

Charles Edward  
of Saxe-Coburg



# Charles Edward of Saxe-Coburg:

*The German Red Cross and the  
Plan to Kill “Unfit” Citizens  
1933-1945*

By

Alan R. Rushton

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For Nancy

There is no sin but ignorance.

—Christopher Marlowe  
The Jew of Malta c. 1590

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Abwehr	German Military Intelligence Service
DNVP	Deutsche National Volks Partei
DRK	Deutsches Rotes Kreuz
DVST	Deutschvolkische Schutz- und Trutzbund
Gauleiter	Regional NSDAP political leader
Gekrat	Charitable Foundation for the Transport of Patients
Gestapo	Geheime Staatspolizei Secret Police
Herzog	Duke
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
KWIA	Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics
KWS	Kaiser Wilhelm Society
Meldebogen	Registration forms
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
ORP	Office of Racial Politics
Rathaus	Town hall
SA	Sturmabteilung NSDAP Security Force
SD	Sicherheitsdienst Security Police
SS	Schutzstaffel
Staat	The state
Volk	The people
Volksgemeinschaft	National community
Volskörper	Body politic
WCC	World Council of Churches
Wehrmacht	German Army



## INTRODUCTION

The idea for this book project developed from research I completed more than 10 years ago that resulted in the 2008 work *Royal Maladies: Inherited Diseases in the Ruling Houses of Europe*. I was investigating the descent of the hereditary bleeding disease hemophilia in the British royal family. Queen Victoria carried the mutated gene and transmitted it to three of her nine children. In subsequent generations, males with the lethal bleeding disorder would be born into the British, German, Spanish and Russian royal families.

Prince Leopold was the eighth of Victoria's children, born in 1853. His childhood was not happy because he had repeated episodes of internal bleeding with severe abdominal and joint pains due to the inherited disorder. But he survived to adulthood and married Helen of Waldeck, a German princess, in 1882; they produced two children. His daughter Princess Alice inherited the hemophilia gene and had one affected son. Leopold died of cerebral hemorrhage in 1884 before the birth of his unaffected son, Prince Charles Edward.

Charles Edward experienced a typical upper-class English childhood and attended Eton College for his education. As I read the life histories of Queen Victoria's numerous grandchildren, I was struck by the outcome of Charles Edward's life. The standard biographies state that he inherited the German Duchy of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha as a young man, served as a general in the German army and fought against England in World War I, consequently lost his English and German titles in 1918, became a staunch German nationalist and then an early supporter of the National Socialist movement. He developed a close friendship with Adolf Hitler and was appointed to important offices during the 1930s. What an odd story, I thought, the English prince who became a German Duke and German Army general, then a supporter of Hitler, and eventually an important leader in German politics before World War II.

Charles Edward was named president of the German Red Cross in 1933 and worked with Hitler to prepare this humanitarian organization for military work in the coming war. The German Red Cross also became involved in the National Socialist government program to kill handicapped citizens by poison gas and later by starvation. One of his own relatives died in this so-called "euthanasia" scheme. Despite his intimate knowledge

about such crimes against humanity, Charles Edward recounted after the war that he had only known what everyone else knew about the government's actions and did not talk to Hitler about terminating such a barbaric plan.

This book tells the story of a man born to royalty who became ensnared in the politics of human destruction. It is a tragic story.

Librarians from several institutions have kindly offered assistance in this project. The National Archives at Kew, England, the Universitätsbibliothek at the University of Basel, the Bundesarchiv in Berlin and the Riksarkivet in Stockholm provided documents that assisted my work. The prompt service of the staff at Firestone Library of Princeton University in New Jersey and the British Library in London is also greatly appreciated. Fabrizio Bensi at the International Committee of the Red Cross Archives and Hans von Rötte at the World Council of Churches Archives kindly offered their assistance for my research in Geneva.

My long-suffering wife Nancy Spencer Rushton has been my devoted copy editor for many years, and her assistance is appreciated as ever. My historian colleague Michael Lackey read the entire manuscript and made pointed suggestions for improving the flow of the material. Many thanks for his patient efforts as well.



