuals in the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*. Less change is seen within other agencies.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, native East Prussians alone were permitted to serve in the Königsberg *Regierung*. Although this never formally changed under Frederick William I, the extension of the General Directory into the Kingdom through the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*, the primary rival to the *Regierung*, gradually brought about a change, though at first there were few significant inroads. Ultimately, the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* was able to accomplish many of Frederick William I's intentions through its implementation of the consistent flow of edicts and directives which came from the General Directory. Imposition of these often required the compliance and cooperation of the *Regierung* and, since this was lacking at times, the King's efforts could be delayed or otherwise hindered.

It must also be remembered that, since the *Indigenatsrecht* was a formal law, it therefore had legal force and was part of the unwritten constitution of the Kingdom, established by time and tradition. Just as the

native elites of the other Hohenzollern territories coveted their exclusive dominance over territorial titles and positions, so too did the East Prussians. This had been the case in the Kingdom for generations prior to the reign of Frederick William I. Such laws had existed, particularly during the seventeenth century, in most, if not all, of the Hohenzollern territories. What was unique in East Prussia was that the *Indigenatsrecht* lasted for so long and survived long into the eighteenth century. This feature of the Kingdom's law primarily sets the territory apart from the other provinces. In a real sense, this is a manifestation of the province's enduring distinctiveness and semi-independent nature.

The issue of the East Prussian *Indigenatsrecht* is an important issue underlying the King's reform effort which affected almost every level of government, from members of the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* to the *General Domänenpächter* to the traditional native institutions and elites, that is to say the *Regierung*, *Amthauptleuten*, and *Verwesern*. Administrative structures might not have been fundamentally altered, but important changes came about in the personnel who staffed them. This key theme runs through much of the present chapter, which demonstrates how the *Indigenatsrecht* related to the Junkers' maintenance of their status relative not only to their own past traditions but also to new and royal officials who emerge after 1723 in the Kingdom's affairs. The General Directory's impact upon the institutional structure of government in the Kingdom may have been gradual and limited. But Frederick William I hoped and intended, by overcoming the *Indigenatsrecht*, to change the personnel and thus indirectly enhance the degree of control which he could exert.

Government after 1723

Since the role of the General Directory remained limited throughout Frederick William I's reign, the appointment of administrative personnel and their loyalties were crucial. There is a separate clause within the Instruction for the General Directory which specifically pertains to the choice of administrators within the Hohenzollern territories. This provision was clear and unambiguous, and it aimed to break the dominance of natives over the King's government of their own province. When there was the need for a replacement of *Kommissariaten* and/or *Kammern* officials in the provinces, the following procedure was to be followed:

When a vacancy arises in East Prussia, the proposed replacement made to Us by the General Directory, shall be subjects of Cleves, the Mark, or Pomerania, but not Prussia....In a word, Our most gracious intention is that no person shall be suggested to Us for the filling of the provincial *Kammern* and provincial *Kommissariate* that was born to that province where the vacancy is again to be filled.³

What is interesting about the prescribed appointment procedure is that it was a direct though limited assault by the King upon the principle of the *Indigenatsrecht*. It was to apply to vacancies in the *Kommissariaten* and the *Kriegs und Domänenkammern*. As has been emphasised throughout this study, these positions were never a traditionally strong location of East Prussian natives, but were often filled by individuals who had been born outside the Kingdom. The original intention of the Instruction did not, nor was it intended, to refer to the *Regierung* or other traditional East Prussian agencies. This was intended as an unambiguous signal to the officials of the

³Translated from ABB, 3, pp 577-78. See Section 11.

Regierung and the other members of the native elite that he did not plan to overhaul these agencies or to interfere directly in appointments to them.

This provision happened to single-out the Kingdom first, but it applied to all the territories of the Hohenzollerns as was made clear by subsequent clauses in the Instruction. Furthermore, although this was an early signal that one of the provinces' most cherished traditional rights was to be undermined, it remained no more than an intention. The appearance on paper of who should or should not be appointed to particular positions, no matter how clearly and directly worded, was not a guarantee that this policy would be followed in practice or applied to the real power centres within East Prussia.

This instruction, of course, only applied when vacancies arose, and there was no challenge to the existing personnel. Therefore, its impact was both delayed and, limited. In general, vacancies only arose through death or acute infirmity and in rare instances, dismissal. There were occasional promotions which were drawn primarily from the ranks of the established elite.⁴ Thus, there were relatively few vacancies and/or movement within these bodies, and this ensured that structural and personnel changes came about very slowly.

Though this particular part of the Instruction did have an impact on appointment procedures in the Kingdom, it did so only for the agency directly subordinate to the General Directory, the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*. Although this was an important part of government, too much should not be made of the King's growing control over East Prussia. The traditional elites retained considerable influence and prestige, and long dominated the Kingdom's agencies of government. Frederick William I had

⁴See Chapter 5 for the period prior to 1723, and Chapters Six and Seven for appointments after that date.

to struggle against this bastion of traditional East Prussian opposition to Berlin's control in other ways. Principal among these was his ability to intervene directly in the appointment of lesser officials. This, as we shall see, was not a direct consequence of the establishment of the General Directory and produced limited results. His ability to appoint officials personally in areas other than the *Kammern* or provincial *Kommissariate* did not increase significantly in the years after 1724. This was the case particularly for appointments at the *Amthauptleute* level as well as for many of their subordinates, notably, the *Verwesern*. The nominal increase in actual appointments made by the King which will be seen was more due to Frederick William I's personal and day-to-day attention to the affairs of the Kingdom than to the impact of any Instruction or edicts, or to other reform measures. The General Directory was only one influence upon East Prussian administration during the 1720s. It may not have been the most decisive: here, the King's personal intervention was more potent than the new institution's authority.

One case in which this can be seen is also an example which shows the complex relationship between the native territorial elite and their Hohenzollern ruler. After the death of the *Generalfeld Marschal Burggraf und Graf zu Dohna* in February 1728, his position of *Amthauptmann* in Amt Mohrunen went unfilled for almost a year.⁵ This was not due to a delay on the King's part since all the candidates presented to the ruler were put forward by the *Regierung*. The King continued to expect nominations for such posts to be put forward by the East Prussians. Rather, as the *Regierung* frankly reported on 9 October 1728, so few people applied for the position that the *Regierung* had no acceptable candidate to nominate. To paraphrase

⁵Krollman, *Altpreußische Biographie*, vol. 1, pp. 140-141. *Burggraf und Graf Alexander zu Dohna* was born in Genf on 5 February 1661 and died in Königsberg on 25 February 1728.

its words, there were few appropriate candidates inside their circle of clients, contacts, and acquaintances.⁶

At first glance, this would appear to call into question the endurance of the *Indigenatsrecht*. Surely the East Prussians would have someone available to fill the position, especially since *Amthauptleute* positions were part of the Kingdom's traditional government, and often remained within one family? The Dohna family was one of the Kingdom's most dominant lineages and its members were to be found throughout the ranks of government both in Königsberg and Berlin. In fact, one of Frederick William I's closest advisors was a member of the Dohna family, Christoph Graf zu Dohna. From subsequent manuscript material, however, it appears that the *Regierung* continued to have considerable influence on these appointments, as will be demonstrated later in this chapter. In the end, Frederick William I appointed the next in line for this *Amthauptleute* position from his own short-list of potential candidates. However, the man chosen was a native-born Junker who was acceptable to the established elite and, in particular, to the *Regierung*. He was also a member of the Dohna family which was traditionally more loyal to the Hohenzollerns than many other East Prussian elite families.

Even though there is no formal mention of the chosen candidate until very late February 1729, the General Directory notified the *Regierung* about who was to pay the salary of the new official on 6 November 1728 — all consistent with the manner in which appointments were normally completed. Shortly thereafter, the *Regierung* reacted with some surprise. This was not only because the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* was given many details and considerable authority in the appointment procedure but also because the *Regierung* did not yet know who the successful candidate was

⁶GSStAPK, EM 96b, Nr. 5, fol. 47, 9 October 1728.

and therefore sought clarification. In other words, the *Regierung* was upset because an agency that had traditionally been less important but was now of enhanced status and under greater royal control, was being treated by the King as the more significant institution in practice. Although the *Regierung* may have given Frederick William I the right to make the appointment, they apparently did so in the confidence that it would be in accordance with custom and the *Indigenatsrecht*. Moreover, it was taken to be done according to age old traditions in the particular Amt in which the vacancy occurred.⁷ With the other institutions now becoming increasingly involved, there was an opportunity to appoint an official who may not have been a native East Prussian.

There are three aspects of this appointment which are important here. It does, at first glance, appear that the *Regierung* may have given up their right to appoint to a position traditionally consistent with the East Prussian constitution and in particular, the *Indigenatsrecht*. However, Captain Alexander Amylium *Burggraf und Graf zu Dohna* was the official selected with the same pay as other *Amthauptleute* and in accordance with the *Etat*.⁸ Second, it appears more than likely that the *Regierung* created the fiction of having no candidates to put forward for the position in order to allow Frederick William I to appoint the next Dohna family member. Since the Dohnas were native East Prussians, there was no break with the *Indigenatsrecht*. The *Regierung* certainly had no problems putting forward candidates for other positions in the territory at this point in Frederick William I's reign.

There was a final factor of importance and one which was more characteristic of Frederick William I's reign. The succession of one Dohna to

⁷Ibid., 48-51. Correspondence of 6 November 1728 through 28 February 1729.

⁸Ibid., fol. 52. Relation of 24 January 1729.

another Dohna family member for this *Amthauptmannschaft* is suggestive of older, that is, territorial and familial, administrative practices. This continuation of the traditional operation of government in the Kingdom, rather than the brave new administrative world he attempted to implement five years earlier in the General Directory, appears to have survived well after 1723. Frederick William I knew, for example, he could more often than not rely upon the Dohna, a provincial native elite. This example underlines the point about personnel being the key to administrative control after 1723. An additional issue, that of the supremacy within the territory of either the *Regierung* or the newly established and emerging authority of the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* remained to be resolved in early 1729.

The exact established procedure for Dohna's appointment appears to have been followed near the end of the long vacancy as the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* and the *Regierung* both jostled for supremacy. Each side claimed the other was delaying the procedure. Eventually, details about the candidate's salary and oath were finalised after he paid his customary fee to the *Rekrutenkasse*.⁹ Dohna does not appear to have been involved in a bidding war with another potential candidate and the available manuscript evidence reveals nothing out of the ordinary.¹⁰

Another obligation was the taking of an oath which promised of good service to the King. The swearing of such oaths by military and civilian servants of the Hohenzollern monarchy in East Prussia was not always carried out but appear to have been more often than not. Oaths were not

⁹*Ibid.*, fol. 48. Special Befehl, from *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* to *Regierung*, 6 November 1728. Once again it is important to remember that in addition to almost everyone receiving approval for an appointment from the Frederick William I, the *Rekrutenkasse* was at the king's private disposal, i. e., he determined when, where, and how it was spent. However, it is clear that the appointment was urged in Berlin and among the officials of the General Directory and *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* in the kingdom.

¹⁰See the previous footnotes which relates to Dohna for the precise locations of these manuscript materials.

only to the King. That administered by the *Regierung* in East Prussia reflected the fundamental convention that local territorial government was resolutely rooted in its regional and local traditions, which administrators swore to uphold. Throughout Frederick William I's reign, the King tried to change which officials administered the oaths and wanted 'his' officials to administer them. As far as the *Amthauptleute* were concerned, these always seem to be administered by the *Regierung* with other *Amthauptleute* perhaps acting as witnesses. The *Verwesern* often had their oaths administered by the *Regierung*, but not always. In a few instances there appears to be the administering of an oath by the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*. Such cases appear rarely and there is only one case where the evidence is ambiguous and relates to an individual under its direct authority. The swearing of an oath was widespread in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Brandenburg-Prussia. Oaths also appear to have been specific to individual posts. That is, their content set out the duties and expectations of the particular position. There was no general oath of allegiance which was taken by all administrators. Within East Prussia, however, there was a general emphasis on honest work, a promise not to accept bribes, and the requirement to further the cause of the Hohenzollern ruler.

The rare case of an oath administered by the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* was significant, however. It centred around the survey commission that emerged after the imposition of the *Generalthufenschoß*. A survey of land and its ownership had to be undertaken before this could be introduced. It was a progressive tax based on the extent and value of land, and it applied to the nobility as well as to other social groups in the countryside.¹¹ Two *Verwesern* were appointed in *Amt Sehesten* and their

¹¹For the wider context and background to this important tax, see Chapters 4, pp. 143-47 and 155-61 and Chapter 6, pp. 269 and 287. As noted in these previous chapters, the survey took years to complete.

appointment appears very much tied to this new tax and in particular to the survey, which they were asked to undertake. Although many of the oaths were left unchanged and continued to reflect the outlook of the East Prussian traditional rights, the one these men took appears to have been a drastic revision of a standard oath.¹² It essentially attempted to reinforce the fundamental premise that their loyalty and work was for the King in Berlin rather than for any East Prussian body or individual. Certainly the standard loyalty clauses to the King were the same but there were additional clauses that referred to their declaration to carry out support duties for the new tax. In addition, like almost all oaths of all ranks, the officials promised not to take gifts which were a likely source of additional wealth for the office holder as well as a matter of bribery and administrative corruption. As for the two officials in question, however, the manuscript material suggests that

¹²GStAPK, EM 130k, Nr. 31, fols. 2, 2 Rückseite, and 3. "Ich ... gelobe und schwere zu Gott dem allmächtigen, daß, nach dem Pr. königl. Magest. in Preußen, mein allergnädigsten König und Herr mich allergnädigst beordnet, bey der zu ein richtig des General Huben Schoses in dero Königreich Preußen angeordneten Commission zu seyn, Ich nach meinem besten Wißen und Gewißen der Güther Ihre ad und pertnentien wohl notizen, die wahre bonitast des Ackers, die eigentliche und warhafftige nicht aber imagirte und unfundirte Conservation derer Unterthanen vor Augen haben, so viel einer möglich auf die Vermehrung Pr. Königl. Magest. Contributions Reventüen sehen, alle Wir wißende und bey Wohnende Umstände und beschaffenheit derer Güther anzeigen, die Classification, nicht weniger aber die Taxation derer Huben ohne Ansehen der Persohn nach meinerem besten wißen und Gewißen machen, keinen aus Freund oder Freundschaft, noch aus abfuht Freund blut oder an verwandschaft, viel weniger außfurcht oder umb Geschencke (?) noch gebe, etwas thun wil(?), wodurch Pr. Königl. Magest. hohes Interesse könne wer absämet (?), oder der Contribuent ruiniert werden, sondern Ich wil vielmehr in allem anlegenheiten mich wie einem Treuen Vasallen eignet und gebühret aufführen, und auf alle wege, soweit(?) das königl. Interesse alß das aufnehmen der Contributenten besonderen helffen(?), alle unnöthige Ch. Camer(?) Retardaments um nöthige weitlauffig seiten verweyden, und alles Wir erschienliche beytrag, wo durch die Königl. Commission in Ihrer arbeit könne geholsten(?), und Pr. Konigl. Magest. Interesse besondert werden, so wahr p." The oath continues with a testimonial about who was present at his swearing-in: "Vorstehenden Eyd haben Wir endes unterschreibene in gegenwahrt des Königl. Preußischen Commissariats Presidenten und Wirklichen Kammerern des Herr Carl Heinrichs des beyl. kom. Reichs Erb Truchßes und Graffen zu Waldburg dan auch derer zur General Huben Commission verordneten Ihren(?) Commissarien alß herrn Majorn und kreiß Rath von Boddenbrok, Ihre Hoff und Commissariats Rath Werner, Ihrem Kammer Rätzthen Dröhten und Kahßdehnen(?), Herrn Kreigs commissary Adler, Herrn Oberland Schöpe Reinke, Herrn Burgermeister Liedtke und Herrn Schoßeinnehmer Hedn Prastegente des Herrn Hoff Raths Wernern Wirklich in dato abgeschworen solches haben wir hirduruch Attestirn wollen Sehisten. 26 Jan 1719. Hirsch. Stech. v. Gotzheim.

their role in the new tax was limited. In the event, they probably only participated in gathering of the survey information for their district. These appointments are the only ones of their kind. We know that the implementation of the *Generalhufenschoß* encountered stiff resistance and was never fully realised under Frederick William I, something which requires much fuller discussion.

The Beginnings of Legal Codification

East Prussia's traditional rights and privileges were deeply rooted in the native legal machinery and in the administration of justice within the Kingdom — as was the situation in all other Hohenzollern territories. Frederick William I's attempted reforms within this sphere were less effective and successful than other areas. Legal reform only began in earnest after 1740, and it was only formally completed after Frederick the Great's death with the so-called *Allgemeines Landrecht*, finally issued in 1794.¹³ In general, fundamental legal and administrative authority remained with the traditional native East Prussian elite throughout the reign of Frederick William I and into that of his son. Frederick William I began a process, which took two generations to reach fruition: the complexities of legal reform made it a slow-moving process everywhere in eighteenth-century Europe, and the Hohenzollern Monarchy was no exception. Legal codification implied the introduction of one uniform legal code for the whole monarchy which came about in 1794. This, in turn, implied a modern notion of sovereignty and a modern idea of the state. In this sense, legal codification went far in promoting the so-called *Gesamtstaat*.¹⁴

Frederick William I certainly laid some of the groundwork for what would eventually culminate with the *Allgemeines Landrecht* in 1794. An

¹³Hans Hattenhauer and Günther Bernert, editors, *Allgemeines Landrecht für die Preussischen Staaten von 1794*, Berlin: Luchterhand Verlag, 1996.

¹⁴For some useful comments on this process in an Austrian context, see Grete Klingenstein, "The meanings of 'Austria' and 'Austrian' in the eighteenth century," in *Royal and Republican Sovereignty in Early Modern Europe: Essays in memory of Ragnhild Hatton*, edited by Robert Oresko, G. C. Gibbs and H. M. Scott, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 423-478.

overview of this work in Chapter Four noted important patterns which were developing in the Kingdom before 1723 which began at the very beginning of his own reign.

The pinnacle of Brandenburg–Prussian legal codification, however, was the document of codified laws known as the *Allgemeines Landrecht*, finally issued only in 1794. This was an enormously complex project and underlines the slowness behind the reform impetus. In general, legal reform was a very slow process because of the complexities involved in drawing-up a revised and uniform code which would cover all the Hohenzollern territories, all with their own distinct law codes and legal systems. This codification covered the entire Hohenzollern state, including East Prussia. As significant as this might sound, the fact remains that the *Allgemeines Landrecht* essentially confirmed almost all of the traditional rights and privileges enjoyed by the various territorial elites. It “confirmed the corporate order” which helped to integrate the traditional elite into the Brandenburg–Prussian state and it enunciated this order for the first time.¹⁵ However, its significance did not stop there. The Hohenzollerns (and even Frederick the Great), as rulers of the emerging Brandenburg–Prussian state, openly recognised the traditional elites’ authority and their established privileges. Conventionally, Frederick the Great would be seen as more of a defender of the established social order than even his father. Dietrich Gerhard rightly argued that not only did the territorial nobilities become more integrated into the Brandenburg–Prussian state but the influence of these groups was legitimised as well as welcomed, since the provincial Estates had to approve the increased salaries and other costs that came with

¹⁵Gerhard, “Assemblies of Estates and the Corporate Order,” p. 45. See also Hattenhauer, *Allgemeines Landrecht für die Preußischen Staaten von 1794*, p. 541.

legal reform.¹⁶ Their influence on the actual drafting of the *Allgemeines Landrecht* was significant — indeed they contributed specific suggestions to the minister initially responsible for the reforms, Samuel von Cocceji. The *Allgemeines Landrecht* clearly confirmed the Junkers' dominance within society and the state.

