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The Influence of Hanover on British Politics during the Napoleonic Wars.

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Abstract:

The accession of George I in 1714 saw Great Britain tied to the Electorate of Hanover in a personal union. This union would last until Victoria's accession in 1837 when, due to differing inheritance laws, Hanover broke out of the union. Traditionally, a personal union is considered to exist when two independent polities share the same sovereign, without any overlapping jurisdiction and administration. By the reign of George III, the only Hanoverian administrative body in Britain was the German Chancery in London. Designed to serve as a conduit between the sovereign and his Hanoverian officials, the German Chancery was theoretically nothing more than a glorified post office. The Napoleonic Wars changed all this.

Hanover spent much of the war under foreign occupation. This caused the German Chancery in London, led by the ambitious Count Münster, to function as a government in exile. Through the examination of diplomatic correspondence, Münster's private letters, and the reports of military personnel, this thesis examines how the Hanoverian faction sought to influence British policy for their own interests, and fought to retain autonomy when infringed upon by Westminster. Previous studies have claimed that the personal union, as a political construct, does not fit the political relationship between George III's domains, offering composite monarchy as a substitute. The findings within this thesis supports the premise that a personal union is too rigid a term in its current state, but rejects composite monarchy. Influence was cultivated by both Hanoverians and Britons alike, but wielded on a pragmatic basis that retained and defended the independent nature of each.

Acknowledgements

The writing of this thesis would not have been possible without the support and advice of a number of people whose help has been greatly appreciated and deserves particular mention here. First of all I'd like to thank my supervisors, Drs. Mark Lawrence and Ambrogio Caiani. Both have offered much needed critique on my work throughout this process, and their knowledge of recent publications relevant to this topic has been invaluable. As my primary supervisor, Dr. Lawrence deserves specific thanks for his continuous patience and understanding of my irregular study routine that being a part-time student entailed. In addition, both made themselves readily available for general support and advice, the subject matter being academic or otherwise. Similarly the support staff for the School of History, in particular Faye Beesley, has been greatly appreciated. The efforts Faye goes to to help all History postgraduates throughout their studies is an invaluable asset to both the School, myself and the wider postgraduate community. I must also extend my thanks to the staff of the National Archives at Kew, and the British Library, for their help and assistance throughout my research. Finally on the academic front I wish to thank the Directors of the Society for Friends of Foreigners in Distress for allowing me to examine their historical material. In particular I wish to thank Valerie Goodhart and her husband John Riley for allowing me to visit their home, the use of their guestroom while I made notes, and importantly supplying me with coffee and biscuits while I worked. Their hospitality was deeply appreciated and invaluable to me.

Specific thanks must be extended to the small group of friends and family who have supported me throughout my studies. Of particular note are those who aided me greatly by agreeing to proof read my work at various stages of the course. Without the support and keen grammatical eyes of my Grandmother Tina Stagg, and fellow students Helena Power and

Ralph Roberts, this thesis would not be to the high standard I believe it to be. In addition, being a part-time Research student can make for an isolated experience. Therefore the companionship of Helena Power, Ralph Roberts, George-Thomas Rohrich, and a scattering of other postgraduates has been greatly appreciated. The first three in particular allowed me to retain a presence in student life in spite of the irregularity of my being on campus. Two final proof readers who deserve specific mention are my parents Rosie and John Eckett, who in addition to providing their thoughts on my writing style have always been there for support, and when needed, a gentle push in motivation.

There are two final people who deserve my specific gratitude and appreciation. First and foremost is my partner of six years Jonathan Griffiths. As well as tolerating all things Hanoverian, his enduring patience in dealing with any academic stress has been more than appreciated. Of particular note however, was his agreement to move from Wales to the other side of the country, to a county he'd never visited and rent a house neither of us had seen. Without this leap into the unknown, and his faith in my ability to pursue my academic interests, I doubt very much whether this paper would have ever been produced. Finally I wish to extend my greatest thanks to my Grandfather, Richard Stagg. As well as providing comments on my writing at various stages of production, his genuine interest in my subject matter has provided for many lengthy phone calls theorising on where my research could lead me next. It is not just his interest in my work that deserves my gratitude however. His great belief in the merits of further education, not just for myself but for his other three grandchildren, has resulted in what is now nine years of generous support, both financial and advisory. Without the help he was willing and able to provide, my studies, both past and present, would have been much harder to pursue and much more stressful. In acknowledgement of the extensive aid he has provided to me, my brother and cousins, I wish to dedicate this thesis to him.

A note on Covid-19

As a result of the 2020-21 health crises many libraries, archives, and institutions closed their doors to safeguard their staff, students and visitors. While being the best response to such a situation, this has resulted in some difficulties in accessing some material that could have been used for this thesis. I was fortunate to have done the majority of my primary research in the first year of the part-time course, the plan being to focus on secondary material in the second academic year, 2019-2020. This approach unexpectedly resulted in limited access to these secondary documents between March and July 2020. However, I would like to thank my supervisors Drs. Mark Lawrence and Ambrogio Caiani for granting me access to their own private libraries, which in addition to expanding digital libraries, helped alleviate this problem. Overall the source material referenced within this thesis is a good representation of the many materials that cover Britain and Hanover during the Napoleonic era. While the secondary material is not as extensive as I would have preferred, I do not think that this thesis has been adversely affected by the current health crises and the resulting institutional closures.

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Introduction

For over a decade, scholars of the Napoleonic period have started to reassess the importance of second tier states in Europe which had been neglected in favour of five great powers: Britain, France, Prussia, Austria, and Russia. This list could be extended to include Spain, although its history is sometimes written in an ancillary capacity to the British experience of the war. This interest in pursuing the experience of the 'lesser states' has developed all the more since the bicentenary of the conflict, with a wealth of new literature covering many diverse aspects such as economic considerations of the Rhine territories,¹ the Riga export trade,² or Napoleon's relationship with the Hungarian estates.³ A topic that has received much attention and has benefited largely from this revived interest, is what is traditionally termed the 'Third Germany'. Abigail Green noted that the scholarly interest in the 'Third Germany' was a conscious attempt to move away from the predominant narratives of Austrian and Prussian histories. She claimed, quite convincingly, that the Borussianism school that preceded revisionists had attempted to portray German history to reflect contemporary politics of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century's.⁴ As such scholars of the 'Third Germany' focused on the middle and lesser states of Germany.⁵ Green's points reflect the increasing emphasis that is being placed on the need to examine the affairs of the smaller states of the former Holy Roman Empire, and how they traversed the tumultuous

¹ Joep Schenk, 'The Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine', in Beatrice de Graaf, Ido de Haan, and Brian Vick, *Securing Europe after Napoleon: 1815 and the New European Security Culture*, (Cambridge, 2019), pp. 75-94.

² Anita Čerpinska, 'Riga Export Trade at the Time of the Continental Blockade (1807-1812)', in Katherine Aaslestad and Johan Joor (eds.), *Revisiting Napoleon's Continental System*, (Hampshire, 2015), pp. 241-258.

³ Orsolya Szakály, 'Opportunity or Threat? Napoleon and the Hungarian Estates', in Michael Rowe (ed.), *Collaboration and Resistance in Napoleonic Europe: State-formation in an Age of Upheaval, c. 1800-1815*, (Hampshire, 2003), pp. 153-168.

⁴ Abigail Green, *Fatherlands: State-Building and Nationhood in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, (Cambridge, 2001), p. 8.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

period of the Napoleonic Wars. Brendan Simms echoes these sentiments in the introduction of his edited collection of essays, *The Hanoverian Dimension in British History, 1714-1837*.⁶ While recent scholars have taken an interest in re-examining the place of Hanover in British historical discourse, the typical approach had been to side-line the former electorate. This, Simms explains, is partly because the Hanoverian connection did not fit the narrative of British history being an 'island story'.⁷ Anything that countered the idea of Britain being the sole protagonist in its own theatrical production was thrown aside. Thankfully, with revisionism seeking to move the historical narrative on from the hegemony of the former Great Powers, the full impact of the 'lesser states' is now being brought to the spotlight. The result of this ongoing research, in regards to the 'Third Germany', has been the formation of a new narrative, one that supplements and critiques older works that placed an emphasis on the decline of the Habsburgs, or the ascendancy of Prussia.

Studying the experiences of smaller states such as Bavaria, Württemberg, or Baden can enhance our understanding of the period greatly, by revising and scrutinising their influence.⁸ That said, much more can be done, and one former electoral state has received less attention than it is due. The former Electorate of Hanover is singularly placed not just to add to the historiography of the 'Third Germany', but to enhance our understanding of Britain's affiliated position with the Holy Roman Empire, due to the succession of the Electoral House of Guelph to the British throne.⁹ In the case of the lesser German states'

⁶ Brendan Simms & Torsten Rlotte (eds.), *The Hanoverian Dimension in British History, 1714-1837*, (Cambridge, 2010).

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 1-2.

⁸ The study of 'Third Germany' has received increasing scholarly interest in the last ten years. For instance, focused pieces like Markus J. Prutsch, *Making Sense of Constitutional Monarchism in Post-Napoleonic France and Germany*, (Eastbourne, 2013) provide comparisons between the smaller states, in this case Bavaria and Baden. Other works investigate how the smaller states interacted with the Great Powers of Austria and Prussia, thus revising the one-sided narratives produced in the 20th century. One work that accomplishes this is Jasper Heinzen, *Making Prussians, Raising Germans*, (Cambridge, 2017), who investigates how Prussia sought to integrate the peoples and cultures of annexed territories post-1866.

⁹ One such work that investigates the relationship between Britain and Hanover over issues relating to the Holy Roman Empire is, Jeremy Black, *Continental Commitment: Britain, Hanover and interventionism 1714-1793*, (Oxon, 2005).

relations with Britain, Hanover is unique in this respect. Through its' dynastic ties, Hanover provided Britain with a natural gateway into the geo-political melting pot that was Central Europe during this period; a diplomatic boon that the Guelphic Electors could offer with particular ease, due to their residency in London. The period between 1802 and 1815 in particular allows for a deeper examination of Britain's relationship with its continental partner, due to Hanover suffering foreign occupation for much of the war.¹⁰ How Hanoverian and British statesmen adjusted to this fact is a subject that deserves more attention. To examine the Hanoverian impact on Britain's experience of the Napoleonic War effectively, three key elements, each covered in their own dedicated chapter, demand scrutiny: the influence of Hanoverian statesmen resident in Britain, the union's impact on the war effort and, crucially, the bilateral relationship throughout the peace process. Each element merits more comprehensive research, and while these micro-historical studies are examined concisely, this thesis aims to shed light on the Anglo-Hanoverian union throughout the course of the Napoleonic period, contributing to a new 'macro-history' of the Guelphic dominions in Europe.

Of the three aforementioned elements, the first is crucial in providing the necessary context, creating a better understanding of the wider ramifications that are examined in the later chapters. Within chapter one, a large section is dedicated to understanding the views and actions of the head of the German Chancery in London, Count Ernst Münster. During the war period and the occupation/annexation of the Electorate, the Hanoverian Minister found himself to be the *de facto* government in exile, and his influence and position within the British political sphere transformed as a result. While the Elector remained the autocratic head of the Hanoverian Government, the Guelphic dynasty was required, by British law, to

¹⁰ Torsten Riotte provides a good summary of this particular aspect, suggesting British Ministers were handicapped by their Monarchs Hanoverian policies. Torsten Riotte, 'George III and Hanover', in Brendan Simms & Torsten Riotte (eds.), *The Hanoverian Dimension in British History, 1714-1837*, (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 78-79.

keep their Hanoverian and British interests separate.¹¹ This resulted in the German Chancery, having no other administrative arms to answer to on the hostile continent, being the only body that could promote Hanoverian interests with the British authorities.

To examine this changing relationship, the first chapter of this thesis examines how the Count and the Elector reacted to the Prussian occupation of 1806, compared to the British reaction. This is a particularly important event for analysing the British-Hanoverian relationship of this period. Prussia had, until the occupation, been a target of British diplomatic overtures, the hope being that the descendants of Frederick the Great would join with Britain in coalition against the French.¹² Naturally, as a result of the Prussian occupation, Hanoverians took a rather different view. How George III's two polities navigated this issue is instrumental in examining the political relationship between the British and Hanoverian Ministers. The rest of the chapter puts this relationship under further scrutiny, by investigating the political relationship between Whitehall and the German Chancery in the immediate years after 1806. In so doing, the typical attitude of the two administrations can be gauged.

The central part of this study places the attitudes and policies of Westminster and the Chancery within the wider context of the war effort after 1806. As the Napoleonic wars are an extensive field of study, the themes covered in the second chapter have been selected carefully, maintaining the aim to add a new perspective to existing historiography. To achieve this, two particular theatres of war were chosen: maritime and espionage. Espionage is a natural element of study when considering the impact of the German Chancery on the British war effort. Count Münster, prior to being the Minister in London, had built a reputation within the Hanoverian diplomatic service, and had represented Hanover in the

¹¹ Jeremy Black, 'Hanoverian Nexus: Walpole and the Electorate', in Simms & Riotte (eds.), *Hanoverian Dimension in British History*, p. 12.

¹² Riotte, 'George III and Hanover', in Simms and Riotte (eds.), *Hanoverian Dimension in British History*, p. 79.

courts of the Italian peninsula and Russia.¹³ Once taking up his post in London, he maintained diplomatic contacts across the continent and, due to his proximity to the Elector, was in frequent contact with the Hanoverian representatives abroad. The retention of this second group of men across Napoleonic Europe allowed Münster to cultivate a network of diplomat-spies in lands bound to the French, and to pass on vital information to his British counterparts.

The study of maritime affairs on Anglo-Hanoverian relations is far more rewarding than first impressions suggest; the Hanoverians not having much of a sea-faring reputation at the time.¹⁴ However, the acquisition of Heligoland by the British would come to be vital in safeguarding Münster's communication links.¹⁵ Remarkably, the thoughts and opinions of British officers stationed on Heligoland provide some insight into British perceptions of their German cousins, Heligoland being a frequent terminal for Hanoverians travelling to and from the mainland. By examining both espionage and maritime affairs collectively, a deeper understanding of the Electorate's importance becomes evident. A beneficial appendage to this is that the British perception of the Hanoverian comes to light by examining the thoughts of British agents. When compared to social attitudes, gauged via the study of philanthropic efforts, the impact of the Hanoverian union can be seen at a social level. This is crucial in truly understanding political influence. An understanding of these social ramifications helps clarify the sense of responsibility British society had for the other subjects of the House of Guelph. By its very nature, any sense of social responsibility can alter the way we view Anglo-Hanoverian relations.

¹³ George Herbert Count Münster, *Political Sketches of the State of Europe From 1814-1867*, (Forgotten Books, London, 2017), p. 7.

¹⁴ Nicholas Harding, 'North African Piracy, The Hanoverian Carrying Trade, and the British State, 1728-1828', *The Historical Journal* 43.1 (2000), pp. 28-29.

¹⁵ The acquisition of Heligoland became vital for British smuggling to counter the Continental System. Silvia Marzagali, 'The Continental System: A View From The Sea', in Katherine B. Aaslestad & Johan Joor (eds.), *Revisiting Napoleon's Continental System: Local, Regional and European Experiences*, (Hampshire, 2015), p. 90.

The final part of this thesis focuses upon the Anglo-Hanoverian relationship during the final stages of the Napoleonic conflict. The purpose of this is to determine whether the conflict itself had any lasting consequences upon the union in the subsequent period of peace. By initially focusing on areas of contention, such as debt or other diplomatic wrangling of the Vienna Congress, the relationship of the two administrations can be placed in its correct setting. The results of these negotiations, tied with the findings from the previous two chapters, will be able to determine whether the personal union had been effective during the war for each constituent part, while additionally placing a new perspective upon the post-war maritime relationship of the two. In the final stages of this study two key questions will be considered. Firstly, whether Hanover was indeed the 'millstone' around the neck of Britain as politicians and journalists of the time often complained.¹⁶ Secondly, whether the union itself was a beneficial entity or a hindrance. Ultimately, this study seeks to illustrate the importance of the Hanoverian connection, not only to understand its relevance in the Napoleonic era more completely, but to showcase the radically changed perspective of 'British' history when the Hanoverian link is re-established.

Contextualising the Anglo-Hanoverian Union

The succession of the House of Guelph to the British throne in 1714 was not a simple affair. Domestically, it caused the Acts of Union between England and Scotland in 1706 and 1707.¹⁷ Parliament also had to consider the relationship the new monarchy would have with their previous possessions; in this case their original seat of power, the Electorate of Hanover.

¹⁶ This sentiment is best depicted in a political cartoon following Napoleon's occupation of Hanover in 1803. 'Boney in Possession of the millstone: museum number 1868,0808.7151', *The British Museum: BM Satires / Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, n.d., <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1868-0808-7151> [date accessed 05/08/2020].

¹⁷ Jeremy Black, *The Hanoverians: The History of a Dynasty*, (London,2004), p.24.

When it became clear that the next Protestant heir would be of the Guelphic line, Parliament passed what would become known as the Act of Settlement in 1701— it stated:

That in case the Crown and imperial dignity of this realm shall hereafter come to any person, not being a native of this Kingdom of England, this nation be not obliged to engage in any war for the defence of any dominions or territories which do not belong to the Crown of England, without the consent of Parliament.¹⁸

This policy would later become the standard argument used by both the government of the day and the opposition to question any commitment to the protection of Hanover at times of war. The original intention was that Britain would never have to commit to the extension of Hanover's territory within the Holy Roman Empire, and so would avoid getting dragged into whatever squabbles should occupy the German Princes at any given time. An additional factor behind this was that the reigning monarch could not amalgamate British and German forces and overthrow the British constitution¹⁹

Despite the principles laid out in the Act of Settlement, Britain regularly used the ties to Germany to employ German mercenaries to fight in their colonial wars. For example, Hessian troops could be found in the Americas, and Hanoverians were present in India.²⁰ The Hessians themselves, although not being in the union, profited from such mercenary agreements. The Seven Years War in particular allowed the Landgrave of Hesse to bolster state revenue and grant his sons meaningful employment. Indeed, as Charles Ingrao pointed out, the various subsidy-mercenary treaties from 1702 to 1763 could have paid for half of the Hessian government's expenditure for that period.²¹ However, these military relationships

¹⁸ Jeremy Black, *Continental Commitment, Britain, Hanover and interventionism 1714-1793*, (Oxon, 2005), p. 25.

¹⁹ Bob Harris, 'Hanover and the Public Sphere', in Simms & Riotte (eds.), *Hanoverian Dimension in British History*, pp. 188-189.

²⁰ For Hanoverians in Britain's Imperial dominions see Chen Tzoref-Ashkenazi, 'Hanoverians, Germans, and Europeans: Colonial Identity in Early British India', *Central European History* 43 (2010), pp. 221-238.

²¹ Charles Ingrao, *The Hessian Mercenary State*, (Cambridge, 1987), p. 127.

with the German Princes were distinctly mercenary in nature and had little bearing on Britain's perception of their continental commitments, or the Hanoverians' perception of themselves whilst in British service.²² The Hanoverians' perception of themselves in a mercenary fashion is examined further by Michael Pavković. In his examination of the Westphalian Army, Pavković notes that while many of these Westphalians²³ served loyally and professionally as a result of their mercenary heritage; loyalty to the state was something the Westphalian's King, Jerome Bonaparte, would have to build up from scratch.²⁴

During the Napoleonic wars, when all of Europe was engaged in hostilities, it would be logical to assume that the principles laid out in the Act of Settlement would provisionally go unobserved when Hanover was occupied in retaliation for British actions, particularly given the Hanoverians past military contracts with Britain. With a few exceptions, this does not seem to be the case. Only on rare occasions did Britain act primarily for Hanover's benefit, and even on those occasions Britain would stress the independent nature of both countries. Yet there is evidence to suggest that Hanover retained a distinct presence in British politics and was able to benefit from the dynastic union, despite the war and the principles laid out in the Act of Settlement. This study seeks to address the intricate relationship between Britain and Hanover during the Napoleonic period in which, for the most part, Hanover as a state was under occupation/annexation from a foreign power, by examining how the union connecting these two states influenced British policy, extending into its impact on foreign affairs and constitutional questions.

²² Tzoref-Askenazi, 'Hanoverian, Germans, and Europeans', *Central European History* 43(2010), pp. 221-238. Tzoref-Askenazi's work on Hanoverian identity is in itself an innovative study that while deserving, as a topic has had to be neglected in this thesis to retain focus.

²³ A Napoleonic grouping of Germans predominantly consisting of Hessians, Hanoverians, and Brunswickers.

²⁴ Michael Pavković, 'Recruitment and conscription in the Kingdom of Westphalia: The Palladium of Westphalian freedom', in Donald Stoker, Frederick Schneid & Harold Blanton (eds.), *Conscription in the Napoleonic Era: A revolution in military affairs?*, (Oxon, 2009), pp. 135-148.

Methodology

The principal aim of this study was to investigate the level of influence Hanoverian affairs had upon British political and diplomatic decisions. The approach of viewing British choices through the lens of Hanoverian actions was decided upon for two primary reasons. Firstly, as the more powerful of the two in terms of economic and military power, Britain (in theory) could pick and choose when to pay attention to its Hanoverian partner. The methodical approach that Hanoverian Ministers took to overcome this and influence British policy is the principal subject of chapter one specifically, laying the foundations for more critiqued policy areas in chapter two. The second deciding factor of choosing this research approach was my own unfortunate lack of proficiency in the German language. Although a very rudimentary grasp allowed me to discern roughly what the purpose of some German documents were, to attempt to scrutinize these archives and secondary materials would not have done those works justice, being detrimental to my own in the process.

In an attempt to move away from a purely Anglo-centric interpretation of events, I purposefully curated secondary material from a more international array of authors. In navigating the issue of primary material, documents from the Hanoverian Ministry in London were utilised to a significant degree. Fortunately many of these had been translated for the British Foreign Office by the Hanoverian Ministry. These included translated copies of most foreign correspondence being supplied alongside their original. In this way I hoped to utilise primary and secondary material that emphasised the Hanoverian position on a given issue, while analysing the British reaction based upon the information they were provided with.

Due to the language issue and the research approach taken, three key themes were chosen for particular analysis. Chapter one looks into the mechanics of the relationship between the Hanoverian Ministry in London and the British Government, particularly the

Foreign Office. By examining how the Hanoverian Ministry interacted with their British counterparts, we get to see the frequency of their communication, the depth to which it went, and any cordiality that was cultivated as a result. The strength of this is then examined by looking into the events of 1806, the year in which Hanover was lost to French occupation. How British Ministers reacted to this event is of particular importance in gauging the strength of their commitment to their Hanoverian partner at that particular time of crises. To achieve this, the records of the German Chancery in London were examined, with particular attention paid to that administration's primary Minister, Count Ernst Münster. His correspondence with the Foreign Secretary of the day, often including the aforementioned translated copies of foreign despatches, was crucial in exposing the frequency and detail of communication between their two respective ministries.²⁵

While it became clear that Münster held particular prejudices that did not align with British policy, it was possible to acknowledge and even scrutinise these, in part due to the political history of the Congress of Vienna written by Münster's son in the 1860s.²⁶ This book acted somewhat as a biography of the father, providing the son's point of view on the father's policies. While this should be used with some degree of caution (publication was an ominous two years after the fall of Hanover to Prussia), it provides for a deeper understanding of the Hanoverian Minister in London. Through the analysis of Münster's character and the relationship between his Ministry and the British Government the necessary groundwork is set for the remaining chapters to thoroughly scrutinize the level of Hanoverian influence on specific areas of British policy.

To understand the impact of Hanover on British politics fully, British policy areas were chosen that reflected Britain's main sources of power at the time, naval and economic

²⁵ Many of the documents held at the National Archives in the series FO 34 are illustrative of this. Of particular note are boxes FO 34/1 to FO 34/4

²⁶ George Herbert Count Münster, *Political Sketches of the State of Europe From 1814-1867*, (London, Forgotten Books, 2017).

policies. As alluded to above, British Ministers are examined, but the depth of Hanoverian influence on the British can be found in letters that were penned in the naval quarters at Heligoland,²⁷ the accounts of philanthropist societies,²⁸ even in a dispute between a pair of grooms and a militia.²⁹ Examining source material of this nature achieves two objectives. First of all, it shows that the Hanoverian union was not merely an issue for the politicians, but that it had penetrated society as well. This is of particular importance as social perceptions can in turn shape political outlooks. By looking into what naval officers thought of the Hanoverians, or how British law saw them in comparison to 'official' Émigrés, we can gauge the mindset that British politicians may have held when dealing with their counterpart at the German Chancery. The majority of the second chapter's source material is utilised in this way. By building on the material of the first chapter that contextualised the mechanics of the Anglo-Hanoverian political relationship, the material used in the second aims to gauge British perceptions of the Electoral connection, and what the German Chancery themselves were doing to build a working relationship.

As the concluding section of this thesis largely deals with the end of the war and the peace negotiations, much of the primary material concerns diplomacy. By its very nature, much of this material focuses on Hanover directly, such as British-Hanoverian talks over subsidies. Again, to maintain the question of the extent of Hanoverian influence, documents concerning, or authored by, Hanoverian dignitaries were essential. However, when examining the consequences of influence within a peace congress, the peace itself must be looked at to see if there was any lasting impact. To do this, two elements were considered: the Hanoverian carrying trade in the Mediterranean, and the financial condition of Hanoverian war veterans many years later. Whether or not Britain sustained these pensioners even after the termination

²⁷ National Archives, FO 36. Particular note should be made of FO 36/1-3.