# CHAPTER ONE

## GERMAN SPRING

General Patton's Third U.S. Army moved into the area around Coburg in southwestern Germany during early April 1945. The soldiers had already witnessed the widespread destruction of most German towns and cities. Until the spring of 1945, U.S. policy had been to bomb military targets, while Britain practiced carpet-bombing of populated urban centers (Hansen, 2008, ix-x). One U.S. military observer noted, "The countryside is practically untouched and in many reports as picturesque as ever. But in a physical and to a large degree psychological sense, the cities no longer exist" (Bach, J., 1946, 17). Not until the last 4-5 months of the war did the U.S. Army Air Corps initiate a bombing campaign to destroy the small towns and cities in Germany as well (Sandner, 2010, 414).

As the 11th Armored Division approached Coburg on 10 April, the American soldiers were surprised to see that most of the city buildings were intact. Postwar military reports indicated that the city had no industrial or transportation capabilities, and hence was spared from destruction (Daniels, 1981; Sandner, 2010, 414). One soldier recalled being surprised to see a "Disney" castle on the hill above Coburg (Emerich, 1998, 59). On that morning in April, the U.S. task force began to attack the castle with howitzer shells, and a fighter plane dropped a bomb through the castle roof which started a fire. U.S. Maj. George Pickett then approached the castle Veste Coburg under a white flag of truce. He met an older man wearing a hunting jacket who introduced himself as Herzog Carl Edward, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, and the owner of the castle. The duke spoke perfect public school English and asked the major what he wanted. "I wish we could stop the fighting," Pickett replied. The duke then nodded grimly and agreed, "I think that's a good idea." He then commanded the German troops in the castle to surrender. The duke next turned to Pickett and asked, "Could you now get some of your people up here to help us? Your airplane dropped a bomb into the area where we had put the art treasures and museum pieces, and the museum itself is on fire." For the next hour, a combined German-

American military bucket brigade collaborated to extinguish the fire and save the art pieces inside the castle (Yenne, 1991, 235-237).

Major Pickett ordered the duke and his family to stay in the castle under house arrest. Charles Edward was known to be a prominent member in the Nazi Party, the President of the German Red Cross as well as General in the Sturmabteilung [the SA]. He was noted on the official U.S. Army Wanted List of War Criminals and Security Suspects. But the duke was not too alarmed by his capture as the war ended and requested that Pastor Carl Pistorius celebrate a service of thanksgiving in the Luther Chapel of the castle (Sandner, 2010, 421-424).

The U.S. Army was aware that the capture of Charles Edward could have significant political implications. George VI, King of England, was a nephew of the duke, and one could speculate that this may have been at least one reason why Coburg was left untouched by Allied bombers during the war. Death or injury of a close relative of the British ruling house would have been a major propaganda item for the German war effort. Once the war ended, the British government sought to mitigate public knowledge of this Windsor-German connection. Winston Churchill urged Prime Minister Clement Attlee late in 1945 to block public release of any documents in this matter. He suggested, "I earnestly trust that it may be possible to destroy all traces of the German intrigues" (Petropoulos, 2006, 343). These sentiments continue to this day, many decades after the end of the conflict. The historian Jonathan Petropoulos found material connecting German nobility and the British ruling family to be closely guarded in the archives at Windsor Castle. The royal family and its staff are still "really nervous" about revealing very much of the historical interactions of the individuals involved (Petropoulos, 2006, 8).<sup>1</sup>

The National Archives at Kew contain material related to the British government and Charles Edward from the post-war era. These documents originally were classified "secret" for 100 years, but more recent changes in the law have allowed limited public access (Face Page, 1946). Once the British royal family became aware of Charles Edward's capture by the U.S. Army, his relatives began to use both personal and political connections to suppress public knowledge about the matter and also to mitigate legal consequences for the duke. For several months after his capture, he remained in Coburg. Late in November 1945 the occupying U.S. military officials finally acted. The *New York Times* reported,

Charles Edward, Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, and a grandson of Queen Victoria, is under arrest and his estates have been confiscated, American military government officials announced today. The duke was President of the German Red Cross and a General in the Storm Troops. His

high rank in the German hierarchy places him in the 'categorical arrest' class (Sandner, 2010, 428).