This must be borne in mind when further consideration is given to Frederick William I's attempts to appoint other officials. As will be demonstrated, the King was never wholly unsuccessful or without authority in East Prussia where such appointments were concerned: contrary to what the above may lead one to anticipate. He was able to make appointments, some of them to important provincial posts, although the total number of these do not appear to rise significantly enough to conclude he was more successful than prior to the establishment of the General Directory. In fact, such successes as he achieved probably had more to do with the increased personal attention he paid to the Kingdom and to these matters, as will be seen.

One notable illustration of this was provided when *Herzog Friedrich Ludwig von Holstein-Beck* died in early March 1728. The *Regierung* asked the King on 8 March, the day after Holstein's death, whom Frederick William I would like to appoint as a replacement for the position of *Amthauptmann* in the East Prussian district of *Amt Brandenburg*.¹⁷ Holstein-Beck had had a long career in the Brandenburg-Prussian army, which had begun as long ago as 1671, and retained influence in various capacities over East Prussian military affairs until his death. He had been a very close advisor to the Great Elector but had a reduced role and more

¹⁶Gerhard, "Assemblies of Estates and the Corporate Order," p. 45.

¹⁷GStAPK, EM 17b, Nr. 6, fol. 2. 8 March 1728.

distant relationship with Frederick III/I.¹⁸ It appears that he was re-located to East Prussia against his will and afterward never returned to active military service.¹⁹ There are, however, indications that he may not have been popular amongst many members of the Kingdom's elite. In 1709, he was apparently critical of the authorities of the local East Prussian municipalities over how best to protect the province against the plague. Nevertheless, he served the Hohenzollerns' in various capacities for over fifty-seven years, and upheld the ruler's influence in Königsberg. His connection to the Hohenzollerns' was more than professional, as he was married to the *Herzogin* Louise Charlotte von Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, the niece of the *Kürfürstin* Dorothea von Brandenburg. This was obviously crucial for his relationship with the Hohenzollern family.

Frederick William I personally signed the order naming *Herzog* Peter August Friedrich Holstein(-Beck) *Amthauptmann* in Amt Brandenburg on 7 April 1728.²⁰ He was the son of the former *Amthauptmann*, *Herzog* Friedrich Ludwig Holstein. This order contained nothing unusual and set out the standard provision that Holstein was, for example, to defend the territorial integrity of the Kingdom and not allow the administration of justice to be damaged.²¹ As the son of Friedrich Ludwig Holstein and daughter of Louise Charlotte, Peter August also was personally well connected to the King. This connection had been strengthened by his own career. He married twice, both times to well established families. His first marriage

¹⁸Krollmann, *Altpreußische Biographie*, I, p. 286, on which the following discussion is based.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰GStAPK, EM 17b, Nr. 6, fol. 6.

²¹GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpr., I - Bestellsachen, Nr. 165, fol. 2; Krollman, *Altpreußische Biographie*, I, p. 286. Peter August Holstein was born December 7 1697 in Königsberg and died 25 February 1775 in Reval.

was to Princess Sophie of Hessen-Philippstal in 1728. After her death, he married again in 1742 to *Gräfin* Natalie Golowin. It was through his son by this last marriage, Karl Anton August, that Holstein was related to the *Herzöge* of Holstein-Glücksburg and the King of Denmark-Norway and future first King of modern Greece, Otto of Wittelsbach, in 1832.²²

Frederick William I rewarded his loyal officers. Not only was Holstein personally selected by the King for this appointment, but in a highly unusual move which underlines his special status, he relieved Holstein from the obligation to make the customary payment the *Rekrutenkasse*.²³ In addition, Holstein was to receive 500 talers yearly and paid in quarterly instalments of 125 talers.²⁴ Although Holstein's initial appointment went ahead smoothly and swiftly, it was to be January 1729 before he was actually confirmed in the position by the *Regierung*.²⁵ The reason for the delay is not clear. None of the surviving manuscript material suggests that there was a problem beyond the usual slow pace at which government worked, other than the possibility that the delay was caused because he was not to pay the customary contribution to the *Rekrutenkasse*.²⁶

Peter August Holstein's appointment is also important in that it shows how tied certain positions located in specific geographic locations

²²Ibid.

²³GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpr., I - Bestellungenachen, Nr. 165, fol. 8. 6 November 1728, the General Directory to the *Regierung*. Here the king noted "*nichts bezahlen, FW*" next to a section inquiring whether Holstein should be required to pay the "*Rekruten Gelder*."

²⁴GStAPK, EM 17b, Nr. 6, fol. 7. Draft document dated 3 April 1728.

²⁵Ibid., fol 9. 4 January 1729.

²⁶GStAPK, Gen. Dir, Ostpr., I, Nr. 165, fol. 8. Here the General Directory wrote to the king on 6 November 1728 enquiring what to do about the fact that they have not received Holstein's contribution. The implication was that such a payment was standard procedure for appointment, even for someone as highly ranked as Holstein. Frederick William I replies in the margin that he does not need to pay. The king's personal permission was the only authorisation acceptable for abatement of the *Rekrutenkasse* payment.

were to particular families at this time. Many historians consider such appointments to be a strict continuation of the practice of sinecure which was common one among military officers, of whom Holstein was one.²⁷ His father has been noted by one historian to have received the first such position.²⁸ The King was using administrative posts as a form of pension for elderly military officers. Frederick William I's increased use of such posts, not so much as sinecures, but rather because he had increased influence over these appointments for officers, left the *Regierung* with very little effective means to fill a vacant position. The King's ability to appoint to these posts led him to use them as a way of extending his own influence through the appointment of military men, who were seen as more reliable. Frederick William I did not overhaul the Kingdom's administrative structure and organisation. In fact, he did the opposite by attempting to increase his personal involvement in appointments carried out in the traditional way.²⁹ There was one final, curious dimension to Holstein's appointment. The widow of the former *Amthauptmann*, Friedrich Ludwig Holstein, was to continue to receive his salary through to the end of the year from the salary of Holstein.³⁰ At the bottom of the order instructing Holstein's appointment, there was the note stating the continuation of his salary which was to go to his predecessor's widow: who was in fact his mother. Not only did Frederick William I provide members of his own elite with positions

²⁷Joachim Krause, "Die kurfürstliche Verwaltung im Herzogtum Preussen am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts," Ph. D. Dissertation, Bonn: Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 1973, pp. 40ff.; Otto Büsch, *Militärsystem und Sozialleben im alten Preußen, 1713-1807*, p. 131; Juhr, "Die Verwaltung des Hauptamtes Brandenburg/ostpreussen von 1713-1751," p. 49.

²⁸Krause, "Die kurfürstliche Verwaltung im Herzogtum Preussen am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts," p. 40.

²⁹Juhr, "Die Verwaltung des Hauptamtes Brandenburg/ostpreussen von 1713-1751," p. 49.

³⁰GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpr, I - Bestellungen, Nr. 165, fol. 4, 1 April 1728.

with work, although with substantial support staff, he continued to pay the heirs of certain of them after their death. The King's increased intervention during in the later 1720s was equally as visible in the appointment of lesser officials, which will now be examined.

The Selection of Territorial Officials after 1723

The practices which were established at the higher levels of East Prussian government appear also to have been characteristic of its lower levels. Royal influence, predominant within bodies under Berlin's direct control, increased in the choice of officials within East Prussian territorial government. There is no clear evidence that Frederick William I's influence in the selection of lesser officials also increased, though this seems likely. The *Regierung* did not carry out the appointment in full and, indeed, had recognised that the King had a part to play in the selection. The *Regierung*, however, did carry out the administration involved in appointments including any determination of qualifications, notifications, and so forth.³¹

The *Regierung* continued to appoint salaried officials during Frederick William I's final decade. This was particularly true for the subordinate positions in local and provincial government. For example, in *Amt Rastenburg*, when the sitting *Adelichegerichtschreiber* Theodore Fröhlich died in 1732, the *Regierung* immediately addressed minister Cocceji ^{and} proposed that their suggested replacement would pay 100 Rt. into the *Rekrutenkasse*.³² Their choice was Gottfried Heiligendörfer who at that time was the *Adelichegerichtschreiber* in Barten which was a nearby *Amt* lying

³¹See GStAPK, EM 96b, Nr. 13. These documents contain numerous cases of appointments for *Amt Mohrungen* and *Liebstadt* and document well how the the lower officials were appointed and the extent to which the *Regierung* and Frederick William I were involved.

³²GStAPK, EM 119b, Nr. 59, 12 November 1732, fols. 2-12. Fröhlich died on the evening of 10 November 1732, having been ill for some time. The *Regierung* wrote to Berlin again on 15 November 1732 and this time to the king on 15 November 1732. They requested, as before, that Gottfried Heiligendörfer replace the deceased Fröhlich at the position of *Adelichegerichtschreiber*.

approximately 25 miles north of Rastenburg. Though he retained the same position, Heiligendörfer's move was in other respects a promotion. Rastenburg was the more important *Amt* in that region of East Prussia. Frederick William I signed the order for Heiligendörfer's appointment under the usual conditions that he was only to be confirmed after he paid into the *Rekrutenkasse* and took the customary oath.³³

This appointment demonstrates that from start to finish the *Regierung* was involved in the appointment process. The fact that it moved so swiftly to nominate a candidate who was already acceptable to Frederick William I, due to past service, allowed the *Regierung* to take the initiative. The King, therefore, had a choice when presented with their candidate. If he did not support their choice, he risked increased resistance from the *Regierung*. The King had to be selective in the administrative battles he fought. The *Regierung's* involvement throughout the appointment process also extended to the formal appointment procedures: it was to ensure that the candidate paid his *Rekrutenkasse* obligation as well as satisfying any applicable tests and taking any necessary oaths. Ultimately, the King's approval was necessary and, to this extent, he retained their final choice. Frederick William I, in this case, appeared to have been mostly concerned with the *Rekrutenkasse* payment. The *Regierung* oversaw this appointment throughout.

On the other hand, the fact that Frederick William I was involved at all in such a relatively low level appointment showed his interest in East Prussia and the extent of royal involvement in the detailed work of government. Although the King recognised the role of the *Regierung*, he was more than a distant spectator. From the perspective of Berlin, he might have had to allow the *Regierung* its role in this selection. Frederick William I was

³³GStAPK, EM 119b, Nr. 59, 5 December 1732, fol. 9.

at least able to ensure that this appointment and in a wider sense, the authority of the *Regierung*, came at the price of enforcing payments to the *Rekrutenkasse*. In addition, the King and *Regierung* never made reference to the salary for Heiligendörfer and he presumably received none.³⁴

Therefore, he was reliant upon fees that came with his administrative appointment, something that will subsequently be discussed.

By the end of Frederick William I's reign, the East Prussian *Regierung* clearly began to acknowledge and concede to the King's increased involvement in the selection of personnel. It was almost as if the *Regierung* knew they would have their candidate for a post accepted by the King if they could nominate a plausible candidate quickly and, that the candidate had the financial ability to pay a substantial sum to the *Rekrutenkasse*. Also, there was a relatively small number of candidates for lower posts from which to choose and, for such a selection to be made from distant Berlin would have been even more difficult. Therefore, a plausible and swift nomination was more likely to succeed, provided the requisite payment could be made.

Although Frederick William I did not noticeably increase the number of officials who advanced to the higher posts in East Prussia's established government, he did exert a moderate degree of influence on who would move up through the administrative ranks.³⁵ The King personally appointed lower officials who, if they subsequently moved to a new position, would carry with them a direct link with the ruler, who had been

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵The number of institutions that were introduced throughout his reign, however, did increase the number of officials operating in the territory. These included such institutions as the administration for the *General Domänenpächter*, certain military tax agencies, as well as the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* officials. These institutions left the core administrative control of the kingdom under the authority of the *Regierung* and its sub-authorities.

responsible for their appointment. This is not to suggest that Frederick William I set out deliberately to establish a pool of lower ranking officials whose principal loyalty was to him. By the late 1720s, however, this was the result of growing royal involvement in selection procedures. His increasing personal involvement was therefore important in shaping the careers of officials and, over time, the contours of the administration as a whole.

The role of the *Verweser* was of critical importance in East Prussia. He was the individual who, under normal circumstances, saw through the day-to-day administrative duties under the responsibility of the *Amthauptmann* under whom he served. The *Amthauptleute* came from the nobility and possessed a different social, political and administrative prestige. The ultimate responsibility for actual work was their^s alone as will be demonstrated shortly. In addition, not all *Amthauptleute* had the advantage of having a *Verweser*, and the position of such officials will be considered shortly. The *Verweser* were clearly important and carried out many of the functions under the *Amthauptleute*. One must remember, however, that the *Verweser* only carried out the routine day-to-day work for the *Amthauptleute*. Such work was clearly important for the operation of government but it did not bring with it nor could it match the social and political status of the *Amthauptleute*. In fact, with the growing number of appointments determined by Frederick William I, there should be a measurable increase in the number of *Verweser* appointments in which the King was personally involved, as was the case with the *Amthauptleute*.

To some extent this was true and will be shown subsequently with respect to the developed appointment process. The fact remains, however, that far from all *Amthauptleute* were fortunate enough to have the services of an appointed *Verweser*. The General Directory issued an *Immediatbericht* soon after its establishment concerning this matter. Of the twenty-seven *Amthauptleute* in East Prussia in November 1722, only eight — less than one

third — were provided with a *Verweser* by Frederick William I on the administrative establishment, as is apparent from Appendix E.³⁶ The remaining nineteen either had to pay for a *Verweser* privately or carry out their official duties themselves. If one examines the geographical spread of the eight *Verwesern*, one will notice that they are spread more or less evenly throughout the Kingdom and every region of East Prussia had at least one *Verweser* in it, whether he was paid by Frederick William I or not.

These eight given a *Verweser* were Major *Graf* von Lehndorff (Memel), *Kommissariatspräsident* von Lesgewang (Ragnit), *Generalmajor Prinz* von Holstein (Labiau and Neuhausen), *Capitän Graf* von Finckenstein (Barten), *Generallieutenant Graf* von Dönhoff (Oletzko), *Obrister* von Marwitz (Lyck), *Obrister Graf* von Dohna (Neidenburg and Soldau), *Generalfeldmarschall Graf* zu Dohna (Mohrungen and Liebstadt). All of these individuals were noblemen and either in military administration or holders of military rank; six out of the eight also held higher titles of nobility. Furthermore, they and their families had close personal ties to the Hohenzollern rulers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as previous chapters have demonstrated.

The King noted his complete support for the appointment, or retention in post, of retired military officers to the position of *Amthauptmann* when he noted in the *Randverfügung* that those from a military background were to get a *Verweser* while non-officers “should administer themselves or pay an *Verweser* from their *Amthauptmann* salary.”³⁷ Not all *Amthauptleute* who were army officers, however, received *Verwesern*. Those *Verwesern* who were approved by the king were given a salary of 80 talers per year, a fact

³⁶Adapted from ABB, 4:1, pp. 6-8. *Immediatbericht des General-Directoriums*, Berlin, 28 January 1723.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 7.

which was confirmed in the *Immediatbericht* of 28 January 1723 mentioned above. There are no definitive accounts in the manuscript material about how many *Amthauptleute* who were not officers actually hired private *Verwesern*. A study of signatures upon correspondence from the manuscript material would suggest that none did, though this is far from definitive evidence. These *Amthauptleute* signed correspondence, even if an assistant would have likely drafted the documents. In addition — and as is well known — the King strongly supported the appointment of former officers. Nonetheless, he was also selective within this group. In other words, military experience was not enough in itself. One must have distinguished themselves in a way for the King to take notice of their service. Many were still actively serving in this period.

The fact of being an army officer did not in itself entitle an *Amthauptmann* to the services of a *Verweser*. Seven *Amthauptleute* held military titles as high as *Generalfeldmarschall* and yet were not given an *Verweser*.³⁸ As one can see from Appendix E, holding a military rank did not necessarily mean the King designated all military officers in the position of *Amthauptmann* to receive a *Verweser*. In fact, Frederick William I did not designate the following: *Obrister Graf von Lehndorff* (Insterburg), *Brigadier von Canitz* (Angerburg), *Capitän Graf von Finckenstein* (Johannisburg), *Obristlieutenant von Gaudecker* (Ortelsburg), *Generalmajor von der Gröben* (Marienwerder and Riesenburg), *General von der Infanterie Graf zu Dohna* (Pr. Holland), and *Generalfeldmarschall Prinz von Holstein* (Preußisch-Eylau and Bartenstein). Incidentally, the size of the districts varied. The status of an *Amt* appears to have been based less on size with rather more importance placed upon its potential for productivity and profit as well as its geographical location.

³⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

The families of Canitz, Dohna, Dönhoff, Finckenstein, Gröben, and Holstein, were all among some of the most influential noble families in the Kingdom and provided high-ranking military officers who were also an elite group of *Amthauptleute* at the time. In fact, few other noble families held as much authority in East Prussia. Their influence has not been as widely known but they were perhaps equal in status to the families of Creutzen, Tettau, Waldburg, and Wallenrodt.³⁹

Not all of these family members were given the assistance of a *Verweser* even though they came from one of these families and held a military title. The Dohna family, for example, exactly illustrates this point. It embodied a tradition of service to the ruling family extending back over generations and, as with other important lineages, its members were the ones who were rewarded in such cases.⁴⁰ The other members who were not appointed to be an *Amthauptmann*, or who were but did not receive an *Verweser*, appear to be more independent of Frederick William I and not as popular as the other family members.

Nevertheless, it appears that both the *Amthauptleute* and the *Verwesern* were increasingly retired officers as Frederick William I's reign progressed. There was a gradual but discernible trend towards the appointment of more retired officers. One can see more and more leading officers retiring with an *Amthauptleute* or *Verweser* administrative title even though their appointment came at the request of the *Regierung* and not as a result of the direct influence of the King. Unfortunately, the manuscript material which is currently available does not allow further examination of this aspect during this reign.

³⁹See also Rosenberg, *Bureaucracy, Aristocracy and Autocracy*, p. 53. Rosenberg discusses some of these families.

⁴⁰Not all individuals with the name Dohna were of the family wielding such influence within the kingdom or with the king.