²⁸ Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress (charity no. 212593) Trustees Private Collection, *An Account of The Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress*, (London, 1815).

²⁹ This particular dispute can be found throughout Count Münster's letters in National Archives, FO 34/1-4.

of the dynastic union will prove to be a clear indicator of the lasting influence the Hanoverians had upon British political structures.

With the groundwork laid out in chapter one, the exploration of war-time policies and social perceptions in chapter two, and the analysis of the peace process and the union's lasting impact for merchants and pensioners, we get a good illustration of the far-reaching impact of Hanoverian influence within British politics. Yet while this shows that Hanoverian influence was in place, to successfully answer the question of how influential Hanover was, some form of metric will need to be considered. To achieve this, the works of political theorist Joseph S. Nye, Jr. will need consideration.³⁰ Nye's principle works on the theory of Soft Power details two differing forms of power. 'Hard Power' is the attempt to accomplish a goal through coercion or financial incentive. 'Soft Power' on the other hand, is a slower process that attempts to woo a third party to your point of view.³¹ This could be done through creating policies that others wish to emulate, or acting co-operatively on international projects, cultivating relationships and political alliances along the way. Even cultural desirability plays a role³²

In the case of Hanover and Britain, Britain relied heavily on its 'hard power', relying on its naval dominance and economic subsidies to counter Napoleon and maintain the various coalitions built against him. After Hanover's occupation, Electoral ministers had to rely on diplomacy and the reliance of 'soft power' to persuade British Ministers to utilise their own hard power for Hanoverian benefit. Evidence of this process can be seen throughout this work, but in particular chapter two, as we will see Hanoverian soft power reaching into wider British society, be it the general public or the British naval officer corps. As Hanover lacked extensive material assets due to their occupation, any success in focusing British efforts for

³⁰ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means To Success in World Politics*, (USA, 2004).

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Hanoverian gain should be considered a strong indicator of an influential Hanoverian faction in British politics.

Literature Review

The Anglo-Hanoverian question is one area concerning the ‘Third Germany’ that lacks critical attention, with the exception of a limited assortment of dedicated works. While these focus heavily on various particular aspects, they are not extensive enough to explore the period as a whole. Despite this, works that focus on other themes and countries do at times feature the subject of Hanover and Britain. However, this is often in an auxiliary capacity that is complimentary to their primary focus. For example Sam A. Mustafa’s book *Napoleon’s Paper Kingdom, the life and death of Westphalia, 1807-1813*, covers the fate of Hanover in the introductory chapter before turning the focus on to the French-Westphalian relationship in the book proper.³³ Additional supplementary evidence can be discovered in works that focus on other subjects, but use source material in such a way that the British-Hanoverian aspect can be examined first by cross-referencing the initial point the author makes with the origins of the sources used. For example, C. K. Webster’s work on the foreign policy of Castlereagh in 1812-1815 focuses largely on the British perception and response to affairs on the continent during the war. However, in providing the evidence to support his theories Webster relies heavily on the correspondence between Count Münster and his agents in the European courts of Prussia and Austria.³⁴ This suggests that British foreign policy towards Central and Eastern Europe during the latter half of the period was in large part formed from the information provided by Hanoverian agents.

³³ Sam A. Mustafa, *Napoleon’s Paper Kingdom, the life and death of Westphalia, 1807-1813*, (London, 2017), pp. 27-52.

³⁴ C. K. Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, (London, 1963), *passim*.

It is questionable whether the foreign policy of Britain in these years was only as influential as it was because of access to intelligence provided by the Hanoverian Minister. If this is the case, further lines of enquiry open up that have yet to be satisfactorily addressed in existing literature. These include why Napoleon allowed Hanoverian agents to act against him in the diplomatic arena as openly as they did, and did the British government reciprocate the aid given by their German cousins by softening their approach to their Hanoverian policies? The impact of Hanover on British policy during this period appears to have been overlooked in favour of studying the Great Powers of the period. This is an unfair dismissal of the influence wielded by Hanoverian statesmen and diplomats and the subsequent impact on British policy, whether this be diplomatic or domestic. To examine fully the influence of the Anglo-Hanoverian union, this study has broken down the existing literature into three key elements in line with the method of study already alluded to above; royal and domestic political studies, military and maritime affairs, and finally works that focus upon the peace process. With some notable exceptions, like the significant contribution of Brendan Simms,³⁵ Hanover is rarely the key principle of the existing literature, but by applying the methods mentioned above a clearer picture begins to emerge that can significantly add to the primary material and contribute to an emerging scholarly discourse.

Viewing the impact of the personal union on constitutional affairs from a Royal perspective is rather complex; as Hanover was an absolutist state George III (and when appropriate the Prince Regent) dictated Hanoverian policy. This meant that when the British Foreign Office acted against the wishes of Count Münster they were by extension acting against the wishes of the Elector. The consequences of such policy decisions must be examined, as should the subsequent tension that this must have placed between Westminster and George when he was playing the role of British sovereign; were disagreements between

³⁵ Brendan Simms, ‘‘An Odd Question Enough’. Charles James Fox, the Crown and British Policy during the Hanoverian Crisis of 1806’, *The Historical Journal* 38(3) (1995), pp. 567-596.

Parliament and the Hanoverian Elector ever felt in the relationship between the King and Whitehall? The Act of Settlement disengaged Britain from the internal affairs of the Holy Roman Empire, and a general consensus amongst historians suggests that both George I and II consciously held a strict policy of keeping their sovereign states' interests separate.

This opinion amongst historians extends to George III, with only some claiming he had keen Hanoverian sympathies.³⁶ Tim Blanning writes that the official British view was that Georg Kurfürst von Hanover and George III King of England were two separate entities.³⁷ While he expresses an overlapping influence, Blanning retains the distinction and argues that foreign events did not change this, that George III simply pursued his interests as Elector regardless of Parliament.³⁸ This hypothesis in Blanning's case study of the 1785 Fürstenbund is an excellent supporting argument of the personal union theorem. Provided that George III was able to retain a clear division of his sovereign personas, he could act as he wished within the constitutional limits of each one; regardless of whether acting as Elector frustrated the wishes of the British Cabinet or not. Doubtless, such action on the part of the Crown would cause tension between the Monarch and his British government, and could have further exasperated other, solely British, disagreements between the Crown and Whitehall.

There were plenty of instances when George III as King of Great Britain disagreed with his British Ministry, the most infamous being his opposition to William Pitt's Catholic emancipation policies after the Act of Union with Ireland in 1801. Peter Jupp theorised that Pitt's administration was in favour of Catholic relief because of the military and strategic

³⁶ Torsten Riotte, 'George III and Hanover', in Brendan Simms and Torsten Riotte (eds.), *The Hanoverian Dimension in British History, 1714-1837*, (New York, 2010), p.59.

³⁷ T. C. W. Blanning, '“That Horrid Electorate” or “Ma Patrie Germanique”? George III, Hanover, and the Fürstenbund of 1785', *The Historical Journal* 20(2) (1977), p. 311.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 313-314.

advantages an appeased Irish Catholic populace could provide the British Government.³⁹ Patrick Geoghegan's views support this hypothesis, he claimed that proponents of the Act of Union, such as the military commander Lord Cornwallis, believed that union without emancipation was worthless in itself.⁴⁰ Support of union therefore, was to support Catholic emancipation, not just on humanitarian grounds, but for the strategic dividends that would follow. Regardless of Pitt's political motivations, George III is often documented in historiography to have opposed Catholic emancipation because of the coronation oath he took to defend the Anglican Church when he acceded to the British throne. Geoghegan points to an episode of rage that George III exhibited on the arrival to London of the Irish Peer Lord Castlereagh to further illustrate this point.⁴¹ George's refusal to give way on the Catholic issue led to an impasse that resulted in Pitt's resignation.

If the King could prove difficult and emotionally stubborn over specific issues, it is reasonable to assume that such feelings could carry over into the King's judgement of other matters. So, could the Elector of Hanover's disagreement with British foreign policy spill over into the relationship between the British monarch and his Ministers? The foreign policies of the German Chancery after Hanoverian occupation suggest that the Elector was committed to having their ancestral home restored. Due to the Act of Settlement, this was hardly a point the Elector could stress to Parliament as King of the United Kingdom.

³⁹ Peter Jupp, 'Britain and the Union, 1797-1801', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 10 (2000), pp. 197-219, pp. 202-204. Jupp initially read this as a paper at a conference at Queen's University of Belfast on the 9th September 2000.

⁴⁰ Patrick Geoghegan, 'The Catholics and the Union', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 10 (2000), pp. 243-258, p. 243.

This journal article was originally presented as a paper by Geoghegan, read at the Public Record Office Northern Ireland, 10 September 1999.

At the same conference, William Doyle presented a paper outlining the similarities between the British-Irish parliamentary system and stereotypical understandings of *ancien regimes*. This original hypothesis is fascinating, but unfortunately cannot be examined here for reasons of space.

For reference see: William Doyle, 'The British-Irish Union of 1801: The Union in a European Context', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 10 (2000), pp. 165-180.

For an analysis on the religious context of the Irish question in a wider British Imperial sense, see J. G. A. Pocock, 'The Union in British History', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 10 (2000), pp. 181-196.

⁴¹ Geoghegan, 'The Catholics and the Union', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 10 (2000), pp. 257-258.

Examining whether tensions between the Crown and Westminster existed because of the loss of Hanover is vital in understanding the impact of the personal union, and can add greater depth to current interpretations of Crown-Whitehall relations. However, it will be difficult to pursue, as the question will arise as to whether George III kept his Electoral priorities distinct from his British interests, or whether in this period they merged together as one but were hampered by the laws and politics of his British ministers. If this had been the case, it would have necessitated indirect political action through the German Chancery of which the Crown was autocratic ruler.

The above lines of enquiry rest upon the assumption that George III, while a keen advocate of his Britishness, was also a keen Hanoverian. This single question of George III's character is now in dispute amongst historians. While there is a general consensus that he wanted to keep his state's separate (as mentioned above), historians differ on the extent to which George adopted a Hanoverian policy at the expense of British interests. Jeremy Black went so far as to claim that George III went to great lengths to promote British interests to the neglect of those of Hanover, an argument supported by Peter Thomas and Uriel Dann.⁴² In opposition to this view, Brendan Simms and Torsten Riotte put forward arguments that call for a reassessment of George's character,⁴³ something which Blanning delved into with his work on the Fürstenbund (as alluded to above). The problem with the former argument is that it does not account for George's actions in the years after the American Revolution. Peter Thomas argued that with George III's succession the Hanoverian 'problem' was removed.⁴⁴ Thomas based this on George's dislike of his grandfather. His supporting argument provides an impression of George having a teenage style of rebellious behaviour in adopting a hatred

⁴² Jeremy Black, *Convergence or Divergence? Britain and the Continent*, (New York, 1994), p. 158. For an assessment on the views held by Peter Thomas and Uriel Dann see: Riotte, 'George III and Hanover', in Simms and Riotte (eds.), *Hanoverian Dimension*, pp. 58-59.

⁴³ Riotte, 'George III and Hanover', in Simms and Riotte (eds.), *Hanoverian Dimension*, pp. 58-59.

⁴⁴ Peter Thomas, *George III, King and Politicians 1760-1770*, (Manchester, 2002), p. 33.

towards Hanover, simply because his grandfather, George II, held the Electorate in high regard.⁴⁵ Thomas went on to claim that George III's reputed detestation of the Electorate had influenced the French decision to not bother with an invasion of Hanover during the American Revolutionary wars.⁴⁶

Such an argument seems both lacking and incomplete; whether or not George held a childish dislike of Hanover to begin with, Thomas appears to have ruled out any possible change in character as his reign progressed. This characteristic does not tally with George's pursuit of pro-Hanoverian policies during the 1780s or at the turn of the century, a point Riotte and Blanning convincingly state, Riotte going so far as to bemusedly ask why the importance of Hanover to George III is lost on the academic community.⁴⁷ Furthermore, if George III detested Hanover to the extent Thomas claimed, it begs the question of why George sent all his sons but the heir apparent (whom Parliament would not allow to go) to the University of Göttingen⁴⁸. Encouraging a Hanoverian education for his children does not quite register with the rationale Thomas attempted to showcase. Likewise, if George III had no love for Hanover, would he have threatened to abdicate in 1783? Arthur Burns suggested that the King had hoped to continue his reign on the continent had he gone through with his threat of abdicating the British throne.⁴⁹

Accompanying this debate, the importance of the personal union appears to be further dismissed as unimportant, possibly due to the characteristics rightly or wrongly attributed to the King. For example, in J. Watson's 600-page work on the life of George III, the loss of

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.33.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 33.

⁴⁷ Riotte, 'George III and Hanover', in Simms and Riotte (eds.), *Hanoverian Dimension*, p. 60.

⁴⁸ This University being founded by George II in 1731 further illustrates the contradictory nature of Thomas' argument. If George III wanted little to do with the legacy and views of his Grandfather it is unlikely he would have sent his sons to this university when other options, with similar claims to prestigious fame without the royal connotations of George II, were available.

⁴⁹ Arthur Burns, 'The Abdication Speech of George III', *Georgian Papers Program: Blog*, 22 January 2017, <<https://georgianpapers.com/2017/01/22/abdication-speech-george-iii/>>, [5/5/2020].

Hanover to the French after the recommencement of war in 1803 gets just a single sentence.⁵⁰ The importance of the union, embodied in the King/Elector, is widely debated and at times dismissed, the argument over whether George had any regard for the German state or not (and the consequences his beliefs would entail) only recently emerging as a topic of interest.

The existing literature covering the British experience of the war is extensive. Two theatres in particular receive much scholarly attention, these being maritime and the Peninsular War. The latter of which, being the more geographically focused, has received a multitude of studies of various natures. The many works of the recently retired Charles Esdaile being prominent amongst these.⁵¹ However, despite the popularity of the aforementioned theatres, much is being done on topics of less public renown. For instance, Dr. Jacqueline Reiter's current research and upcoming book on Sir Home Popham may shed new light on the Walcheren Expedition.⁵² This expedition will be discussed in a subsequent chapter, as the connections to Hanoverian policy suggest that the German Chancery was lobbying the Foreign Office for military aid drawn from this military front.

The problem existing literature has when it comes to joint British-Hanoverian efforts is that specific detailed works rarely move beyond histories of the King's German Legion (K.G.L.). These can range from the battalion's individual experience of the war,⁵³ to studies of the British Army and its relations with German forces.⁵⁴ As this paper aims to discern the political influence of the Electorate on British policy, the K.G.L. will not be covered in any great detail. The reasons for this are two-fold. Primarily, there is extensive coverage of this specific topic already within broader British military studies and so, for reasons of space, this

⁵⁰ J. Steven Watson, *The Reign of George III, 1760-1815*, (Oxford, 1960), p. 422.

⁵¹ For instance Esdaile, with a geographic focus on the Iberian Peninsula has published works on topics such as the role of the Spanish Army to the experience of women in Napoleonic Spain.

⁵² Jacqueline Reiter, 'Jacqueline Reiter: Profile', *LinkedIn*, n.d., <<https://uk.linkedin.com/in/jacqueline-reiter-b30a1693>> [17/08/20].

⁵³ Brendan Simms, *The Longest Afternoon: The 400 Men Who Decided the Battle of Waterloo*, (UK, 2015).

⁵⁴ Mark Wishon, *German Forces and the British Army: Interactions and Perceptions, 1742-1815*, (Hampshire, 2013).

politically focused thesis has had to sacrifice this more military-based subject for other, more concise, political analysis. This leads into the second point. As an area of study, the campaigns of the K.G.L. are not directly relevant. However, their mode of entry into the British army, or their *raison d'être*, touches on political dialogue between Britain and Hanover, which will lend itself to this thesis. With the exception of the K.G.L., a shared Anglo-Hanoverian war effort has received limited attention. The second chapter of this work will aim to broaden this area of historiography into the maritime and espionage theatres, and subsequently analyse Hanoverian influence on these areas of British policy.

The years 1813-15, the Congress of Vienna, and the Europe-wide consequences of the peace process have received much scholarly attention over the years, especially since the bicentenary in 2015. This has resulted in more dated works, such as Henry Kissinger's influential piece *A World Restored*,⁵⁵ being surpassed by studies ranging from specific focused projects, to more substantial macro histories of the period. This has allowed for greater context of the early nineteenth century, and how Europe was shaped prior to the Industrial and Romantic periods. For instance, detailed contributions on the Congress of Vienna by authors Adam Zamoyski and Mark Jarrett have moved scholarly thought away from 'Great Power politics' respectively by emphasising the influence the lesser states could hold over diplomatic proceedings,⁵⁶ and by providing an in-depth overview of the Congress system at large.⁵⁷ This in turn helped to lay the foundations prior to examining the more specific case studies of regional history. A plethora of recent academic studies has provided scholars with works on the evolution of a European security culture,⁵⁸ regional trade and

⁵⁵ Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace 1812-22*, (USA, 1957).

⁵⁶ Adam Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace: The Fall of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna*, (St. Ives, 2007).

⁵⁷ Mark Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy*, (London, 2013).

⁵⁸ Beatrice de Graaf, Ido de Haan, and Brian Vick, *Securing Europe after Napoleon: 1815 and the New European Security Culture*, (Cambridge, 2019).

economic analysis of Napoleon's continental system,⁵⁹ and crucially the transition from Napoleonic Europe to Restoration and Romanticism.⁶⁰ In this vast library of new publications, the internal dynamics of the Anglo-Hanoverian union are more prominent than preceding decades, and will be detailed further in the final chapter of this thesis.

The examination of two specific works helps to illustrate the legacy of Anglo-Hanoverian relations in Hanover itself and adds to this growing area of study. Abigail Green's analysis of the Kingdom's of Hanover, Württemberg, and Saxony in the mid-nineteenth century suggests that the union was detrimental to Hanover in the long-term.⁶¹ By comparing industrial, artisan and population growth Green showed that Hanover was economically backwards in comparison to the other two Kingdoms throughout the nineteenth century.⁶² This was partly because the royal court had moved to London when George I inherited the British throne, and Green suggested that royal patronage disappeared as a consequence.⁶³ More importantly was the absence of the Elector's themselves. With the exception of the period of occupation, the administration and running of the Electorate/Kingdom was entrusted to the Hanoverian nobility. Green argued that by the time the German states were ramping up their industrial sectors, the Hanoverians were handicapped by an entrenched landed nobility with agricultural interests and the political power to defend them.⁶⁴ This resulted in a lack of industrial development and a limited commercial centre. This analysis is important to consider throughout this thesis as no matter how influential the German Chancery proved to be during the war period under Count Münster, they failed to secure any economic advantage from the union that could have benefited the new Kingdom's long-term

⁵⁹ Katherine B. Aaslestad and Johan Joor, *Revisiting Napoleon's Continental System: Local, Regional and European Experiences*, (Hampshire, 2015).

⁶⁰ Michael Broers and Ambrogio Caiani, *A History of the European Restorations, Vol. I: Governments, States and Monarchy*, (London, 2020).

⁶¹ Abigail Green, *Fatherlands: State-Building and Nationhood in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, (Cambridge, 2001),

⁶² *Ibid.* See Greens comparative data tables on pp. 26-27.

⁶³ *Ibid.* p. 34.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 38.

infrastructure. Admittedly, some financial gain was secured in land acquisition as a result of the Congress of Vienna, but failure to innovate and reform left Hanover trailing behind the other German states.

In a similar vein the work of Jasper Heinzen adds to some of the points raised in this study. In his work on Prussian state-building in the aftermath of that Kingdom's consolidation of northern Germany, Heinzen examined how Hanoverians adjusted to the new state they found themselves in. Importantly, one of the issues covered discussed how Hanoverians viewed themselves, in terms of what we would now refer to as national identity. While discussing the transition from Hanoverian to German identity, Heinzen pointed out that the Prussians made use of Hanoverian symbolism, with which they attempted (with debatable success) to place regional identities within a larger 'German' character.⁶⁵ This move from Hanoverian to German identity is touched upon when analysing the writings of a Hanoverian diplomat shortly after the Prussian conquests in the first chapter. Heinzen also referred to a Hanoverian desire for autonomy even after concessions to local nobles and legislature,⁶⁶ and that groups with lasting loyalties to the House of Guelph remained prominent.⁶⁷ This shows that the cultural and political shift from Hanoverian identity politics to German was by no means clear-cut or simple. These points will find parallels throughout this thesis in the arguments used by the German Chancery when in dispute with the British Government during the Napoleonic Wars.

⁶⁵ Jasper Heinzen, *Making Prussians, Raising Germans: A Cultural History of Prussian State-Building after Civil War, 1866-1935*, (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 96-97.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 12.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 132.

Alternative Constitutional Perspectives

The constitutional relationship between Britain and Hanover is itself a controversial issue that will be addressed throughout this study. The typical approach of viewing the dynastic union as a personal union has come under scrutiny by historians such as Nicholas Harding, who claimed a composite monarchy is a more suitable political category. Under a personal union, the countries in question share the same sovereign, each represented independently of the other. Yet in a composite monarchy one country is supreme, with the monarch presiding over both constituent parts as a single entity. The subordinate region, while retaining some autonomy, is subject to the dominant authority of the other. Additionally, a composite monarchy would pursue policies that would apply universally to the shared institutions of both states. On an international level, countries forming a composite monarchy are viewed as a unified whole. For the purpose of this study, a brief analysis of the two political theorems will help to contextualise each model and how they reflect upon the British-Hanoverian relationship.

Composite monarchy was by no means a new feature of European politics by the eighteenth century. Indeed, historians have applied it to much of European history, some dating them as far back as the Angevin Empire of the Plantagenets.⁶⁸ In a seminal article entitled ‘A Europe of Composite Monarchies’, J. H. Elliot analysed many composite states from the medieval to early modern period. Elliot builds upon the ideas of the seventeenth century Spanish jurist Juan de Solórzano Pereira, who described such unions as *aeque principaliter*. According to this idea, the regions that formed a union were to be treated as distinct entities with high levels of autonomy.⁶⁹ The differences between *aeque principaliter* and personal union are apparent. In personal union's, the constituent regions were considered

⁶⁸ J.H. Elliot, *Scots and Catalans: Union and Disunion*, (London, 2018), p. 10.

⁶⁹ J. H. Elliott, ‘A Europe of Composite Monarchies’ *Past and Present*, no. 137, The Cultural and Political Construction of Europe, (Nov, 1992), p. 52.

to be entirely independent from one another. Under *aeque principaliter*, the regions could act with autonomy on a domestic level, but externally were recognised as a single entity under the unified dominion of their sovereign. One of Elliot's examples that illustrated this was the marital union of Castile and Aragon. On an international level, Castile and Aragon were recast as a single entity - Spain,⁷⁰ while domestically their internal policies differed substantially. Elliot noted that Aragon retained an independent nature, largely as a result of the constitutional differences with Castile. The King found it much easier to obtain financial contributions from the Castilian Cortes than the Aragonese, due to the traditional relationship the nobles of the latter region had had with their ruling house.⁷¹ With these conditions, a composite monarchy could take on a variety of forms, as each distinct region developed their own domestic governance independently of the other constituent parts. Moreover, the conceptual fluidity of composite monarchy has led some scholars to apply it to the British-Hanoverian union.

A leading advocate of applying the composite monarchy theorem to the British-Hanoverian union is Nicholas Harding. His work on the subject, entitled *Hanover and the British Empire, 1700-1837*, is an exceedingly stimulating and original study as he entirely refuted the personal union thesis, replaced with his own nuanced take on composite monarchy. Part of Harding's critique of the Anglo-Hanoverian personal union theorem was that its' supporters, diplomatic historians, were forced to be 'episodic' in their approach on account of the time span that would need to be covered. This, Harding claimed, resulted in an insular representation of the dynastic union.⁷² In arguing against personal union, he relied on a reassessment of the term 'empire', expanding its remit to encompass composite monarchy. Harding agreed that composite monarchy consists of two or more regions, with one being

⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 57.

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 54.

⁷² Nicholas Harding, *Hanover and the British Empire, 1700-1837*, (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 7.

dominant over the others. He added that at varying times during the course of the dynastic union, the dominant position transferred from one region to the other.⁷³ Harding adopted the term empire to describe the perception of dominance, thus British fears of subjugation are referred to as a fear of Hanoverian empire, and vice-versa. His argument could be clarified if the term influence were used instead of empire. Harding claimed that at times there were fears of subjugation on both sides of the North Sea, and this lends itself to the composite monarchy theory. For example, the British feared that their new sovereign would undermine their constitution with the aid of his German soldiers. This was an issue which returned sporadically throughout the union's history.⁷⁴ Harding used this to identify periods when the British were fearful of Hanoverian empire and the perceived possibility of becoming subordinate. Throughout *'Hanover and the British Empire'*, Harding deployed examples covering the breadth of the dynastic union to highlight episodes when Britain and Hanover each perceived a threat of subjugation to the other, be it militarily or through royal policy. He suggested that this perception undermines the thesis of personal union, to the point that it should be rejected as a political construct for the Anglo-Hanoverian union.

An additional element when considering the term 'empire' is the constitutional/diplomatic relationship between Imperial States and their satellites. While the Napoleonic Empire conjures images of a European map painted blue, such a portrait is too simplistic. The French Imperium was a complicated network of direct vassals, satellites, allies and newly annexed territories. A recent article, by Ambrogio Caiani, detailed the political repercussions of Italian collaborators within the French Imperial monolith. At the beginning of the article, Caiani briefly put into context three alternate forms of subaltern state that could be found in Napoleonic Italy: the annexed region in the north west, the quasi-

⁷³ This is a recurrent theme of Harding's study in *Hanover and the British Empire*, but for one example see pp. 234-236.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 255-256.

autonomous state of Naples in the south, and the satellite Kingdom of Italy in central and north east Italy.⁷⁵ Under Harding's terminology, all three regions would fall under the remit of a French composite state. Such an approach fails to appreciate the different constitutional (and practical) political realities that existed in the regions Caiani examined. That all three were subject to empire is obvious; empire as a political entity transcends composite monarchy. If reversed, it would be difficult to determine when a historian is referring to the political landscape of the composite state of an empire (e.g. French Empire), the dominant imperial region (France), or the relationships between the imperial state and its vassals (France and Naples).