The duke was then removed from Coburg and lodged in a prisoner of war camp.

The duke's sister, Princess Alice Countess of Athlone, first contacted a family friend, Sir Miles Graham, Major General in the British Army, for assistance when she learned of the arrest. Because Coburg was located in the American occupation zone, the proper channels for communication regarding the status of Charles Edward required British-American military liaison. In May 1946, Gen. Graham wrote to Lieutenant Gen. Sir Brian Robertson who was the Deputy Military Governor in the British zone of occupation. The Count of Athlone, Princess Alice's husband, had served with Graham during World War I. Graham asked Robertson if he would send one of his staff to investigate the condition of the duke in captivity. The royal family believed that Charles Edward was in poor health and wished to have him lodged either in Coburg or in Sweden. Graham expressed the desire of all concerned to bring this matter to a rapid conclusion.

Of course I haven't the slightest idea what the man has done or whether it is possible, even were it desirable, to alleviate his lot... I imagine that as Coburg is the brother of one of our royal princesses, there might be in the event of a trial undesirable publicity... (Graham, M., 1946).

The duke's lawyer confirmed the family's concerns in a letter to Princess Alice in July 1946. Charles Edward was confined to a military hospital and had cancer of the face. The lawyer reported, "The status of his health is very serious... If the duke is still not released to custody soon, one must be prepared for the worst" (Rechtsanwalt Dr. Langer, 1946). Princess Alice herself then contacted Robertson to explain her apprehension regarding her brother.

Fate has been cruel to him, but I am fully aware of his great folly in getting himself deeply involved in the Nazi Party as the President of the German Red Cross and the motor organization. This has of course landed him in his present predicament. But it is absurd to consider him as a Nazi insider.

She mentioned that she had been discussing the matter with Sir Miles Graham and would be grateful if Charles Edward could be released to the care of his wife in Coburg or to the care of his daughter Princess Gustav Adolph of Sweden. Because of his ill health, "All are anxious to remove him from camp life to a place where he can receive more individual

attention” (Alice Countess of Athlone, 1946a). Princess Alice then requested that Robertson use his contacts with American officials to “bring pressure to bear on the right quarters,” in order to improve the duke’s accommodation (Alice Countess of Athlone, 1946d). The Princess traveled to Sweden in September 1946 and met with Count Folke Bernadotte of the Swedish Red Cross. He had just returned from Germany and reported that he had heard reports that Charles Edward’s health was satisfactory. She wondered if that was merely a “purposeful exaggeration.” The Princess noted to Robertson, “Nothing matters if we can only get him home” (Alice Countess of Athlone, 1946b).

The general did forward Princess Alice’s concerns to Lieutenant Gen. Lucius Clay, Deputy Military Governor of the American zone of occupation, and apologized for repeatedly bothering him regarding the status of the duke. He reported that Princess Alice had sent him numerous communications on her brother’s behalf. A detailed medical report indicated that the 62-year-old duke suffered considerable physical disability from chronic spinal arthritis. He also had a basal cell carcinoma of the left eyelid and had received prior radiation therapy (Clay, 1946b; Robertson, 1946). Gen. Clay then completed an investigation of the duke’s activities and reported to Robertson in September 1946. The duke had joined the Nazi Party in 1934 and then served as General in the SA and the Nazi Transport Corps. Owing to his military rank, Charles Edward was placed in the “mandatory arrest category” as a “major offender” under the Law for the Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism. As such, he was not eligible for release from confinement. Clay ordered continued medical treatment and an early trial date for the duke. Once his case was completed, it might then be possible to arrange care abroad as the family requested (Clay, 1946a, b). Princess Alice thanked Robertson for his efforts with the American military officials to ease the duke’s situation. But she noted sadly, “I am afraid that strings of Nazi titles will undo every effort on our part.” She expressed the hope that her brother would receive the medical care he needed while in captivity (Alice Countess of Athlone, 1946c).