The King, however, was not responsible for every *Amthauptmann* or *Verweser* appointment in the Kingdom, whether permanent or temporary. In *Amt Rastenburg*, for example, the *Regierung* allowed an *Amthauptmann* to delegate a “temporary deputy” during an absence. On 20 July 1725, the *Amthauptmann* in Rastenburg, *Graf von Schlieben*, wrote to the *Regierung* asking if he might have a temporary official take his place while he travelled to Holland.⁴¹ Von Schlieben had received the essential authorisation to travel from the King two weeks earlier on 6 July: at this period, noblemen required royal permission to leave Hohenzollern territory. The *Regierung* responded to von Schlieben six days later on 26 July. Although Frederick William I’s permission must have implied the appointment of a deputy, which the *Regierung* were simply putting into effect, the temporary appointment would potentially remain in active service for several months of the year. In the correspondence of 20 July, the *Regierung* cited Frederick William I’s permission to travel and, most notably, the implicit royal intention that Schlieben himself may deputise someone to take his place. Although there is no confirmation in the manuscript material of which individual was confirmed by Schlieben, there is a mention at one point that Lieutenant Colonel von Hohnsdorff was selected.⁴²

In the end and without any dispute, *Amthauptmann* Schlieben was permitted by the *Regierung* to have von Hohnsdorff as his deputised *Amthauptmann*. Such acts of deputation were rare. Formal permission came from the *Regierung*; although they must have told Frederick William I after the selection, it did not ask the King before making its decision for Schlieben, believing his permission had been given. The likely period of absence for

⁴¹GStAPK, EM 119b, Nr. 25, fols. 1-2.

⁴²Ibid, fol. 1. Only in the correspondence’s customary summary description noted by the *Regierung* is there reference to von Hohnsdorff.

Schlieben is important but difficult to determine precisely. His journey certainly took him to Berlin but it also appears that he planned and, crucially, had approval from Frederick William I to travel to Holland after his visit to the Brandenburg capital. Therefore, it was likely his trip occupied a period of months rather than days or even weeks.

By 1730, fewer appointments for the positions of *Amthauptleute* and *Verweser* were being made by the *Regierung* than in previous decades.⁴³ The cases described above were those which best demonstrate how Frederick William I used his personal influence on an increasing basis and the consequently reduced role of the authorities in Königsberg. The *Regierung* no doubt continued to fill these positions but its involvement had decreased since the beginning of Frederick William I's reign. This decline was particularly marked after 1730. The requests to Frederick William I to appoint some *Ämter* became routine by the end of his reign.⁴⁴ By 1740, the *Regierung* was unable to secure all the appointments they desired, but they did not stop contesting such decisions.⁴⁵

Although the *Regierung* always retained some influence, and rather less authority, its role was greatly reduced during the 1730s in large part due to increasing royal control over the appointment process. In the end the King was better able than any previous Hohenzollern ruler to fill many positions in East Prussian government with his own nominees.⁴⁶ Frederick William I's ability to appoint officials in the Kingdom was never complete. The change was not that the selection of candidates shifted from being a

⁴³Evidenced through a comparison of appointments made during Frederick William I's reign. See Appendix D, p. 355 and Appendix E, p. 376.

⁴⁴See, for example, GSTAPK, EM 126b, Nr. 2, 8 June 1739. In addition, see above and specifically those appointments relating to Amt Brandenburg.

⁴⁵In addition to those detailed here, see also, GSTAPK, EM 126b, Nr. 5.

⁴⁶See Appendix D, p. 355 and Appendix E, p. 376.

decision primarily made by the *Regierung* to one made by the King, but rather in the degree of influence each exerted on the choice of candidates. The growth of royal authority thus reduced but did not remove that of the *Regierung*. Often, the King simply approved the candidates the *Regierung* suggested and Frederick William I even asked for a name on occasions, as has been demonstrated, both before and after 1723.

In addition, many of those officials in the critical support positions to the *Amthauptleute* and *Verweser*, if not they themselves, were the sons or other close relatives of the office holder. Sons following fathers, as discussed in the previous chapter, was a practice that continued after 1723 and indeed throughout Frederick William I's reign.⁴⁷ In one particularly detailed case from August 1727, the current *Adelichegerichtschreiber* in Lyck, Andreas Mansvetus, wrote to the *Regierung* requesting that his son succeed him in his post at his death. At this time, he was sixty-two years old and had been *Adelichegerichtschreiber* for twenty years (since 1707). He was concurrently occupying the position of *Amtschreiber* (also in Lyck), a position he had held for twenty-four years (since 1703).⁴⁸ His son, Ludvich Mansvetus, had studied philosophy at Königsberg University for three years.⁴⁹ In addition, he had also studied *juridica* for three years under Professor Jason(?) Adam Gregorvig.⁵⁰ He was clearly a well-qualified candidate. This also shows the relatively high standard for such a relatively

⁴⁷For example, see, GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 18h, 30 August 1727.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 28 September 1727, Beylage A.

⁴⁹Dorwart, however, notes that the University of Königsberg was in a "poor" condition during the reign of the Great Elector. See, for example, Reinhold August Dorwart, *The Prussian Welfare State before 1740*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971, p. 205. Nonetheless, the university survived when others did not and went on to produce Emanuel Kant, among others, in the eighteenth century.

⁵⁰GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 18h, 28 September 1727, Beylage A. Cited as "Doctor Gregorovio Frequentiret".

low administrative position which was potentially the first step towards the higher reaches of the East Prussian government. One should also remember that with such poor prospects for a well-rewarded career, attending the university in Königsberg was a popular option.

Andreas Mansvetus also suggested he would pay 40 Reichtalers to the King's *Rekrutenkasse* and would like the salary of 80 Reichtalers annually to continue for his son. The correspondence was extensive and detailed and involved many individuals, some at the highest levels of the *Regierung* and central Hohenzollern administration, notably the future legal reformer Samuel von Cocceji. In all the discussions which took place over detailed points of the request, the propriety or otherwise of what might seem nepotism to later observers was never discussed. This was simply the most efficient and logical method at the time.

The correspondence produced by this case also sheds light on the operation of lower level government during the later 1720s. After the initial request by Mansvetus, wide-ranging discussions took place within the administration in both Königsberg and Berlin. The *Regierung*, who received the initial request, passed it on to Cocceji. Mansvetus's request suggested he would pay the *Rekrutenkasse* fee and as a result this appears to have required the approval of finance officials in Berlin who received a copy. *Finanz Rat* von Marschall⁵¹ and the *Collegi* officials around the King determined that 150 talers should be paid into the *Rekrutenkasse* for the appointment to move forward. This was a very high figure, far above the standard of a fraction (often a half) or even equivalent of their first year salary, in this particular case 80 talers. Mansvetus might have been expected to live for some years and this might have influenced the high level of payment into the *Rekrutenkasse* although no explanation is given in the manuscript material.

⁵¹Ibid., note of 7 September 1727 stated, "Finantz Rath von Marchal."

The question of the amount to be paid into the *Rekrutenkasse* was not the end of the discussion, however. The *Regierung* asked *Hofrat Advocatum Fisci* Warthen and *Mandatarium Fisci* Rat Bekhern to examine Mansvetus's son in his knowledge of administrative and legal measures. This was to supplement Wilhelm Gottfried von Tettau and Professor Gregorvig's recommendations for him. These were in support of his competence at University and his study of law and it appears the *Regierung* wanted a *Adelichegerichtschreiber* competency exam as well.⁵²

In the end, it appears the son was indeed qualified for the job. The request for the position was a curious mix of the father's desire for his son to succeed him and to pay the required amount to the *Rekrutenkasse* as well as submit his son to a rigorous examination of his competence. This, as is seen throughout many other parts of Europe in this period, was also the case in the local and remote areas of the Brandenburg-Prussian Kingdom. This case does support the proposition that qualifications were of importance but nothing to suggest that examination and references, together with selection by merit, was new. The East Prussian *Regierung* was the body who requested the examination and oversaw it, although it was not common practice.⁵³

There is little doubt that there were clearly defined methods of appointment but the consequent decisions were reached in a more varied way. The fee was fixed for payment to the *Rekrutenkasse*, and this appears to be strictly observed by both the highest officials in Königsberg and those in Berlin. Even the East Prussian *Regierung* did not question this policy. In addition, the Mansvetus case did not involve the King directly in any

⁵²Ibid., 26 May 1727. The status determined by the examiners was "causae" and "Beschied."

⁵³Ibid.

correspondence and this, as has been demonstrated, was rather unusual, since Frederick William I was personally involved in most appointments.

Salaries for both the *Amthauptleute* and *Verweser* were proposed as part of a larger budget by the *Regierung* and adjusted by the King, with changes often being made in his own hand. Frederick William I was involved personally in this area of government, which was part of his unending search for economies and his renowned frugality. As early as 1714, he substantially reduced salaries on budgets with his own hand and made them equal for all district captains or their administrators.⁵⁴ In this example which occurred early in his reign, he noted that he was to be sent a revised copy for review. Clearly the King was attempting to implement a procedure which he would supervise and hopefully make his administration more systematic. Essentially, the King set the salaries for District Captains at 500 talers per year. This was the standard salary, and it remained the same until the last decade of his reign. Not surprisingly, however, relatively few documents exist which are similar for later years: they were unnecessary if the salary was not being changed. Similar documents prescribing the salary level exist for other officials in the Kingdom, notably for the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* in later years.⁵⁵ It appears clear that, once the King set the salary, it was not altered. He only adjusted the salaries of other positions. This would also suggest that, although he may not have had complete authority over the candidate for the *Amthauptleute* or *Verwesen* positions, as has been seen, he apparently did have the final say where salary levels were concerned. One may notice that the discussion here has focused on who was appointed and whether or not they received a salary, rather than the level of that salary. There was no

⁵⁴GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpr., I, Nr. 157.

⁵⁵GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpr., II-Materien, Nr. 1849; ABB, 4:1, p. 637.

discussion about receiving a higher salary but rather, whether one was received at all. For a King to be involved in, far less make personal decisions about, such relatively minor matters was extremely unusual in this period. This makes the nature of Frederick William I's rule all that more extraordinary. The personal nature of his kingship comes through very strongly in such examples.

Frederick William I was able to utilise the property under his direct control, above all the royal domain lands, in East Prussia, as well as minor assets. The most interesting of these included the *Kanzler Wohnung*, which was the house used by the *Kammer* President in East Prussia. In addition, the King employed the more mundane but crucial tactic of limiting office materials and firewood, and even the number of draft horses for a particular project, both to exert control over East Prussian officials and to save money: frugality was a royal preoccupation. Frederick William I also withheld basic necessities from East Prussian administrators. Writing materials, firewood, and horses are only three examples. Throughout his reign, the King tightly regulated the amount of firewood and writing materials and draft horses which could be supplied to officials in the Kingdom.⁵⁶

In the East Prussian district of Schaaken, the *Landvogt* Bredow had a miserable winter in 1724/25 due to the lack of firewood for his office heating during a particularly cold winter in that region.⁵⁷ East Prussian winters, in general, were harsh. Bredow wrote to the *Regierung* in November 1724 stating that the current allowance (which in any case he apparently had not

⁵⁶See, in relation to *Schreibmaterial*, GStAPK, EM 126b, Nr. 5, EM 137b, Nr. 62, 29 October 1726, and EM 137b, Nr. 63. For documents relating to firewood, see, GStAPK, OF 14701, 23 January 1723, GStAPK, EM 126b, Nr. 5, GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpr., I, Nr. 157 (covers a similar incident as described above in year 1717). For an incident early in his reign noting his marginalia on issuing draft horses for a minor building project in the kingdom see GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpr., I, Nr. 157.

⁵⁷GStAPK, EM 126b, Nr. 5.

yet received) would be insufficient to get him through the winter months. The *Regierung*, in turn, notified the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* who responded with a brief statement that the amount of firewood was fixed. This matter dragged into the typically cold months of January and February of 1725 without a satisfactory resolution for Bredow. In fact, the matter becomes more alarming when we learn that he had gone some months without any firewood whatsoever for heating. The market where he was instructed to buy his allotment had been sold-out since 5 or 6 December 1724. What this clearly shows is that Frederick William I's strict regulations were established for even the most routine, day-to-day work of local government. Moreover, the King was determined to economise wherever possible — even if it meant pursuing frugality over firewood and writing materials! His success in these types of regulations is striking — particularly when one remembers that there was a notable native timber trade in East Prussia.

This case also reveals the involvement of the *Regierung* in such matters. Their initial correspondence contained copies of Bredow's request as well as a brief note explaining the situation in summary form. As the months passed, however, the *Regierung* became ever more involved on behalf of Bredow. By the end of the run of correspondence in the spring of 1725, it was writing significantly more to the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* and emphasising what it believed to be essential action — namely, increasing the allotment and ensuring it was provided. The *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*, for their part, never wavered from their typically brief statements which noted that Bredow's allotment would not change and there was no mistake.⁵⁸ It should be noted, however, that once they learned of his complete lack of firewood, they did requisition the supply of part at least of his allowance.

⁵⁸Ibid.

Unfortunately, the run of relevant correspondence ends in the spring of 1725 and we are unable to establish the final outcome although we do know Bredow made it through the winter.

Regulations such as the above were not exclusive to East Prussia and appear to be characteristic of Frederick William I's actions throughout the Hohenzollern territories, as well as in the central administrative agencies. In a similar episode, officials in the administrative auditors' office (*Oberrechnkammer*), a Berlin central financial agency, requested additional firewood to be allocated so they would not have to borrow against the following year's allotment in order to fuel their five heating ovens in their offices. Frederick William I responded that rather than burn more wood, the officials should and must get along with what firewood they were allocated and "should make gentle fires."⁵⁹ Frederick William I appears to have taken the same interest in administrative minutiae at both the central and local levels.

Finally, documentary evidence survives which reveals that the *Regierung* resisted some of these impositions by the King. The manuscript material shows that the *Regierung* was responsible for the *Kanzler* house, while the *Kanzler* was not required to pay compensation for it throughout the later part of Frederick III/I's reign.⁶⁰ Reference first was made to this responsibility on part of the *Regierung* on 31 July 1710 while it appeared to be an on-going custom not to charge the *Kammer* President rent.

These practices appear to have been continued through the early years of Frederick William I's reign. However, a serious challenge to this practice, inaugurating a decade-long debate, arose in April 1721. The current *Kammer* President, von Münchow, had been given the house

⁵⁹ABB, 4:2, p. 440, *Immediatbericht des General-Directoriums*, 26 February 1729.

⁶⁰GStAPK, EM 121b, Nr. 130.

outright as a permanent gift by order of Frederick William I in October 1718.⁶¹ This royal generosity produced a debate which touched not only the root of East Prussian foundations but more significantly, fundamental Hohenzollern principles.

It was not until more than two years after the King gave this gift to von Münchow that Rauske, Tettau, Ostau, Wallenrodt, Waldburg, all as members of the *Regierung*, wrote to the King with their grievance in May 1721.⁶² They did not understand how Frederick William I could have given away the house as a gift when, according to his famous Patent of 13 August 1713, the King declared all domains and so forth to be inalienable. The *Regierung* was testing one of the first and most important decisions Frederick William I made during his reign: the inalienability of the Hohenzollern possessions.

This was a debate which centred around one of the first actions Frederick William I had taken after ascending the throne in 1713. He attempted to ensure the long-term survival of Brandenburg-Prussia by his declaration that all royal lands were indivisible and inalienable. This had the symbolic effect of preventing royal Hohenzollern property from being sold or given away by the Hohenzollerns to Junkers, for example, and also by being taken unofficially by the nobility. Land, however, continued to be leased. In short, this Patent was meant to keep the Brandenburg-Prussian physical state together and not left to the disposal of the Hohenzollerns or other individuals at a particular moment.

As noted earlier, this Patent provided a strong basis for the survey of East Prussia for the purpose of the Generalhufenschoß, the tax on the nobility which was proportional to the size and quality of land.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, fol. 16. 26 October 1718.

⁶²*Ibid.*, 27 May 1721.

Approximately one-third of the land, it was determined by the survey, was found to be inappropriately held by the East Prussian nobility, who had annexed portions of the royal domains over the years. This was due to a number of factors, but the lack of supervision or enforcement, and in particular, inaccurate record keeping were the primary reasons that allowed the East Prussian Junkers to appropriate land that did not belong to them.

This Patent was an important theoretical statement of principle for the state of Brandenburg-Prussia, but it was not always followed in practice. The response to the *Regierung's* report came in the form of a special royal order. The order was brief and upheld the King's gift on the grounds that the house was *inter bona Domaniaia*.⁶³ It was not until February of 1722 that the *Regierung* responded. The *Regierung* argued that the King acted against the 1713 Patent and could not "dispose" of the house and it should be considered like all other domain property.⁶⁴ Frederick William I repeated his previous order after which the *Regierung* appears to have also acknowledged the decision's validity.⁶⁵ The King recognised the case presented by the *Regierung*, but was determined to continue with his original intention for the house in question. The *Regierung* presented a simple but powerful argument and Frederick William I appears to have infringed his own Patent of 1713.

It was quite common for nobles in the East Prussian administration to receive additional salaries or other forms of income. The nobility as a group dominated the ranks of the officer corps as well as the higher levels of local and regional administration. Being from the ranks of the nobility, then, was another characteristic that by and large made-up the corporate group of traditional elites. The combination of these factors entitled these men to

⁶³*Ibid.*, 30 May 1721.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 10 February 1722.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 20 October 1723 through 23 May 1724.

opportunities which enabled them to more than a single source for income.

These combination of factors will be examined in the next section.

The East Prussian Junker as Military Commander

The dominance of the Kingdom's nobility over its government has been a central theme in this study. Yet there was another dimension to the relationship between the East Prussian elite and the emerging Hohenzollern state: the royal army, which expanded notably during Frederick William I's reign, doubling in size from around 40,000 at the King's accession to over 80,000 by the time of his death. The enlarged force was almost entirely officered by the nobility, and East Prussia's Junkers found careers and income serving in Brandenburg-Prussia's military forces.

The Kingdom's elite came to benefit from this link, which furthered the nobility's integration into the Hohenzollern state. One important source of income other than any salary enjoyed was the profits associated with one's military position. Otto Büsch and Fritz Redlich have written on aspects of this topic. While Redlich concentrates on the period surrounding the Thirty Years' War (1618-48), Büsch examines the Brandenburg-Prussian Junkers primarily during and after Frederick William I's reign.⁶⁶ Büsch's conclusions will be the focus of this section, although a few words about Redlich's findings are necessary first.⁶⁷ Redlich has illuminated the various means by which officers received income from their military position in the early modern period, during the heyday of the military enterpriser. He has

⁶⁶Fritz Redlich, The German Military Enterpriser and his Work Force: A Study in European Economic and Social History, 2 vols., *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* Beihefte 47 and 48, Wiesbaden, 1964 and 1965. See especially vol. 2; Otto Büsch, Militärsystem und Sozialleben im alten Preussen, 1713-1807.

⁶⁷Although Büsch is mainly focused on the territory of Brandenburg, he does point out important details and figures for the entire Brandenburg-Prussian state which are used here. These are used in conjunction with examples from East Prussia.

studied the military officer as an entrepreneur and businessman in so-called *Kompagniewirtschaft*. This was an important element in the developing armies of the Holy Roman Empire as well as for East Prussia which lay outside direct Imperial authority. Although Redlich's main subject, private military contracting, was at an end by 1648, remnants of this system persisted within Brandenburg-Prussia's army until the later eighteenth century. This was especially so in the way officers remained financially responsible for their regiments, from which they derived considerable profit. Junkers benefited from this *Kompagniewirtschaft* by which they acted both as colonels and proprietors of their regiments.