The alternate political concept of personal union is far more rigid in definition. The term was coined during the eighteenth century by a Hanoverian jurist, Johan Stephan Pütter. This coincided with the dynastic union of Britain and Hanover. Its initial use by Pütter, in *Elementa iuris publici germanici* in 1760, sought to analyse the electorate's relationship with the recently acquired territories of Bremen and Lauenburg. He later amended the political theory to encompass the relationship between Britain and Hanover, in *Beyträge zum teutschen Staats- und Fürsten-Rechte* in 1777.⁷⁶ In essence, the territories constituting the personal union were independent from one another, much like composite monarchies, and similarly the union had the same head of state. Unlike composite monarchies, such domestic autonomy was replicated in the realm of diplomacy and international relations. For all intents and purposes, each constituent part of the personal union was entirely independent of the other in all matters of policy, both foreign and domestic. The two did not form a single nation on the international stage.

⁷⁵ Ambrogio A. Caiani, 'Collaborators, Collaboration, and the Problems of Empire in Napoleonic Italy, The Oppizzoni Affair, 1805 – 1807' *The Historical Journal* 60(2) (2017), p. 386.

⁷⁶ Harding, *Hanover and the British Empire*, p. 8.

The problem facing the personal union thesis is that it does not allow for the same level of conceptual fluidity as composite monarchy. Under current terminology, should two nations show any semblance of close cooperation, they are considered to fall within the remit of composite monarchy. When sovereignty is shared at a legislative level, or is hard to define, it pulls away from the strict definition applied to personal union, in which sovereign titles can be held within the same person but are treated independently from one another.⁷⁷ Anything other than complete independence would cause a union to break away from the intellectual constraints of the personal union thesis. This is an overly rigid assessment of personal union as a political category. Several political concepts allow for fluidity in how they operate and are defined. For example, the Dutch, Venetian, and American Republics all operated somewhat differently to each other, yet retain the same moniker of ‘Republic’. Additionally, different levels of absolutism and state management could be found in the autocratic states/absolute monarchies of Europe. Furthermore, the constitutional monarchies of Poland-Lithuania and England differed greatly in how they functioned on a political and electoral level. While in England the relationship between Parliament and Crown was settled in the Medieval period and evolved steadily, the Polish monarchy failed to establish an equilibrium between their own position and the influence of the Polish nobility.⁷⁸ By the 18th century two entirely different polities existed, but are still referred to as Constitutional Monarchies in academia.

All the above political theories are far less rigid than those currently applied to the concept of personal union, and act more as umbrella terms for the type of political polity each nation adopted. This thesis will attempt to show that personal unions should also adopt this

⁷⁷ For detailed arguments analysing what constitutes a composite monarchy, see: J. H. Elliott, ‘‘A Europe of Composite Monarchies’’. Nicholas Harding, *Hanover and the British Empire*.

⁷⁸ Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge, 1997), p. 315.

elasticity, and in so doing demonstrate (that as a political construct), are capable of close inter-regional cooperation without falling into the category of composite monarchy. Composite monarchy stresses the existence of a partnership where one region holds dominance over the other, and more importantly its politics accept and adapt to this fact. A personal union, on the other hand, retains the distinct independent nature of its constituent parts, while providing for the option of cooperation without obligation.

The dynastic union of Britain and Hanover was a complex entity that does not easily fit either composite monarchy or personal union as they are currently defined. The following study will prove that Britain and Hanover operated under a personal union, provided that the current understanding of the term is expanded to allow more fluidity. First of all, statesmen on both sides of the union stressed the independent nature of their own state from the other. If the need arose, they took action to defend this principle, as will be observed in an affair concerning Hanoverian grooms, the German Chancery, and the British authorities. Secondly, the extension of British policy to cover Hanoverian interests abroad can be viewed as actions not dissimilar to British attempts to aid their allies. This had been the case when Britain interceded with the Barbary States on behalf of Sardinia, an episode concerning maritime trading policy in the Mediterranean that can greatly enhance our understanding of the Hanoverian dimension. Finally, the absence of any policy originating from Parliament that jointly applied to Britain and Hanover as a single entity lies in stark contradiction to the composite state model. The British declaration of war on Prussia in 1806 does at first suggest British responsibility for Hanover in a manner not dissimilar to that of aiding a satellite, but this does not take into account other political events during that year. As the British government needed the King's favour,⁷⁹ the declaration was not made primarily to liberate Hanover, but more to gain political capital with the British sovereign. Taken individually,

⁷⁹ Brendan Simms, 'An Odd Question Enough'. Fox British Policy during the Crisis of 1806', *The Historical Journal* 38(3) (1995), p. 588.

each of these themes could serve as an indicator of composite monarchy; but when combined, a dynastic union emerges whereby each country guarded jealously its independence, whilst being open to the notion of cooperation and the opportunities that the union could provide. While acknowledging the sporadic and underlying fears of subjugation on both sides, such anxieties were ultimately inconsequential.

The dynastic union was, in essence, a political entity whose constituent parts treated each other as allies and behaved towards each other in like manner. The union between Britain and Hanover was personal in nature, a union whereby each partner was able to act independently of the other. At times cooperation occurred, and grey areas concerning sovereignty certainly existed. This is particularly apparent in those policies relating to Hanoverian refugees. The ambiguity of the constitutional relationship during this period needs addressing, but to claim the relationship was a composite monarchy distorts the complex political situation. When stripped to its core principle, a composite monarchy requires a dominant state and subjugate vassal. Certainly, the subjugate partner could enjoy a high level of autonomy, but they were ultimately answerable to the dominant authority. The British-Hanoverian relationship does not fit this political theory. The core principle of personal union on the other hand allows for the executive power of both states to reside in the same sovereign body, provided that they treated their sovereign states in an independent manner when it came to international relations. This core principle certainly applies to Britain and Hanover, yet our present understanding of personal unions as political entities is undoubtedly in need of revision.

Terminology and Abbreviations

Due to the number of political unions that the British Isles experienced in the eighteenth century, there is a need to clarify the intended definition of some of the terminology used throughout the following work. The Unions of England, Scotland and Ireland will not feature to a great extent, but when this does occur these will be referred to as the Anglo-Scottish/Irish unions to avoid confusion, later the traditional joint terminology of Great Britain/Britain/British. When referring to 'the Union', this will typically be referencing that of Britain and Hanover. For Hanover specifically, I will follow the lead of other scholars in expressing the difference of Hanover and Hannover, the former relating to the territory as a whole and the latter its primary city.

I have attempted to refrain from referring to the monarchy as the House of Hanover, a distinctly British moniker that undermines the spirit of this work. As such, the monarchy will be referred to by their ancestral name of Guelph/Guelphic. In relation to abbreviating archive locations, I will be following standard practice of mentioning them in full in the first instance before abbreviating thereafter. Of particular note, however, is the material held by the Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress. As this is a source base that has received little scholarly attention and was, at the time of writing, held in private by the trustees of that charity, the relevant abbreviation I will use (SFFD) requires specific mention here. However it should be noted that plans are in place for this material to be deposited at the University of Kent.

Chapter 1: The King's German Minister

The influence of Hanover in British politics was a complex affair during the Napoleonic period. The popular response from British parliamentarians when discussing Hanover was to fall back on the official position of the 1701 Act of Settlement, the aim being to avoid any military commitment to the Electorate that might be asked for by either the Electorate's representatives or by the Royal House of Hanover.⁸⁰ The ambiguity of this position is astounding. For example, Hanoverian troops were employed by the British (prior to the Napoleonic Wars) to further their own colonial interests in India,⁸¹ with additional Electoral forces being deployed to Gibraltar for garrison duty.⁸² With such military assistance offered by the Hanoverians it would be understandable for them to have assumed some amount of sympathy for their position when the continental wars resumed in 1803. To a degree this was the case, however, as the wars progressed it became clear that British military assistance was not forthcoming. To understand this it is crucial to examine the opinions of British Ministers towards the Electorate and her representatives, while additionally looking into the efforts of the German Chancery and its agents to exert political influence in Britain.

To complicate matters further, we have to consider the position of George III. In his capacity as King of Great Britain his hands were tied by the Act of Settlement. However, when events forced him to make a stand over Hanover we see a monarch who is both diplomatic in regards to the expectations of his British Ministers, while also forthright in his personal opinion of events, expressing a concern for his Hanoverian subjects that would be uncharacteristic of an indifferent Elector. To best examine the influence of Hanover in British

⁸⁰ Jeremy Black, *Continental Commitment: Britain, Hanover and interventionism 1714-1793*, (London, 2005), p. 25.

⁸¹ Wishon, *German Forces and the British Army*, p. 15.

⁸² *Ibid*, p. 14.

politics we should look to the relationship between the German Chancery and British Ministers, while touching on the role played by George III and the extended royal family.

This chapter will establish three key points in determining the impact of the German Chancery during Count Ernst Herbert Münster's time as Minister. Count Münster is a crucial figure in establishing the impact of the Hanoverian connection for a number of reasons, these being in the spheres of diplomacy, domestic/constitutional affairs and military strategy. Most importantly, we also gain insight into how the personal union affected the rights of Hanoverian émigrés in Britain, and so explore whether King George III's policy to retain a separation of his two sovereign states was put into practice at all levels of society, and not just used by politicians to explain policy decisions. To examine these factors, we can look to the private correspondence of Count Münster as well as his state papers, and in so doing, realise that this was a man who worked tirelessly whatever the circumstances. His letters show his involvement in a wide variety of situations that his British counterparts had dedicated government departments for; for example, we see him dealing closely with the Foreign Office, the Home Office and the Treasury. His philanthropic work outside of the political landscape goes further still in emphasising the industrious nature of this particular politician. By being involved in all manner of domestic and diplomatic affairs, Count Münster, and the work of his department, grants us insight into the full impact of the personal union on Hanoverian subjects' status in Britain, international diplomacy, and the war effort.

The Hanoverian Minister in London

To justify and contextualise the documents directly concerning the actions of Count Münster, one should examine how this man's influence has been assessed over time. Brendan Simms and Torsten Rlotte, both having written on the subject, are the first points of reference

with which to explore this issue. From there we can look further back, to an almost contemporary analysis of Count Münster, one written by his son in 1868. Yet due to the timing of this publication, and the nature of its contents, this in itself raises some concerns over its accuracy, and while not deserving to be disregarded, should be handled with caution. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, the personal union and its place in the British historical narrative has been severely overlooked, and Simms and Riotte both stated that Münster was a force to be reckoned with in his own right. Riotte argued that Münster was a wildly ambitious man, with a further insinuation of an almost Machiavellian attribute to his character. Riotte noted that shortly after taking office in London Münster orchestrated the dissolution of the Hanoverian political body in Hanover; a body that had secured his elevation to the post of Hanoverian Minister in the first place, the purpose of which it is suggested was so that Münster could elevate his own protégés.⁸³ Furthermore, the flurry of activity that Münster set in motion on assuming office led the British press to report on Hanoverian affairs, something that they had rarely bothered with until Münster's time in office.⁸⁴

Count Münster also increased the activity between the Foreign Office and the German Chancery dramatically, the full significance of which is argued by Simms to have created a situation where the Foreign Office was manipulated by the Chancery in securing its own interests.⁸⁵ On this particular note there is a cause of contention; while correspondence did indeed increase while Münster was Minister, whether he manipulated foreign affairs is highly debatable. The evidence put forward in this chapter will showcase that while Münster did indeed suggest points of policy that would directly benefit Hanover, the advisory nature of his remarks would suggest more a cooperative manner, and less one of underhanded

⁸³ Torsten Riotte, 'Britain and Hanover', in Peter H. Wilson (ed.), *Companion to Eighteenth-Century Europe*, (Wiley, 2009), p. 358.

⁸⁴ Torsten Riotte, 'George III and Hanover', in Brendan Simms and Torsten Riotte (eds.), *The Hanoverian Dimension in British History, 1714-1837*, (New York, 2010), p. 80.

⁸⁵ Brendan Simms, 'An Odd Question Enough'. Charles James Fox, the Crown and British Policy during the Hanoverian Crisis of 1806', *The Historical Journal* 38(3) (1995), p. 582.

manipulation. Indeed, the blatant Hanoverian self-interest in many of the despatches Münster sent to the Foreign Office is not hard to miss, and as Münster's Hanoverian agents largely operated in the German domains it is unsurprising that the subject of Hanover, and other powers' relations to it were a central feature in Münster's correspondence. Simms focuses his claim of Hanoverian manipulation on the events of 1806, notably the King's response to Castlereagh over the theoretical question of which power would be the preferential occupier of Hanover.⁸⁶ The Elector's response not being favourable to British policy is not in itself a manipulation of British policy. It is a response from one sovereign power to another. If that resulted in a re-alignment of Britain's policy, then such is the way of international diplomacy.

In comparison to his predecessors,⁸⁷ Count Münster was a pro-active statesman and courtier, judging from his correspondence and newspaper articles relating to him. Various regional newspapers when reporting royal gossip regularly report him being in the royal entourage, whether this be a royal inspection of the Royal Horse Guards,⁸⁸ a leisurely horseback ride through the London Parks,⁸⁹ or even accompanying the Royal family to their Christmas service.⁹⁰ This also gives a slight impression of Münster having the King's ear. This impression is further reinforced by Torsten Riotte. When Riotte addressed Münster's ambitious streak, he mentioned that in 1805, following the Hanoverian council's appointment of him as their representative in London, Münster caused the body's dissolution within months of being in Britain.⁹¹ While Riotte used this example to float the possibility of Münster having great ambition and drive home Münster's political acumen, we can also

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 582.

⁸⁷ The German Ministers in London prior to Münster typically were selected by the Hanoverian Ministry chiefly to serve as the communication link with the Elector. As a result, most would have non-descript careers and prove to be historical non-entities. A good indicator of this is that the records of the German Chancery held at the National Archives begin with Count Münster's tenure. For further reading on how Münster proved to be a stark break in character from his predecessors see Riotte, 'Britain and Hanover', in Wilson (ed.), *Companion to Europe*.

⁸⁸ 'Yesterday Morning, His Majesty and the Duke of Kent,' *Times*, 12 July 1805, p. 2.

⁸⁹ 'Saturdays Post', *Bury and Norwich Post*, 21 August 1805, p. 1.

⁹⁰ 'Saturdays Post', *Bury and Norwich Post*, 31 December 1806, p. 1.

⁹¹ Riotte, 'Britain and Hanover', in Wilson (ed.), *Companion to Europe*, p. 358.

garner two further points on Münster's character. One being an almost Machiavellian approach to politics; Münster had no qualms in consolidating power at the expense of the men who had helped him to gain his initial appointment, the influence he thus obtained was extensive. With the dissolution of the Hanoverian administration in Hanover, Münster became the *de facto* government, stationed in London in the same building as the King, St. James's Palace. His political power and influence can only have increased as a result. This would have made his purpose in London more forceful as he could act freely, answerable not to a government body in Hanover but to the King alone.

This suggests a particular ruthlessness on Münster's part, but it should be noted that his reasons for causing the Hanoverian government to be dissolved are disputed. Riotte argued that this could have been done to improve government efficiency, or so that he could place his favourites in positions of power.⁹² Regardless, this single action effectively transformed him from envoy to head of George III's Hanoverian affairs. His enhanced status and his proximity to the King would have made him particularly interesting to a British politician hoping to gain the King's ear. Indeed, we can see the trust George III placed in Münster by the fact that in early 1806 Münster is not in London but in Hanover, on a mission to the country to set the local governance in order on behalf of the King/Elector.⁹³ Despite the fact that the Prussian invasion cut his mission short and Münster promptly returned to London,⁹⁴ we can see that Münster was entrusted and expected to rebuild the governing infrastructure of Hanover personally (between the French and Prussian occupations), and not delegate it to another. Whether this was favouritism on the part of George III is debatable; Münster may have been the only credible man available at the time, but regardless this level of trust could only have increased his own personal prestige and influence as a result.

⁹² Ibid., p. 358.

⁹³ 'Hanover', *Newcastle Courant*, 1 March 1806.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

When it comes to Münster's efforts during the war period, Riotte was a bit more generous in his description of the Hanoverian system, stating that Hanoverian agents were vital in securing and reporting secret correspondence to London.⁹⁵ He stressed further that the Hanoverian Minister held as part of his office two vital political assets: proximity and knowledge of the British political arena, and direct access to the King.⁹⁶ Riotte's brief assessment of the Vienna Congress, and that Hanover was capable of not only regaining independence but also of gaining territory, suggests strongly Riotte's opinion that Münster, who represented Hanover in the Congress, was an accomplished diplomat. Indeed, he stressed that most historians attribute Castlereagh with having constrained Hanoverian demands; demands that would have curtailed the ambitions of Prussia.⁹⁷ It is this last point that attention should be drawn to. The suggestion that Castlereagh had to persuade Münster to stand back from Hanoverian expansion at Prussian expense is highly indicative that Münster was anti-Prussian in his beliefs, a point that is in sharp controversy with the professed views of Count Münster's son. For the sake of clarity in the following section, the Count Münster who is the subject of this chapter shall continue to be referred to as such, and as his son was also known as Count Münster, he shall be referred to by replacing his title with his first forename, so he shall be referred to as George Münster.

At first glance, the account written by George Münster in 1868 on the political affairs of Europe between 1814 and 1867 appears to be a well-reasoned political analysis explaining how Russia and the states of Germany had evolved over the period covered. Writing in the immediate aftermath of Prussian expansion in northern Germany, as a primary source for that period his work is invaluable. Through this document we gain an intelligent analysis from a contemporary diplomat, who as a Hanoverian national, was well placed to observe events as

⁹⁵ Riotte, 'Britain and Hanover', in Wilson (ed.), *Eighteenth Century Europe*, p.356.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 357.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

they happened. Indeed, being in possession of some of his father's diplomatic accounts from the Vienna Congress made him uniquely placed to analyse how the fate of northern Germany progressed over time. However, it is on close study of his account of his father's politics that the son's political bias becomes apparent.

The examination of Count Münster's private correspondence and his political declarations suggests political leanings that are in stark contrast to those suggested by his son. In short Count Münster was a staunch opponent of Prussian expansion, and his own words when describing the Government of Prussia are less than accommodating. His son however attempted to disprove this. He strongly suggested that his father was a staunch German nationalist, claiming his father was '*the centre of the patriotic movement for the freedom of Germany*'.⁹⁸ However, George Münster went on to claim that a firm German nationalist was, by extension, a firm Prussian nationalist and that the two were indistinguishable; furthermore the son claimed that while his father Count Münster was heading the Hanoverian government, the best possible '*understanding existed between them (Hanover and Prussia)*'.⁹⁹ His reason for such a bizarre statement was that a true German nationalist should envision a united Germany or 'Bund',¹⁰⁰ and that as the diplomatic route of mutual allegiance (as worked out at Vienna) had failed to achieve the desired results, a Prussian-led solution was inevitable.¹⁰¹ Unification, he argued, could only have been achieved by that Kingdom, and so all true German nationalists should support Prussia to that end.¹⁰²

As a result of this reasoning, George Münster suggested that although a diplomatic unity of the German lands as sought by his father had failed, it still qualified Count Münster as a German nationalist. In George Münster's opinion the next logical step for unity was a

⁹⁸ George Herbert Count Münster, *Political Sketches of the State of Europe*, p. 7.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 115-116.

Prussian takeover. Therefore the diplomatic nationalists from the Vienna Congress still qualified as German, ergo Prussian, nationalists, as their vision for a united Germany in some shape or form had been their shared ultimate goal. Due to their shared heritage and language, Germans would naturally follow Italy in uniting on these grounds.¹⁰³ Essentially, Prussia was merely facilitating that end. This leaves us with the quite ridiculous concept that Count Münster would have been in favour of a united Germany under Prussian rule. The following example will show that not only is that highly unlikely, but that Count Münster not only distrusted the Prussians, but actively worked to hinder the establishment of mutual trust between Britain and Prussia. Not to do so could have compromised the Hanoverian interests he was trying to safeguard. If Count Münster were to be as pro-German/Prussian as his son later suggested,¹⁰⁴ these letters would simply not exist; nor would he have been supportive of his Sovereign's own opposition to a Prussian occupation of Hanover in preference of a French, as alluded to above with Simms.

In a letter to the Foreign Secretary George Canning in May 1807, Münster presented a translated despatch concerning the Prussian Minister Baron Hardenberg. In this despatch one of Münster's agents, Mr de Hugo, detailed Hardenberg's plans for Northern Germany should Britain aid Prussia in a suggested venture.¹⁰⁵ What Hardenberg reputedly proposed was that should an allied force consisting of Britain, Russia and Prussia oust Napoleon from central Germany, a clear war goal was required to be agreed before-hand. Hardenberg's goal was that Prussia and Austria would become the guarantors of Germany, each being responsible for the

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 123.

¹⁰⁴ The reasoning behind George Münster's portrayal of his father as a German nationalist in this manner is a complex matter worthy of its own investigation. On the one hand George Münster may well have been a staunch nationalist who firmly believed the illogical leaps of his arguments in aligning German nationalism with Prussian. However, as he had made his career, like his father, in the Hanoverian diplomatic service, it is more likely that he was attempting to ingratiate himself with the new Prussian regime so as to retain meaningful employment. A view that is supported by his subsequent illustrious career, and elevation to Prince, within the Prussian establishment. Some academic work has been done on the subject of the evolution of German nationalism, the aforementioned works of Jasper Heinzen and Abigail Green being prominent amongst them.

¹⁰⁵ National Archives, FO 34/1, 'Mr de Hugo to Count Münster', 8 April 1807.

security of their respective spheres. This agreement was to be underscored by the powers of Britain and Russia.¹⁰⁶ In effect, as de Hugo and Münster both saw it, Prussia and Austria were to carve up the German territories between them, imposing not necessarily a political governorship of other German territory, but a military one. In the lengthy document that Count Münster sent in accompaniment to a copy of Hugo's despatch, he provided a full analysis of Hardenberg's scheme and his thoughts on it. These thoughts included Münster's strongly held beliefs of the Prussian state in general. In a brief introductory analysis, Münster addressed Hardenberg's plan as doomed to failure as it would never 'obtain the concurrence of those parts of Germany whom he wishes to rescue from the French yoke for no other purpose than that of subjecting them to an equally oppressive one'.¹⁰⁷

This statement alone contradicts his son's belief that, failing a diplomatic union of Germany, a German nationalist (to which he claimed his father was) would welcome a Prussian military union. Münster went on to claim that the military system that was the Prussian state was vexatious and intolerable on its own subjects, the more so as it was a military system that failed to defend them when the time came. Münster then claimed that the current troubles of central Europe stemmed from the Peace of Basel;¹⁰⁸ a peace partly orchestrated by the same Hardenberg. He then exclaimed that the illegal occupation of 1806 left Hanover's finances in ruins, and that even in neutrality Prussia damaged Hanover by opposing and denying expeditionary forces from Britain and Russia that could have aided the nation.

The rest of his letter continued in much the same vein; Prussia was essentially called out as a distrustful ally and a power hungry neighbour, even referring to Prussia at one point as being '*the most vexatious Military System that was ever known*'.¹⁰⁹ He stated to the Foreign Secretary that, while the King could not order his British Ministers to follow his lead, he had

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ N.A., FO 34/1, 'Count Münster to George Canning, 9 May 1807.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ N.A., FO 34/1, 'Count Münster to George Canning, 9 May 1807.

already instructed Münster to inform the Prussian ambassador Baron Jacobi that George, in his Electoral capacity could never condone the plan laid out by Hardenburg. Furthermore, he formally requested his British government to follow suit, Count Münster added for diplomacy's sake that Canning was better placed than he to make a British decision on this matter.¹¹⁰ This letter fundamentally closes George Münster's argument in relation to his father's views on Prussia, and by extension, calls into question his reliability as a source when referring to his father's opinions in matters politic. It should be pointed out also that, as a diplomat of Hanoverian nationality, George Münster was presumably attempting to justify his father's actions against Prussian expansion at the Vienna Congress for personal gain. To retain his position as a diplomat or even to retain some function in the new Prussian/German state, it is suggestive that he felt a need to ingratiate himself with his new Sovereign, something particularly hard for the son of a man so adamantly opposed to Prussia.