Despite the potential embarrassment for the British Royal Family when one of its own members faced a court in Germany, Charles Edward did have an early trial. The Law for Liberation from National Socialism and Militarism was accepted by the occupying powers in Germany in 1946, and a system of denazification courts was established. Over the next three years, some 2.5 million cases of former Nazi officials were reviewed. Approximately 1.4 percent of all cases were alleged serious perpetrators, and 182,000 individuals were actually arrested and incarcerated (Rauh-

Kuhme, 2004, 65-73; Denazification, 2010). The tactics of the defense in these post-war trials were clearly designed to rationalize and minimize any perceived negative results of the alleged actions of the accused individual during the war itself. Testimony was crafted to present the defendants in the best possible light (Petropoulos, 2006, 9), and any review of such reports must recall that these were clearly biased toward the defense and not necessarily truthful at all.

The trial of Charles Edward began in 1946, and its two appeals were not completed until 1950. It was admitted that the duke had allowed his famous name to be associated with the Nazi Party to its public benefit. But he served the people through his leadership of the German Red Cross, based on his humanitarian and Christian beliefs. If the government acted illegally in certain cases, he knew nothing about that. His awareness of the details of party action was therefore limited, “knowing only what was generally known” (Sandner, 2010, 442). By the time of the final appeal in 1950, the court agreed with the duke’s defense that he was really not actively involved in the affairs of the Nazi Party; he was merely an average citizen, one of the Volk [the people] (Sandner, 2010, 446).

If one accepts this statement at face value, two questions arise which then form the basis for this book. What did people in different classes of society know about the excesses of Nazi actions at home and abroad, and what did the German citizens do with that information as it disseminated through country? Shortly after the war ended, Adolph Arndt published an article in the *Frankfurter Hefte* arguing that the German people could not really claim that they were unaware of the true nature of the recently demolished Nazi regime. In fact, he claimed, “Everyone knew” about political arrests and programs against the socially undesirable elements in German society (Ericksen, 2012, 177).

The historian Daniel Goldhagen has also analyzed the responses of the German people to the government euthanasia programs designed to eliminate mentally ill and handicapped people from society as a paradigm for the later action when their government systematically killed millions of Slavs and Jews. Goldhagen argued that:

1. Germans believed that the euthanasia program was wrong;
2. They openly expressed their opposition;
3. No one suffered punishment for such public protest;
4. Protests eventually convinced the Nazi leaders to stop the programs and hence saved many German lives (Goldhagen, 1996, 118).

He contrasted this behavior with the absent German public outrage against the arrest, deportation and slaughter of Jewish German citizens during the Holocaust years. Goldhagen vilified the Germans as “Hitler’s willing executioners” (Goldhagen, 1996, 119-120; Wehler, 1997, 80-91).

Duke Charles Edward served as President of the German Red Cross from 1933 until the end of the war in 1945. As leader of the largest humanitarian organization in Germany, he directed the actions of many thousands of physicians, nurses and other aid workers. As a Nazi Party and military leader, Charles Edward certainly knew more than the average German citizen about the actions of the government.

The National Socialist racial-eugenic policies were implemented after 1933 in what historians term “Euthanasie.” The general term euthanasia means a merciful and painless death for a person with an incurable and devastating disease such as terminal cancer. The German definition of euthanasia during the Nazi era, however, meant the wholesale murder of handicapped and disabled citizens. There was no mercy involved in the scheme to eliminate these “useless eaters” from German society. “Euthanasia” in this book means the German implementation of such a racial cleansing program.

When Charles Edward learned about the euthanasia program, even though it impacted his own family, he did nothing to openly protest the destruction of handicapped German citizens. The euthanasia scheme did not remain secret and rapidly became widely known in government, religious and medical circles, as well as among average German citizens. Some of them did protest the government acts for moral, religious and family reasons, both privately and publicly. Recent documentation demonstrates that many of the protesters were arrested and severely punished by the Gestapo during the war years. Protest was not a benign pursuit. The public euthanasia protest did force the government to modify the original program, but the killing continued via more subtle means. The rescue of individuals caught in the euthanasia maelstrom required specific efforts by brave individuals to defy the orders of their government by placing themselves and their family members at considerable risk. Goldhagen’s facile analysis of easy public outcry cannot be reconciled with these facts.