Redlich has explained the origins of some important developments which become important factors during Frederick William I's reign. The most important form of revenue was company ownership (*Kompagniewirtschaft*). Here, company refers to its military definition of a corps of troops. One simple example of how this worked was when the lower ranks of the company had to pay the captain a portion of their earnings, which would increase significantly upon promotion; it might, for example, amount to several month's salary.⁶⁸ There were also more traditional payments made by the lower ranks to officers above the rank of Captain which supplemented their other income and wages, such as the mandatory "New Year" fees. Here a payment was due at the start of each year.⁶⁹ It was to be used for wages and the company commander was supposed to distribute it.

From sources such as these, the officer also had to pay out for certain necessities, for example, uniforms, food, and so forth, for troops under his

⁶⁸Redlich, *The German Military Enterpriser*, vol. 2, pp. 27-66. See, in particular pages 29 and 55.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, vol. 2., p. 29.

command. These basic necessities for his soldiers were often met and what was left over was considered profit and an addition to any basic salary the officer may have received. Therefore, the colonel became proprietor of the regiment.

Common soldiers became a commodity. Not only were men coerced into military service against their will but it was also common for "captains, or higher officers in their capacity as company commanders, [to discharge] men for money, [to sell] them to other companies or regiments for money, [to exchange] them with other troops, or [to give] them away as a matter of courtesy."⁷⁰ Frederick III/I forbade this practice, but his efforts were unsuccessful and it appears to have continued throughout Frederick William I's reign and into Frederick the Great's, as there were edicts issued against this practice in 1743 and 1748.⁷¹ It should be noted, however, that the development of cantonal recruitment significantly reduced its incidence under Frederick William I, especially after the crucial cantonal reforms of 1733.

The regiments, in many cases, were considered private property and could be transferred by purchase. The extent to which this occurred in East Prussia is unclear. Clearly such sales did take place. *Graf* Alexander von Dohna (1661-1728) bought the Brandenburg regiment for 2,000 talers at a time when he was its regimental commander.⁷² The price of this regiment underlines just how much was expected of officials who paid in to the *Rekrutenkasse* as discussed earlier in this chapter. It was sold to him by Prince Ferdinand of Kurland (1655-1737) who originally had it bequeathed to

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 48.

⁷¹Ibid.; Curt Jany, *Geschichte der Preußischen Armee*, vol. 2, pp. 77, 240. Jany quotes several of the orders.

⁷²Redlich, *The German Military Enterpriser*, vol. 2, p. 50.

him by his brother Prince Alexander who was killed in battle.⁷³ In another case, Friedrich Wilhelm von Grumbkow (1678-1731), who was the son of Joachim Ernst, bought a regiment from Colonel Friedrich von Sydow for six thousand talers in 1704.⁷⁴ A few years later, in 1709, Grumbkow would become a favourite of Frederick William I at the start of the plague crisis in East Prussia. These cases, however, were before the reign of Frederick William I and during that of his father. Curt Jany has pointed out that Frederick III/I did abolish the practice of selling regiments in the Kingdom.⁷⁵ The extent to which the private sale of regiments continued during the reign of Frederick William I is uncertain and cannot be definitively established, although it clearly occurred.

There is nothing to suggest East Prussia did not correspond to these eighteenth-century practices. In fact, the manuscript material from the period shows that Frederick William I sanctioned the activities of the East Prussian military entrepreneur. On 2 March 1728, the King signed an order stating that the *Prinz* von Holstein, a major, shall have the revenues from his regiment as he requested, beginning at the start of April 1728.⁷⁶ The sale of a regiment was quite a different thing from being its proprietor. It was the extension of the role of the East Prussian regimental commander as a company proprietor to which the focus will now turn.

Frederick William I allowed military entrepreneurship to flourish among his administrative officials and private Junker landlords and is even linked to a few positions within the *Amthauptleute*. The *Amthauptmann* in

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Jany, *Geschichte der Preussischen Armee*, p. 50.

⁷⁶GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 165, Potsdam, 2 March 1728, fol. 1.

Amt Brandenburg, for example, has traditionally been considered a position of sinecure since the *Regierung* asked Frederick William I for the name of a replacement in several cases. If one considers the Holstein case referred to on the previous page, the *Regierung* wrote to Frederick William I and reported the death of *General Field Marschall Herzog von Holstein* six days earlier. The secondary point of the *Regierung's* report was a request for a name from the King for the appointment to replace Holstein as *Amthauptmann in Amt Brandenburg*.⁷⁷ It is important to mention here that when Frederick William I ordered the approval for *Prinz von Holstein* to receive revenues from his regiment, the King also named him to replace the *Herzog von Holstein*. Curiously, this was ordered six days before the *Regierung* drafted its initial report for the King.

Although there are clear links between the company commander described by Redlich the system as it operated in East Prussia, there is one crucial difference: the changed role of the state by the start of Frederick William I's reign in 1713. More precise links have been more fully examined by Otto Büsch.⁷⁸ The financial incentives for the Junker company commander came as the proprietor (*Inhaber*) for company business, which is the source of the term *Kompagniewirtschaft*. To be granted the rank of Captain as a company commander was particularly important to East Prussian Junkers. Since the Kingdom's native Junkers were not, on average, as wealthy as their Junker counterparts from other territories, and without the additional incomes as company proprietors, the East Prussians would

⁷⁷See above for the circumstances of this appointment.

⁷⁸Büsch, *Militärsystem und Sozialleben im alten Preussen, 1713-1807*, pp. 113-134. The following discussion is based on Büsch's account.

typically have a meagre existence.⁷⁹ During the eighteenth century colonel-proprietors benefited to the extent that, after the Seven Years' War — a period of considerable potential for profit among regimental commanders — contemporary observers cited the discrepancy between the life of luxury and pleasure of the upper ranks and the indigent living conditions among the lesser officials: many of whom — of course — were not paid during the Seven Years' War.⁸⁰

Nevertheless, among the regimental commanders, a lucrative, let alone secure income was not assured by being a company proprietor. Provisioning a company was a matter of considerable expense and regiments were regularly passed on to the next commander encumbered by debt. Typically, upon receiving the company, the commander would receive a single, once-off payment from the *Kriegskasse* in order to bring it up to strength. This was intended to pay for additional men and equipment. In addition, there was an annual budget that was fixed by Frederick William I personally with the assistance of his close friend and military advisor, Leopold von Anhalt-Dessau. The budgets were calculated down to the most trivial item and for years in advance. This is just one more example of the way in which Frederick William I tried to be personally involved in the most minute of administrative and financial details. He was able to provide a reward and incentive to the poorer East Prussian Junkers, who typically made their money outside the auspices of the agencies which oversaw regional and local regimental commanders, notably, the *Kriegs- und Domänenkammer*. Furthermore, the King sought to budget the expenses of

⁷⁹One may consider, however, the nobility of Pomerania and even Brandenburg poorer.

⁸⁰Theodor Goltz, *Die ländliche Arbeiterfrage und ihre Lösung*, Danzig: A. W. Kasemann, 1872, p. 180. Report of Marzuis de Toulangeon. Cited in Büsch, *Militärssystem und Sozialleben im alten Preussen, 1713-1807*, p. 113.

the regiments for basic needs years in advance. He could plan his expenditures according to a budget and have a good chance that he would not go over-budget during periods of peace. It was up to the company commander to make sure his company was well-enough equipped and trained for the yearly mustering and so-called "revue." Therefore, everything which Frederick William I did not provide was left to the company commander. The *Kriegskasse* provided a sum of money according to the King's budget and from this the commander attempted to meet his supply for uniforms, training and equipment, food, and recruitment. All of the soldiers were to be provided with a basic level of supplies.

This was an arrangement that apparently worked well and changed little before 1733. Frederick William I consolidated the cantonal system of recruitment in that year. The canton system was based on the number of fireplace hearths and varied greatly by province. East Prussia had a total 64,720 fireplaces.⁸¹ This was divided into 5 regular (i. e., standing) infantry regiments of between 7600 and 7900 men each. Cavalry units contained between 3800 and 3870 horses and men. In addition, there were two regiments of dragoons totalling 3530 men each.⁸² The number of men in the various East Prussian military branches was larger than those of other territories. For example, in Brandenburg, the average infantry regiment contained about 5000 men while in both Pomerania and Magdeburg-Halberstadt, 5900 men was an average sized infantry regiment. Only a few individual regiments contained more men.⁸³ As this system was based on

⁸¹Curt Jany, "Die Kantonverfassung des altpreußische Heeres," in *Moderne Preußische Geschichte 1648-1945*, vol. 2, p. 784 (first published under the title "Die Kantonverfassung Friedrich Wilhelms I," in *Forschungen zur Brandenburgischen und Preußischen Geschichte*, vol. 38, 1926, pp. 225-272).

⁸²*Ibid.*

⁸³*Ibid.*

population, and since population density varied enormously within the Kingdom, the size of the districts varied. Clearly the eastern district was the largest while western and northern areas much smaller.

Before the start of the canton system in 1733, however, the arrangement between regimental commander and the King's officials could be considered positive for both sides. The King relinquished some authority at the local level and over certain commercial interests. He strengthened the loyalty among the Junkers who found a potentially lucrative way to escape their typically meagre standard of living. Finally, his increased control over the military was assured. His troops were required to have training and to show their abilities at least once per year.

It was the soldier's furlough which was reformed significantly in 1733 but, before this, a commander would routinely furlough a group of soldiers. This meant in practice that the troops would be sent back to being peasant labourers, sometimes even to the estate of their regimental commander or once back on the estate, the Junker landlord. Since the regimental commander did not have to pay his soldiers while on furlough, the Junker was able to pocket the savings. This practice was reformed under Frederick William I in 1733 both to even out some of the incomes of regimental commanders and also to provide a better trained force. In short, Frederick William I merely attempted to reduce the blatant profit-taking at the expense of maintaining a trained standing army.

Precise figures are only available for a much later period. Büsch has claimed that at around the end of the eighteenth century and after all expenditures were made for the maintenance, training, and so forth, of a single *Freiwächter*, the company commander made a two talers profit per soldier. Generally, much of this profit went to the maintenance of foreign mercenary soldiers in the immediate period of their use, namely just prior to and at the annual muster revue. However, there were more savings for the

commander from the furlough arrangement. If he had, for example, fifteen *Freiwächter*, he would make 2 talers each or thirty talers. In addition, he would save the costs of maintenance, food, and care as well as other equipment and armament supply which Büsch notes as an additional income of 177 talers per month.⁸⁴ In addition to this, there was the profits from the small equipment stipend or so-called, "*kleinen Mundierungsgeldern*." This totalled 2 talers 22 groschen per man per year and was intended to cover such items as repair to boots, especially the front piece, soles, and buckles, shirts and undershirts, pigtail hair ribbons, and neckerchiefs. This was an allotment from the King. It appears that only about half of this actually was spent and in essence, this was an additional 150 talers per year for a typical squadron of 144 men. At the end of the eighteenth century, it has been estimated, a company commander apparently could earn approximately 2270 talers per year.⁸⁵ Büsch notes that these are similar figures as those found during the reign of Frederick William I for the early decades of the eighteenth century. One must grant, though, that the Brandenburg-Prussian army changed significantly after Frederick William I's reign and prices rose more sharply after 1750.

That was not all the potential income, however. This total does not include the salary of the officer as well as the *Douceursätze*, which one could consider a reimbursement fund. Salaries were approximately 275 taler per year with an additional 180 talers to be used for ten rations of provisions for their horses. A squadron commander, the next higher rank above company

⁸⁴Büsch, *Militärsystem und Sozialleben im alten Preussen, 1713-1807*, 119. Büsch cites in addition an annual figure of 2132 talers. Unfortunately Büsch and the source he cites are unclear on this point. Not only is this figure an incorrect calculation, but such a yearly income was impossible to achieve since the soldiers were unable to be on furlough for a 12 month consecutive period.

⁸⁵*Ibid.* See previous note about annual salary in Büsch's figures as they may represent an inaccurate sum.

commander earned 836 talers per year with 396 talers which allowed for a better fed horse which was allowed sixteen rations. In addition, they were the lowest rank permitted to make certain purchases that could be reimbursed from the *Douceur* up to a total of 1540 talers per year. The commander in the royal dragoons, which commanded 10 squadrons and was of a rank just above that of squadron commander, would have earned the same salary but could expense an additional 1433 talers per year. Essentially, as the rank and responsibilities rose so did the financial benefits and potential earnings. Once again, estimates do not appear too different for the reign of Frederick William I, although it should be mentioned that the *Douceur* amounts do appear to rise faster during the reign of Frederick the Great. Finally, as Büsch emphasises, all salaries in this period had the added benefit for commanders to be paid one quarter of their salary in gold, known as *Talern Courant*. This was essentially an added 13.33 per cent to salaries as gold currency was more valuable, even in the same denominations, than the more common silver composite currency. As a result, some Junker commanders were able to approach an annual income of 8000 talers per year although this figure was likely not to be free from debits.

The bulk of income for the commander, as proprietor, came from other less formal, even legally questionable business of the company. In addition, some of these transactions were only tangentially related to company affairs and welfare. As one contemporary critically noted about the higher officers in East Prussia: "The spirit of the company commanders completely tainted everything that was good. In truth, the lords saw in their relationship to the company nothing more than as a relationship of a owner to his plantation. They saw the so-called recruited soldiers as their slaves. What they could steal from them, accrued to their advantage, and therefore, they even pinched as much as they could from all that which the state gave

for these recruited soldiers' maintenance."⁸⁶ What becomes clear is that the view of a despised landlord by his peasant labourers was now finding its way into the ranks of the military. The Junker lord was also now the hated company officer.

If this was not sufficient, the company commanders often cut corners on their provisions and outfitting of the company. One example of this is winter clothing. Even though the Brandenburg-Prussian commander did not have to provide his company with winter overcoats, the coats and clothing he did provide were often shortened with the savings in material and tailoring going to — who else — the company commander.

Systematic fraud must also be added to the practices of the regimental commanders. This was particularly the case when figuring the additional sums of money a commander received to compensate for the higher expense of procurement and pay when he recruited and maintained a 'foreigner', (i. e., a soldier from outwith the Hohenzollern territories). To get this additional money, a commander would simply account his recruit a foreigner if he was born outside the recruiting district. This appears to have been more prevalent after 1733 when the Canton system of recruitment was introduced by Frederick William I. With these reforms, the King divided Brandenburg-Prussia into districts with a sub-division of those districts down to the local estate level. Furthermore, commanders in special regiments, for example, the cavalry, would convert cavalry into more than the permitted number of *Freiwächter*. This allowed the commander to furlough these recruits and then keep their pay when they had no job to return to in civilian life which was presumably the reason the King limited the number that could be furloughed. Many such troops resorted to begging. As mentioned above with respect to this tactic, some commanders

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 123.

even considered begging a profession in order to justify officially their furlough procedures. And although Büsch cites this as a situation which existed after 1740, he does note that it certainly was seen during Frederick William I's reign.

As has been made clear, the recruiting of soldiers, although it often required a large outlay of money, was a potential source of profits for the regimental commanders. For all but a twenty-three year period in the eighteenth century, the recruitment of soldiers was left to the regimental commanders themselves.⁸⁷ Therefore, Recruiting was paid for through the use of fixed budgetary allotments from the *Kriegskasse* or, if necessary, from savings the company commander accrued from his furloughing of the *Freiwächter*. The amount given by the Hohenzollerns to the regimental commanders for purposes of recruiting fluctuated, never more so than during periods of war when recruits were hard to come by and therefore fetched a higher price. Moreover, company commanders engaged in the forcible abduction of fit men in order to avoid having to give the soldier the standard enlistment bonus. This was particularly the case if a young man had a height over six feet four inches. Such giants were automatically a candidate for Frederick William I's regiment of tall grenadiers. Complaints were common not only throughout Brandenburg-Prussia but also, all across Europe. This practice was so common that Voltaire mocked it in his fictional tale, *Candide*. One may recall the passage where Candide was travelling and became extremely hungry and tired whereupon he stopped at an inn in the town of Waldberghofftrarbkdikdorff. While there, one of two men in

⁸⁷During the years 1763-86, Frederick the Great took direct control over the recruiting of foreign mercenaries and this resulted in a significant decline in the number of mercenaries serving in the Brandenburg-Prussian army. Some historians believe this may have been due to the king's desire to reduce the extraordinary profits regimental commanders were taking under the old system. See Dennis Showalter, *The Wars of Frederick the Great*, London: Longman, 1996, p. 334.

matching blue uniforms — the Brandenburg-Prussian uniform was of course blue — clearly to be understood as recruiting officers from the army of Frederick William I, exclaimed “here is a well-built young fellow, and of proper height.” After inviting Candide to dinner at the inn, Candide asks whether or not he has to pay his share for the drink and meal, again one of the men dressed in blue responds that “people of your appearance and of your merit never pay anything: are you not five feet five inches high?” After Candide answers affirmatively and soon after, the three drink to the King of Bulgarians, a veiled reference to Frederick William I. Suddenly, they took Candide away to his new regiment.⁸⁸

Many of these practices were frowned upon by Frederick William I and his highest military officials. However, rarely was strong action taken even in high profile cases of fraud or other illegal activity in company business. In fact, as Büsch notes, several cases were condemned by Frederick William I but nonetheless, the officials charged went on to complete long and successful careers in the military. Frederick William I appears to have been most comfortable as long as he knew his *Oberrechnungskammer* successfully completed its regular account audits of the books maintained by the company commanders. Embezzlement was taken seriously by Frederick William I when such fraud directly affected the military income and/or the standards prevailing in the regiments. His budgeting was so precisely calculated that any unauthorised or unaccounted loss could produce significant negative consequences. Therefore, many of the practices described above did not have direct or adverse consequences for the King or his budgets. Büsch notes illegal activity occurred within the day-to-day operation of company business and was directed by the Junker. In addition, even though the King had a notorious ‘Old Testament’ sense of

⁸⁸Voltaire, *Candide*, New York: Dover Publications, 1991, pp. 3-4.

justice, he allowed many of these activities to develop. As mentioned, his failure to severely punish the responsible Junker commanders in high profile cases shows that Frederick William I not only tacitly consented to their actions but also had the potential ability to control illegal company business.

CONCLUSION

The early years of Frederick William I's reign has traditionally been seen as a period when Hohenzollern government first acquired a clear hierarchical division of duties. Although this may have happened to some degree at the central and highest level, primarily through the mechanism of various administrative departments after the establishment of the General Directory in 1723, duplication and ill-defined distinctions of responsibilities existed between individuals and separate institutions in East Prussian government throughout Frederick William I's reign. This was not simply a legacy from Frederick III/I. Frederick William I's innovations at times actually increased governmental duplication and confusion. A prime example of this duplication is seen through the established territorial Königsberg *Regierung* which was competing and conflicting with the *Kommissariat* and its subordinate agencies in the Kingdom.

Although Frederick William I attempted such broad based reforms, they were far from all successful, nor were they adhered to by both the East Prussian *Regierung* and *Kommissariat*. In fact, one may confidently say that few of the King's initiatives which affected in a fundamental way the territory's traditional political structure were either introduced, accepted, or executed smoothly. Whether Frederick William I attempted to intervene over a particular case or problem, or reform the general administrative procedure in East Prussia, he often encountered significant resistance in words and action by the Königsberg *Regierung*, which in turn drew verbal

retaliation from the ruler in Berlin. It is perhaps no coincidence that by 1720 the East Prussian *Regierung* complained to the King about the badly dilapidated condition of their headquarters, the *Oberratsstube*. They had been forced to carry out business in a building exposed to wind and rain as a result of rotten beams.¹ Such neglect did not occur overnight; the failure to put it right expressed the King's hostility towards the *Regierung* and those who staffed it.