The Year 1806

The question of Hanover and its impact on the domestic affairs of Westminster are best understood by evaluating the events of 1806. This was a terrible year for Hanoverians and British alike. Hanover swapped one occupying nation, Prussia, for another, France, and in so doing would suffer large economic upheaval as a result of French requisitions throughout the duration of the war.¹¹¹ Britain, on the other hand, saw the deaths of two prominent statesmen, an uneasy relationship with the Crown, and a coalition government that consisted of factions traditionally opposed to each other. The internal strife of the Guelphic

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ N.A., FO 36/1, 'Edward Nicholas' report on distribution of Hanoverian territory to French Marshalls', 11 December 1809.

lands did not, however, prevent the effects of union from being felt. The disastrous peace negotiations of the year are a case in point.¹¹²

It is debatable whether Napoleon wanted peace or not in 1806, but from a British perspective talks were over-complicated from the start due to Hanover. The Act of Settlement made clear there was to be no war for Hanover, but George III was able to apply enough pressure on a weak government that needed royal support to ensure that there would be no peace without it either.¹¹³ Simms implies that this was in part due to the work of Münster lobbying the Crown, Government and civilian officials.¹¹⁴ It could be argued that this single issue destroyed the credibility of the Ministry of the Talents, and discredited the primarily anti-royalist, anti-Hanoverian minister Charles Fox and his supporters in the process.¹¹⁵ L. G. Mitchell, in his biography on Fox, suggested that Fox had this single opportunity to prove that the policy of peace he had been advocating for so many years in opposition was crucial in securing not just his own goals, but the credibility of the troubled coalition of which he was a part.¹¹⁶ With the failure of the peace talks, Fox and his supporters had failed in a key policy they had advocated for years; a failure that, in part, was influenced by the need to negotiate terms favourable to the Elector of Hanover, regardless of the impact this would have on British bargaining power.

It was not just negotiations with France that became problematic for the British politicians. Earlier in the same year, negotiations with Prussia came to an impasse over the question of Hanover. Brendan Simms passionately argued that it was only the issue of

¹¹² H. Butterfield examines this in its wider European context for the duration of the war of the fourth coalition, predominantly focusing on the French negotiations, but his wider analysis of the allied powers attitudes to each other is noteworthy in itself. Particular illumination can be found in his chapter on Prussian-English relations post-Jena. H. Butterfield, *The Peace Tactics of Napoleon (1806-1808)*, (Cambridge, 1929).

¹¹³ Simms, 'Odd Question Enough', *The Historical Journal*, p. 588.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 585.

¹¹⁵ L. G. Mitchell, *Charles James Fox*, (New York, 2002), p. 235.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 328-330.

Hanover that prevented closer relations between the two powers.¹¹⁷ Simms suggested that not only did George III convince the British Foreign Secretary that action against Prussia had to be taken as a result of their occupation (a small feat in itself considering foreign policy had been devolved to Parliament), but in so doing radically altered British policy towards the Prussians in the process.¹¹⁸ Simms even went so far as to suggest that Fox was a willing participant in the reactionary measures,¹¹⁹ a sharp U-turn in the otherwise pacifist policies normally adopted by the man. Unfortunately, the British reaction, a blockade of the north German ports and embargo of Prussian goods, did not improve life in Hanover. While Britain had uncharacteristically gone against its own policies of a close relationship with Prussia in favour of punitive measures because of their occupation of Hanover, by blockading the North Sea ports Britain prevented the flow of commerce down the rivers Elbe and Weser, which unfortunately flowed directly through Hanover. In this instance, the personal union had a profound effect on British policy, forcing it to defend proactively the interests of the smaller state, although the cost of this was a potential ally and the government's credibility, as traditional policies that had been followed by successive governments were changed for Hanover's benefit. How much of this was due to pressure applied by Münster or the Crown is a question to be investigated, as is who instigated the Hanoverian lobbying campaign, Count Münster or George III? Either way, we can see a Hanoverian faction successful in influencing a change in British policy for their own benefit; the question is how they did it.

In March 1806, Prussia, having come to an agreement with France, occupied the Electorate of Hanover. This event serves as the epitome of British and Hanoverian national interests being in conflict, and so is crucial in understanding the constitutional nature of the dynastic union. To gain some insight into the British attitude towards Hanover we can look to

¹¹⁷ Simms, 'Odd Question Enough', *The Historical Journal*, p. 586.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 575-576.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 575.

the correspondence of Viscount Castlereagh and George III a few months preceding the Prussian occupation. On the 11 January 1806, Viscount Castlereagh, serving in the Government as Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, noted the risk to British troops stationed in Hanover due to the expectation of its loss to France or Prussia. In addition to his plans concerning an evacuation of British troops, Castlereagh suggested that the King give serious thought to allowing a temporary Prussian occupation to take place until peace was established.¹²⁰ Castlereagh considered this course to be in both the King's and his Electoral subjects' best interests. He argued that a French occupation would likely see Hanover incorporated into Holland, and so grant France influence over the rivers Elbe and Weser, further insinuating that a Prussian occupation would be the lesser of two evils.¹²¹ This letter helps illustrate a British desire to retain good diplomatic relations with Prussia, whose Government, it was hoped, would eventually be convinced to abandon their shaky neutrality in the Allies favour; yet it goes further than that. It could be argued that, in his capacity as Secretary for War, Castlereagh was only doing his job in outlining Britain's tactical interest in an amicable Prussian occupation (over a hostile French one). Yet it is glaring that he did overstep his jurisdiction by offering advice on what was essentially a matter of Hanoverian policy under the guise of British strategic interest.

The King's responses to Castlereagh further illustrates this point, while additionally expressing a mistrust on the King's part as to whether his British Government would respect the sovereignty of his Hanoverian subjects at the cost of Britain's strategic interests. After approving the plans to evacuate the British troops, and demanding the evacuation be extended to his Hanoverian soldiers as well, the King (via his Private Secretary) responded in great detail to Castlereagh's suggestions. George adamantly claimed that French occupation was

¹²⁰ A. Aspinall, *The Later Correspondence of George III, Vol. IV*, (London, 1968), 'no. 3168, Letters from Viscount Castlereagh to Lieut.-Col. Herbert Taylor, and the replies: Castlereagh to Taylor, 11 Jan. 1806.', p. 376.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

preferable to Prussian, claiming that *'the occupation of his Electoral dominions by an open enemy was preferable to their possession by a treacherous friend'*.¹²² He further reasoned that by being aggressively occupied, the restitution of Hanover in the event of peace would be easier to obtain from a defeated France. This was opposed to having to negotiate control back from Prussia, had she obtained George's consent to occupy the state,¹²³ George's belief being that the Prussians strongly desired Hanover for themselves and would not give up the Hanoverian territory easily. This first note, dated the 12 January, further reminded Castlereagh that the King expected his (British) Government never to secure peace without Hanover's recovery. This is possibly George III's diplomatic attempt to inform Castlereagh that Prussia was not to be handed Hanover, temporarily or otherwise, to secure British interests. In the above case Castlereagh's trespass into Hanoverian policy was somewhat overlooked, but following a further note on Castlereagh's part suggesting to bring the matter to Cabinet,¹²⁴ he received a firm rebuke from the King, who reiterated his previous preference of a French occupation, and as he had firmly made up his mind he *'by no means calls on his British Ministers for an opinion on a subject which can alone be determined by what his Majesty feels he owes to himself and family.'*¹²⁵ This correspondence is a prime example of when the British national interest was put on a collision course with the policy interests of Hanover, as laid down by her Elector. It further shows how the complexities of the personal union's political dynamic could be a cause of contention between British Ministers and their King.

¹²² Ibid., 'Taylor to Castlereagh, 12 Jan. 1806.', p. 377.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 377.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 'Castlereagh to Taylor, 12 Jan. 1806.', p. 378.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 'no. 3169, The King to Viscount Castlereagh, 14 Jan. 1806.', p. 379.

Relations between the Chancery and British Ministries

It should be noted that the influence of Hanover on British politics was not always confrontational or at odds with British interests. Hanover's influence had positive side effects as well, although it is arguable that these were only felt as a result of individual statesmen's efforts to sustain and cultivate working relationships. To examine this point, we can turn to the correspondence between Count Münster and George Canning between the years 1807-1809, the years that Canning held the post of Foreign Secretary. To add weight to the points that will be raised in this correspondence, the character and ambitions of George Canning must be examined, thus gaining an idea of the working relationship of the Foreign Secretary and Hanoverian Minister.

George Canning is widely regarded by scholars as an ambitious individual, who held aspirations of being Prime Minister from an early stage of his political career. This view was also held by Canning's contemporaries. This ambition was complemented by Canning's ability to network and cultivate important social and political connections. For example, J. Steven Watson credited Canning as having been '*the darling of fashionable dinner parties*'.¹²⁶ This should be noted, as the hosts of a social gathering of this kind would stand to boost their own prestige and status within their own circles if they were able to secure men who were viewed in such a manner. This can only have benefited Canning, who by cultivating this reputation would have been able to enhance his own standing amongst the British upper classes. This would have been important to him if he had eyes on the Premiership, as Watson claims the aristocracy did not truly see him as a gentleman as he was the son of an actress.¹²⁷ With such snobbery aimed against him, he would have needed to cultivate all the prestige he could, yet this would also have taught him the skills needed to develop political ties as well.

¹²⁶ J. Steven Watson, *The Reign of George III, 1760-1815*, (London, 1960), p. 436.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 443.

As he wanted to become Prime Minister, he would have needed two things: the support of his colleagues in Parliament, and the endorsement of the King. As Canning saw himself as Pitt's natural successor, he believed he was due the support of the Pittite MPs. He was also regarded as being intensely clever, and clearly seen as a man to watch, having been granted office at a comparatively young age in relation to the rest of the Cabinet, despite his open criticism of Cabinet colleagues he disagreed with.¹²⁸ As such, gathering support for a government led by himself may have proved difficult in reality, but Canning clearly thought he was capable of the task. While the King's favour was not technically a necessity, the difficulty of a politician to advance quickly without it was evident from Charles Fox's career. This is where Count Münster would have been a useful ally to Canning, the German Chancery offices being based at the King's residence, St. James Palace.¹²⁹

Due to the competencies and character of Canning and Münster, their correspondence makes for interesting and insightful reading. Initially, Canning did not appear to have regarded Münster with anything other than a professional courtesy, the earlier letters from his time in office merely addressing the Count as Sir as opposed to addressing him by his title, and being somewhat rigid and brusque in manner. Additionally, when signing off a letter, Canning simply used the lines, 'Your obedient and humble servant', or an equally short equivalent.¹³⁰ However by mid-1808 Canning addressed his letters with the salutation 'My dear Count', and ended them on the most part with a flattering extensive run of pleasantries, one such example being; *'Yours, my dear Count, with great regard and esteem, Your sincere and faithful, humble Servant, George Canning.'*¹³¹ Ending letters in this manner reads as rather exaggerated in comparison to the more compact endings of his earlier correspondence.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 443.

¹²⁹Torsten Riotte, 'Britain and Hanover', in Peter Wilson (ed.), *Companion to Eighteenth Century Europe*, (Wiley, 2009), p. 357.

¹³⁰ British Library, Add MS 89143/2/19/3, 'Canning to Count Münster', 14 December 1807.

¹³¹ B.L., Add MS 89143/2/19/3, 'Canning to Count Münster', 20 June 1809.

On their own, these extensive subscriptions formally ending the letters do not explicitly signify an informal cordial relationship. What they do show, is that a mutual respect for the other's social and political standing had grown between the two men. As Anni Sairio and Minna Nevala discuss in their study of the social dimensions within letter writing, the more extensive and humbling the subscription at a letter's end, the more respect and social dignity is being expressed to the recipient.¹³² In the case of Canning and Münster, their later correspondence suggests a mutual respect for the rank of the other, and importantly, that neither signature style hints at a feeling of superiority or inferiority to the other. Due to Sairio and Nevala's findings, it is clear that a mutual respect grew between the two, who believed their positions to be equal in status, despite working for different polities. What proves the relationship was a cordial and affable one, and not just professional, is a later event surrounding the infamous Canning-Castlereagh duel.

The additional evidence of a close relationship between Canning and Münster lies within Canning's last letter to Münster in his capacity as Foreign Secretary. The day before he resigned (as a consequence of the duel he had with Castlereagh the month before), Canning had taken the time to write to Münster, in which he expressed a desire to see him one last time before he resigned.¹³³ The letter itself is quite short which, according to Sairio and Nevala, indicates informality,¹³⁴ but the manner in which Canning asks this favour and the wording of the letter as a whole is quite touching, simply because when compared to letters from the start of their correspondence, the language used had softened dramatically and overall is less rigid and brusque compared to earlier letters. Now, whether or not a genuine

¹³² Anni Sairio and Minna Nevala, University of Helsinki, 'Social dimensions of layout in eighteenth-century letters and letter writing manuals', *Varieng: Studies in variation, contacts and change in english, Volume 14 - Principles and Practices for the Digital Editing and Annotation of Diachronic Data*, 13 June 2013, <http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/series/volumes/14/sairio_nevala/#sect2> [accessed 29 April 2020].

¹³³ B.L., Add MS 89143/2/19/3, 'Canning to Count Münster - resignation', 10 October 1809.

¹³⁴ Anni Sairio and Minna Nevala, University of Helsinki, 'Social dimensions of layout in eighteenth-century letters and letter writing manuals', *Varieng: Studies in variation, contacts and change in english, Volume 14 - Principles and Practices for the Digital Editing and Annotation of Diachronic Data*, 13 June 2013, <http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/series/volumes/14/sairio_nevala/#sect2> [accessed 29 April 2020].

friendship developed on Canning's part is debatable, as this friendship could have been nurtured for political reasons. On the one hand, a genuine friendship may well have grown between the two men, as the above correspondence would imply. Yet Canning could have been using Münster to get a friend close to the King, and this should be considered. Indeed, by 1809 George III appeared to have had some level of trust in Canning's abilities, evidenced by his involvement in the affair to oust Castlereagh from office. Had Castlereagh had more favour with the King than Canning, it is unlikely that George, or even the Prime Minister, Portland, would have supported Canning's underhanded scheme.

While the above is an example of how Canning may have used the existence of a Hanoverian Minister to promote his own political agenda, Münster was just as capable of cultivating a working relationship with Canning for his own ends. There is a series of letters in which Canning urged Münster to revoke his request for a passport for a Hanoverian gentleman who wanted to travel back to Hanover via Heligoland. Canning, on four separate occasions, one being verbal, attempted to persuade Münster that this would be a bad idea.¹³⁵ First of all, the weather for an Autumn/Winter crossing was treacherous, and should Canning have permitted this man a passport, he could not in good conscience deny other Hanoverians passports. He claimed that such an increase in activity would draw French attention, and would risk the closure of this route onto the Continent. This was of deep concern to Canning, as this route remained the only access point for news from the Continent at the time.¹³⁶ He further argued that, should the French close this route of traffic, it would cause a scandal in Parliament that could damage Canning himself. However, despite these claims, and bearing in mind Canning's political aspirations, he stated that he would not stand in the way, and would permit passports should Münster insist upon them.¹³⁷ This illustrates that, despite the

¹³⁵ B.L., Add MS 89143/2/19/3, 'Canning to Count Münster - Passport to the continent', 12 May 1808.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

risk to British interests and Canning's own career, Münster had garnered enough support and influence with the Foreign Secretary that Canning was prepared to risk quite a lot for Hanoverian interests. The Canning-Münster relationship is of paramount importance when studying Anglo-Hanoverian relations. Primarily, it illustrates the cooperative nature of the two administrations, with political favours and influence fluidly moving across the divide. Furthermore, it provides ample proof that the two polities could voluntarily work together in a manner quite different to mere allies, yet not in such a way as would suggest the existence of a composite monarchy. The Canning-Münster relationship clearly highlights the flexible working nature of a personal union.

While Harding's argument for composite monarchy has merit, in that he recognises the failings of the current limits of the personal union thesis, it is this latter theory that remains the most adequate. Admittedly, our current understanding of what constitutes a personal union requires a less rigid definition. The personal union of Britain and Hanover was a complex political entity, and the relationship was viewed as such by contemporaries. If we allow for a personal union to be flexible, we see a more dynamic political entity emerge where precise jurisdiction was difficult to ascertain. One example can be found in a domestic affair between the King/Elector's grooms, after they settled (temporarily) in Britain following their evacuation of the Hanoverian Electoral stables from the continent, while another is brought to light by examining the complexities of taxation. In relation to taxes, the evidence will showcase that the rights of Hanoverians living in Britain was a continuous cause of complaint for Münster.

Taxes, then as now, were not popular but necessary. What caused Münster concern was that these British taxes were being levied upon Hanoverians, the legality of which was contentious. It certainly brings to mind a not dissimilar disagreement between Britain and another party, of 'taxation without representation', that had ended quite badly for Westminster

some thirty years prior.¹³⁸ The conception of income tax by William Pitt the Younger was a particular cause of contention for the British aristocracy, and although the cause for its creation was to fund the war effort, it has remained a staple of British revenue even now, despite regular repeals and reintroductions.¹³⁹ Taxation has always had a presence in British history, whether this be as an influencing factor relating to the outbreak of the English Civil War,¹⁴⁰ or the infamous rallying cry that led to George III's loss of the American Colonies. However, these issues relate to the taxation of British subjects-colonists from a British authority. It is interesting to learn then, that the issue of taxation raises its head in the form of the taxation of Hanoverians by the British government. The importance of this cannot be understated; if Hanoverian subjects are being taxed by British authorities then it would suggest a closer union exists, one akin to that of Scotland and England, yet the political arguments of the British Government in relation to the Hanoverian union would deny them the right to tax these people. It is in this financial quagmire that we find Count Münster operating on behalf of Hanoverians in Britain.

In a letter dated 15 January 1807, to the Foreign Secretary Viscount Howick (who would go on to be the Prime Minister Earl Grey in 1830), Count Münster raised the issue of a tax refund for a Mr. Best, who was serving as Hanoverian Secretary of Legation. Münster expressed that he had raised the issue with Howick's predecessor, Charles Fox, but due to Fox's passing nothing, understandably, had come of it.¹⁴¹ His letter, dated the 19th January, is the one that shows Münster's opinion on the matter of tax, and also the studious nature with which he approached it. He explained that Mr. Best was of dual nationality, his father being a

¹³⁸ I refer here, of course, to the American War for Independence. A recently published overview of which can be found in Rick Atkinson, *The British Are Coming: The War For America 1775-1777*. (London, 2020). Although a public historian Atkinson's analysis makes for interesting reading, coming from an American ex-serviceman's point of view with experience in journalism.

¹³⁹ John Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Consuming Struggle*, (London, 1996), pp. 262-263.

¹⁴⁰ For an explanation on the contentious issue of tax between the Crown, Parliament and British subjects see, Michael Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire: A New History of the English Civil Wars*, (London, 2009), p. 47.

¹⁴¹ N.A., FO 34/1, 'Count Münster to Viscount Howick', 15 January 1807.

Hanoverian who had also held the role of Hanoverian Secretary of Legation. He pointed out that, although Best had been born in Britain, he had been residing in Hanover when he received the call to assume the Office of Legation in London. He expressed his belief that Best should, therefore, be exempt from taxation, this having been automatically deducted from him by the Bank.¹⁴²

To further emphasise this point, Münster enclosed a letter dated 13 December 1799, from Lord Grenville to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, in which Grenville had been encouraged by the King to express Mr. Best's exemption from tax.¹⁴³ While this letter stated that the exemption was due to the Office held by Best, and makes no mention of his nationality, it was Best's nationality that Münster pushed as his reason for tax exemption in the letter of 1807, adding that he '*cannot entertain a doubt of his (Best) being entitled to the Exemptions claimed*'.¹⁴⁴ This shows us that, while Münster had a legal precedent from 1799 with which to ensure Mr. Best's tax exemptions, he turned in addition to Best's rights as a Hanoverian national, suggesting that the Treasury had no rights on these grounds to tax Hanoverians. The issue of tax exemption is one that Münster returned to again and again throughout his time in office,¹⁴⁵ suggesting that when it came to financial contributions, the British establishment was less particular in expressing a distinction between the two separate subjects than they were when it came to their foreign policy.

This particular case study is noteworthy on two counts. In addition to the arguments on nationality put forward by Münster, we also find the King's belief that Best's diplomatic office should suffice as reason for exemption in the earlier case of 1799. If we take into account the Diplomatic Privileges Act of 1708, we see a strong legal case suggesting that Mr. Best should indeed have been in receipt of diplomatic immunity and the financial exemptions

¹⁴² N.A., FO 34/1, 'Count Münster to Viscount Howick', 17 January 1807.

¹⁴³ N.A., FO 34/1, 'Lord Grenville to Lords Commissioners of His Majesties Treasury', 13 December 1799.

¹⁴⁴ N.A., FO 34/1, 'Count Münster to Viscount Howick', 17 January 1807.

¹⁴⁵ See National Archives, FO 34/1, 'Treasury Chambers to George Hammond', 9 June 1809., as an example.

that accompanied it.¹⁴⁶ As the 1708 Act applied not just to ambassadors and public ministers of foreign courts, but also to their servants, both domestic and otherwise, Mr. Best's status seems without question.¹⁴⁷ That British authorities repeatedly attempted to disregard the 1708 Act, suggests that British Ministers held independent Hanoverian sovereignty in scant regard. This view can be reinforced further when noting that the 1708 Act specifically stated that any attempt to disregard its statutes should be considered criminal offences resulting in '*pains, penalties, and corporal punishment*'.¹⁴⁸ With the decrees of this Act, the King's own support, and Münster's points on nationality, we can only be left with one conclusion. That, from a British point of view, British-Hanoverian sovereignty had become indistinguishable from the personal union as Ministers could apply their own theories on where exactly their jurisdiction lay. From a Hanoverian perspective, we gain further evidence suggesting that Count Münster had to repeatedly make the case for full Hanoverian sovereignty, independent to the institutions of British politics.

Another example that illustrated Münster's belief in the separate rights of Hanoverians can be found in a series of letters ranging from November to December, again in 1807. The point of contention between the German Chancery and the British Government was whether two Hanoverian grooms should have been exempt from militia service. Count Münster's argument rested on the grounds that the two Hanoverians in question were residing in Britain only temporarily as refugees.¹⁴⁹ While sounding of a trivial nature to begin with, the arguments put forward by the two departments quickly took on a legal and constitutional nature that questioned the nature of the personal union.

¹⁴⁶ Danby Pickering, *The Statutes at Large, from the Second to the Eighth Year of Queen Anne, Vol. XI*, (Cambridge, 1764), pp. 487-489.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 488.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 488.

¹⁴⁹ N.A., FO 34/1, 'Count Münster to George Canning', 13 November 1807.

On the British side the Foreign Secretary, George Canning, referred the matter to Lord Hutchinson, who with the assistance of the Attorney and Solicitor General, argued that as Hanoverians and British subjects alike shared the same sovereign, they should not be exempt from the responsibility to defend said sovereign by joining a militia.¹⁵⁰ Count Münster's response relied heavily on the separate nature of the two subject peoples. His argument rested primarily on three distinct points: the independent statehood of Hanover to Britain, the Alien Act of 1793, and the rights shown to foreigners of different nationality. He began his argument with expressed dismay that Canning had referred the matter to Lord Hutchinson, who in turn had not replied with the expected response. Judging from the forcefulness of Münster's subsequent arguments, Hutchinson's response had not even been anticipated, such was the written display of Münster's disagreement. He claimed that, as Hanoverians, they were not subject to British laws.¹⁵¹ As the Government of Britain had frequently expressed their view on the separate nature of the two states, he insinuated that this distinction should have been obvious.

Münster's second point rested on the claim that as the two grooms were resident in Britain under '*peculiar*' circumstances, having brought George III's Hanoverian stables to Britain for safety, they should be treated according to the Alien Act.¹⁵² This Act essentially monitored European refugees, as well as any other foreigner the British authorities believed to be suspicious.¹⁵³ While its initial purpose had been to allow the British government to monitor Émigrés from the Revolutionary war,¹⁵⁴ its blanket coverage of anyone not born British clearly meant that (in Münster's opinion) Hanoverian subjects qualified. He further claimed that as people covered by the Alien Act were not required to join organisations such

¹⁵⁰ N.A., FO 34/1, 'Count Münster to Lord Hutchinson', 18 December 1807.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ John Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Reluctant Transition*, (London, 1983), p. 225.

¹⁵⁴ This Act was initially passed in 1793 by William Pitt in response to the perceived dangers of the French Revolution. See John Ehrman's work on Pitt's passage of this Bill as referenced above in footnote 147.

as a militia, the refugee grooms in question were exempt.¹⁵⁵ Münster concluded with the fact that the Home Office would not expect a servant of a foreign dignitary or *'another Prince'* to be pressed into a militia. As the grooms had taken the responsibility of rescuing the Elector's property, they were working on behalf of George III in his Electoral capacity, thus ensuring they were servants of a separate sovereign.¹⁵⁶ Again, Münster relied on George III's own desire to retain a distinct separate identity to his own roles as Elector and King.

Interestingly, in a letter dated 12 May 1808, we discover it was the Home Secretary, Lord Hawkesbury, with the aid of constitutional lawyers, who prevailed. Hawkesbury argued that due to George III being Elector of Hanover the grooms owed allegiance to the King, as both sovereigns were housed in the same person.¹⁵⁷ This was a point that Münster did not appear to agree with, and understandably so as it suggested a rather interesting legal assumption. If a Hanoverian subject of George III could be called to arms in the defence of Britain, due to the fact that the individual owed allegiance to the sovereign regardless of which titled moniker was in use, then the same principle in an equal personal union would imply that a British subject was required to take up arms in defence of Hanover. This went against the crucial point laid out in the Act of Settlement. As Count Münster appeared to have resigned himself to the fate of the two grooms, it is a safe assumption that he did not pursue the matter further as he did not wish to open this particular constitutional can of worms. What this does imply, however, is that the British establishment, while accepting the personal union as a reality, did not view it as a union of equals, a view clearly not shared by the Hanoverian Minister.

A second point to consider, in regards to the British position, was that Hanoverian service under the British flag was not entirely exclusive to the King's German Legion.

¹⁵⁵ N.A., FO 34/1, 'Count Münster to Lord Hutchinson', 18 December 1807.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ N.A., FO 34/1, 'Count Münster to George Canning', 12 May 1808.