On 8 April 1945, the Allied code-breaking unit at Bletchley Park in England intercepted a telegram fragment from Adolf Hitler which read: “The Führer attaches importance to the President of the Red Cross, the Duke of Coburg, on no account falling into enemy hands” (Urbach, 2015, 2). Such a warning from the German leader certainly indicated that Charles Edward was knowledgeable about the most secret actions of the

Nazi regime and should never be allowed to provide evidence to the Allied governments. This then is the story of Duke Charles Edward, born an English prince, who was aware of the German eugenic euthanasia program from its early planning stages until it was fully implemented, resulting in the murder of tens of thousands of disabled German citizens.





## CHAPTER TWO

### THE ENGLISH PRINCE, THE GERMAN HERZOG AND THE RISE OF NAZISM

Prince Charles Edward was born 19 July 1884 at Claremont House in Surrey, south of London. Queen Victoria had presented the country estate to Charles Edward's parents upon their wedding in 1882. His mother was Princess Helen of Waldeck und Pyrmont in Germany. His father was Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany and the fourth son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Leopold suffered from the hereditary bleeding disorder hemophilia and died suddenly of a brain hemorrhage several months before his son was born. Charles Edward then became the second Duke of Albany as he inherited the title from his father. A daughter Alice had been born a year earlier (Potts and Potts, 1995, 155-159; Zeepvat, 1999, 189; Rushton, 2008, 2-7). Princess Helen and her two young children lived with the extended royal family under constant supervision of Queen Victoria (Priesner, 1977; Lundgren, 2009; Sandner, 2010, 14-21; Urbach, 2015, 27-30; Büschel, 2016).<sup>1</sup>

The young prince attended the public school Eton College near Windsor. Charles Edward became involved in German politics because of the actions of his royal relative and Eton classmate, Arthur Connaught. Ernest II, the older brother of Prince Albert, ruled the German duchy of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha until he died in 1893. Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, the second son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, then assumed the ruling post until his death in July 1900, leaving no male heir. The Queen had proposed in 1899 to the Diets of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha that her next son, Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, should assume the governance of the duchy. However, she had not consulted her grandson, Kaiser Wilhelm II on this plan, and he threatened that the Reichstag in Berlin would override and veto the succession scheme. The Kaiser also told the English royals that German public sentiment demanded that the next duke should reside permanently in the country and serve in the German army. Both Prince Arthur and his son also named Arthur declined to accept these stipulations. The Queen then proposed that Prince

Leopold's young son, Charles Edward, should accept the position in Germany. Newspaper reports detailed discussion among the young royals at Eton. "There is a funny story at the famous college that Arthur forced his cousin... to take the succession to the little German duchy under threats of personal violence" (*Marriageable Princes*, 1903). In fact, Arthur demanded that Charles Edward accept the office, or "he would be punched in the head." Charles Edward appeared reluctant to leave Eton. He blurted, "I've got to go and be a beastly German prince" (*Unwilling Prince*, 1905). The Queen and the Kaiser finally agreed on the proposed succession in the summer of 1899 (Lee, 1925, 741; Van der Kiste, 1991, 149-150).

At the beginning of the 20th century, Saxe-Coburg and Gotha comprised one of 18 sovereign royal houses ruling specific provinces within the German Reich (Petropoulos, 2006, 394). The two small duchies had united in 1852 under one ruling Herzog. Their total land area was 764 square miles, and the population numbered 242,000. The ruling family owned 13 castles and 60 percent of the farmland in the region which generated considerable annual income (Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, 1911).