Even after the introduction of many of Frederick William I's administrative reforms and, in particular, the General Directory in 1723, the operation of government in East Prussia remained confused, as old and new authorities jostled for supremacy. The traditional institutional structures maintained a role in essential administration and even in areas where Frederick William I had recognised the competence of other authorities. As a result, there were numerous and lengthy jurisdictional disputes, as well as sustained resistance mounted by the East Prussian *Regierung*.

From a legal standpoint, the King's reforms became a major issue for the East Prussian *Regierung*. The constitutionality, so to speak, of the *Kriegs- und Domänenkammer*, a royal agency that often held parallel authority to the *Regierung*, quickly became a major focus of debate and dispute. In some significant cases, Frederick William I was able to circumvent the *Regierung's* traditional authority. Yet, to a large degree, his reform efforts resulted in government that was both inefficient and ineffective, and only generated administrative conflict and confusion.

The continual bickering and complaining between the bodies involved continued throughout this period. In fact, as was demonstrated in chapters five, six and seven, it never really ceased, even after 1723. The

¹GStAPK, EM 121a, Nr. 78, Königsberg, 26 September 1720, Johann Paul Zilcher to the *Regierung*. The cost to repair the damage was estimated at 50 Rtlr, a relatively trifling sum.

records of the *Regierung* show that Frederick William I did not attempt to carry out fundamental reforms but instead intervened only in selected cases. His efforts therefore established no wider precedent, only a particular result. Instead, the King employed a broad-brush approach and ordered wide-ranging procedural and administrative reforms combined with attempts to alter particular personnel. He must have known the broader procedural and administrative reforms had little hope of being fully implemented or realised. This had the effect of persuading Otto Hintze that the reforms of Frederick William I were a Hohenzollern revolution from above.² Hintze established this notion, which influenced other, later historians.

Finally, the list of officials appointed by Frederick William I throughout his reign to investigate or lead reform commissions in East Prussia shows a significant number of names that went on to high ranking careers for the state. For example, Waldburg, Ilgen, and Cocceji were all involved with significant reform efforts in the territory. This came about despite any one official's initial success with respect to reform in East Prussia. Frederick William I understood what he faced and what his limitations were in the territory. Waldburg had the most success with the introduction of the *Generallhufenschoß*. After this, however, his reforming initiatives encountered a series of setbacks. Cocceji remains the most significant judicial reformer of eighteenth-century Brandenburg-Prussia. Under Frederick William I, however, his efforts never advanced beyond paper proposals. Very few judicial reforms were successfully implemented. Even the formidable Ilgen was unable to quell the confusion and conflict at both the central and provincial levels during his period in charge of the affairs of East Prussia. Local Junker authority remained extremely resistant

²See, for example, Hintze, "The Commissary and His Significance in General Administrative History: A Comparative Study", in *The Historical Essays of Otto Hintze*, p. 273. In addition, see Hintze, *Die Hohenzollern und Ihr Werk*, p. 204.

to reform, as was demonstrated in chapter five. As was seen in chapters six and seven, the King gradually influenced personnel appointments in the Kingdom although never completely. People, not institutions, were the key to government at this time, as this study has underlined.

Much of the reason for Frederick William I's lack of success with regard to appointments was the continuation of traditional rights and privileges of the native East Prussian elite, so-called *ständisch* endurance. The *ständische* values and authority over the administration in the Kingdom remained in the hands of the established elites well into the final decade of Frederick William I's reign. The Junkers' status continued to come through their dominance over government, which in turn enabled them to collect taxation although this had been reduced on the royal domains, and those which related to the military were increasingly collected by the officials of the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer*, namely the *commissarius loci* or *Steuerräte*. As significant as this may have been, the simple facts remain that the East Prussian nobility continued to possess primary authority over justice, local administration, important military matters, as well as religious questions.³ They did not lose their authority as a group until the 1750s when significant judicial and district administrative reforms were introduced. These were arguably the most significant reforms to take place at one time. Even with more rapid reforms by the mid-1750s, Frederick the Great did not appear to eliminate the district's influence over some of their affairs.⁴

The personal intervention and gradual control acquired by Frederick William I over provincial appointments, however, was a major dimension of the reform effort. Common procedures did exist although often based on unwritten rules, or, perhaps more likely, the age old traditions and

³Neugebauer, *Politischer Wandel im Osten*, p. 77.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 76-85.

privileges of the East Prussian Junkers. Progress in breaking down these privileges and increasing Berlin's control during Frederick William I's reign came about not because of any formal institutional reform but rather, because of the King's increased personal intervention, particularly in appointments. The ruler was never able totally to dominate the appointment process for the most established positions in the Kingdom which ran much of the day-to-day administration. In this sense there were always limits to the authority of Frederick William I.⁵

Despite the King's claim that he travelled to all the Hohenzollern territories each year, he actually travelled to East Prussia only five times between 1713 and 1731.⁶ In fact, Frederick William I did not travel to the Kingdom between 1716 and 1726 — a period which included the introduction of significant reforms, for example, the *Reglement* of 1716 and the General Directory.⁷ His travel within East Prussia did not focus on the centre of territorial affairs in Königsberg but rather the more remote areas of the Kingdom including Memel, Ragnit, Rastenburg, and Mohrungen, among several other locations which were in a continual state of ruin. The ruler's lack of personal presence in the territory — the source of the royal title for the Hohenzollerns — further highlights the problems in an age when political authority was strongly personal in nature.

There was also a noticeable change in the way in which recruitment was undertaken.⁸ Reform took several years and involved several initiatives

⁵See Juhr, "Die Verwaltung des Hauptamtes Brandenburg/ostpreussen von 1713-1751," p. 36.

⁶GStAPK, Rep. 5, Tit. 13, Huldigen, Reisen, hohen Herrschalten, Nr. 1 (1716), Nr. 2 (1726), Nr. 3 (1728), Nr. 4 (1731). Almost all of the surviving manuscript material relates to the planning and necessary supplies for the King's travels to East Prussia. For Frederick William I's claim, see Dietrich, ed., *Die politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern*, p. 232.

⁷In regard to the *Reglement* of 1716, see pp. 168-80 and pp. 247-288 for more on this point with regard to the General Directory.

⁸Büsch, *Militärsystem und Sozialleben im alten Preussen, 1713-1807*, p. 14. Hinrichs, "Der Regierungsantritt Friedrich Wilhelm I," pp. 219-223. Hinrichs cites Frederick

over recruitment before the innovative Canton Regulations of 1733 were finally introduced by Frederick William I. The Canton System brought and secured the army and its accompanying military authority to the estate level. The Junker found himself acting as lord and military officer simultaneously. The Junker-peasant relationship, however, was more complex than this.⁹ Throughout Frederick William I's reign the growing interdependence between the Junkers and peasants allowed the Junker to feel like a natural leader who could transfer and expand the estate social structure where the Junker was the ruler to the more powerful, emerging public, and external army. Thus, the relationship between officer and soldier was similar to that of lord and peasant. The peasant soldier's role remained the same, that is, simply to obey.

The East Prussian traditional authorities continued to believe it was their right to retain the privileges they held after the emergence of the General Directory. These beliefs were defended by those at almost all levels of the Kingdom's administration. To these East Prussian officials, this was what has become known as the *Indigenatsrecht*, or right of the native born. To use a term found in defence of traditional elite rights in other Hohenzollern territories which (unlike East Prussia) were within the Holy Roman Empire, these officials believed they held the right to their position because it was their "well earned right" (*wohlerworbenes Recht*).¹⁰ To the East

William I's edicts of 9 May 1714 and 17 October 1713, both cited in Otto Mylius, *Corpus Constitutionum Marchicarum*, vol. 3, Berlin: Zufinden in Buchladen des Waysenhauses, 1755, Christian Otto Mylius, *Corpus Constitutionum Marchicarum*, vol. 3, Berlin: Zufinden im Buchladen des Waysenhauses, 1755, nrs. 360 and 349 respectively.

⁹Ibid., pp. 104-108.

¹⁰Carol Rose, *Empire and Territories at the End of the Old Reich in The Old Reich: Essays on German Political Institutions, 1495-1806*, edited by James A. Vann and Steven W. Rowan, Studies Presented to the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions, vol. XLVIII, Bruxelles, Les Editions De La Librairie Encyclopédique, 1974, p. 73. The term, *wohlerworbenes Recht*, was not a term used by the East Prussians although there is reference in the manuscript material to the right of the native born.

Prussians, their nativeness was their well earned right. Although the Kingdom of East Prussia was located outside the Holy Roman Empire, the native officials still were able to justify their high position in administration and society at large just like the traditional elites of other territories inside the Holy Roman Empire. They did this by citing their own traditional rights and authority even though as East Prussians they were obviously unable to appeal to the Imperial courts.

The East Prussian claim to the *Indigenatsrecht* remained strong and was used to a successful degree in justifying the elite's arguments against Frederick William I's intervention and reforms in the Kingdom. Throughout all of Frederick William I's reign, the traditional East Prussian elite were not at the mercy of the King's absolutism. As a corporate organisation, these elites were not "vanquished."¹¹ The ancient notion about territorial elites that Dietrich Gerhard presents, namely that "[t]he prince was regarded more as the guarantor and administrator rather than as giver of law" is one that was still true during the reign of Frederick William I.¹² The King made significant inroads into East Prussian traditional authority but he was still obliged to respect and uphold the native rights of the East Prussians.

One of the major hindrances weighing in favour of the East Prussian traditional elite and against Frederick William I's reform effort in the Kingdom was the fact that the King had so many separate territories with which he had to deal. Even though East Prussia was not able to use many of the defences available to other Hohenzollern territories, especially those above the level of the prince at, for example, the Imperial courts level, the East Prussians were well able to protect their interests to a large degree through use of their own institutions. They held the territory which was the

¹¹Dietrich Gerhard, "Assemblies of Estates and the Corporate Order," p. 39.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 40.

principal source of the royal title, and thus of status and power for the Hohenzollerns, and they made life very difficult for the King if their interests were subjected to too great encroachment. In addition, their native rights were strongly entrenched. This last point was similar to many other Hohenzollern territories which made it very difficult for Frederick William I to confront all at once. The King was forced to deal with each territory separately although this was a position he may not have wanted to change even if he could have.

The drawback of this situation for the Hohenzollerns' was two-fold. If, for example, Frederick William I wanted to have changed the fundamental organisation of the territorial elites throughout all his territories he would have had to have gone through a fundamental shift in thinking that would have affected the very foundations of social and political structure which had for so long existed. A change in approach to not recognising any territorial native rights was outside the general conception of the fundamental order. The inherent hierarchy was not an area any Hohenzollern questioned, nor was it an area a prince could have effectively changed. The resistance and cost would have been far too high a price to pay, the outcome unpredictable and the benefits unquantifiable.

Frederick William I was forced to keep the aims of the various territories divided which at times was desirable. Although Frederick William I wanted to unite much of the administration throughout the scattered lands, there is no evidence to suggest he changed his thinking and ever thought of uniting the separate territorial elites into one large elite covering all the territories even after 1723. The political testaments of both Frederick William I and Frederick the Great make clear distinctions between the territories and emphasise that they should be treated differently.¹³ This

¹³Richard Dietrich, ed., *Die politischen Testamente der Hohenzollern*. For Frederick William I's comments on East Prussia in 1722, see pp. 227-229. He focuses on

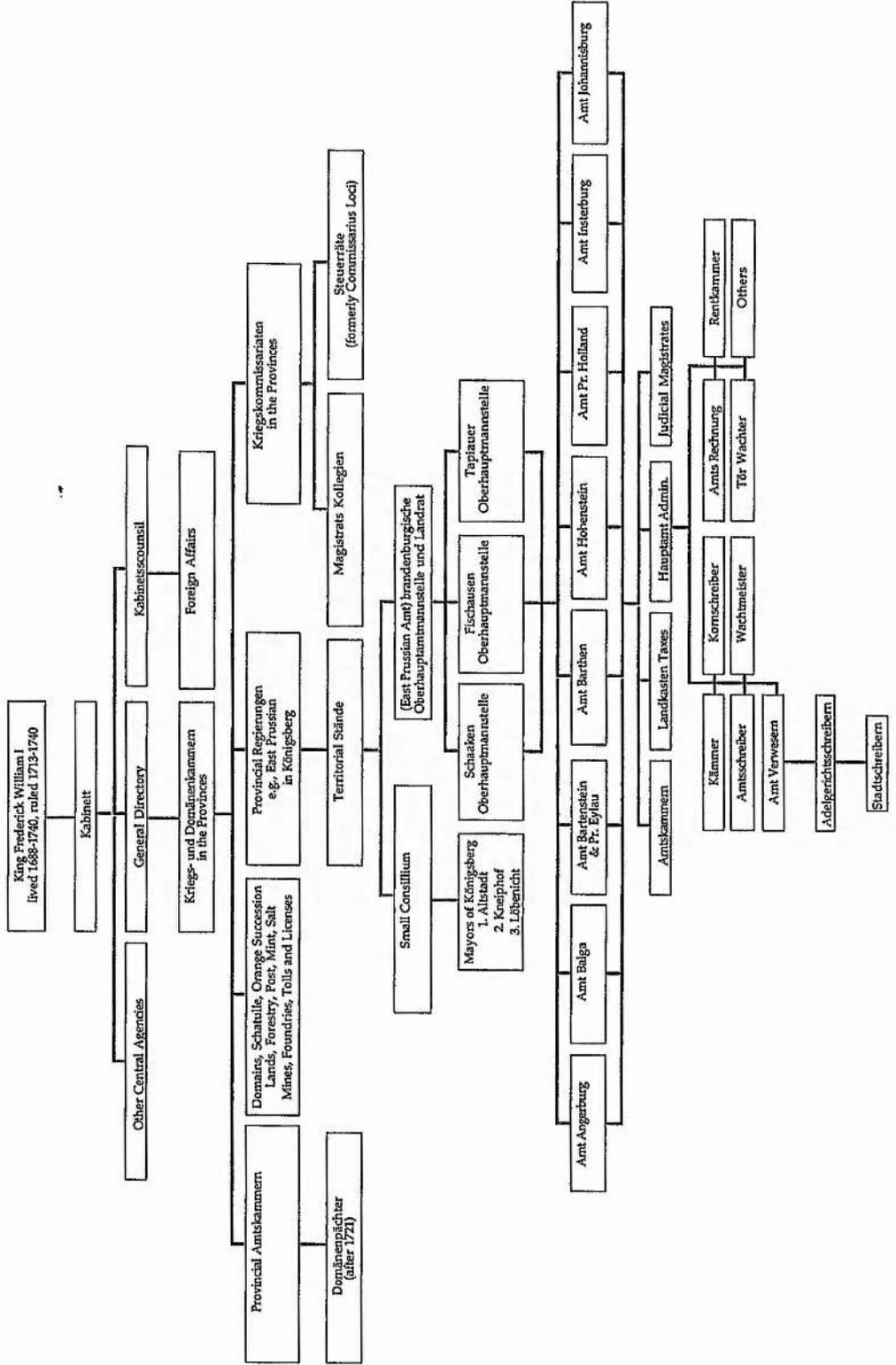
had the added crucial effect of making any concerted effort among the various elites of the Hohenzollern territories extremely difficult. Allowing the Junkers to maintain their focus on more local affairs meant that the King did not have to focus on a unified front among the Junkers. Furthermore, setting up military and certain financial agencies was easier on paper than in actual practice: as we have seen, implementation was less certain. In the words of Dietrich Gerhard, "[t]he princes — the Hapsburg (sic) or the Hohenzollern, for instance — had to deal with them separately, even in smaller composite states attempts at administrative centralization were rarely seconded by fusion of previously separate estates."¹⁴ No Hohenzollern ruler in the eighteenth century would have wanted to have faced an opposition consisting of unified territorial elites. In addition, they surely would have seen the King purely as 'their' king 'in Prussia' and not as ruler of any other Hohenzollern territory. In other words, the particularist viewpoint was common to the ruler and territorial elite. Finally, there is no evidence to support the proposition that corporate groups of one territory sought the advice, suggestions, or support from a different territorial corporate group.

both institutional differences and collective personal characteristics and how one should treat the peoples of each province. In Frederick the Great's political testament of 1752, on the other hand, he sprinkles regional variations throughout and focuses more on the need to unify institutional differences which potentially contribute to any collective or personal characteristics which is also the case for his political testaments of 1768, 1776, and 1784. In reference to the people of East Prussia, Frederick the Great comments (p. 275): "The population there is very indolent/lazy."

¹⁴Dietrich Gerhard, "Assemblies of Estates and the Corporate Order," p. 44.

Appendix B

East Prussian Domestic Administration, 1723 Onwards



Appendix D – *Amthauptmannschaft* Table¹

Amthauptmannschaft	<- Salary	<- How Appointed	Amt Verweser	<- Salary	<- How Appointed
Ämt					
Angerburg					
von Lesgewang, 1690 ²					
Julius Ernst von Tettau, 1701-1711 ³			Johann Christoph von Grabowski, Verweser, 1730-1740 ⁴		
Joachim Heinrich Erb-Truseß zu Waldburg, 1712-1718 ⁵					
Brigadier Melchior Ernst von Canitz, 1718-1730 ⁶	500 Rt. per yr.	<i>Regierung</i>	Wolf. Fried. Truches, Grafen Waldburg, 1718 ⁷	100 Rt. per yr.	Frederick William I
Gotthard Christoph von Schlieben, 1722-1731 ⁸	n/a	n/a			
Heinrich Carl Ludwig Hérault von Hautcharmon, General-Lieutenant und Chef eines Inf.-Regts. u., 1730-1757 ⁹		<i>Regierung</i>			
Amt Balga					
Trib. Raths Christoph Arnd von Röder, 1696-1725 ¹⁰		<i>Regierung requested</i>			

Amthauptmannschaft	<- Salary	<- How Appointed	Amt Verweser	<- Salary	<- How Appointed
Friedrich Wilhelm von Dewitz, General-Lieutenant, Chef des Leib-Cuir-Regts u., 1725-1736 ¹¹ General Major Dewitz, Aug 1725 ¹²	80 Rt. per yr	<i>Regierung</i>	Friedrich Winckelmann, 1725 ¹³	none ¹⁴	<i>Regierung</i>
Johann Jobst Heinrich von Buddenbrock, General-Lieut., Chef des Cadetten-Corps u., 1736-1781 ¹⁵			Wilhelm Albrecht von Massenbach, Verweser, 1737 ¹⁶		
			Christian Friedrich von Winckelmann, Verweser, 1740 ¹⁷		
			Reinhold Christian von Parck, Verweser, 1740-1753 ¹⁸		
Amt Barthen¹⁹					
Fabian von Knobelsdorf, 168?-1714					
Bogislaus Friedrich Reichsgraf von Dönhoff, General-Major u., 1714-1721 — Dönhoff, 28 Aug 1720 ²⁰			Christoph von Elditten, Verweser, 1695. 1712.		