Hanoverians were not excluded from seeking promotion and advancement through other regiments of the British army.¹⁵⁸ Jasper Heinzen explores Hanoverian military service in his work on the effects of transnational sentiment and its longevity, and in so doing, depicts a military community around the German Legion that enabled the Hanoverians to interact with, and become part of, the wider British military and the towns in which they were billeted.¹⁵⁹ While Heinzen goes on to explain convincingly how the myth of the Legion grew and in turn influence the memory of the union in British discourse, the evidence he supplies helps to explain the British position in regards to the case of the two grooms. With Hanoverian officers taking up posts in the wider British military, it is not unreasonable to presume that British authorities saw no issue of having the same rules apply to the rank and file. In this case a domestic militia. That the grooms were reluctant to enlist, and had the means to plead their case to the German Chancery probably did not factor into the initial decision. The forced enlistment of foreigners into British service was by no means unheard of, the most recognisable examples here being the Royal Navy press gangs. In spite of this, as the grooms had appealed to the Hanoverian Minister, we do see that this did become a constitutional issue, albeit an isolated one. This in itself furthers the argument that the union was pragmatic in nature, with constitutional and sovereign rights being dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Overall, the above correspondence touches upon the very structure of the personal union, and its effect on the rights of its respective sovereign peoples. On the one hand, the British Government, while adamant that in political and foreign spheres the Hanoverians were not their concern, were prepared to overlook their official view somewhat when it came to domestic affairs. By promoting the joint sovereignty of the two realms, and taking advantage of the union's ambiguous nature, they hoped to acquire the right to tax resident

¹⁵⁸ Jasper Heinzen, 'Transnational Affinities and Invented Traditions: The Napoleonic Wars in British and Hanoverian Memory, 1815-1915', *The English Historical Review* 127(2012), p. 1410.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1410-1411.

Hanoverians and press them into military service on the Home Front. The counterargument to this, as laid out repeatedly by the Hanoverian Minister, was that by Parliament's own admission the two states were separate, and by extension, so were their peoples. The rights shown to other foreigners should by default have been extended to the Hanoverians regardless of circumstance, the key point being that George III King of Britain was not their sovereign, it was George Elector of Hanover, and as such they were subjects of a foreign Prince. As the fate of the grooms was decided upon fairly ambiguous grounds, and evidence illustrates that Münster was repeatedly having to advocate for tax exemptions and rebates, it is suggestive that the nature of the personal union in regard to the rights of the House of Hanover's subjects was never truly settled in this period, the union's very existence causing controversy for its peoples when such issues arose.

Chapter 2: Smugglers, Spies, and Philanthropists

The maritime relationship between Britain and Hanover during the Napoleonic war was one that had no immediate dividend for either side. It was more a case that British naval policy created the opportunity for both parties to benefit as a result of by-products of Britain's policies. In the North and Baltic Seas, Napoleon's Continental System provided the opportunity for Hanover to benefit through Britain's defence of the smuggling operation that would grow out of Heligoland. The defence of these contraband routes in turn provided for a safe communication route to establish itself within the smuggling network, thus Count Münster could frequently pass on intelligence sent to him from his continental agents. This, for obvious reasons, was of additional benefit for Britain. After the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, and Napoleon diverting his northern forces to fight his wars in Germany, the threat of a military invasion of the British mainland diminished substantially. Napoleon had not given up in his attempt to subdue Britain; he had merely altered his strategy from one of military conquest to economic attrition.¹⁶⁰

To achieve the surrender of Britain, Napoleon attempted to introduce a continent-wide embargo of all British exports.¹⁶¹ On paper, the plan had merit as the British economy was highly invested in trade with the rest of Europe.¹⁶² Depriving Britain of the means to fund her allies, while dealing a blow to her industrialised economy, was a sound theoretical stratagem to force her to the negotiating table. In practice, however, the Continental System proved ineffective. To have any lasting effect on British trade, Napoleon would have had to ensure

¹⁶⁰ Napoleon's efforts in this regard was to establish the Continental System. For an overview of this see, Aaslestad and Joor, *Revisiting Napoleon's Continental System* with particular attention given to the contributions of Annie Jourdan, Alexandre Tchoudinov, and Silvia Marzagalli.

¹⁶¹ Philip Dwyer, *Citizen Emperor*, (London, 2013), p. 235.

¹⁶² Jann M. Witt, 'Smuggling and Blockade-Running during the Anglo-Danish War from 1807 to 1814', in Aaslestad & Joor, *Revisiting Napoleon's Continental System*, p.155.

his embargo was implemented across Europe, as the ports of France and her satellites alone would not have been enough to achieve the end intended.¹⁶³ There is even logic in the argument, as put by Michael Broers, that the implementation of the Continental System was one of the driving forces behind Napoleon's military campaigns across Europe; Portugal's refusal in 1807 to implement Napoleon's scheme brought French armies to the Iberian Peninsula, and events there would subsequently lead to war with Spain.¹⁶⁴ Enforcing the Russians to adhere to the System was an additional factor for the invasion of 1812.¹⁶⁵ Yet by 1808, Napoleon was in a position to close off many of the Mediterranean's ports to British shipping, despite British naval supremacy in that theatre. Indeed the dominance of the Royal Navy and their countering maritime blockade crippled southern Europe's trading hubs.¹⁶⁶ Napoleon was also able to close off the Baltic and Russian coastlines to the British. In 1806, as we have seen, Prussia was aligned briefly with the French through the transfer of Hanover. The cost of this was the closure of Prussian ports, a move that led to the brief war between Britain and Prussia, although, as has been discussed, the British demand for the return of Hanover to its Elector was an additional factor. The subsequent French war with Prussia the following year temporarily saw a return of British trade with the North of Germany but, following Prussian defeat and Russia's peace settlement, as concluded in the Treaties of Tilsit, Napoleon had effectively cut British trade with the continent by early 1808.¹⁶⁷

Another example of the influence of the union during the war could be the efforts of prestigious Britons and Hanoverians in forming the 'Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress'. Its founding in 1806 is noteworthy, being the same year as the Prussian occupation of Hanover. This philanthropist group's aim was to provide funds for struggling foreigners,

¹⁶³ Adam Zamoyski, *Napoleon: The Man Behind The Myth*, (London, 2018), p. 406.

¹⁶⁴ Michael Broers, *Napoleon: The Spirit of the Age*, (London, 2018), p. 154.

¹⁶⁵ Zamoyski, *Napoleon: Man Behind The Myth*, pp. 496-497.

¹⁶⁶ James Davey, *In Nelson's Wake: The Navy and The Napoleonic Wars*, (Ceredigion, 2015), pp. 238-239.

¹⁶⁷ Zamoyski, *Napoleon: Man Behind The Myth*, p. 442.

and to help them return to their native lands when the opportunity arose.¹⁶⁸ In its founding years, Count Münster was a notable patron.¹⁶⁹ Whether he was a founding member remains to be seen, but the very existence of this society suggests that Hanoverian nationals had succeeded in exerting enough influence to gain support and sympathy from a portion of the British upper classes, thus bolstering Hanover's 'soft power'. Incidentally, the success of this Society speaks for itself, the Society being a registered charity in Britain that still functions today, 184 years after the union's dissolution.¹⁷⁰ This is important to note, as it could be argued that, while originating as a body whose purpose generally aided Germans, it adapted and developed over time so as to accommodate social British sympathies of any subsequent period.

Diplomat-spies

While British and Royal policy traditionally appeared to want to keep British and Hanoverian interests as separate as possible, there was without doubt some overlap. This aspect can best be seen in diplomatic and espionage theatres. As the Napoleonic wars progressed, Britain found itself increasingly isolated, as more of the continent gave way to the arms of Napoleon, cutting Britain off from maritime commerce and military allies. This in turn saw a systematic removal of British delegates from the various courts of Europe, as either through choice or defeat, the other courts of the continent came under the sway of the French Empire. However, Hanoverian delegates remained in place, thus providing a channel

¹⁶⁸ Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress, *An Account of the Friends of Foreigners in Distress*, (London, 1847), p. 9.

¹⁶⁹ 'Friends of Foreigners in Distress', *National Intelligencer*, 27 August 1810.

¹⁷⁰ Charity Commission, 'Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress - Charity Details', *Registered Charities in England and Wales*, n.d., <<http://beta.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?regid=212593&subid=0>>, [accessed 22 November 2018].

of communication between London and Europe that Napoleon appears to have uncharacteristically overlooked.

Two key Hanoverians stand out on the diplomatic scene: Baron Ludwig von Ompteda in Prussia, whose more famous brother fought alongside Wellington in Spain but fell at Waterloo; and Count Hardenberg in Vienna, a distant cousin to the well-known Count Hardenburg in Prussian service.¹⁷¹ Webster briefly touched on this subject by noting that by 1812 the British Foreign Office had ‘almost ceased to exist’ in regards to having agents in Europe, and that these two men were instrumental in keeping communications open at the height of Napoleon’s power.¹⁷² Unfortunately, while expressing the fact that these men acted openly and seemingly without repercussion, Webster did not delve into the questions he was raising, merely glossing over the issue as a curiosity of the period.¹⁷³ What is more telling, however, is that many of the policy decisions Webster attributed to Castlereagh were, judging by his sources, built upon information Castlereagh could only have got from Count Münster or the Crown. Webster’s sources in this case were the various reports Ompteda and Hardenburg sent to Münster who, being the head of the German Chancery, did not answer to Parliament. While it is understandable for the two interested parties to pool resources, it begs the question as to whether Münster or Castlereagh had more influence on continental affairs; was Castlereagh Münster’s unwitting accomplice, or was Münster hoping for more concrete aid for Hanover to materialise from a grateful Britain? While the former is unlikely, Münster and the Hanoverian faction’s influence in the Foreign Office could be more substantial than previously acknowledged.

¹⁷¹ Rory Muir, *Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon 1807-1815*, (London, 1996), p. 177.

¹⁷² Webster, *Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, pp. 45-46.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

As already discussed, Hanoverian influence within the Foreign Office is covered to a degree by Simms, who used the events of 1806 as his example.¹⁷⁴ The diplomatic correspondence between Münster and his agents after 1806 does much to build on Simms's seminal article in this regard. To demonstrate further that the Hanoverian agents were instrumental in forming British policy, would be that they were trusted far more than their British counterparts. Hardenburg, for example, enjoyed the confidence of Count Metternich of Austria,¹⁷⁵ and was thus able to glean a great deal of insight into the plans of this highly secretive minister. The level of influence on the part of Hanover is further illustrated by Webster's claim that it is only due to Ompteda's intervention in 1813 that Britain agreed to an alliance with Prussia, on the promise of returning the Kingdom to its size in 1806, and not that of 1805; the Prussian Minister Hardenburg had almost succeeded in having the British accept the 1805 agreement when Prussia had considerably more territory.¹⁷⁶ This subsequently calls into question the competence of the British delegates in this particular case.

With his views on Prussia having already been established, we can turn to the full impact of Count Münster on Britain's foreign policy. With the loss of Hanover in 1803, Count Münster was essentially head (after the King/Elector) of a Government in exile, almost a Charles de Gaulle of the nineteenth century. The influence this position granted him, in addition to his close proximity and relationship with the Sovereign, was not lost on agents in Europe. In his diplomatic correspondence we see that it was not just Hanoverian agents that kept him informed of affairs, but also statesmen and military officers from other European courts, notably those of the Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns. More often than not in the case of the latter, this was to request his assistance in facilitating British support for military

¹⁷⁴ Brendan Simms, 'An Odd Question Enough'. Charles James Fox, the Crown and British Policy during the Hanoverian Crisis of 1806', *The Historical Journal* 38(3) (1995), p. 582.

¹⁷⁵ Webster, *Foreign Policy of Castlereagh*, pp. 45-46.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 132-133.

ventures, or even just financial aid. This is important to note, as it would suggest that, while being the representative of a nation that had essentially ceased to exist, Münster was still held as an important and influential figure by people outside of the British-Hanoverian political arena. Whether this trust in his influence was based on a poor understanding of the political reality of the Anglo-Hanoverian union, or a strong faith in Münster's personal capabilities as an individual, will probably never be truly understood, but occasionally we can discover glimpses of how the union was perceived by external nations. It is even arguable that it was the perception of Münster's influence that allowed him to become such an influential figure within British foreign policy. Due to the nature of information sent to him by both his own agents and foreign dignitaries, Münster was able to cultivate what would nowadays be described as an intelligence network and make it available to the British authorities. A network that they themselves would have found hard to match, as it was presumably much easier to explain away the presence of a Hanoverian in central Europe than a Briton. By examining his diplomatic correspondence we will see how Münster sustained his personal influence and made himself indispensable to the Foreign Office, suggesting that the union paid out profitable dividends in the realms of foreign policy and diplomatic espionage, while incidentally proving to be beneficial to Britain's prospective allies.

In a letter from Berlin dated September 1811, Prussia and Austria were communicating unofficially through the conduit of the Hanoverian agents.¹⁷⁷ The information they passed to each other in turn got passed on to the Foreign Secretary the following month,¹⁷⁸ as Count Münster made it a habit to translate and convey a large quantity of these documents to the Foreign Office.¹⁷⁹ On the 10th September, Baron Ompteda wrote of a plan

¹⁷⁷ N.A., FO 34/3, *'Translated extract from Baron Ompteda to Count Münster dated Berlin 10 Sept 1811'*, 'Count Münster to Marquess Wellesley', 7 October 1811.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ This seems to be a habit that the Count carried out continuously during the war period as can be seen throughout his papers held by the National Archives, particularly within FO 34/2 and FO 34/3.

of military action on the part of Prussia, and he sent the despatches with his brother, Colonel Ompteda.¹⁸⁰ The Colonel had a verbal report to give of a secret conversation he had had with Colonel Gneisenau, to supplement the Baron's communique. Baron Ompteda expressed that, at that time, it was impolitic for Prussia to be seen communicating with Austria, so the two states had turned to using Münster's agents as intermediaries. Ompteda would send Prussian information to Count Hardenburg in Vienna, with instruction to forward them in turn to Count Metternich.¹⁸¹ Britain profited from this informal agreement, as both Ompteda and Hardenburg relayed this information to Münster, who then translated and informed the Foreign Secretary, Marquess Wellesley, of events.¹⁸² Had the Guelphic union not been in existence, it is questionable how much of this information would have found its way to Britain, thus further showing the importance of the union and the Hanoverians.

The same series of despatches provides further evidence of the value of the Hanoverian connection with the continent. Colonel Ompteda, on arriving in Britain, provided Count Münster with an extensive military analysis of Prussia, alongside strategic ideas put to him by Colonel Gneisenau. Gneisenau proposed a strategy similar to the guerrilla warfare being carried out in Spain and pressed for British aid in the form of arms and ammunition.¹⁸³ The support of the Royal Navy present in the Baltic was then later requested in conjunction with these plans by a Colonel Dornberg.¹⁸⁴ Before agreeing to petition Britain on behalf of Prussia, Col. Ompteda succeeded in gaining a thorough report on the strength of existing Prussian forces, the projected number of men Gneisenau believed he could raise, which forts were planned to be used as bases, and which forts were unsuitable due to French

¹⁸⁰ N.A., FO 34/3, *'Translated extract from Baron Ompteda to Count Münster dated Berlin 10 Sept 1811'*, 'Count Münster to Marquess Wellesley', 7 October 1811.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ N.A., FO 34/3, 'Colonel Gneisenau to Count Münster', Berlin 10 September 1811.

¹⁸⁴ N.A., FO 34/3, 'Colonel Dornberg to Count Münster', Colberg 20 September 1811.

occupation.¹⁸⁵ He further discovered Gneisenau's plans should he suffer defeats, his plan being to essentially drop the notion of pitched battles and instead to fight a guerrilla war in the four administrative regions left to the Prussian state. If one fell, the remaining three would continue the struggle. Gneisenau is reported to state that should Prussia fall, he would see her fall with honour to the end, insinuating that the defeat of 1807 was anything but. It is due to Ompteda's bargaining in this matter that Münster was able to supply the Foreign Office not just with Prussia's request for assistance, but also a detailed layout of Prussian capabilities, thus allowing Britain to make a well-informed decision. Evidence of this process is further supplied in a separate despatch that suggested a plan to secure and form an independent state of Italy and Illyria which, in concert to an invasion in the north of Germany, could have opened up the whole of Central Europe as another front.¹⁸⁶ It appears that however outlandish the scheme suggested, Münster did not take it upon himself to limit the decisions that the Foreign Secretary could propose to his government by censoring his intelligence, no matter the quality of the strategies sent him.

The passing on of important continental despatches was not the only purpose Münster served when it came to foreign policy. He used information learnt to press for action in relation to his Hanoverian homeland. There are two examples highlighting this, one being his involvement in lobbying for support of a reported Hanoverian uprising in 1809, and another relating to events in Hanoverian territories that were to be incorporated into the Kingdom of Westphalia in 1810. Addressing the former issue first, we find through letters and political statements that Münster and the Elector were both being kept well-informed of events in Hanover, and when things came to a head in May 1809, George instructed Münster to begin lobbying Parliament for action. In a communique to the Foreign Secretary, Münster informed

¹⁸⁵ N.A., FO 34/3, '*Colonel Ompteda's report on the Plan of Defence as Proposed by Prussia*', report included in despatches: 'Count Münster to Marquess Wellesley', 20 October 1811.

¹⁸⁶ N.A., FO 34/3, 'Note of Verbal communication with General Nugent', 1 August 1811.

Canning of the Elector's instruction, and that he had received reports of a general uprising in Hanover that had resulted in the attack of Dutch troops that consequently led to that force having to formally lay down their arms.¹⁸⁷ Münster went on to state that a provisional government had been set up, and that it was his duty to plea on behalf of the provisional government and his sovereign for British aid. He further insisted, that with British support, Münster could raise a substantial number of troops in a short space of time.¹⁸⁸ This particular belief in Münster's recruitment capabilities was later echoed in Gneisenau's plan for a wider German uprising in 1811, where he stated that Münster's presence in Hanover would cause men to flock to him should he wish to lead them into battle in the Prince Regent's name.¹⁸⁹ As there were three public proclamations from the provisional government in Münster's possession by July 1809,¹⁹⁰ it seems, on the face of it, that the uprising at this stage had had some success. Britain had responded to Münster's plea by sending arms and financial aid in early July.¹⁹¹

Yet by late August of the same year the situation had changed. In what appears to be a letter to the British Government, Count Münster acknowledged a '*change in circumstances*' relating to the events in Hanover, but still pressed for military action.¹⁹² He suggested an expedition could still be successful in the north of Germany if plans were modified accordingly. Münster noted he had been instructed by the King to press for such an expedition to take place, in the event of the termination of the Walcheren campaign,¹⁹³ and

¹⁸⁷ The timing of this insurrection is doubly interesting due to its proximity with the Walcheren expedition. However it is unlikely that it was an influential factor in determining that campaign. John Bew in *Castlereagh, The Biography of a Statesman*, (London, 2011), claims the issue that convinced the British Cabinet to approve Castlereagh's expedition was the Austrian victory at Aspern-Essling which was learnt about in early June [Bew, *Castlereagh*, p. 250]. So while the timing is fortuitous, in this particular case it is unlikely that Hanoverian events influenced British military action.

¹⁸⁸ N.A., FO 34/1, 'Count Münster to George Canning', 21 May 1809.

¹⁸⁹ N.A., FO 34/3, 'Colonel Gneisenau to Count Münster', Berlin 24 September 1811.

¹⁹⁰ N.A., FO 34/1, Three Printed Proclamations in German dated July 1809.

¹⁹¹ N.A., FO 34/1, 'Count Münster to George Canning', 12 July 1809.

¹⁹² N.A., FO 34/1, 'Hanoverian expedition letter', 29 August 1809.

¹⁹³ This presumably being a decision not to reinforce the failing Walcheren expedition.

that he had received similar requests from Vienna and '*some Prussian Officers*'.¹⁹⁴ While this implies that a general German uprising could have been in the making, Münster cautioned against a strategy that relied heavily upon the Austrians. He went on to state, as diplomatically as possible, that in his opinion an expedition under existing plans would be unwise. He called into question the sincerity of Austrian support, and the wisdom of investing more British troops in Holland should Austria fail to aid the British. He stressed that the troops in Holland would have to face off against a large force headed by Marshal Bernadotte, who was known to be in the vicinity of Antwerp, and that such an encounter would isolate British troops and make an insurrection in Holland insecure.¹⁹⁵

Münster did however suggest an alternative strategy, which coincidentally could prove beneficial to Hanover. He suggested that a small diversionary force could remain in Flanders, thus tying up the French troops in Holland, while the rest of the force could be sent to Hanover, using Cuxhaven as a beachhead. He acknowledged that the troops sent to this location would likely have had to face an estimated 22,000 men consisting of Westphalians, Danes, and Saxons, but their forces would not have been consolidated and would in turn have to deal with uprisings.¹⁹⁶ Münster further supported his argument by claiming the Prussians had promised to cross the Elbe should Britain invest its troops in Hanover and secure an insurrection.¹⁹⁷ Münster ended his plea for a revised strategy by stating that, with British support, a legitimate authority could be restored in the city of Hannover, allowing for further military operations in northern Germany. This could then have acted as a central point of communications in a central European front, with local intelligence of ideal places to capture

¹⁹⁴ N.A., FO 34/1, 'Hanoverian expedition letter', 29 August 1809.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

and fortify, thus securing the region long enough to analyse whether the insurrection had the ability to support itself.¹⁹⁸

These documents illustrate that Münster, while being passionate for the liberation of his homeland, did not simply ask for a blank cheque, but offered his own local knowledge and analysis of foreign promises to advise the British should they consider aiding the Hanoverians. It is crucial to note that although he does refer to his instruction from the King on this matter, he not once demanded the assistance of Britain, merely requested it. In short, he refrained from calling on the shared sovereign ties of the two nations, respecting the intentions of the Act of Settlement as laid out by Parliament. He was passionate in his requests for aid, but this is to be expected, his homeland having by this point been under foreign occupation for six years. The absence of any mention of their shared allegiance was not once used as a means of persuasion. This is not to say that the influence of the union was obsolete in this matter, far from it. When Prussians or Austrians appealed for help, they had few points of contact with which to lobby, namely the Hanoverian Minister and the Foreign Secretary. Münster, due to the union and his presence in London, was able to appeal directly to Parliament, using the ties created by the union to promote his cause regardless of the outcome.

A crucial element of the occupation of Hanover would be Napoleon's eventual decision to annex part of its territory into the newly formed Kingdom of Westphalia. This event resulted in further dialogue between the German Chancery and the Foreign Office on matters Hanoverian. In a letter sent in May 1810, Münster announced to Wellesley that as a result of the unrest in Hanover in 1809, Bonaparte had deemed it necessary to cede the bulk of Hanover into a system that would make it easier to control.¹⁹⁹ By reverting control of

¹⁹⁸ N.A., FO 34/1, 'Hanoverian expedition letter', 29 August 1809.

¹⁹⁹ N.A., FO 34/2, 'Count Münster to Marquess Wellesley', 31 May 1810.

Hanover to France and Westphalia, Münster expressed a concern that Napoleon has proved that, whatever the outcome of the war, the return of Hanover to George III was no longer on the table.²⁰⁰ He reminded the Foreign Secretary of Britain's earlier pledges of ensuring that this remained a condition for peace, citing a brief account of Hanover's fate since 1803 and Britain's firm stance on this issue. He further reminded the Foreign Secretary that the invasions of Hanover were justified by France (as Prussia had in 1806) as being in response to British policy. This, in Münster's (and the King's/Elector's) mind, made the various invasions illegal. As each invasion had been met by a stern proclamation from Parliament that guaranteed their sovereign's ancestral rights to Hanover, he stressed that the circumstances they found themselves in, in 1810, deserved another proclamation from the British government.²⁰¹ Proclamation forthcoming or not, however, this was not the end of the Westphalian matter.

The following August, Wellesley received another despatch from Münster concerning the property of Hanoverians serving in the King's German Legion. Unless they returned to said property in Westphalia, the land would be confiscated by the imposed King, Jerome Bonaparte. Münster argued that the value of this property should be guaranteed by the British government and returned to them when peace was established, but failing that, confiscation of property should be reciprocated in kind.²⁰² This issue is further pressed on the Foreign Secretary by direct royal intervention. The Duke of Cambridge, who was a Colonel in the K.G.L, claimed that the lucrative colonial property then occupied by British forces should be confiscated and, it was implied, that this property would be used as compensation to the Hanoverians who were set to lose property in Westphalia.²⁰³ In this instance, we see that the existence of the union was bringing financial and moral obligations to Britain; obligations

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ N.A., FO 34/2, 'Count Münster to Marquess Wellesley', 31 May 1810.

²⁰² N.A., FO 34/2, 'Count Münster to Marquess Wellesley', 1 August 1810.

²⁰³ N.A., FO 34/2. 'Duke of Cambridge to Marquess Wellesley', 9 August 1810.

that, had the union not existed, Britain would not have had to contend with. Additionally, the Foreign Secretary was having to decide upon an issue that could affect future peace negotiations as a result of pressure not merely from a fellow Minister of his Sovereign, but by pressure coming from the Sovereign's own family.

Count Münster's involvement in foreign affairs primarily rested on his instrumental assistance in keeping the United Kingdom informed, often in great detail, of events in central Europe; this information having been gathered through Hanoverian agents who could explain their presence much easier than their British counter parts. However, he was not merely a glorified messenger boy for the Foreign Office. Due to his political capacity, he could impose pressure in a manner that a simple emissary could not and, when needed, could express the direct interest of the King in any given situation. His advice and knowledge of Hanoverian events, and his opinions on the Central Powers capabilities would also have aided Britain in making informed choices when it came to devising military stratagems. Yet throughout his time in office, despite aiding the British Foreign Office in gathering intelligence, Münster did not lose sight of the fact that he was a Hanoverian representative.

When the opportunity presented itself, the Count pushed for military assistance in the hope of liberating his homeland. He may have had a closer proximity to British politicians than the representatives of other European courts working in his favour, but this was a direct result of the existence of the union between Hanover and Britain, and so it is evident that, in regards to foreign affairs, both states benefited from the union. Britain received detailed reports with well-informed advice to accompany it, while Hanover enjoyed an indisputable guarantee that its independence would be returned once peace was accomplished. In addition, Hanover enjoyed something that Prussia and Austria did not. Münster's close relationship with the Foreign Office in turn made him privy to the plans of British strategists, and so

enabled him to make detailed assessments on how plans could be altered slightly to increase the chance of aiding his own country.

Heligoland

On paper, Napoleon's immediate success of implementing the Continental System seems evident. The war with Portugal in 1807 appeared to be going well for France in the sense that Marshall Junot had seized control of Lisbon despite his losses to attrition,²⁰⁴ and the rest of Europe, including Russia, was adhering to the system. The Russians themselves forcing their Swedish neighbours to join the enterprise through military means in 1809²⁰⁵ The reality, however, was quite different. The war in Portugal would become the opening act of the Peninsular War, a disastrous military venture that would infamously be known for centuries as Napoleon's 'Spanish Ulcer'. On the eastern border of Napoleon's empire, the Russians steadily gave up any pretence of enforcing the embargo on British trade by using neutral shipping as a conduit.²⁰⁶ In the rest of Europe, the popularity of British goods and the reliance of economies both on the continent and in Britain meant that a roaring trade in smuggled goods spread across Europe's northern coastlines.²⁰⁷ Crucial to the success of the smugglers was the naval base of Heligoland captured from the Danish in 1807. James Davey sums up the importance of Heligoland in this capacity by referring to the island as 'the Warehouse of Europe'.²⁰⁸ Merchants carrying British goods would sell their cargoes at Heligoland and then smugglers, often falsely flying neutral colours, would carry the goods on to the European coastline, regularly in convoy under the protection of the Royal Navy. The wealth that this trade offered to merchants was so lucrative that Davey gives evidence that

²⁰⁴ Dwyer, *Citizen Emperor*, p. 263.

²⁰⁵ Dominic Lieven, *Russia Against Napoleon*, (St. Ives, 2009), pp. 71-72.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 78-79.

²⁰⁷ Philip Dwyer, *Citizen Emperor*, p. 355.

²⁰⁸ James Davey, *In Nelson's Wake*, p. 240.

officials could easily be bribed, asking rhetorically why a French administrator would give up a bribe worth a year's wages for pretending to be asleep for half an hour.²⁰⁹ Such easy money would hardly have been passed up. Yet despite the wide scale corruption of men tasked with implementing the system (and the blasé attitudes of some sovereigns), the smuggling operation was not without risk. The Danish, for example, after having lost their fleet to the British in a not-so-diplomatic pre-emptive naval strike, adopted a maritime stratagem of raiding the trade convoys with gunboats as they passed through the Danish straits. While not being enough to close off the Baltic to the smugglers, this could be evidence to explain why the Hanoverian port of Cuxhaven is listed by Noel Mostert as being one of the three main entry ports on the continent used by the smugglers.²¹⁰

The importance of Cuxhaven, and Hanoverian access to the smuggling operation, granted more than just economic benefits to Britain and Hanover. As has been discussed previously, the Hanoverian Minister in London supplied the Foreign Office with a steady stream of intelligence acquired by his agents across Europe. The established smuggling routes from Hanover and Prussia (guarded in convoy by the Royal Navy) granted a safer route of transit for those agents than their counterparts working in France presumably would have had access to. The agents would merely board a 'neutral' ship that would stop at either Heligoland or an alternative naval base situated outside Gothenburg in Sweden. That these bases were not just depots for merchants, but an essential stopping point for those carrying letters from Hanoverian agents, is indicated in various despatches between Münster and the Foreign Office. For example, in a letter dated May 12th 1808, Münster asked for passports so that Officers of the King's German Legion (K.G.L.) to return to Hanover. In this letter, he stated that the officers would be travelling via Heligoland, specifying that they would only require British passports to carry them as far as the island, with Heligoland acting as the

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 241.

²¹⁰ Noel Mostert, *The Line Upon a Wind, The Great War at Sea 1793-1815*, (New York, 2008), p. 525.

transfer link in their commute.²¹¹ That the same journey was carried out in reverse is indicated in a separate letter dated November 5th 1811, the contents of which detail the complexities of the necessary communication routes, but in this instance the alternative British base outside Gothenburg was used as the transfer link.²¹² The less-than-subtle defiance of Napoleon's clients and allies, in regards to the continental system, could well be an indirect factor that contributed to Count Münster's ability to act as the head of a Hanoverian intelligence network that aided Britain. The ease with which his agents could communicate with him would doubtless have been substantially harder had the smuggling ring not existed. The benefits that the smugglers provided for the communication of intelligence could lead to the question of whether the Royal Navy protected the smugglers for the reason of intelligence, but this is doubtful. While Britain would have benefited indirectly from ensuring a safer means for Münster's communications, the priority for a nation so heavily invested in trade would have made the protection of the smuggling routes a major strategic concern; that this protection would in turn provide further security for Münster's informants could well be no more than happy coincidence. The British attitudes towards Hanoverians in the North Sea, and their reliability as loyal agents of the Crown, can be examined in the detailed letters written by the Foreign Office agent in Heligoland, Edward Nicholas.

Stationed in Heligoland from the beginning of February 1808, Edward Nicholas was charged by George Canning to review all correspondence leaving and arriving at the island, with the exception of those sent by the few British servants of the Crown resident in Heligoland.²¹³ His apparent capability and sense of duty in carrying out this task leads one to view Nicholas as the gatekeeper to the British spying community on the continent. While

²¹¹ N.A., FO 34/1, 'Count Münster to George Canning', 12 May 1808.

²¹² N.A., FO 34/3, 'Colonel Ompeda to Count Münster', 5 November 1811.

²¹³ N.A., FO 36/1, 'Edward Nicholas to George Canning', 7 February 1808.

stationed on the island, Nicholas additionally kept the British authorities abreast of events on the continent, using information gathered from his own circle of agents throughout Hanover and the Hanse towns. Nicholas's reports back to the British mainland illuminate the importance that the British naval presence in the North Sea provided for Hanover, and simultaneously provide a window into the British perception of the Hanoverian agents. One benefit of the naval presence, which becomes immediately apparent within his reports, was the desired relationship between the British fleet and the fishing communities of the European coastline. Within ten days of his arrival on the island, Nicholas reported to George Canning that Danish and German fishing communities were tied intricately to one another, and to the people of Heligoland. He expressly mentioned Cuxhaven (one of three examples) as being one such community that took part in this localised international market.²¹⁴ Since the British occupation of Heligoland in 1807, the Heligolandians had been unable to fish safely in the region alongside the Danish and the French-occupied Germans. Nicholas suggested that mutual fishing arrangements with the local authorities could be negotiated successfully, and that such an agreement would be hugely beneficial to His Britannic Majesty. The main benefit forecasted by Nicholas was that the cost of sustaining Heligoland would become redundant, but he added subversively that communication between the Heligolander fishermen and the inhabitants of Cuxhaven could open up under the protection of the British fleet.²¹⁵

Nicholas's efforts in the realm of espionage proved to be highly successful throughout 1808. By establishing connections with North Sea merchants, he was able to gather vital information that could have influenced the British Government's decision to safeguard the aforementioned smuggling operation. His reports included, for example, the rapid rise in cost of colonial produce. After being informed that coffee had tripled in price, Nicholas stated that

²¹⁴ N.A., FO 36/1, 'Edward Nicholas to George Canning', 17 February 1808.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

he immediately made efforts with the informing merchant to open up communication on this matter, the implication being the acquisition of his assistance in furthering Britain's smuggling interests.²¹⁶ Nicholas's success in safeguarding Britain's illicit trade was indicated in a letter several months after his appointment, where he described what was essentially a booming black market.²¹⁷ Chiefly, but not exclusively, through his merchant connections Nicholas was able to garner a large variety of information relating to continental affairs. This ranged from forced loans in French occupied territories, to troop movement and fortifications, the latter providing evidence for a French invasion of Denmark and the redeployment of troops to Iberia.²¹⁸ By December 1808, he had acquired enough information to produce a ledger that detailed the regional partition of Hanover amongst Napoleon's Marshals, with the added forecast of the estimated revenue that each Marshal would extort from his delegated territory.²¹⁹ The accomplishments of Nicholas, in terms of espionage, were of benefit to Britain. Yet the means by which his suggestions were put into practice provided marked improvements for the people of Hanover and the larger coastal communities of the North Sea. The interest placed on safeguarding the pre-existing fishing community, while for British interest, is self-evident in the way such a measure would aid the local fishing industries of their respective communities. Yet the reports are not only useful in indicating British attempts at espionage, but also provide an opportunity to gauge British attitudes of the Hanoverian as an independent agent.

As has been mentioned, Count Münster made several requests for passports for Hanoverians to travel to the continent via Heligoland. The frustrations that his endeavours encountered appear to have come, in part, from the views expressed by Mr. Nicholas. In a

²¹⁶ N.A., FO 36/1, 'Edward Nicholas to George Canning', 19 February 1808.

²¹⁷ N.A., FO 36/1, 'Edward Nicholas to George Canning', 25 May 1808.

²¹⁸ [For forced loans and financial extortion of Hanover see:] National Archives, FO 36/1, 'Edward Nicholas to George Canning', 19 February 1808, & 'Edward Nicholas to George Canning', 9 May 1808.

[Invasion of Denmark see:] National Archives, FO 36/1, 'Edward Nicholas to George Canning', 12 March 1808.

[Redeployment to Spain see:] National Archives, FO 36/1, 'Edward Nicholas to George Canning', 9 May 1808.

²¹⁹ N.A., FO 36/1, 'Edward Nicholas to George Canning', 11 December 1808.

particularly detailed letter to the Foreign Office, Nicholas expressed his views on ‘the alien’.²²⁰ It was Nicholas’s view that subjects of His Britannic Majesty should be readily permitted to reside in, and correspond with the continent from, Heligoland. The presumption here being that so long as the correspondence was watched with care (to guard against ‘imprudence’²²¹), such people were naturally trustworthy individuals. However, the ‘alien’, he suggested, was not to be permitted such opportunities. The only exception was if such foreign individuals were ‘recommended by well known Characters...[that] have the same interest as a British Subject...[yet] in such cases the greatest precaution ought to be observed’.²²²

While the bulk of the letter examined the dangers posed by the passage of Danish merchants who had had their ships confiscated,²²³ his suggestions concerning Hanoverians reflected the views that had been held since the personal union came into being.²²⁴ While acknowledging that the Hanoverians should be granted more leeway than peoples not subject to the House of Guelph, it is clear that Nicholas retained reservations concerning their loyalties to the ‘British’ cause. This is indicated by the fact that Hanoverians, despite being required to be accompanied by reputable references, were in Nicholas’s opinion worthy of extra surveillance or ‘greatest precaution’,²²⁵ on the grounds that they were not British. Such discrimination, however, was not unfounded, in the sense that it was the logical conclusion of the preconceptions held in Britain regarding the dangers that a personal union with Hanover posed. The irregular fears that had been brewing ever since the accession of George I, that Hanover as an Electoral state could prove to be detrimental to British institutions and values, naturally evolved into a distrust of the Hanoverian. Further indicators of this can be seen in

²²⁰ N.A., FO 36/1, ‘Edward Nicholas to George Canning’, 25 May 1808.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Bob Harris, ‘Hanover and the Public Sphere’, in Simms and Riotte (eds.), *Hanoverian Dimension in British History*, p. 184.

²²⁵ N.A., FO 36/1, ‘Edward Nicholas to George Canning’, 25 May 1808.

the frequent public hyperbole that surrounded the K.G.L. after their arrival in Britain.²²⁶ That such views had progressed to the extent that Edward Nicholas believed that Hanoverians wanting to communicate with, or even travel to, Hanover required meticulous observation is unsurprising, and explains why in spite of Münster's repeated efforts, the number of Chancery-approved Hanoverians travelling to Heligoland from Britain was radically smaller than that of their British counterparts.²²⁷

The Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress

By examining the actions of the 'Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress', one can gain some insight into how British society viewed the personal union and its subject peoples. Founded in 1806, this philanthropic group sought to provide funds for struggling foreigners, and to help them return to their native lands at the earliest opportunity.²²⁸ This proved to be beneficial for Hanoverians, and the Society later had the honour of counting amongst its patrons most of the Royal Houses of Europe, as well as prestigious diplomats from across the world.²²⁹ Count Münster, who attended regularly the charity's annual reception dinner,²³⁰ by 1815 was its Vice-President.²³¹ The importance of this charity in discerning the constitutional nature of the dynastic union should not be understated due to its excellent portrayal of Hanoverian 'soft power'. The charity made clear that it was not its responsibility (or aim) to

²²⁶ Harding, *Hanover and the British Empire*, pp. 253-254.

²²⁷ N.A., FO 36/2, 'List of Persons to whom Passports have been granted to go to Heligoland', 14 May - 2 December 1808.

²²⁸ Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress, *An Account of the Friends of Foreigners in Distress*, (London, 1847), p. 9.

²²⁹ Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress (charity no. 212593) Trustees Private Collection, *An Account of The Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress*, (London, 1815), pp. I – IX, pp. X - XII.

[I have used roman numerals here as the pages preceding the book proper are not numbered. It is these pages I refer to here that contain the signatures of various patrons. The separation of pages accounts for the last three pages of signatures that are found after the main contents of the book. This archive will be abbreviated to SFFD].

²³⁰ 'Friends of Foreigners in Distress', *National Intelligencer*, 27 August 1810.

²³¹ SFFD, *Friends of Foreigners*, Hierarchy of the Society.

aid subjects of the British crown, whether they were British or colonial. As they aided Hanoverians, such a sentiment suggests that the British upper classes (and clergy) did not view the connection with Hanover as anything other than a personal union. That Hanoverians were aided was naturally beneficial for the Hanoverian Minister. However, as Münster had gained a position within the Society itself, the question remains as to whether this was a calculated attempt on his part to win over the 'hearts and minds' of British society and thus indirectly bolster Hanoverian 'soft power' reserves through the Society's social interactions.

The aid Hanoverians received can be seen in a case preceding 1815, when the charity rescued a Hanoverian widow of a British Sergeant. Following the death of her husband, the woman (with infant in tow) had tried to gain passage to Gothenburg, where she had a sister. Unfortunately, she appeared to have struggled with the English language, and had resorted to selling most of her possessions before the charity became aware of her situation. The Society furnished her with funds, and secured her and her child passage aboard a Swedish vessel.²³² In addition, the charity noted a separate case whereby it aided a man intent on joining the King's German Legion. Again, this fell within their remit of assisting people who were not subjects of His Britannic Majesty. The man in question made several attempts to reach Spain and enlist during the peninsular campaign. He attempted to avoid detection by travelling via Turkey, but failed to secure passage from Smyrna, instead taking a vessel to London due to ill health. It was while recovering in a workhouse in Whitechapel that the charity became aware of his predicament. After nursing him back to health, the charity helped the man to achieve his original objective.²³³

The charity's efforts in assisting the foreign Hanoverians is further evidence of contemporaries viewing the dynastic union as a personal union, in as much as the

²³² SFFD, *Friends of Foreigners*, Case Studies, Case no. 3, pp. 66-67.

²³³ SFFD, *Friends of Foreigners*, Case Studies, Case no. 38, pp. 88-90.

Hanoverians were not considered 'British' subjects, thus showing the extent to which the personal union thesis had penetrated society.²³⁴ That Münster could assist his fellow countrymen from a social position, while simultaneously cultivating his and his homeland's standing in British society, is evidence of Hanoverian soft power at work. Indeed, the question of whether Münster had such an agenda is not implausible. As G. M. Ditchfield points out, the occupations of Hanover received little public interest and any overtly noticeable British political outrage was short-lived.²³⁵ It is possible then, that Münster was attempting to ingratiate himself with British socialites, which in turn could produce more public sympathy and political pressure for his cause. The extent to which Hanoverians could influence British decision-making from a societal footing is a viable and interesting research topic in itself, and a dedicated study of this alone would greatly add to the wider material of British-Hanoverian relations.

²³⁴ The depths to which the Anglo-Hanoverian union had penetrated wider British society is a subject worthy of its own designated thesis, and unfortunately has not been covered to any great depth in this study. Fortunately in the case of the SFFD, there is enough overlap into political and foreign affairs that this social aspect can be examined.

²³⁵ G. M. Ditchfield, 'Visions of Kingship in Britain under George III and George IV', in Andreas Gestrich and Michael Schaich (eds.), *The Hanoverian Succession: Dynastic Politics and Monarchical Culture*, (New York, 2016), pp. 188-189.

Chapter 3: Debt, Peace, and Pensions

Following its liberation in 1814, Hanover rapidly re-emerged on the international stage as an independent country, distinctly separate from the United Kingdom. For the first time in just over a decade, Hanoverian policies concerning Hanover were being implemented in the former Electorate, not in London. Having been Minister of the German Chancery in London throughout the war, Count Münster had come to embody a Hanoverian government in exile. It would be expected then, that the man would have received some relief in his workload once administrative bodies in Hanover were resurrected. Yet this was not the case. While being in a position where some responsibilities could now be delegated to ministers and civil servants in his homeland, Count Münster received fresh duties, namely to represent Hanover throughout the Congress of Vienna. As the personal union allowed for a coordinated effort on the part of the British and Hanoverian plenipotentiaries, Münster was placed in a position where he would directly affect the negotiations, independent from Britain. The task given him, and the subsequent consequences, would go on to have a longer-lasting impact on Hanover than the preceding years of occupation. Indeed, it could be argued that the decisions that Münster was directly involved in would shape the geo-political map of Europe and dominate inter-European relations for the next century.

High-stakes international diplomacy was not the only sphere within which the Anglo-Hanoverian union pursued a coordinated course of action. Financial matters, chiefly concerning Sweden, but including Hanse towns such as Hamburg, were also resolved in a more cooperative manner than one would expect, given the poor track record of the eighteenth century in making peace.²³⁶ Indeed, the fiscal policies pursued in this matter

²³⁶ Frank McLynn, *1759: The Year Britain Became Master of the World*, (London, 2005), pp. 7-8.

display the strengths of the personal union as a political entity, even when the interests of the constituent parts were not always aligned. Additional factors to be considered are Britain's economic and naval policies in the Mediterranean, chiefly concerning the Barbary States. These would have beneficial consequences for Hanover at the expense of Britain's own economic interests in the area, and were unforeseen on Britain's part. What this meant for the Anglo-Hanoverian union is particularly illuminating. The war itself, naturally, left an impact upon the Hanoverians who had lived through it. Even years after the peace, the conjoined war effort of the Anglo-Hanoverian union could still be seen. Veterans of the King's German Legion, far from being funded by the Hanoverian government, instead received their pensions direct from the Chelsea Hospital fund in Britain. This peculiar development, highlights not only the impact of the personal union at a social level, but also illustrates the longevity of Anglo-Hanoverian policies and how these obligations were upheld.

The Settling of Subsidies

The diplomatic efforts of Münster and Castlereagh between 1814 and 1815 is a strong indicator of robust cooperation between the respective representatives of the Guelphic lands. Despite occasional altercations, efforts were made on both sides to achieve a positive outcome. Yet to say that this level of harmony spilled over into the diplomatic spectrum is dubious. Contentious matters did indeed exist and negotiations were necessary. Unsurprisingly the controversial issues in question involved money and stemmed from the British wartime policy of subsidies. However, compromise was invariably reached, showing that even over matters as provocative as foreign debt, the Anglo-Hanoverian union was able to find practical solutions, in part because of its supple constitutional *modus operandi*. Three separate case studies emphasise this point: 1. The subsidies owed to the Hansa towns, 2. The

Hanoverian claims on the defunct Dutch subsidy, and 3. The Swedish debt to Hanover. The first of these case studies was arguably the most controversial. It revolved around the subsidies owed to the Hansa towns, chiefly Hamburg, the financing of which was disputed between Britain and Hanover. A thorough report by the Duke of Cambridge to Earl Bathurst provides a rich analysis of the dispute.

During the liberation of Northern Germany, there had been a proclamation made by General Settenborn calling upon the peoples of Northern Germany to rise against the French. The Hanseatic Legion was formed in response to this call to arms. Unfortunately for the people of Hamburg, French forces soon retook the city. The Hanseatic Legion, however, continued to operate. In a manner not dissimilar to the King's German Legion, the Hanseatic Legion, following a convention with General Sir Charles Stewart, placed itself under British command and pay. The Duke of Cambridge stressed that under Article 4 of that convention, the Legion would be able to re-enter the service of Hamburg once the city had been retaken from the French, with the option of returning to British service should the British government approve. By June 1814, Lübeck and Hamburg had resumed command over the Hanseatic Legion, and a letter between that Legion's former commander, General Decken, and the Senates of those cities stated that from 1st July 1814, they would no longer be in British pay. This, in the Duke of Cambridge's view, was the end of Britain's obligations to the Hanseatic Legion, in relation to General Stewart's convention.²³⁷

The problem that arose was the subsequent call to arms following the conclusion of the Peace of Paris. The Duke of Cambridge informed Bathurst that, following the Allied Sovereigns' disposition to retain some forces in the north of Germany, Count Münster was tasked with relaying that wish to the Dukes of Brunswick and Mecklenburg, and the Senates of the Hansa towns. Hamburg (and Lübeck) agreed to raise men but claimed financial

²³⁷ N.A., FO 34/9, 'Duke of Cambridge to Earl Bathurst', Hanover, 15 February 1815'.

assistance in the form of subsidies would be required.²³⁸ Their request to the British government on this went unanswered until Viscount Castlereagh promised as much financial aid as was necessary for the upkeep of the Hanseatic Legion. Furthermore, Cambridge pointed out that a letter he received from the Senate of Hamburg stated that they had considered the Legion to be under the continued service of the Prince Regent. It is curious to note that, following his lengthy argument with which Cambridge stated Hanover had no obligation to Hamburg, he offered to press the Hanoverian government to provide relief to Hamburg and settle the debt owed for the year 1814.²³⁹ What he did not state (and this was the point of contention) was that he expected Britain to reimburse the Hanoverian government on this point. In May 1815, George Best put the Hanoverian claim to Castlereagh, claiming that the Hanoverian government had paid for the Hanseatic Legion on two separate accounts (Hamburg: 24th Jan – 30th June 1814, and Lübeck: 24th Jan – 5th July 1814), and in consequence was owed £55,437.9.2.²⁴⁰ A reply from the Duke of Wellington approved the repayment of a small amount owed, but further stated that it was only due to the union of Hanover with Britain that it was considered at all.²⁴¹ It was not until July 1815 that Britain agreed in principle to reimburse Hanover the full sum given by Best two months previously, first with an initial payment of £30,000, the difference of which would be paid following a future investigation.²⁴²

The issue relating to the Hanseatic subsidy was controversial on two counts. Firstly had Castlereagh not later stipulated to the Hansa towns' representatives that Britain would cover the costs of the Hanseatic Legion, the argument that Hanover was responsible for the debt would have more weight. Prior to Castlereagh's intervention, the last representative of

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ N.A., FO 34/9, 'George Best to Viscount Castlereagh', London, 6 May 1815.

²⁴¹ N.A., FO 34/9, 'Duke of Wellington to Count Münster', 19 May 1815.

²⁴² N.A., FO 34/9, 'Foreign Office to George Best', 19 July 1815.

the Guelphic Sovereign dealing with the issue of Hansa troops had been Count Münster. It could then be argued that the Hanoverian Sovereign, not the British Sovereign, had made the request for arms in the north of Germany, a not unreasonable assumption to draw based upon Hanover's geographic location. Count Münster had, of course, been foremost in the argument that he represented the Hanoverian Sovereign throughout the war years. However, as Castlereagh subsequently promised fiscal aid, it was indeed Britain that resolved to finance the Hanseatic Legion in this instance. Had he not done so, it would be difficult to discern who, if anyone, was responsible for the upkeep of the reformed legion following the Treaty of Paris, as the request by Münster had been made without any proposed subsidiary aid.²⁴³ The second point of contention was the initial act of the Duke of Cambridge who, despite making the legal case for why neither Hanover nor Britain had any obligation in this matter at all, formally undertook to instruct the Hanoverian Government to pay the Hanseatic debt of 1814 in February 1815. Not only had Cambridge gone against his own persuasive reasoning on this point, he undertook an obligation on Hanover's behalf in full knowledge that a previous convention had agreed, in principle, that Britain was to finance the Hanseatic Legion for the year 1814. Furthermore, Cambridge made no indication that he expected Britain to reimburse the Hanoverian government, a decision that obscured the financial responsibilities of the two countries on this matter.

Two days following the agreed financial settlement of the Hanseatic Legion, Count Münster again raised the issue of subsidies with Bathurst; the issue under dispute in this case was the Dutch subsidy. Münster's primary point on this subject was that the Dutch fund had been paid out of the Hanoverian subsidy.²⁴⁴ This particular arrangement had been agreed

²⁴³ N.A., FO 34/9, 'Duke of Cambridge to Earl Bathurst', Hanover, 15 February 1815'.