Amthauptmannschaft	<- Salary	<- How Appointed	Amt Verweser	<- Salary	<- How Appointed
Friedrich Ernst Bernhard Reichsgrafen von Finckenstein, Oberst-Lieutenant, 1721-1735 ²¹		<i>Regierung</i>	Wilhelm Ludwig von der Gröben, Verweser, 1718	80 Rt. per yr. ²²	
Christoph Ernst von Röder, Oberst, 1735-1754			Alexander von Elditten, Verweser, 1721. 1734.		
			Hans Ernst von Queiß, Verweser, 1743-1751		
Amt Bartenstein and Pr. Eylau			Melchior von Tettau, Verweser, 1686-1699		
George Dietrich von der Gröben, 1686					
Hans George von Tettau, 1686-1713					
Wolff Christoph von Hackeborn, General-Major u., 1713-1719 ²³					
Gen. Major Hackborn, 13 Sept. 1714 ²⁴					

Amthauptmannschaft	<- Salary	<- How Appointed	Amt Verweser	<- Salary	<- How Appointed
Heinrich Albrecht von Kalnein, 1736-1754.			Wilhelm Gottfried von Tettau, Verweser, 1737		
Amt					
Brandenburg²⁵					
Friedrich Wilhelm von Canitz, 1697-1706 ²⁶					
Ludwig von Ostau, 1706-1711 ²⁷					
Julius Ernst von Tettau, 1711 ²⁸					
Sigismund von Wallenrodt, 1711-1719 ²⁹					
Friedrich Ludwig Herzog von Holstein-Bock, General-Feld-Marschall, January 1719-1728 ³⁰		First candidate suggested by <i>Regierung</i> may not have been approved by Frederick William I ³¹			

Amthauptmannschaft	<- Salary	<- How Appointed	Amt Verweser	<- Salary	<- How Appointed
Friedrich Wilhelm Herzog von Holstein-Bock, Oberst, Herzog, 1728-1729? ³²	500 Thaler per year to be paid 125 Thaler per qtr. ³³	Regierung asked Frederick William I ³⁴			
Tribunals Rat von Chaise, 1729?-17??, replaced Holstein during absence ³⁵		Regierung suggests to Frederick William I ³⁶	Tribunals Rat von Grabowski, 1730-17?? ³⁷		
			Johann Friedrich von Keith, 1740. 1750 ³⁸		
			Christoph Albrecht von Auer, 1740. 1750. ³⁹		
Amt Fischhausen					
Blankensee ⁴⁰					
Vogt von Tettau, 1723 ⁴¹					
Insterburg					
Obriste Truches Graf von Waldburg, to 1719			Schlieben, welcher nach SKM befehl, wegen der gar großen Weitlauffigkeit des Ampts, 200 tal. bekant. ⁴²		

Amthauptmannschaft	<- Salary	<- How Appointed	Amt Verweser	<- Salary	<- How Appointed
Fürstl. Hesen-Cassel'schen Obristen, Graf von Lehndorff, 1719 ⁴³		<i>Regierung</i>	Gotthardt Christoff Graff von Dönhof ⁴⁴		
Kunheim, 1723 ⁴⁵		<i>Regierung</i>			
Baron Gotter	500 Rt. per yr				
Amt Johannsburg					
Dobreczinski resigns in 1716 ⁴⁶					
Captain Graff Finckenstein takes over, 11 May 1716-1718 ⁴⁷		<i>Regierung</i>			
			Wolfgang Friedrich Reichs Erbtruchess und Graff zu Waldburg, 1719 ⁴⁸		
Amt Labiau & Neuhausen⁴⁹					
Obrist des Printzen von Holstein, 1719 ⁵⁰					
Gen. Maj. von Lottum, 13 Juni 1723 ⁵¹		<i>Regierung</i>	Major von Dudersberg, 1719 ⁵²	100 Rt. per yr.	<i>Regierung</i>
Boddenbrock, 15 July 1729 ⁵³	none	Probably <i>Regierung</i>			

Amthauptmannschaft	<- Salary	<- How Appointed	Amt Verweser	<- Salary	<- How Appointed
Lyck			Heinrich Albrecht von Kalnein, 1714 ⁵⁴		
Obrister von Marriotz (Marwitz), 1719 ⁵⁵			extraordinair Hoffgerichts Rath von Lesgewang ⁵⁶	80 Rt per yr ⁵⁷	
Amt Memel ⁵⁸					
Gen. Maj. Brion, up to 1719? ⁵⁹			Elias Daniel von Canitz, 1719 ⁶⁰	100 Rt. per yr.	<i>Regierung</i> (via Brion and Lehndorff)
Major Grf. von Lehndorff, 1719-Jan. 1723 ⁶¹					
Ernst Graff von Lehndorff, 1724 ⁶²					
Bonin, June 1727 ⁶³	500 Rt. per year				
Amt Mohrungen und Liebstadt ⁶⁴					
General Feld Marschall Graff von Dohna, 1719 ⁶⁵			Fabian von Kunheim, died 29 December 1720 ⁶⁶	probabl y 100 Rt. per yr. ⁶⁷ also left notable in-heritance ⁶⁸	unknown
			Obrist Lt. von Reichau, 1721-1732 ⁶⁹	100 Rt. per yr. ⁷⁰	<i>Request by Regierung.</i>
Graf and Grafen Donha to 1728 ⁷¹		Probably Frederick William I			

Amthauptmannschaft	<- Salary	<- How Appointed	Amt Verweser	<- Salary	<- How Appointed
Cap. Alexander Amylium Burggrafen und Grafen zu Dohna, Jan 1729 ⁷²	500 Rt/yr 125/qt	<i>Kriegs und Domänenkammer</i> ⁷³			
			Captain Frederick William von König, 1733-17?? ⁷⁴	80 Rt per year ⁷⁵	<i>Regierung</i>
Amt Neidenburg und Soldau ⁷⁶					
General Graf von Dohna, to 1719 ⁷⁷					
Obrist-Lieutenant Graff von Dohna, 1719 ⁷⁸		<i>Regierung</i>	none through 1719 ⁷⁹		
			Obrist Lt. Boyen, 1720 ⁸⁰	100 Rt. per yr.	<i>Amts Kammer</i>
			one approved by Frederick William I in 1723	80 Rt. per yr. ⁸¹	
Amt Oletzko ⁸²					
			Baron Leydens, to 1713 ⁸³		
			Capitain Johann Christoff von Hirsch, 1713- ⁸⁴		<i>Regierung</i>
Graff von Dönhoff, to 1723 ⁸⁵			Ordered one approved	80 Rt. per yr. ⁸⁶	

Amthauptmannschaft	<- Salary	<- How Appointed	Amt Verweser	<- Salary	<- How Appointed
General Major von Egel, 1723-17?? ⁸⁷		Presumably Egel to <i>Regierung</i>			
Amt Osterode					
Baron von Kettler, to 1719 ⁸⁸	none		Tribunals Rat von Groben, 1719-1722	was paid privately ⁸⁹	
Kammer Junker Friedrich Reinholdt von Rosen, 1719 ⁹⁰	no	<i>Regierung</i>	Major Johann Friedrich von Brunsee, 1722 ⁹¹		<i>Regierung</i> (via Groben)
Graffen Georg Adam von Schlieben, 1720 ⁹²	500 Rt. per yr.	Probably Frederick William I			
von Rose, to 17??-1723 ⁹³					
Grafen von Schlieben, 1723-17?? ⁹⁴	500 Rt. per year ⁹⁵	<i>Regierung</i>			
Amt Pr. Holland					
Gen. Major Graf von Dohna, to 1726		Unknown			
Cap. Gr. Christoph von Dohna, 1726 ⁹⁶		Frederick William I	Major von Deppen ⁹⁷	100 Rt.	<i>Regierung</i>
Amt Pr. Eylau					
Gen. Maj. Hackborn ⁹⁸ , 13 Sept 1714 ⁹⁹					

Amthauptmannschaft	<- Salary	<- How Appointed	Amt Verweser	<- Salary	<- How Appointed
Henrich Albrecht Kalnein, 1714-1720 ¹⁰⁰					
Gaudecken ¹⁰¹		<i>Regierung</i>			
Amt Ragnit					
Commissariatspräsident von Lesgewang ¹⁰²			Captain von Perbandt ¹⁰³	80 Rt. per yr.	
Amt Rastenburg¹⁰⁴					
Gröben dies Dec 1717 ¹⁰⁵					
Friedrich Wilhelm Prinz vom Holstein succeeds, 5 Dec 1717-1718 ¹⁰⁶		<i>Regierung</i>	Wolff F. Truchess Graften von Waldburg, 1718-1719 ¹⁰⁷		<i>Regierung</i>
Ernst Sigmund Graff von Schlieben, 1718-17?? ¹⁰⁸		<i>Regierung (appears Amthauptmann Holstein influences)</i>	Major Duderberg ¹⁰⁹	no pay ¹¹⁰	<i>Regierung</i>
Amt Schaaken					
Johann Henrich von Bredow, 1711-1717 ¹¹¹					
Friedrich Wilhelm von Bredow, 1717-1739 ¹¹²			ordered not to have one ¹¹³		
Wilhelm Ekenrich von Pappe, 1739-1751 ¹¹⁴					

Amthauptmannschaft	<- Salary	<- How Appointed	Amt Verweser	<- Salary	<- How Appointed
Amt Sehesten					
Carl Ludwig, to 1714 ¹¹⁵					
Friedrich Emanuel von Troben, 1714-17?? ¹¹⁶	500 Rt. per yr. ¹¹⁷	Probably <i>Regierung</i>	Capitain Stach ¹¹⁸		
			Capitain Johann Christoff von Hirsch, to 1718 ¹¹⁹	100 Rt. per yr. ¹²⁰	
Obristen von Bredow, to 1717? ¹²¹			Büttner, 1718-1724 ¹²²	100 Rt. per yr. ¹²³	
Canitz, Sept. 1717-1726 ¹²⁴		Probably Frederick William I	Joh. Georg Büttner, 1724-1727 ¹²⁵	100 Rt. per yr. ¹²⁶	
George Heinrich von Groben, 1726-1729 ¹²⁷		request first to <i>Regierung</i>			
von Kreutzen, 1729 ¹²⁸	500 Rt. per yr	Frederick William I			
Amt Tapiau¹²⁹					
Adam Christoph Graf von Wallenrodt, 1716-1718 ¹³⁰		Frederick William I			
Landrat Georg Ernst von Schlieben, 1718-1724 ¹³¹		<i>Regierung</i>			

Amthauptmannschaft	<- Salary	<- How Appointed	Amt Verweser	<- Salary	<- How Appointed
Adam Christoph Graf von Wallenrodt, June 1724 ¹³²	100 Rt. per yr	Probably <i>Regierung</i>	ordered not to have one ¹³³		
Amt Taplacken					
Graff von Creyzen, dates unknown ¹³⁴	Rec'd undetermined amount per quarter	Unknown			
Amt Tilsit					
Creutz ¹³⁶			Hof- und Kammer Rat von Perbandt, bekommt von SKM Verweser nichts ¹³⁷		
Dockum, July 1729 ¹³⁸	500 Rt. per yr	Frederick William I			

Notes

¹These include as much information, biographical and otherwise, as can be reliably ascertained.

²GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, III-Ämtersachen, Nr. 2285.

³A. Mülverstedt, "Verzeichniß der Amtshauptleute, Erbamtshauptleute, Amtsmänner, Landrichter, Landschöppen, Ober-Kastenherren, Kastenherren, Fischmeister, Jägermeister, Mühlmeister u. in Preußen. 1525-1806," *Preußische Provinzial-Blätter*, Königsberg, Band 10, Neue Folge, July-December, 1856, p.33.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.; See also, GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 227 for 1726 and GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50 (1 April 1718). See also GGStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 229. This manuscript material notes a "Canitz" but the position is not linked to any particular *Amthauptmannschaft*. See also, GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, 15 January 1718. Canitz was in line to receive this position and requested it (see correspondence of 16 April 1718).

⁷GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, 15 March 1718. He is the son-in-law of General Lieutenant Graf Truches von Waldburg who had recently died and had been replaced by Canitz. It is clear this was an influence in appointment to this position. Frederick William I supports his decision by the use of the word "Prarogativ" which the *Regierung* recognises. See also Amt Rastenburg.

⁸Mülverstedt, "Verzeichniß der Amtshauptleute, Erbamtshauptleute, Amtsmänner, Landrichter, Landschöppen, Ober-Kastenherren, Kastenherren, Fischmeister, Jägermeister, Mühlmeister u. in Preußen. 1525-1806," p. 33. Mülverstedt states that Schlieben was *Amthauptmann* during this period for Amt Angerberg. This is clearly not the case.

⁹Ibid. König FWI hob die Amthauptmannschaften als Behörden auf und Conserbirte nur einen Theil der Einkünfte, welche nebst dem Titel verdiente Officiere, shr selten höhere Civelbeamte, erhielten. See also, GStAPK, Gen. Dir., Ostpr., I, Nr. 227.

¹⁰GStAPK, EM 17b, Nr. 5, fol.1. For his death, see GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 161. See also, Mülverstedt, "Verzeichniß der Amtshauptleute, Erbamtshauptleute, Amtsmänner, Landrichter, Landschöppen, Ober-Kastenherren, Kastenherren, Fischmeister, Jägermeister, Mühlmeister u. in Preußen. 1525-1806," p. 34.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 178.

¹³Ibid., 26 November 1725.

¹⁴Ibid. *Regierung* requests for same salary as Dewitz receives for Wincklemann. Frederick William I's response was: "soll nits haben FW". Other attempts appear to have been tried without success for Wincklemann.

¹⁵Mülverstedt, "Verzeichniß der Amtshauptleute, Erbamtshauptleute, Amtsmänner, Landrichter, Landschöppen, Ober-Kastenherren, Kastenherren, Fischmeister, Jägermeister, Mühlmeister u. in Preußen. 1525-1806," p. 34.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹After 19 November 1723, Frederick William I ordered in the 1722/23 budget that the *Amthauptman* in Memel, Ragnit, Labiau, Barten, Oletzko, Lyck, Neidenburg, and Mohrungen were to have a *Verweser* with an annual salary of 80 Rt. See OF 14702, vol. 10, fols. 184, 19 November 1723. Total budgeted was 640 Rt.

²⁰Rep 7, Nr. 50.

²¹Purchases position. GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, 19 July 1720. Frederick William I's marginalia on the document next to where the request to allow Finckenstein to purchase *Amthauptschafft* notes, in typical brevity: "gut". See also, documents dated 22 and 28 July 1720. The latter of which contains the receipt of Finckenstien's payment to the General Charge Casse for the amount of 30 taler.

²²ABB, 4:1, pp. 6-9, Immediatbericht des General=Directoriums, Berlin, 28 January 1723.

²³Mülverstedt, "Verzeichniß der Amtshauptleute, Erbamtshauptleute, Amtsmänner, Landrichter, Landschöppen, Ober-Kastenherren, Kastenherren, Fischmeister, Jägermeister, Mühlmeister u. in Preußen. 1525-1806," p. 186.

²⁴See also Amt Pr. Eylau.

²⁵Mülverstedt, "Verzeichniß der Amtshauptleute, Erbamtshauptleute, Amtsmänner, Landrichter, Landschöppen, Ober-Kastenherren, Kastenherren, Fischmeister, Jägermeister, Mühlmeister u. in Preußen. 1525-1806," pp. 185-6. The most prominent Hauptamt of the four "special" (bevorzugten) Hauptamt districts in East Prussia. The other districts were Fischhausen (Vogten), Schaaken (Landvogt), and Tapiau (Hauptamt). These were also members in the *Regierung*. The Brandenburg *Amthauptleute* were eventually synonymous with Landrats Direktor in the *Regierung*.

²⁶Ibid., p. 186.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, January through June 1719. For death, see, GStAPK, EM 17b, Nr. 6, fol. 2; GStAPK, OF 1269, fol. 28. "... den herzog von Holstein verliehen HMschafft Brandenburg...."

³¹GStAPK, EM 17b, Nr. 4, fol. 47. Archive material is not clear on this point although there is a brief mention of Baron von Kettler as a potential candidate. It also appears he died in 1716. See also Juhr, "Die Verwaltung des Hauptamtes Brandenburg / ostpreussen von 1713-1751," p. 59, fn. 3.

³²GStAPK, EM 17b, Nr. 6, fols. 2-9; GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 165; Mülverstedt, "Verzeichniß der Amtshauptleute, Erbamtshauptleute, Amtsmänner, Landrichter, Landschöppen, Ober-Kastenherren, Kastenherren, Fischmeister, Jägermeister, Mühlmeister u. in Preußen. 1525-1806," p. 186.

³³GStAPK, EM 17b, Nr. 6, fol. 7, 3 April 1728; GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 165. In addition to this salary, Holstein was also allowed to have the revenues generated from this position. In a highly unusual move, Frederick William I also ordered that Holstein did not have to pay the customary fee to the Recruten Casse.

³⁴GStAPK, EM 17b, Nr. 6., fol. 2 and 6, 7 April 1728.

³⁵GStAPK, EM 17b, Nr. 7, fols. 18-20. Replaced Holstein during his absent as Vice-*Amthauptmann*.

³⁶GStAPK, EM 17b, Nr. 7, fol. 4, 25 July 1729.

³⁷GStAPK, EM 17b, Nr. 7, fol. 22, 27 April 1730. *Regierung* to Cocejji.

³⁸Mülverstedt, "Verzeichniß der Amtshauptleute, Erbamtshauptleute, Amtsmänner, Landrichter, Landschöppen, Ober-Kastenherren, Kastenherren, Fischmeister, Jägermeister, Mühlmeister u. in Preußen. 1525-1806," p. 186.

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 225

⁴¹ABB, 4:1, pp. 6-9, Immediatbericht des General-Directoriums, Berlin, 28 January 1723.

⁴²GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719.

⁴³GStAPK, Rep. 7., Nr. 50, 27 November 1719. It is likely that this is Gerhardt Ernst Kriegs Graff von Lehndorff: GStAPK, EM 110g, Nr. 31, fols. 4-5. From the "*Vassaltabellen*" of 1724 (the EM manuscript material) we know that he was 38 years old and also held the title of Obrist over a Regiment of Grenadiers. He lived in Cassell and had no children. See also, GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719.

⁴⁴GStAPK, EM 110g, Nr. 31, fols. 4-5. From the "*Vassaltabellen*" of 1724 (the EM manuscript material) we know that he was 51 lived on his *Gutt* in his Amt and had one 8 year old son who lived at home.

⁴⁵GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 226. Kunheim, formerly of Amt Loetzen, and Lehndorff traded *Amthauptmannschaft* positions. Frederick William I personally approved request on 18 August 1723.

⁴⁶GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, 12 July 1718. He resigns under "gewißen Conditionen" although there is no further description.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*; GStAPK, OF 1269, fol. 15, 12 July 1718, Finckenstein resigns his position after purchasing position for 5000 taler. See also, GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719, where Finckenstein is still listed for 1719. In addition on 10 March 1718, Finckenstein via the *Regierung* appeals to Frederick William I to allow his *Amthauptmannschaft* to be combined with the, up to that point, vacant *Amthauptmannschaft* of Pr. Marck. There is no comment on the document and it apparently was not approved.

⁴⁸GStAPK, EM 110g, Nr. 31, fols. 4-5. From the "*Vassaltabellen*" of 1724 (the EM manuscript material) we know that he was 46 lived on his "Gutt," and had 9 children: 5 sons (ages 13, 6, 5, 3,1) and 4 daughters all of whom lived at home; see also, GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719.