²⁴⁴ N.A., FO 34/9, 'Count Münster to Earl Bathurst', 21 July 1815.

upon in September 1814.²⁴⁵ However, by July 1815 Münster had received intelligence that the latest subsidy to Holland had been refused by the Dutch, who no longer wished to receive it. This prompted Münster to insist that the full Hanoverian balance (£50,000) was subsequently due to Hanover, who had only received £25,000 (The difference being the equal sum of £25,000 originally destined for Holland).²⁴⁶

While Münster was able to secure an agreement in principle in August 1815,²⁴⁷ this minor incident is intriguing. First, the fact that Münster discovered the Dutch refusal not from his British counterparts, but through his own intelligence network, suggests that Britain had not intended to return the Dutch subsidy to the Hanoverian one. Secondly, following the subsidy agreement made between Wellington and Münster in August, the payment of the agreed balance still required further prompting from George Best in September,²⁴⁸ only receiving confirmation from Bathurst that he had passed the relevant instructions to the Treasury later that month.²⁴⁹ This particular episode, while brief in comparison to the Hanseatic incident, illustrates periods where British financial interests (in this case retaining a monthly subsidy of £25,000) were not considered to be of Hanoverian concern. Britain had not informed the Hanoverian Government of the cancellation of the Dutch subsidy, suggesting then that as of the initial split of the Hanoverian subsidy in 1814, British authorities had not considered Dutch aid to belong rightfully to Hanover. Alternatively, a cynic could argue that the British politicians accepted in private that the funds should return to the Hanoverian account, but retained the hope that by being silent on the issue they could keep the Hanoverian subsidy at fifty percent and allow the Treasury to make some savings. These two cases provide evidence of a strained relationship when it came to fiscal matters,

²⁴⁵ N.A., FO 34/8, 'George Best to Earl Bathurst', 28 September 1814. This was a contentious episode in itself, but for reasons of space has not been included in this study.

²⁴⁶ N.A., FO 34/9, 'Count Münster to Earl Bathurst', 21 July 1815.

²⁴⁷ N.A., FO 34/9, 'George Best to Mr. Morier', 19 September 1815.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ N.A., FO 34/9, 'Earl Bathurst to Count Münster', 22 September 1815.

the first relating to payment due from Britain or Hanover to a third party, the second being a matter of subsidies concerning Hanover and Britain directly. A final case examines how the relationship operated when Hanover was owed money from a third party, that third party itself being financed by Britain.

Simultaneous to the Dutch/Hanoverian issue of 1815, George Best addressed Mr. Hamilton over an issue relating to the Swedish debt to Hanover.²⁵⁰ The purpose of this debt was to cover the cost of Swedish sustenance while their troops were in Hanover. Referring to a treaty between Britain and Sweden in 1814, Best alluded to a secret article in which Britain endeavoured to withhold over £70,000 (to be accrued across the first six months instalments) of the 24 million francs agreed. The purpose of this was to provide security should the Swedish government neglect to pass the sum owed by them to the Kingdom of Hanover. Should the Hanoverian and Swedish governments arrange a formal liquidation of the debt in the meantime, then the sums held back by Britain would not be due to Hanover.²⁵¹ Best stated that the Hanoverian government had succeeded in securing an arrangement of payment (amounting to 230,000 rixdollars) with the Swedish government in the course of the six-month interval; the arrangement being that British subsidy bills bound for Sweden would instead be granted to Hanover. Best therefore requested that the British government issue the necessary orders to that end.²⁵² The immediate impression of this letter suggests that Hanover and Sweden had come to a logical agreement concerning the Swedish debt, namely that Hanover would be paid direct from the British-Swedish subsidy in the form of British Treasury Bills before they entered into Sweden's possession. One would assume this to be an obvious solution, Britain having taken the responsibility to withhold certain amounts each month to compensate Hanover should Sweden have defaulted.

²⁵⁰ N.A., FO 34/9, 'George Best to Mr. Hamilton', 1 August 1815.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

The British authorities, however, did not appear to draw the same conclusions. In their reply to Best, the Foreign Office claimed that as the Swedish and Hanoverian governments had reached an arrangement on settling the debt, the Swedish-Hanoverian treaty superseded the secret article between Britain and Sweden of the previous year.²⁵³ This in turn rendered British involvement in the Swedish-Hanoverian debt to be terminated, without the need to involve itself financially from that point. Mr. Best, understandably, did not agree. While backtracking slightly, Best stated that the Swedish government had put the proposed arrangement forward and the Hanoverian government, while agreeable, had yet to formally approve. He additionally pointed out that, in his opinion, he could not see how the secret article could have been superseded without the consent of all concerned parties.²⁵⁴ As Best had spent the past several years in the position of Count Münster's officer for legation, his opinion on legal matters such as this can be viewed with a certain level of competency. Before getting into this legal point, however, he started his letter by claiming that in the interval of their correspondence he had received word of an alternative arrangement between the Hanoverian and Swedish governments, which would settle the matter of Swedish debt via Swedish funds readily available on the continent.²⁵⁵

In this respect, the whole episode appeared to have been rendered moot by simultaneous affairs on the continent. As there appears to be no further communication between Hanover and Britain regarding the Swedish debt, the alternative arrangement does indeed appear to have taken place. The interesting point of this case, however, despite it coming to nothing, is the blatant disregard with which British authorities viewed their commitment in this instance. The use of such a loophole to avoid paying sums of money to Hanover, in spite of Swedish and Hanoverian agreement, reinforces the perception alluded to

²⁵³ N.A., FO 34/9, 'Foreign Office to George Best', 8 August 1815.

²⁵⁴ N.A., FO 34/9, 'George Best to Mr. Morier', 10 August 1815.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

in an earlier chapter that Britain did not view the Anglo-Hanoverian union as a partnership of equals. The British attempt to deny the Hanoverians their financial settlement could have cancelled out the debt in its entirety leaving Hanover without recompense. The Swedish could have insisted that they had made arrangement of payment via Britain, and therefore were not accountable should the British refuse to pay out of their own accord. That would be an entirely British-Hanoverian problem. It was only due to an alternative agreement being reached on the continent between Hanover and Sweden that this particular constitutional Pandora's Box stayed shut.

Congress of Vienna

As a result of the recent bicentenary, the Congress of Vienna and the peace process as a whole has received an outpouring of scrutiny from historians across the world. Indeed, the end of the Napoleonic wars had a large enough impact upon public memory that, in spite of the BBC's unending coverage of the First World War centenary, it still found time to mark the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo in 2015. Frustratingly, however, the more important anniversary of the conclusion of peace went largely unnoticed, with the exception of a solitary program of forty-five minutes on BBC Radio 3.²⁵⁶ In a similar manner, the Royal Mint went further than its usual commemorative fifty pence piece (such as the Battle of Trafalgar coin in 2005) by releasing a range of collective coins featuring the Heads of State of major powers, and their more publicly recognisable Generals. The level of public and academic interest that was borne out of the bicentenary has led to new perspectives and

²⁵⁶ Michael Goldfarb, 'In Their Own Write: Notes From The Congress Of Vienna', Sunday Feature, BBC Radio 3, 26 April 2015.

The lack of media coverage of the diplomatic anniversary in 2015 is rather disappointing, and one wonders whether more could have been made of close European cooperation in light of an impending referendum as announced in a Queens Speech in May 2015. Even post referendum, the only coverage was a subsequent program of forty-five minutes hosted on BBC Radio 4 in 2017: Melvyn Bragg, 'The Congress of Vienna', In Our Time, BBC Radio 4, 19 October 2017.

studies of the peace that surpass the (somewhat dated) authoritative works like that of Kissinger's *A World Restored*. The wealth of material now available allows for the study of all manner of aspects concerning the peace, ranging from economic affairs along the Rhine, transnational policing in Germany, to the impact of demobilisation on European society.²⁵⁷

The diplomatic debates of 1814-15, which would determine the future of Europe, brought men and women of illustrious rank and calibre to the centres of the various negotiations; whether this be the triumphal Congress of Paris, the somewhat more austere London Conference, or the extravagant Congress of Vienna (the latter subsequently lending its name collectively to the other two). Yet while Europe rejoiced at the overthrow of the Corsican Ogre, the theatrical encore of the Hundred Days notwithstanding, the continent remained braced for a future outbreak of hostilities.²⁵⁸ The central powers of Austria and Prussia sought to regain former territory, and the Russian presence in Poland forced their attention towards the former Holy Roman Empire.²⁵⁹ As Napoleon had dismembered that ancient German collective and constructed the alternative Rhine Confederation for his German clients, the timeworn securities enjoyed by autonomous rulers, had been swept away.²⁶⁰ This allowed for the internal borders of Germany to be entirely redrawn in line with the Great Powers policy of the Balance of Power.

Similar problems could be found in the Italian peninsula. Following Napoleon's conquests of that region, he had consolidated the various duchies and republics into larger entities, resulting in the satellite Kingdom of Italy in the north of that region when the Napoleonic Empire was at its peak. The dismemberment of that Kingdom fuelled Austria's

²⁵⁷ Beatrice de Graff, Ido de Haan, and Brian Vick (eds.), *Securing Europe after Napoleon: 1815 and the New European Security Culture*, (Cambridge, 2019), & Alan Forrest, Karen Hagemann, and Michael Rowe (eds.), *War Demobilisation and Memory: The Legacy of War in the Era of Atlantic Revolutions*, (London, 2016).

²⁵⁸ Adam Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace: The Fall of Napoleon and The Congress of Vienna*, (London, 2008), p. 371.

²⁵⁹ For an in-depth analysis of The Polish/Saxon question and the influence of this upon Austria/Prussia/Russia, see: Brian Vick, *The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics after Napoleon*, (London, 2014), pp. 278-292.

²⁶⁰ Andrew Roberts, *Napoleon the Great*, (St. Ives, 2015), pp. 406-407, & Broers, *Spirit of the Age*, pp. 74-75.

ambition to reclaim hegemony in that arena.²⁶¹ This sparked a number of debates where nationalism in Italy and Germany were pitted against each other, based as they were in opposite camps of the Austrian interest. In this case, German nationalism could be used in pursuance of a federal system with which Austria could compete with Prussia. Wolf Gruner provides a convincing argument of how a federal political model for the German territories provided elements of peace and security for its competitive members.²⁶² In Italy, however, nationalism was seen as detrimental to the attempts of Austrian hegemony.²⁶³ Russia, proving obstinate in relinquishing Polish territory (partitioned as it had been between Austria, Prussia, and Russia, pre-Napoleon), turned Prussian efforts for recompense to the Kingdom of Saxony, a defeated ally of Napoleon. With ambiguous support of Austria, this issue itself became divisive.²⁶⁴ This ambition in turn worried the delegates of Britain, Hanover and Austria, who had their own ambitions for the German heartlands. Add to this mix the claims of every cleric, noble and sovereign displaced by the French conquests across Europe, and the sheer weight of the task before the European delegates becomes evident. It is no surprise to find episodes when tensions reached boiling point, and led to frenzied rumours of impending war across the European continent.

While the British role in these negotiations has been covered extensively in histories dedicated to the Conferences, the impact of Hanover, while mentioned, has not been covered to the same extent. The recent bicentenary has done much to reclaim this area of history for the lesser powers involved, but the Anglo-Hanoverian union and its constitutional repercussions could greatly influence the way the British element is considered, pending further dedicated study. Considering the prominent position Count Münster enjoyed within

²⁶¹ A good review of Austrian diplomat efforts in this area can be found in Mark Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy: War and Great Power Diplomacy after Napoleon*, (London, 2013), pp. 134-135.

²⁶² Wolf D. Gruner, 'The German Confederation: Cornerstone of the New European Security System', in de Graaf, de Haan and Vick (eds.), *Securing Europe after Napoleon*, pp. 150-167 *passim*.

²⁶³ Vick, *The Congress of Vienna: Power and Politics*, p. 275.

²⁶⁴ Adam Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace: The Fall of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna*, (London, 2008), p. 240.

the Hanoverian political sphere, it stands to reason that the anti-Prussian sentiments discussed in a previous chapter would have had some bearing on the Hanoverian position on the German question. Indeed, similar sentiments were shared by Prince Adolphus Frederick, the Duke of Cambridge, who in an undated document to Castlereagh in 1814 examined the dangers posed by the Prussian and Hessian sovereigns, and attempted to justify Hanoverian claims of expansion in line with this threat; interestingly, he claimed this was the Sovereign's entitled right resulting from British exertions. With regard to Prussia, Cambridge argued that Hanoverian expansion was necessary to provide itself with the means to defend itself from the 'Incroachment [sic] of a Power, that has aimed at the destruction of all its Independent neighbours, ever since the beginning of the actual disturbances, and which even now offers Protection, in order to oppress'.²⁶⁵ A damning indictment against a British ally at a time when peace was sought. His words are softened somewhat by an acceptance that, for the security of Germany as a whole, Prussia should be a considerable power, and recommended restoring its lost territories. Presumably, he references the Polish territories here, as he added that should Prussia seek to recompense itself in Germany, then the acquisition of these non-Prussian subjects and alien institutions would be tantamount to theft. Of particular concern was that, at a future time of convenience, Prussia would exchange its proposed territories left of the Rhine with France in exchange for their support of a Prussian acquisition of Hanover.²⁶⁶

The seven-page document continues with this anti-Prussian sentiment throughout, and after much disparagement of the perceived intentions of the Prussian state and all its politicians (with the exception of the King, who Cambridge merely claimed was manipulated easily), Cambridge turned to Hanoverian expansion as a Sovereign right of the Anglo-Hanoverian dynasty. He claimed that the loss of Hanover would be detrimental to British interests, and flatters the British ego by stating that the Prussian state, while being destructive

²⁶⁵ N.A., FO 34/7, 'Duke of Cambridge to Viscount Castlereagh', 1814.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

to international commerce, excluded the values and liberal ideas of the British people. Indeed, his proclaimed defence of German liberties and British-German commerce led him to urge that the Hansa towns should also remain out of Prussian hands, with the suggestion that this become British policy. Cambridge's attack on German sovereigns stretched to the Prince of Hesse, who he claimed desired the merchant town of Munden, being the concentration point for British exports to the rest of Germany. His reasoning here again raised the spectre of Prussian expansion. The plot Cambridge forecast entailed a profitable transference of Munden from Hesse to Prussia, thus securing the 'heart of Westphalia' for the latter.²⁶⁷ The obsessive anti-Prussian sentiments, that Cambridge took great pains to deliver, end in a rather abrupt fashion. The purpose of his letter was to portray Prussia as the great threat not just to German liberties, but to British values and commerce. To prevent this abominable tragedy, Cambridge proposed that Hanover secure fresh territories from its neighbours. The difference between Prussian and Hanoverian expansion was argued to be that a grateful Europe, delivered by British exertions, begged to deliver 'homage' to the Sovereign of that nation. Additionally, he claimed that the labours of the British in securing the continent from Napoleon entitled the Guelphic Sovereign to territorial rewards.²⁶⁸

Cambridge's letter leaves much to be examined, as it raises questions over Guelphic opinions of British allies and past war efforts. In this case we can see that the Duke of Cambridge may be struggling to segregate his Hanoverian interests from his British royal persona. The perceived threat of Prussia is not, on its own, surprising. Similar sentiments had been expressed on various occasions by Count Münster, the Prussian occupation of 1806 still fresh in the mind of the Hanoverian statesman. Münster claimed regularly throughout his correspondence with the Prince Regent, while stationed in Vienna, that he had little trust in the good-faith of Prussia, feeling obliged to get formal agreements with that power concluded

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ N.A., FO 34/7, 'Duke of Cambridge to Viscount Castlereagh', 1814.

swiftly so as to avoid a volte-face on the Prussian side.²⁶⁹ Intriguingly, following his anti-Prussian rhetoric, the Duke of Cambridge put forth a suggestion that blurred the jurisdictional realities of the personal union, and brought the jealously defended Act of Settlement into question. Terming Hanoverian expansion to be a right of conquest was ludicrous in itself, but the notion that British military efforts should be the *raison d'être* to secure territory, not for the Sovereign of the United Kingdom but for the King of Hanover, wholly contradicts the key principle of the Act of Settlement. That the United Kingdom would never be expected, or forced, to wage war for the purpose of Hanoverian aggrandisement was arguably the entire point of that Act. It is with marked interest that Münster did not employ this particular method of persuasion in securing Hanoverian territory. Certainly, efforts were made by that Minister to enlarge the Kingdom, and the ability to defend itself against Prussia was part of that argument throughout the peace process.²⁷⁰ Yet never did Münster, a staunch advocate of the personal union's constitutional formation, appear to contradict the Act of Settlement, the foundation block of the Anglo-Hanoverian union.

Domestic constitutional issues, and the combined transference of anti-Prussian sentiment from Hanover to Britain, was but one factor in which the Hanoverians left a mark on negotiations. Count Münster, independent of his Hanoverian duties, was placed (with Castlereagh's approval) upon a panel of Commissioners who would perform a task that would shape the negotiations and influence the future of the European continent to this day. The Commission in question was given the logical, scientific, and entirely unethical task of providing a detailed legal analysis of the European territories in dispute.²⁷¹ The Commission's findings in turn allowed the plenipotentiaries to trade souls accurately, theoretically allowing fairer, equitable negotiations to take place. Indeed, the efficiency with

²⁶⁹ Count George Herbert Münster, *Political Sketches of The State of Europe From 1814-1867*, (Edinburgh, 1868), 'Count Münster to the Prince Regent, Vienna, 22 April 1815', p. 248.

²⁷⁰ See Chapter titled 'Despatches from Vienna' in, Münster, *Political State of Europe*, pp. 185-287.

²⁷¹ Ibid, 'Count Münster to the Prince Regent, Vienna, 24 December 1814', pp. 216-217.

which this task was performed was remarkable, allowing Münster to callously announce in one letter to the Prince Regent a detailed analysis of souls to be traded amongst the German powers. He used such terms as an ‘allotment of 20,000 inhabitants’ for the Duke of Oldenburg, a claim that Hanover was ‘owed’ 131,000 souls by Prussia, and that after various proposed trades on the latter point ‘would still leave a surplus of 6,500 souls’ with Prussia.²⁷² The trading of souls in this monetary fashion across Europe was, while quite logical, a disturbing element of the negotiating process. At any rate, Münster was instrumental in acquiring knowledge of Europe’s populations for the use of the Congress. This lends weight to the view that, although Hanover was not a great power in its own right, it left an undeniable legacy, as the competency of its politicians provided statistics that would be used by all parties to lay claim to territory, and ultimately finalise an international agreement on the borders of Europe.

In addition to this, the Hanoverian plenipotentiary at times found himself representing the interests of Britain. Here too we find another example of Anglo-Hanoverian Ministers temporarily crossing the floor to defend the interests of the other. During the Congress of Paris 1814, Münster negotiated with France for the return of cultural artefacts looted from Hanoverian territory during its occupation. In line with these talks, Castlereagh requested that Münster conclude separate articles on behalf of the United Kingdom, to arrange compensation for the cost of keeping French prisoners of war, amongst other unnamed

²⁷² Münster, *Political State of Europe*, ‘Count Münster to the Prince Regent, Vienna, 22 April 1815’, pp. 246-247. While clearly not being akin to slavery, this particular vernacular of the Congress illustrates the sense of superiority of Europe’s elite over the common man, a mindset that had survived the French Revolution and possibly even hardened in response to Republican and Napoleonic aggression. The perception that the Congress took a capitalist approach to the bargaining of populations as economic assets has been taken up by historians in recent years, most notably in Beatrice de Graaf, *Securing Europe after Napoleon: 1815 and the New European security culture*, (Cambridge, 2019). De Graaf subsequently raised this view when addressing a conference in London: British Commission for Military History - ‘War and Peace in the Age of Napoleon’, at Kings College London, 13-14 September 2019.

English claims. Münster agreed to this, and subsequently informed the Prince Regent of his success in the matter.²⁷³

In a similar manner, in January 1814 a diplomatic request was issued that portrayed this close cooperation in reverse. Mr. Best, who appears to have assumed Münster's duties in London while the Count was abroad, addressed the Earl of Liverpool concerning Hanoverians in Denmark. During the expectation of a Peace Treaty with Denmark, the German Chancery, by order of the Prince Regent, raised concerns relating to the property and safety of Hanoverians in that country, primarily within the Duchy of Holstein. Best expressed the Hanoverian desire of gaining an amnesty from the Danish for Hanoverians who risked the loss of their property should Denmark pursue a policy of confiscation. In particular, Best mentioned a Count Kielmansegge whose family stood to lose their estates in Holstein should an amnesty not be forthcoming. Best pressed the point by stating the Count and other Hanoverians had served loyally to defeat the 'common enemy', and urged Liverpool to intercede in the Danish negotiations on Hanover's behalf.²⁷⁴ The two cases here, while obscuring traditional jurisdictional reimits, highlight the fluidity found within this personal union's political-diplomatic structure. As was similarly the case concerning maritime affairs addressed in an earlier chapter, here too the Anglo-Hanoverian union shows its strengths. Importantly, the independent nature separating Britain and Hanover was secured in both of the above cases, by the demand that the negotiations stipulated each country's demands in separate articles of the relevant treaties.²⁷⁵ This in itself secures the malleable personal union thesis against the composite monarchy argument.

²⁷³ Ibid, 'Count Münster to the Prince Regent, Paris, 23 May 1814', p. 178

²⁷⁴ N.A., FO 34/8, 'George Best to Earl Liverpool', 29 January 1814.

²⁷⁵ Münster, *Political State of Europe*, 'Count Münster to the Prince Regent, Paris, 23 May 1814', p. 178, &, N.A., FO 34/8, 'George Best to Earl Liverpool', 29 January 1814.

Mediterranean Trade

Britain's diplomatic affairs concerning the Mediterranean had unintended consequences after the Congress of Vienna that would damage British merchants' supremacy in the Mediterranean, as they would later have to compete with their Hanoverian counterparts. To put this into context, a brief explanation of the Barbary States and their situation in this period is required. The Barbary States, consisting of modern-day Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, were highly autonomous states that owed their loyalty to the Ottoman Empire. By the time of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic period, these states were notorious in raiding merchant ships in the Mediterranean, be they European or American in origin.²⁷⁶ Their aptitude at raiding also saw them carry out raids on the coastlines of southern Europe, ravaging the coastal settlements of Italy and Sardinia.²⁷⁷ It was not just material goods that were looted in these raids; prisoners were often taken as well. These captives would be held to ransom or taken into slavery if no ransom was forthcoming.

This state of affairs changed once war commenced between Napoleon and the Coalitions. The British government would come to rely upon trade with the Ottomans, and could not in any event spare the resources necessary to combat the Barbary slavers in the Mediterranean at that time. To do so would have stretched the Navy thin and turn an otherwise neutral coastline hostile.²⁷⁸ To combat the slavers, Britain established treaties that principally served as bribes to ensure the safety of British merchantmen. These treaties would later be extended to cover the Hanoverians from as early as 1751,²⁷⁹ a move that would have unintended consequences following the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The series of events that followed would show how British maritime policy during the war, and their policy towards

²⁷⁶ Noel Mostert, *The Line Upon The Wind: The Great War At Sea 1793-1815*, (New York, 2008), p. 280.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 283.

²⁷⁸ Tom Pocock, *'Breaking the Chains, The Royal Navy's War on White Slavery'*, (London, 2006), pp. 8-9.

²⁷⁹ Nicholas Harding, 'North African Piracy, The Hanoverian Carrying Trade, and the British State, 1728-1828', *The Historical Journal* 43, 1 (2000), p. 32.

slavery throughout the Vienna Congress, had an overarching benefit for Hanover in ways that had not been planned, and were subsequently detrimental to Britain's own mercantile interests.

Treaties established as early as the seventeenth century by British representatives in North Africa ensured that British merchants and their ships were to be largely spared from aggressive action on the part of the Barbary raiders. The non-aggression agreements formed in the negotiations of the British representatives resulted in what Nicholas Harding refers to as a British 'Mediterranean pass'.²⁸⁰ Harding claims that this granted Britain a unique opportunity of being the only power that could trade throughout the Mediterranean Sea with impunity.²⁸¹ Should, on occasion, British subjects be held captive by the Barbary States, they would be required to release them without receiving a ransom. The question later arose of whether these treaties applied to Hanoverian subjects. As these treaties were ratified in the name of George III, were Hanoverian seamen allowed to claim immunity from raiders due to being subjects of George in his Electoral capacity? The British response to this was to include Hanover and its subject peoples within the terms of subsequent negotiations with the Barbary States, arguing that due to the shared sovereignty of George's person the two peoples should be viewed as being one and the same in this case.²⁸² This led Harding to claim that Hanover and Britain were not in practice in a personal union at all, but in fact formed a composite state.²⁸³ His argument here rested on one crucial point; namely, the manner in which these passes were obtained and what they implied constitutionally for the country to whom they were extended. To emphasise this point, Harding examined the differences Britain observed

²⁸⁰ Nick Harding, 'North African Piracy, The Hanoverian Carrying Trade, and the British State, 1728-1828' *The Historical Journal* 43(1) (2000), p 32.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 33.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, *passim*.

between Hanover and the Kingdom of Sardinia when obtaining the necessary treaties from the Barbary States in 1816.

The Kingdom of Sardinia, being an independent sovereign state in its own right, was seen as a vital buffer on the French border.²⁸⁴ The British attempt to obtain a pass for them was undoubtedly to ensure this nation's maritime security, thus protecting its economic capabilities. Castlereagh legitimised the policy of acting on behalf of Sardinia as a consequence of 'the general friendship and alliance that subsists between the two crowns'.²⁸⁵ British efforts to extend these maritime securities to Hanover assumed a different constitutional justification. While Count Münster was successful in persuading British authorities to act on Hanover's behalf,²⁸⁶ the language used by the British suggested an altogether different political relationship between Britain and Hanover compared to that of Britain and Sardinia. Although the Barbary States were to recognise the flag of the Kingdom of Hanover, the Hanoverians were to be treated in the same manner as 'other countries belonging to the sovereignty of His Britannic Majesty'.²⁸⁷

At first, Harding would appear to be correct in suggesting that this was an indicator of Hanoverian subjugate status. However, the political and diplomatic history of British diplomacy in relation to Hanover is not taken into account. By looking to the events preceding 1806 and the Prussian occupation of Hanover, we see that British representatives refused to talk to their Prussian counterparts about Hanover as a matter of policy. When talks began to involve a potential Prussian stewardship of Hanover until the end of hostilities, the British envoy to Berlin, Lord Harrowby, pointedly remarked that Hanover fell outside of his remit as a British representative. Therefore, he could not discuss the matter; indeed, he was

²⁸⁴ Adam Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace, The Fall of Napoleon & The Congress of Vienna*, (St. Ives, 2007), p. 341.

²⁸⁵ Harding, 'North African Piracy', p. 35.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 35.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 35.

not even allowed to listen.²⁸⁸ The Foreign Secretary, Charles Fox, made similar representations to the Prussian Ambassador in London, Baron Jacobi. When handed papers relating to Hanover, Fox immediately advised Jacobi to transmit these to the Hanoverian Minister as he had no authority over such matters.²⁸⁹

This precedent of British politicians disowning policy matters concerning Hanover does not, however, indicate a sharp change in policy by 1816. While Britain did act on behalf of Hanover in the Barbary States, they had been asked to do so by the Hanoverian Minister. The use of language was in keeping with language used to explain a simplistic view of the Hanoverian relationship with Britain to the Barbary States.²⁹⁰ While *prima facie* such overlapping interests would indicate a composite monarchy, it would be more appropriate to suggest that British consuls carried out Hanoverian interests on behalf of the Hanoverian Minister, in a similar manner to that of aiding the Sardinians in their capacity as allies. The terminology used to describe the Electorate of Hanover's relationship with Britain was merely simplified to ease negotiations. The British and Hanoverian crowns may have rested on the same head in 1816, but the question of obtaining commercial passes for Hanover originated with the Hanoverian Ministry, yet was negotiated by British diplomats out of practicality. Such a relationship is the epitome of a personal/dynastic union. Regardless of the complexities of the dynastic relationship between the two, Britain had secured the safe conduct of Hanoverian seamen in the Mediterranean. As the merchant ships of Hanover were small in number, Britain's maritime strategy did not appear to consider the Hanoverian merchants a threat to their maritime economy. This, it would later transpire, was a mistake.

Agreements formed at the Congress of Vienna had wide ranging implications, partly because of the ramifications of previous treaties. At the congress, Hanover obtained the

²⁸⁸ Brendan Simms, 'An Odd Question Enough'. Charles James Fox, the Crown and British Policy during the Hanoverian Crisis of 1806' *The Historical Journal* 38(3) (1995), p. 572.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p. 574.

²⁹⁰ Harding, 'North African Piracy', p. 33.

former Prussian territory of East Frisia, and consequentially, the East Frisian merchant navy. As a Prussian possession, the East Frisians had made inroads into the Mediterranean trade routes, and so due to the Vienna Congress Hanover received a mercantile fleet capable of competing with Britain in that theatre.²⁹¹ The pre-established treaties secured by Britain ensured that Hanover was in a position to trade across the Mediterranean without fear of Barbary aggression. Britain was exasperated further in this case by agreements made regarding slavery as part of the peace process.

The Atlantic slave trade, being equally abhorrent in nature and far more extensive than that carried on by the Barbary States, had been abolished as a trading practice by Britain. Additionally, Britain assumed the right to police that policy during the war years, and was suspected of wanting to retain that right (to ensure naval supremacy) at the peace table.²⁹² Understandably, the other powers were less than enthusiastic in allowing Britain to stop and search their own fleets at will, but a consensus on an international level regarding the slave trade was agreed, despite the more restrictive policy promoted by Vice-Admiral Sir Sydney Smith, who hoped to focus all efforts against slavery primarily on the Barbary States.²⁹³ Mark Jarrett claimed that, towards the Congress' conclusion, the strength of feeling favourable to halting the slave trade was such that most countries agreed that action had to be taken.²⁹⁴ While this was a general reference to the trade as a whole, with no specific mention of the Mediterranean trade, the policy of ending the slave trade applied internationally. Due to this, Britain was hardly in a position to retract their previous agreement of Hanoverian protection, without looking largely hypocritical diplomatically at a time when they were attempting to encourage other nations such as Spain and France to abolish Atlantic slavery. Should they have retracted their protective policy, it could have been argued by contemporaries that

²⁹¹ Harding, 'North African Piracy', *Historical Journal*, p. 34.

²⁹² Mark Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna and its Legacy*, (London, 2013), p. 145.

²⁹³ Pocock, *Breaking Chains*, p. 10.

²⁹⁴ Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna and Legacy*, pp. 145-146.

Britain was less interested in preventing people, regardless of their nationality/ethnicity, of being traded as slaves, instead hoping to use the enforced abolishment of the Atlantic slave trade as a means to retain their naval supremacy over the other colonial nations. Due to the diplomatic decisions of the war period and the subsequent peace process, Hanover went through a curious series of events where the British intentionally first secured their maritime rights, and unwittingly then aided in their acquisition of a merchant fleet as a by-product of the arranged Hanoverian acquisition of East Frisia. Both were moves facilitated by Britain that would benefit Hanover economically while building competition for British merchants, something that the protectionist maritime policy of Britain did not foresee or intend.

Hanoverian Chelsea Pensioners

The intricate affairs of the Anglo-Hanoverian union on diplomacy, international finances, and maritime rights notwithstanding, its wartime legacy could be found at a social level as late as February 1838. The issue in question related to the British-funded state pensions of King's German Legion veterans, who were registered with the Royal Chelsea Hospital. The primary concern was that the problem of settling the pensioners' financial claims remained a controversial issue throughout the following two decades of peace. Secondly, and more as a point of interest, it is notable that the legacy of the Anglo-Hanoverian war effort in this capacity outlasted the personal union itself, which ended in June 1837, following the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne of the United Kingdom, and the Duke of Cumberland to that of Hanover.

In December 1837, the office of the British Secretary for War and the Colonies received a despatch from Hanover containing annexed correspondence between Hanoverian Chelsea Out-Pensioners (led by a Mr. Christian Sempf) and the British Paymaster at

Hannover, Mr. J. Taylor. These and the cover letter had been sent by the petitioning pensioners, and described a series of grievances relating to the payment and value of their British pensions. Estimating an annual shortcoming of ten percent, the Hanoverians argued they were being treated unfairly by Britain, as their pensions had remained at a fixed rate since the end of the war and did not rise with inflation or take into account the exchange rate.²⁹⁵ An underlying addition to the petitioners' grievances, however, lay in their marked frustration that the British representative in Hanover (Taylor) had little to no sympathy for the petitioners, a frustration that led to their approaching the Office for War and Colonies directly.

Found in the first of four annexed letters (Nov. 1837), Sempf described the financial shortcomings to Taylor and expressed his wish that Taylor could resolve the matter, and if not, follow it up with the relevant bodies. However, Sempf added that should the paymaster be unsatisfactory in this, then the petitioners were prepared to go over his head to the Commissioners and the British War department if necessary.²⁹⁶ Taylor's initial response claimed that the Hanoverians had been added to the Chelsea lists in 1816, and were to be paid the fixed rate of pay of 1813, when these troops first entered Hanover, thus removing the requirement to raise the pension with inflation. Taylor further claimed that as the rate of pay was a fixed amount, there were times since 1815 when the exchange rate meant that the Hanoverian pensioners were receiving more in financial relief at the Government's expense than they were entitled to. It was only in the last few years, he claimed, that the exchange rate had moved in favour of the British government in the sum of roughly ten percent.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ N.A., WO 43/689, 'Christian Sempf to the Secretary at War', Cover letter, 13 December 1837.

²⁹⁶ N.A., WO 43/689, 'Christian Sempf to the Secretary at War', 13 December 1837 – Annex A: [Christian Sempf to John Taylor, Luneburg, 26 November 1837].

²⁹⁷ N.A., WO 43/689, 'Christian Sempf to the Secretary at War', 13 December 1837 – Annex B: [John Taylor to Christian Sempf, Hanover, 1 December 1837].

Up to this point, the correspondence between pensioner and paymaster had been quite cordial. Yet on receipt of Taylor's initial explanation, Sempf's exacerbated response results in what reads as a rather antagonistic exchange of letters between the two in December 1837. Underlining the corresponding text in his follow up letter, Sempf demanded to know 'by whom the rate fixed in the year 1813 was considered a fair exchange' and 'by whose order the same Standard of payment has been continued'.²⁹⁸ Taylor at any rate responded in kind: 'by whom the Army rate was fixed I have to inform you that it was determined by a Board of Officers', these officers being in British pay, commanded by General Count Walmoden; the continuation, he bluntly stated, was authorised by the 'proper' British departments.²⁹⁹ In any case, Sempf and his fellow petitioning pensioners were not satisfied with this response and approached the War Secretary in Britain later that same month.³⁰⁰ This initial aspect of the pensioners' plight in 1837 illustrates a key point, namely that Britain had honoured the commitments made to Count Münster when the K.G.L. initially entered into British service as a subsidised 'foreign' corps within the British army in 1806. The fact that they had continued this financial commitment following the dissolution of the union in 1837 is in itself a credit to the legacy of that continental union. Indeed, the response of the Department for War and Colonies suggests that the British government of the day had every intention to continue honouring that obligation, as their following inquiry with the Royal Chelsea Hospital would imply.

The Chelsea Hospital inquiry into the matter in 1838 reveals not only the seriousness with which Britain viewed its Hanoverian obligations post-union, but provides an exemplary account of the intricate relationship between Hanoverian and Briton during the final years of

²⁹⁸ N.A., WO 43/689, 'Christian Sempf to the Secretary at War', 13 December 1837 – Annex C: [Christian Sempf to John Taylor, Luneburg, 6 December 1837].

²⁹⁹ N.A., WO 43/689, 'Christian Sempf to the Secretary at War', 13 December 1837 – Annex D: [John Taylor to Christian Sempf, Hanover, 8 December 1837].

³⁰⁰ N.A., WO 43/689, 'Christian Sempf to the Secretary at War', 13 December 1837

the Napoleonic wars and its aftermath (as a result of the contemporaneous documents the inquiry researched). A letter to the Chelsea Commissioners in 1815 illustrates how the personal union and its constituent parts operated together on an informal setting, in this particular instance through the link of the Royal family. Dated July 1815, the Duke of Cambridge addressed the Commissioners explaining the issue of unpaid pensions. He explained how, since failing to receive a response to the same question in April of the same year, he had been compelled, at considerable expense, to fund the Hanoverian pensions. This had been due to a failure on the British side to make the relevant payments, and had further led the Duke to lobby the Hanoverian Government to assist in funding the veterans until they could be recompensed by the Chelsea Hospital.³⁰¹

On a constitutional level, this was quite extraordinary. The soon-to-be Viceroy was, essentially, at this time acting as the Sovereign representative of Hanover, and was directly contacting a British institution on matters concerning Hanover. Considering the jealously defended autonomy of the two countries, this should not have happened. Should another power have needed, for instance, a response to a query relating to British obligations to foreign nationals, the normal channels of communication would have been expected to be adhered to; that being to direct all enquiries to a British diplomat, the Foreign Secretary, or the British Prime Minister. That the Duke of Cambridge felt able to bypass these established channels and approach the Hospital directly is demonstrative of the liberties the union allowed some members of the Hanoverian establishment. That his method of contacting the Commissioners directly was potentially controversial was further emphasised by the Duke himself, who stated that, while being aware he should probably be using the ‘proper channels of representation’, he believed his approach was acceptable due to the Commissioners’ ‘feeling[s] of Justice’ and the ‘High Character of Liberality which the British Government

³⁰¹ N.A., WO 43/689, ‘Duke of Cambridge to Viscount Palmerston’, Hanover, 20 July 1815.

enjoy'.³⁰² He emphasised the British obligation in this case by stating that many Hanoverians had enlisted to defend their rightful sovereign post-occupation, in full expectation of receipt of a British pension following a conclusion of peace.³⁰³ Ultimately, following a series of meetings within the Hospital and the British Treasury (where in addition to Hanoverian pensions, those of K.G.L veterans native to Switzerland and Stuttgart were included),³⁰⁴ the Treasury acknowledged the British obligation and authorised the Chelsea Hospital to treat these individuals as Chelsea Out-Patients.³⁰⁵

The agreed system of payment in 1815 was the one with which the surviving Hanoverians in 1838 took issue. The subsequent decision in 1838 was that the mode of payment would continue as it stood.³⁰⁶ The British authorities did at least continue their obligations in this regard even after the union's dissolution. However, their reason for not allowing the pension to vary depending on the rate of exchange was abhorrent; that the Hanoverian pensioners may resultantly struggle when the exchange rate was against them more often than the current system risked, thus forcing them to suffer at the hands of lenders and (most ridiculously) the 'nefarious practices of Jews and others'.³⁰⁷ Yet regardless of the anti-Semitic reasoning behind the format in which pensions would be paid out, Britain had at least endeavoured to continue its obligations to Hanover in this instance. Indeed, the retention of this particular obligation to a union that had terminated is an admirable legacy of the Anglo-Hanoverian union, and lays the foundations for further research into the union's lasting impact well into the Victorian era.

The case of Hanoverian pensions lends itself to an additional debate on inter-union exchange and transfer, that for reasons of space had been neglected in this thesis, but

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ N.A., WO 43/689, 'Duke of Cambridge to Viscount Palmerston', Hanover, 20 July 1815.

³⁰⁴ N.A., WO 43/689, 'Chelsea Hospital to Mr. William Merry', 21 March 1816.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ N.A., WO 43/689, 'Chelsea Hospital to War Office', 13 February 1838.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

deserves mention here. Torsten Riotte notes that the peculiarity of the personal union has led scholars to attempt to define its character by studying how much interchange took place between the two parties.³⁰⁸ The purpose of these studies being to determine the depth of the Anglo-Hanoverian relationship across all walks of life, be it political, social, educational, etc. For instance, Riotte highlights the informal academic connections between the University of Göttingen and British institutions. These connections appear to have been promoted from within academia, independently of any political pressure, suggesting that the union could have provided mutual benefit outside of the political arena.³⁰⁹ With such interchange taking place, it is not entirely surprising to find the Duke of Cambridge taking the liberties he did, while holding some reservations as to the political legality of such action. This case, and the wider debates on Anglo-Hanoverian transfer, further highlight the ambiguous nature of the personal union and the impracticality of forcing a generic definition upon it.

³⁰⁸ Torsten Riotte, 'Personal union and Transfer: Great Britain and Hanover, 1714-1837', *European History Online*, 17 July 2017, <http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/european-networks/dynastic-networks/torsten-riotte-personal-union-and-transfer-great-britain-and-hanover-1714-1837#section_3>, [21/03/2021].

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

Conclusion: A Provident Union?

As a direct consequence of the Napoleonic Wars, the Anglo-Hanoverian union endured a period of strife it had not experienced before. Indeed, had Napoleon proved to be the victor, the union would in all likelihood have ceased to exist. The prolonged occupation of the Electorate, and the resulting relocation of its' administrative centre to London, thrust the two constituent polities of the union together in a way that had not been anticipated. Due to this, the Napoleonic period is essential to understand the potential political influence the union could provide, and sustain. The forced cohabitation of London by both British and Hanoverian governments saw the union's influence touch upon British domestic affairs, Whitehall-Crown relations, and even British naval policy. Hanoverian influence on British naval policy is astounding when the Hanoverian's lack of naval heritage is considered. Even after the war had ended, the implications of the union's wartime policies were still being felt, some lasting well beyond the dissolution of the union itself. Yet despite the close collaboration that ensued, and the occasional dispute, the principles laid out by the Act of Settlement, and embodied in George III, were sustained and acknowledged by statesmen on both sides. At times, the constitutional ambiguity of the union was abused to help in disputes between the two polities, but the predominant view of politicians across the Guelphic territories was to leave their counterparts to their own devices, and aid each other in the war effort against a common enemy, in a capacity not dissimilar to that of simple allies.

Throughout this thesis it emerges that the German Chancery had to involve itself in British domestic affairs to safeguard the interests of Hanoverians who had left the continent. The Chancery's principal minister, Count Münster, thus turned his hand to all manner of domestic affairs. Through issues relating to tax, the British Home Front, and British

philanthropy, Münster worked consistently for the betterment of Hanover and its people. However throughout his correspondence we can see that while there was certainly a close working relationship, primarily with the Foreign Office. This relationship centred on mutual cooperation, and does not tally with Brendan Simms' assertion of a manipulative Hanoverian influence in British politics. British politics had to adapt to Hanoverian situations certainly, but so did policy have to adapt in relation to events concerning other European states, be they Russia, Spain, or more so Prussia. In the case of Prussia, British policy change may have taken a course contrary to the preferred option because of the Hanoverian connection, but that is not to say that it was a manipulation on the Hanoverian's part, more that it was just the political reality of the times. Münster's profound belief in the independent nature of Hanover further suggests this; admittedly he did enjoy a closer proximity to British politicians than dignitaries from other European courts, but this was to be expected. Britain and Hanover may have shared the same sovereign (in body at least), but remained independent in terms of their politics.

The union could at least offer mutual benefits to the two polities from which it was formed. At times the requests from Münster can appear somewhat forceful in nature, especially when we turn to the matter of the Hanoverian groomsmen. Yet as his nation had been under enemy occupation, it is unsurprising that he argued for his countrymen to be viewed as refugees, especially when the status of other émigrés is considered. It is even arguable that Münster embodied the spirit of the union as laid out by George III, his correspondence on domestic issues certainly implies as much. While in the domestic arena Britain was less adamant on a separation of the two states when it came to obtaining taxes and militia service from Hanoverian's in Britain, Münster repeatedly reverted to the principle of independence guaranteed within a personal union. Hanoverians in Britain were displaced refugees and nothing more. Occasionally he prevailed, at times he did not, and on the

occasion that the British view succeeded, it was on very ambiguous grounds that in itself could have caused a legal debate on Britain's duties regarding the defence of Hanover. This, however, was a position Münster did not pursue and supports further the claim that he adamantly believed in the separation within the union. Count Münster's writings on the constitutional nature of the union show us its importance in relation to British history. Münster's importance as an individual should in turn be recognised as instrumental in recognising the policy aims of George III when it came to retaining the distinction between his two sovereign states.

The presence of the union, and its inherent flexibility, could be seen even outside of domestic affairs. The maritime relationship was a crucial example of this, all the more so when the Hanoverian's negligible naval assets are accounted for. In the north of Germany, the unpopularity of Napoleon's Continental System, and the corruption of the men charged with policing its implementation, allowed for a large-scale smuggling operation to generate. By using Heligoland and Gothenburg as bases of operations, the British were able to continue a semblance of continental trade. The protective measures, enforced by the Royal Navy, ensured that the illicit trade of British goods flourished. These closely guarded convoys allowed for a secure system of communication between Count Münster and his continental contacts, and was arguably an unplanned by-product of British naval strategy, but one that would prove to be beneficial for Britain when we consider the frequency with which Münster would share intelligence. The Royal Navy's impact on securing the communication links between London and the continent, while being difficult to ascertain fully, remains in its nature a naval benefit that boosted the security of Münster's intelligence network. This is all the more important when the inadequacy of the British diplomatic service is considered.³¹⁰

³¹⁰ Otto Johnston, 'British Espionage and Prussian politics in the Age of Napoleon', *Intelligence and National Security* 2.2 (1987), p. 233.

This particular aspect in northern Europe provided for mutually beneficial intelligence networks; Hanoverian agents supplying information under protection of the Royal Navy.

The subsequent affairs in southern Europe were less than beneficial for Britain but favourable to Hanover, and did not echo the cooperation found in the northern seas. The need to secure safe trade routes in the Mediterranean required some form of settlement with the Barbary States, and by achieving this end, Britain not only ensured safe passage for their own merchant fleet, but additionally that of Hanover. Although Hanover did not retain anything close to a mercantile fleet at that time, the political nicety of securing the same privileges for the Hanoverians as those enjoyed by the British merchants suggests an amicable relationship that would in this immediate sense benefit Hanover on paper with no actual economic threat being posed to Britain's own mercantile interests. However, as has been explained, Hanover later acquired a sizeable merchant fleet due to their assimilation of the province of East Frisia at the Vienna Congress. The prior arrangements secured with the Barbary States by Britain would prove fortuitous in securing the safe passage of a merchant fleet that would be able to compete with Britain's own trade in the area. These unforeseen conditions were an unfortunate result of Britain's maritime policy in the Mediterranean and their own generosity in extending that policy to their Hanoverian cousins at a time when it was little more than an empty gesture.

Similarly, the union proved to be beneficial during the peace process. As Britain and Hanover were represented independently to one another, their respective diplomats could safeguard their own interests. Yet their close allegiance, and the trust that Münster had cultivated with Castlereagh over the course of the war, meant that the two dignitaries could work in concert with each other to further their agendas, Hanover benefitting from the influential support Britain had to offer. For Castlereagh, this meant that he would be privy to the exclusively German negotiations between the former courts of the Holy Roman Empire,

as Münster would inform him of what transpired in these talks. Thus Castlereagh was in a position to adjust his negotiating strategy accordingly in the wider negotiations. This would have been of significant advantage in the diplomatic manoeuvrings and bargaining maelstrom that embodied the Congress. The years 1814 and 1815 did at times cause friction, mainly over financial matters, but these were largely overcome by further negotiation. What the issue of subsidies proves, however, is that even when a Hanoverian administration was returned to the former Electorate, constitutional ambiguities remained. The decision of the Duke of Cambridge (as George III's royal representative in Hanover) to settle a Hanseatic debt is proof of this. His assumption that the Hanoverian government would be reimbursed by the British, the original debtor, was an interesting development that goes to the heart of the union's constitutional position. If the British had taken the view that Hanover could not act on their behalf in this matter, then we would be left with the peculiar position of a Royal dignitary directly handling British foreign policy. An abuse of royal authority that does not just question the constitutional format of the union but even that of the relationship between the British Crown and its Parliament.

A true test of the depth of influence and success of Anglo-Hanoverian relations during the Napoleonic Wars, would be to examine the legacy of the union on its respective members. In Britain, the union was reported to have died with a whimper, with little interest or remorse being shown when the two Kingdoms split apart in 1837. The only noteworthy part of the dissolution which received popular interest, was the knowledge that the unpopular Duke of Cumberland would be leaving Britain to rule Hanover. In Hanover itself the separation was warmly welcomed. For the first time since 1714, Hanover had a permanent resident sovereign. One would think the two Kingdoms were glad to be rid of each other. Yet the legacy of the union permeated the two well after 1837. Britain remained committed to its Hanoverian war veterans, and while disputes over the value of these pensions did exist, the

fact that the pensions continued at all is noteworthy. It could even be argued that the war years were embryonic of Hanoverian nationalism and Guelphic loyalties. From the commencement of war in 1803 to the Restoration, Hanoverians were faced with a choice. Conform to the Napoleonic system, or trust that the House of Guelph would return. For those Hanoverians who were in Britain, their policies worked towards Hanover's restitution, but crucially, through disagreements with British Ministers, the arguments for autonomy and independence became imprinted in political discourse. That Guelphic loyalty, high autonomy/independence, and Hanoverian identity became prominent political issues for the new Prussian-German regime post-1866 is unsurprising.

The years 1802-1815 are crucial in understanding the extent of the Hanoverian's influence in British politics. The dynastic ties certainly meant that the opportunity for cooperation existed and, significantly, ensured a safe haven for the Hanoverian administration during the years of occupation. The unprecedented success of the German Chancery's principle minister, Count Münster, in cultivating working relationships with the British Cabinet is a clear indicator of the union's potential for internal collaboration. Yet it is clear that both sides remained within their respective spheres, and with very few exceptions, would not suggest a point of policy that refuted the principles of the Act of Settlement. As such it is not the case that Münster could manipulate British policy directly. That is not to say that Britain had any power over Hanover in a composite sense. Yes, Hanoverians fought within the British army as the King's German Legion, but specific ordinances had been agreed specifying the temporary nature of this arrangement. These men were essentially fighting for their Elector in the only military force still available to him. This was pragmatism at its best. The Hanoverian memorial at Waterloo, in a separate location to that of the British, is symbolic of the independent nature of the union, a union that allowed for a combined effort against a common enemy.

With direct influence being ruled out, we return to the principles of soft power and a less direct approach to influencing decision-making. Through their network of agents in Central Europe, the German Chancery could help inform the relevant British ministers of important factors in need of consideration. Likewise the British were unwilling to dominate Hanoverian decisions while the administration was resident in London. The rare attempts to do so would be met with stern resistance from the Chancery and their Elector. The Anglo-Hanoverian union was an entity that jealously upheld the spirit of the Act of Settlement. Mutual collaboration and the cultivation of profitable political relationships was more prevalent than any Machiavellian attempts to manipulate policy. The union, clearly, was not a composite monarchy, or a union where hard power was utilised to achieve dominance. Yet, the cross-polity relationship of George III's Hanoverian and British statesmen, shows that neither was it a personal union as we currently understand them. This was a union of pragmatism, negotiation, and fluid constitutional debate that penetrated all areas of policy. A union whose combined influence on politics and society would be felt in both Britain and Hanover well after its dissolution.

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