⁴⁹After 19 November 1723, Frederick William I ordered in the 1722/23 budget that the

Amthauptmänner in Memel, Ragnit, Labiau, Barten, Oletzko, Lyck, Neidenburg, and Mohrungen were to have a *Verweser* with an annual salary of 80 Rt. See GStAPK, OF 14702, vol. 10, fol. 184, 19 November 1723. Total budgeted was 640 Rt.

⁵⁰GStAPK, EM 119b, Nr. 24, fol. 3; Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719. This document only lists names of current holders of the *Amthauptleute* and *Verweser* positions.

⁵¹GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, nr. 159, 22 June 1723. Lottum asks to be appointed and in correspondence to Berlin, Frederick William I's marginalia states: "Jah".

⁵²GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719. See also document dated 15 May 1719.

⁵³GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 159.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 13 September 1714.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, *Specification* of 8 September 1719.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

⁵⁷ABB, 4:1, pp. 6-9, *Immediatbericht des General-Directoriums*, Berlin, 28 January 1723.

⁵⁸After 19 November 1723, Frederick William I ordered in the 1722/23 budget that the *Amthauptmänner* in Memel, Ragnit, Labiau, Barten, Oletzko, Lyck, Neidenburg, and Mohrungen were to have a *Verweser* with an annual salary of 80 Rt. See GStAPK, OF 14702, vol. 10, fol. 184, 19 November 1723. Total budgeted was 640 Rt.

⁵⁹GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, *Specification* of 8 September 1719. See also documents dated 15 December 1718 and 11 January 1719. This appointment apparently carried through to Lehndorff's tenure. The appointment originated with the *Regierung* but was supported by Lehndorff in 1719.

⁶¹*Ibid.*; ABB, 4:1, p. 7.

⁶²GStAPK, EM 110g, Nr. 31, fols. 4-5; GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 177, From the "*Vassaltabellen*" of 1724 (the EM manuscript material) we know that he was 30 years old and also had the title of Obrist. Lt in the Finckenstein Regiment. He lived in Königsberg, had two children, both daughters.

⁶³GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 228, *Takesover Lehndorff, in Finck. Regiment.*

⁶⁴After 19 November 1723, Frederick William I ordered in the 1722/23 budget that the *Amthauptmänner* in Memel, Ragnit, Labiau, Barten, Oletzko, Lyck, Neidenburg, and Mohrungen were to have a *Verweser* with an annual salary of 80 Rt. See GStAPK, OF 14702, Bd. 10, fol. 184, 19 November 1723. Total budgeted was 640 Rt.

⁶⁵GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719.

⁶⁶GStAPK, EM 96b, Nr. 5, fol. 39, 1 March 1721. "...Fabian von Kunheim 29ten dieses Monats umb 3 Uhr nach mittage mit einem Vernüfftigen Thristlichen Abscheid diese Welt geseget..."; see also, GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719.

⁶⁷GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50.

⁶⁸GStAPK, EM 96b, Nr. 5, fol. 39, 1 March 1721. According to his will of 18 April 1712, all of his land (*Gütter*) was to go to his children while the revenues of his "Magdeburg *Gütter*" were to go to his wife, Anne Sophia (born Ostau). It also appears she was to receive 10,000 gulden.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, fol. 41, 31 December 1720. Request appears to be in the handwriting of Ostau. Approval of this request made by Frederick William I's signature in order to *Regierung* on 29 January 1721, see fol. 43

⁷⁰GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50. See also, ABB, 4:1, pp. 6-9, *Immediatbericht des General-Directoriums*, Berlin, 28 January 1723. This position was approved and with a salary of 80 Rt. per year according to the document contained in the *Acta Borussica*, however, other manuscript material suggest 100 Rt. was to be paid per year.

⁷¹GStAPK, EM 96b, Nr. 5, fol. 47 and Gen. Dir., Ostpr., I, nr. 164.

⁷²*Ibid.*, fol. 52; GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 164. Frederick William I personally approves salary.

⁷³GStAPK, EM 96b, Nr. 5, fol. 51, no date, received by *Regierung* on 28 February 1729. Captain Alexander Graf von Dohna's name is first mentioned by the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* but it should be noted that for the previous months (since Graf and Grafen Dohna died in October 1728), the manuscript material shows more concern by Frederick William I and the *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* about the *Recrutencasse* payment not having been received than with any concern about a particular candidate. This Dohna could have been suggested, therefore, by the *Regierung* although there is no documentation to support this.

⁷⁴GStAPK, EM 96b, Nr. 5, fols. 57-57 Rückseite. Dietrich Albrecht von Lesgewang made known his desire for appointment to the *Regierung*. In this document, he wanted the *Regierung* and king to be reminded of the fact that he had "served for fifteen years in times of war as well as in difficult military campaigns." A month later, the *Amthauptmann* Dohna was notified by the *Regierung* that "der Hauptmann zu Liebstadt und Mohrunge soll jemanden zur dortigen vacantzen Verweserschaft in Vorschlag bringen." His first choice was rejected by the *Regierung* (the current *Verweser* in *Amt Pr. Holland*, Captain von Saucken). His second choice, and his second choice that was first suggested to him by the *Regierung* was accepted and apparently confirmed by Frederick William I in early 1733 although there the manuscript material from Frederick William I is not available. The directives from the *Regierung* that typically follow such a confirmation are available and show he was appointed. In addition, the *Regierung* in July 1734 appointed Lieutenant Friedrich von Braxein to temporarily fill-in for König while he travelled to Halle.

⁷⁵GStAPK, EM 96b, Nr. 5, fol. 87. After some discussion about the exact amount he was to pay into the *Recrutencasse* as well as how that money would be divided once in the *Recrutencasse*, it was determined he would receive normal salary for this position. This case gives an interesting account of what happened to the money once it was paid into Frederick William I's *Recrutencasse*. According to the manuscript material, 20 Rt was to go directly into the *Recrutencasse* while another 10 Rt was to go to the *Geheimte Etats Cantzeley zu Berlin*. He paid 1 Rt as "Stempel geld." There was also 48 gulden payment for postage. He paid, therefore, a sum of 31 Rt and 48 gulden for a position that would pay him 80 Rt. per year for as long as he worked in that position (usually for life).

⁷⁶After 19 November 1723, Frederick William I ordered in the 1722/23 budget that the *Amthauptmannen* in Memel, Ragnit, Labiau, Barten, Oletzko, Lyck, Neidenburg, and Mohrunge were to have a *Verweser* with an annual salary of 80 Rt. See GStAPK, OF 14702, Bd. 10, fol. 184, 19 November 1723. Total budgeted was 640 Rt.

⁷⁷GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, November 1718. Dohna requests permission to give the *Amthauptmannschaft* to his son. Frederick William I approves this request.

⁷⁸GStAPK, OF 1269, fol. 29 Rückseite, 25 November 1719; Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719.

⁷⁹*Ibid.* "Verweser, nach keiner bestellt und wird vor denselben, von dem ObristLeutenant grafen von Dohna, das Verweser Inhalt gesucht, welches zu Preuss. Marck vacant geworden." Frederick William I's marginalia directly below this states: "Soll weis der (or dieser) schreiben FW". I believe, however, that this refers to the entire document rather than this last description of the *Specification*. In this particular case, I believe further that Frederick William I's marginalia is not particularly important.

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 1 and 9 February 1720. Frederick William I's marginalia notes of the suggestion: "guht FW".

⁸¹ABB, 4:1, pp. 6-9, Immediatbericht des General=Directoriums, Berlin, 28 January 1723.

⁸²After 19 November 1723, Frederick William I ordered in the 1722/23 budget that the *Amthauptmänner* in Memel, Ragnit, Labiau, Barten, Oletzko, Lyck, Neidenburg, and Mohrunen were to have a *Verweser* with an annual salary of 80 Rt. See GStAPK, OF 14702, vol. 10, fol. 184, 19 November 1723. Total budgeted was 640 Rt.

⁸³GStAPK, EM 103b, Nr. 21.

⁸⁴GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719.

⁸⁵GStAPK, OF 14702, vol. 11, fol. 66, 16 June 1723. Dönhoff was apparently allowed to trade Egel for his position in Colberg, Pomerania. "Nachdem Wir im Gnaden gewilliget daß unser General Lieuteneint Graff von Dönhoff die Amthauptmannschaft Colberg in Pommern so der General Major von Egel hat, vertauschen dürfte: Alß haben Wir euch solches hiermit allergnädigst zu Wißen fügen wollen, und habt Ihr, wenn gemeldter seiner Introduction sich bey Euch melden wird, sodann thun...."; See also, GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719.

⁸⁶ABB, 4:1, pp. 6-9, Immediatbericht des General=Directoriums, Berlin, 28 January 1723.

⁸⁷GStAPK, OF 14702, vol. 11, fol. 66, 16 June 1723; GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 225, 14 and 16 June 1723.

⁸⁸GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719.

⁸⁹*Ibid.* According to this document: "...bekant von SKM nichts, sondern wird von dem von Kettler bezahlet."

⁹⁰GStAPK, Rep 7., Nr. 50, 23 September 1719. Kettler asks to sell Hauptmannschaft to Rosen. There exists a receipt from October confirming the sale.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 22 March 1722. In addition, Brumsee notes: "...daß der Baron von Ketler als Hauptmann der Ämter mir nicht gerne müßen wil." It also appears he paid 400 Rt. to gain the position.

⁹²*Ibid.*, 10 April 1720. Major in Stillischen Regiment.

⁹³Mentioned in GStAPK, OF 14702, vol. 4, fol. 134, 8 April 1723, as released from

service for poor performance. "Die bisherige *Amthauptmann* von Rose ... seiner dienst verlaßen ... So viel an ihm ist abwenden, warnen und verhüten soll, abforderlich had er dahin zu sehen, daß denen unterthanen prompte und schleunige Justiz administriret dieselben von denen Amtsschreibern mit keinen ungebührlichen Gerichts,, kosten, oder anderren exactionen belegt sondern vielmehr vor ihre Conseroation und beßeres Aufnehmen auff all weise gesorget werde...."

⁹⁴GStAPK, OF 14702, vol. 4, fol. 134, 8 April 1723.

⁹⁵He was also allowed to live in the "*Ambthause*" for free.

⁹⁶GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719; GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, II-Materien, Nr. 163, 2 March 1726. Son of Gen. Major Graff Dohna. Christoph Dohna had to pay 30 Rt. to the Recrutten Casse.

⁹⁷GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719. "...und haben SKM in einem an gedachten General graff von Dohna abgelassenen, und der *Regierung* communicirten hand Schreiben festgesetzt, daß die 100 tal. Verweser gehalt, bey dem Amte bleiben sollen.

⁹⁸See also Amt Bartenstein.

⁹⁹GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*. See also Amt Bartenstein. Former *Verweser* to Lyck. Appears to have died in 1720.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, 7 May 1720, *Regierung* to Ilgen.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, *Specification* of 8 September 1719.

¹⁰³GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719.

¹⁰⁴After 19 November 1723, Frederick William I ordered in the 1722/23 budget that the *Amthauptmanner* in Memel, Ragnit, Labiau, Barten, Oletzko, Lyck, Neidenburg, and Mohrungen were to have a *Verweser* with an annual salary of 80 Rt. See GStAPK, OF 14702, vol. 10, fol. 184, 19 November 1723. Total budgeted was 640 Rt.

¹⁰⁵Rep. 7, Nr. 50.

¹⁰⁶GStAPK, EM 119b, Nr. 22, fol. 2; GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, 5 December 1717. This document suggests that it was in the notification of Gröben's death that Holstein was suggested. Interestingly, Krollmann, fol. 285, notes he was not born in East Prussia but rather, Potsdam.

¹⁰⁷GStAPK, EM 119b, Nr. 23, fol. 2, 31 March 1718; GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, 2 May 1719. Waldburg appears to have left vacant this position in 1719 (reason unclear). The *Regierung* and Lithuanian Kammer jointly suggest that this position be filled in a document dated 2 May 1719.

¹⁰⁸GStAPK, EM 119b, Nr. 24, fol. 3, 25 August 1718.

¹⁰⁹GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, 2 May 1719. Suggestion by *Regierung* and Lithuanian Kammer. Frederick William I approves: "duderberg soll sein...."

¹¹⁰ABB, 4:1, pp. 6-9, *Immediatbericht* des General-Directoriums, Berlin, 28 January 1723.

¹¹¹GStAPK, EM 126b, Nr. 2.

¹¹²*Ibid.* Also appears that he was appointed to *Kriegs und Domänenkammer* in East Prussia on 13 April 1723. See GStAPK, OF 14702, vol. 4, fol. 140, 13 April 1723.

¹¹³ABB, 4:1, pp. 6-9, Immediatbericht des General=Directoriums, Berlin, 28 January 1723.

¹¹⁴GStAPK, EM 126b, Nr. 2.

¹¹⁵GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, 16 October 1714.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, 20 January 1714.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, 8 February 1714. In a receipt from the General Charge-Casse, Troben paid 62 Rt., 12 gulden.

¹¹⁸GStAPK, EM 103b, Nr. 21.

¹¹⁹GStAPK, EM 103b, Nr. 21. See also Amt Oletzko. Held both *Amthauptmannschaft* positions until 1718 when he gave up the Amt Sehesten position. When the *Regierung* questioned this practice, Hirsch responded: "Weilen der Verweser zu Oletzko sich ratione des Ampts Oletzko nur vor dem Capitain Stach geführtet, dieses aber nunmehr verstorben, S. K. M. auch das ampt Sehesten vor wenige Zeit dem Cammer Junker von Canitz gegeben, und also abzuwarten seyn wird, ob derselbe besagtes Ampt Selbst administiren, oder auch bey Sr. K. M. sich einen Verweser ausbitten wolle; alß hatt die Regierung befehlen diesen bericht nur ad acta zu legen, ohne daß eine Relation deshalb an S. K. M. abgestattet verdi(?) 22 Dec: 1717".

¹²⁰GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50.

¹²¹GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 223. There is only an indirect mention of von Bredow as the holder of this position prior to Canitz. It is not clear from the manuscript material when and for how long he held this position, should he have held it at all.

¹²²GStAPK, EM 130b, Nr. 68

¹²³GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50

¹²⁴GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 223. Also appears from the manuscript material that Canitz purchased this position for 5000 Rt. with Frederick William I's approval (although the king apparently did not remember granting approval or it was pre-maturely granted which from a reading of other manuscript material appears possible). On 25 March 1726, The General Directory reports to the king that "we want you to know how much Kammerherr Canitz paid for the *Amthauptmannschaft* to Sehesten...5000 Rthr." Note that this is after the 1725 order by Frederick William I that these positions in East Prussia were no longer to be sold. For that order see, Gen. Dir., Ostpr., I, Nr. 162, fol. 1.

¹²⁵GStAPK, EM 130b, Nr. 69.

¹²⁶GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50. See also ABB, 4:1, pp. 6-9, Immediatbericht des General=Directoriums, Berlin, 28 January 1723. This document shows Frederick William I declared no salary for this Amt. This is clearly different than what other manuscript material shows.

¹²⁷GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 223. Groben requests to receive next available *Amthauptmannschaft* position and in particular, Amt Sehesten. He received Frederick William I's approval and the position in September 1726.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, Nr. 229. This however is questioned because Canitz was still living in 1729

and protests that this is his position as he paid 5000 Rt. for it. He requests that he maintain this understanding in order that he does not lose his "capital". See document dated 23 July 1729. It appears Frederick William I upholds this request and does not appoint Kreutzen.

¹²⁹GStAPK, EM 137.

¹³⁰Ibid., Nr. 18. Wallenrodt died, however, in 1741.

¹³¹GStAPK, EM 137b, Nr. 18, fol. 7, 25 August 1718, Special Befehl. Was issued for the transfer of the position to Wallenrodt in 1724; GStAPK, OF 1269, fol. 21. Authorisation for the transfer was sent from Kameke to the *Regierung* on 25 August 1718.

¹³²GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nr. 160. This appears to be the same Wallenrodt as the one who held this position before Schlieben. The course of events and circumstances in which this office transferred are not available through the manuscript material. The manuscript material, however, does shed light on the fact that Wallenrodt asked for an annual salary of 600 Rt. and was granted 100 Rt. salary. There was apparently some discussion as late as 1730 as to whether the 600 Rt. should be granted and paid from an account under the authority of the *Regierung* since they were either in support of this salary or candidate. The manuscript is unclear on this point although it suggests they probably were the instigator of the re-appointment.

¹³³ABB, 4:1, pp. 6-9, Immediatbericht des General=Directoriums, Berlin, 28 January 1723.

¹³⁴GStAPK, EM 137c, Nr. 67. Reference is made to this individual only briefly. He was not allowed to engage in "foreign service."

¹³⁵GStAPK, EM 137c, Nr. 67.

¹³⁶GStAPK, Rep. 7, Nr. 50, *Specification* of 8 September 1719.

¹³⁷Ibid. Perbandt received 600 Rt. per year as Hof- und Kammer Rat.

¹³⁸GStAPK, General Directory, Ostpreußen, I-Bestellungssachen, Nrs. 223 and 229.

Appendix E - Amthauptleute and Verwesern in 1722¹

Amthauptmann	Amt Name	Verwese Approved	Held Military Title	General Location in East Prussia	Direct Involvement in Verweser Appointment by Regierung or Frederick William I	Name of Verweser
Major Graf von Lehndorff	Memel	Yes	Yes	North	n/a	Elias Daniel von Canitz
Amthauptmann von Creutzen	Tilsit	No	No	North-East	n/a	Hof- und Kammer Rat von Perbandt*
Commissariatspräsident von Lesgewang	Ragnit	Yes	No	North-East	n/a	Capitain von Perbandt*
Obrister Graf von Lehndorff	Insterburg	No	Yes	North-East	n/a	Gotthardt Christoff von Dönhofft
Generalmajor Prinz von Holstein	Labiau and Neuhausen	Yes	Yes	North-Central	Regierung	Major von Dudersberg*
Landvogt von Bredau	Schaak-en	No	No	North-Central	n/a	ordered not to have one

¹Adapted from ABB, 4:1, pp. 6-8, *Immediatbericht des General=Directoriums*, Berlin, 28 January 1723. For further detail, see Appendix D.

- * = appointment was prior to 1722, position after 1722 is not completely certain
- † = appointment probably prior to 1722 although the exact date is not completely certain which is also true for their position after 1722

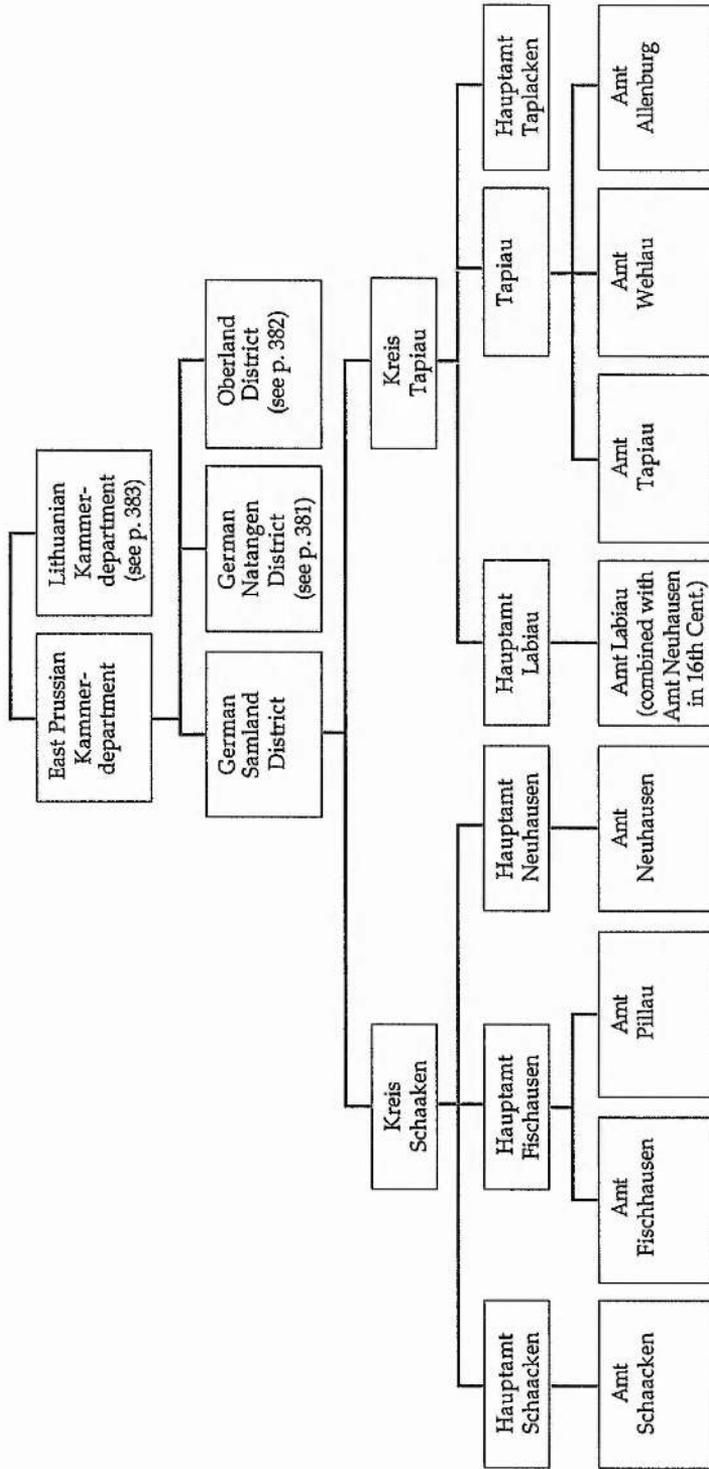
Amthauptmann	Amt Name	Verwese Approved	Held Military Title	General Location in East Prussia	Direct Involvement in Verweser Appointment by Regierung or Frederick William I	Name of Verweser
Vogt von Tettau	Fischhausen	No	No	North-West	n/a	n/a
Tribunalsrat Graf von Wallen-rodt	Tapiau	No	No	North-Central	n/a	ordered not to have one in 1723
Capitän Graf von Finckenstein	Barten	Yes	Yes	Central	n/a	William Ludwig von der Gröben*
Amthauptmann Graf von Schlieben	Rastenburg	No	No	Central	Regierung	Major Duderberg*
Kämmerer von Canitz	Sehesten	No	No	South-Central	n/a	Büttner*
Amthauptmann von Foller	Rhein	No	No	South-Central	n/a	n/a
Brigadier von Canitz	Angerburg	No	Yes	Central	Frederick William I	Wolf. Fried. Truches, Grafen Waldburg*
General-lieutenant Graf von Dönhoff	Oletzko	Yes	Yes	East-Central	Regierung	Capitain Johann Christoff von Hirsch?*

Amthauptmann	Amt Name	Verwese Approved	Held Military Title	General Location in East Prussia	Direct Involvement in Verweser Appointment by Regierung or Frederick William I	Name of Verweser
Tribunalsrat von Kunheim	Lötzen (Sehesten)	No	No	South-Central	n/a	n/a
Obrister von Marwitz	Lyck	Yes	Yes	East-Central	n/a	Extraordina- ir Hoffger- ichts Rat von Lesge- wang†
Capitän Graf von Finckenstein	Johannis- burg	No	Yes	South-Central	n/a	Wolfgang Friedrich Reichs Erbtruch- ess und Graff zu Waldburg †
Obrist- lieutenant von Gaudecker	Ortels- burg	No	Yes	South-Central	n/a	Capitain von Perbandt
Obrister Graf von Dohna	Neiden- burg and Soldau	Yes	Yes	South- West	Amts Kammer	Obrist Lt. Bojen* ²
Kämmerer von Rosen	Oster-ode and Hohen- stein	No	No	South- Central	Regierung	Major Johann Friedrich von Brumsee

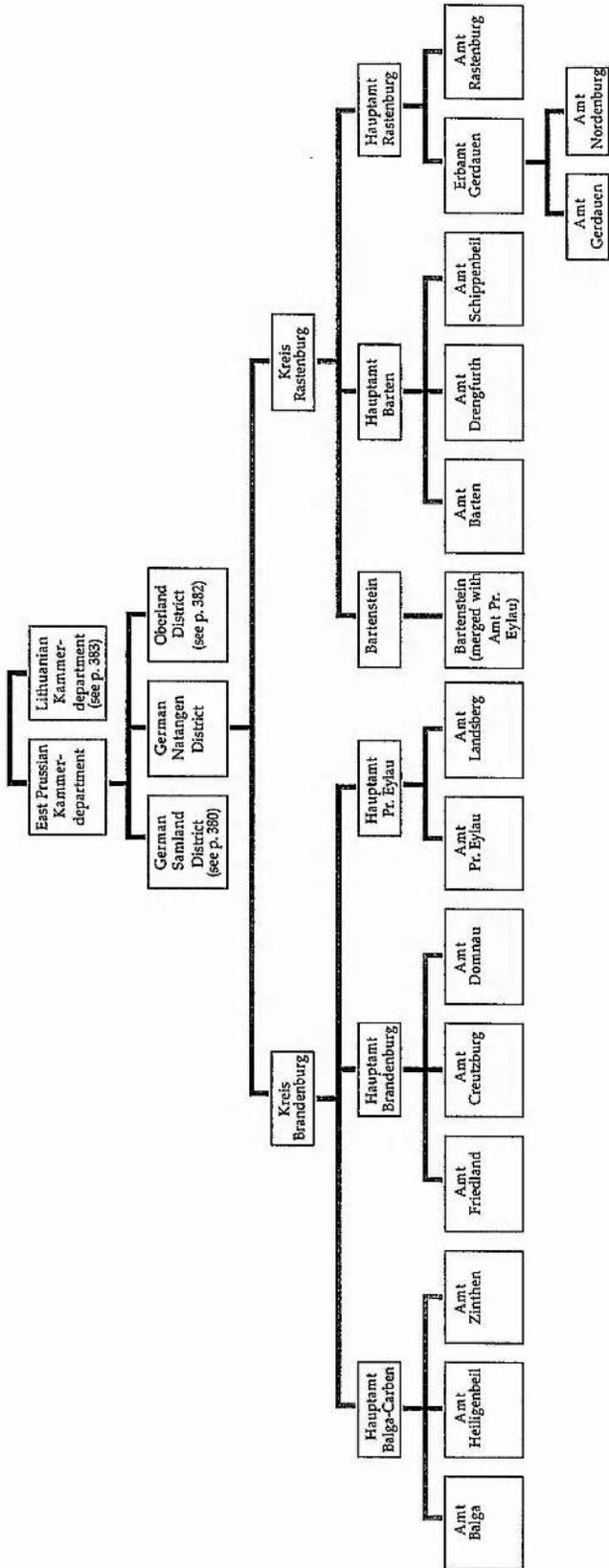
²*Verweser* approved by Frederick William I in 1723.

Amthauptmann	Amt Name	Verwese Approved	Held Military Title	General Location in East Prussia	Direct Involvement in Verweser Appointment by Regierung or Frederick William I	Name of Verweser
Generalmajor von der Gröben	Marienwerder and Riesen-burg	No	Yes	East-Central	n/a	n/a
Tribunalsrat Graf von Finckenstein	Preußisch-Mark	No	No	East-Central	n/a	n/a
General von der Infanterie Graf zu Dohna	Preußisch-Holland	No	Yes	East-Central	Regierung	Major von Deppen*
Generalfeldmarschall Graf zu Dohna	Mohrungen and Lieb-stadt	Yes	Yes	East-Central	Regierung	Obrist Lt. von Reichau*
Tribunalsrat von Röder	Balga	No	No	North-West	in 1725, Regierung	none appear until 1725
Generalfeldmarschall Herzog von Holstein	Brandenburg	No	No	North-West	n/a	none appear until 1730
Geheimer Kriegs-rat von Kalnein	Preußisch-Eylau and Bertenstein	No	No	Central	n/a	none appear between 1699 and 1737

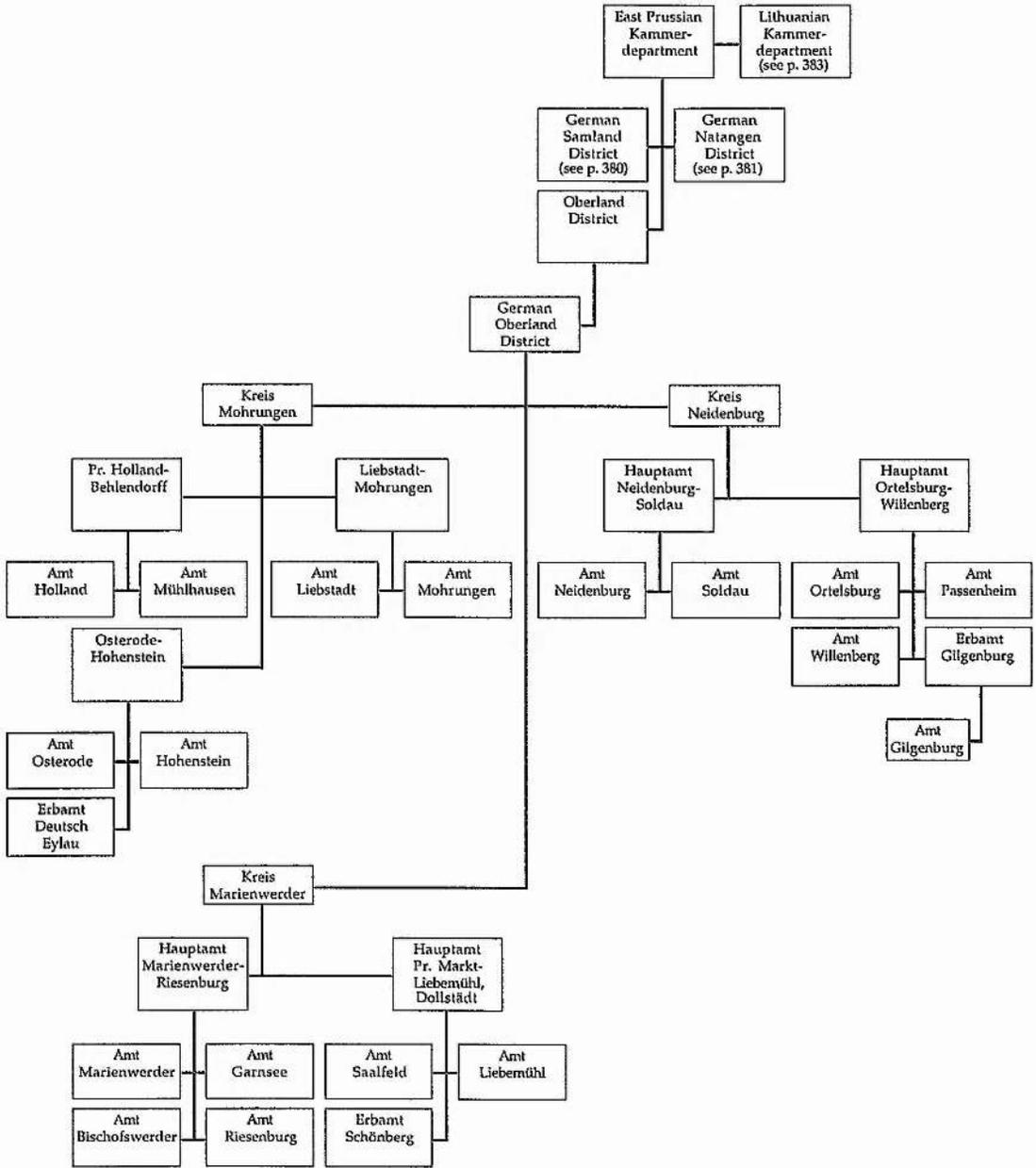
Appendix F
East Prussian Amtshauptmannschaften
German Samland District



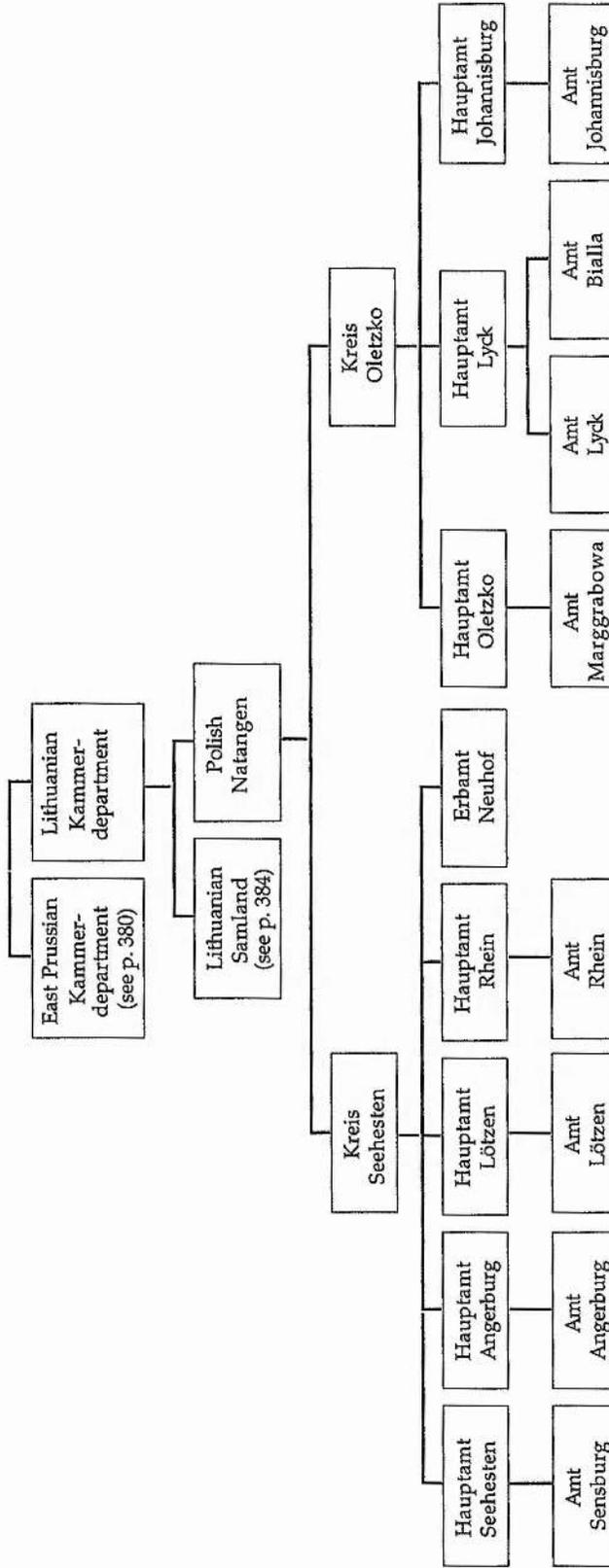
Appendix F
East Prussian Amt(haupt)mannschaften
German Natangen District



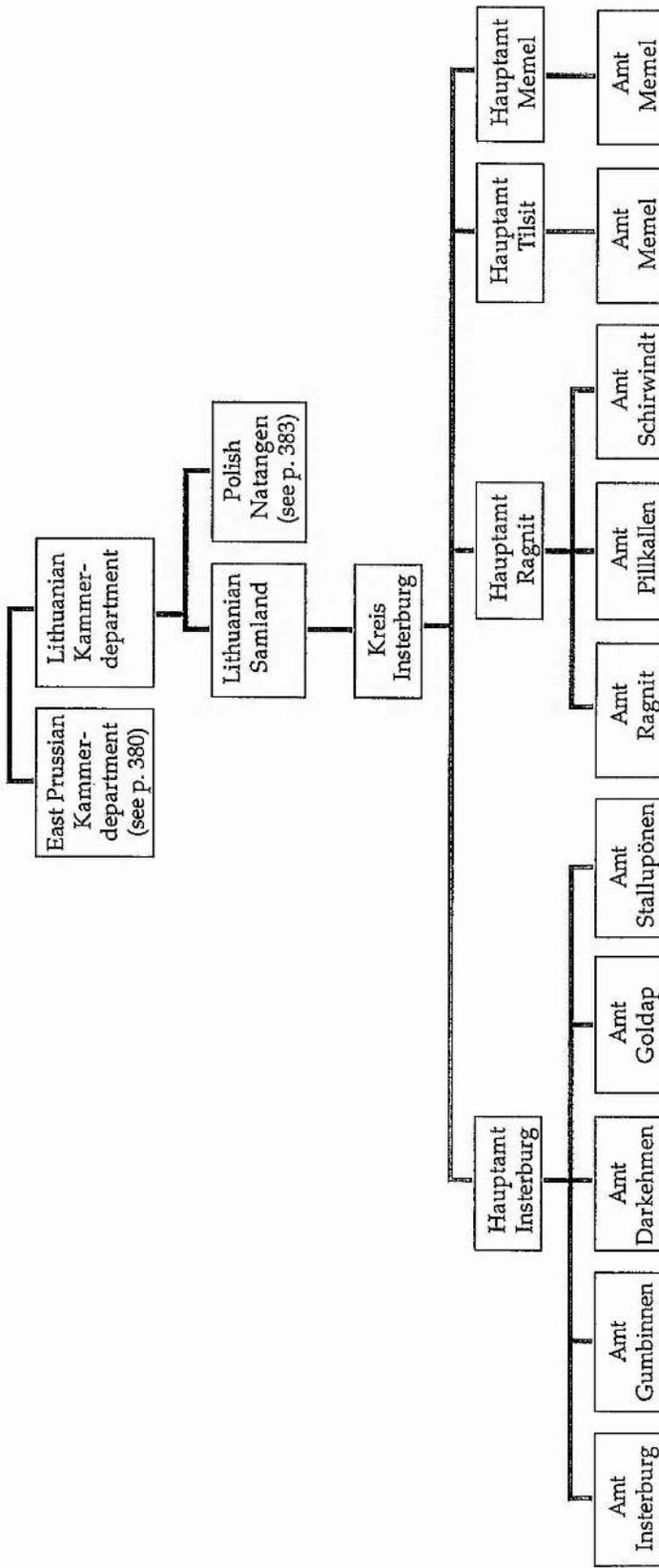
Appendix F
 East Prussian Amthauptmannschaften
 Oberland District



Appendix F
East Prussian Amthauptmannschaften
Polish Natangen District



Appendix F
East Prussian Amthauptmannschaften
Lithuanian Samland District



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nrs. 1, 4

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