The 16-year-old prince prepared to leave his home and settled English life in April 1900. Field Marshal Lord Roberts advised the boy, "Try to be a good German!" (MacDonogh, 2000, 162). Princess Helen had similar ideas. She recalled, "I have always tried to bring up Charlie as a good Englishman, and now I have to turn him into a good German" (Ibarra, 2009). The Kaiser invited Charles Edward, his sister Alice and mother Princess Helen to reside in Potsdam, near the Lichterfelde Military Academy. Charles Edward studied the German language and military science there, taking his new German role very seriously. The exiled British were welcomed into the extended royal family of Wilhelm II. Charles Edward would later attend the University of Bonn with two of the Kaiser's six sons. Princess Alice and her mother became "great favorites of the Kaiserin Augusta Victoria." The entire family often spent weekends with the German royals in Berlin. The Kaiser treated Charles Edward like a "seventh son" (University Studies, 1903; Topham, 1914, 68; Murr, 1931; Princess Alice of Albany, 1966; Priesner, 1977, 9-19; MacDonogh, 2000, 162; Lundgren, 2009, 19-24; Preussische Hauptkadettenanstalt, 2010). But he never really felt comfortable there. He noted to his sister, "You cannot imagine how awful it was to decide not to go to England" (Urbach, 2015, 31).

The *Times of London* reported in March 1901 that the Kaiser had ordered Charles Edward to spend the Easter holiday in Berlin, in "the company with princes of his own age and to acquaint himself with public institutions and the internal organization" of the Prussian government

(Berlin Visit, 1901). As a surrogate father, the Kaiser not only provided political education for Charles Edward, but also inculcated the vulnerable young man with certain social values. The Kaiser viewed the world through his own eyes and raged against anyone who objected to his opinions (Rohl, 1996, 11). As a young man, Wilhelm had been convinced that the Jews were responsible for the economic troubles in Germany. Many in the royal family and the officer corps thought that the Jews should be removed from public office and university teaching positions. To counter this trend, Wilhelm's father Crown Prince Friedrich and his mother Victoria Adelaide publicly attended concerts by Jewish performers. Many German citizens viewed this as alien and un-German behavior (Petropoulos, 2006, 194-198). The political issue at the turn-of-the-century was how to define a German. It really was a matter of the Volk [people] and the Staat [nation]. Religious traditions and social class now were secondary if all were to become citizens of a unified Reich. The idea was to develop a homogeneous ethnic society. German Jews then sought to assimilate in economic and public life while retaining private religious practices. When Wilhelm II acceded in 1888, anti-semitism flourished under his rule (Pulzer, 1989, 293-306). He became convinced that a "racially aware... centrally organized Germany... would rule the world" (Rohl, 1996, 202-205). In his view, the existing social structure had to change. After Germany's defeat in 1918, the former Kaiser was convinced that the war had been lost because of plots by the Catholics and the Jews (Rohl, 1996, 209).

Although technically illegal in Germany at the time, an active male homosexual community developed before World War I, especially in Berlin. The Kaiser and other prominent political and military leaders often participated in such homoerotic behaviors (Hull, 1982, 107-145; Burleigh and Wipperman, 1991, 182-193). The Kaiser had long enjoyed a very close friendship with Prince Philipp zu Eulenberg. Wilhelm noted that he had always felt different than other men, lamenting, "I have lived through such horrible years when no one understood my individuality" (Van der Kiste, 1999, 35). In 1878, Wilhelm noted to his friend that he felt "free with the beautiful nature around you, and soldiers as much as you like, for I love my dear regiment very much, and those nice young men in it." The Kaiser was indeed very comfortable around his "young men" (Rohl, 1996, 19).

As a member of the Kaiser's Berlin family, Charles Edward also became involved in the Kaiser's behaviors which at times turned sadistic. A 1905 report from the Court Marshall indicated that the Kaiser and Charles Edward had spent an evening in the Royal Library together. The

Kaiser apparently gave the young man a “proper beating up” (Rohl, 1996 15, Rohl, 2005, 15). The Kaiser loved all forms of childish pranks, dressing up in feather hats and dancing in all-male company. But this behavior turned serious one evening when the Chief of the Military Secretariat Dietrich von Hulsen-Haeseler dressed in a woman’s ballet tutu and danced for the Kaiser. The officer unfortunately suffered a heart attack and died at an estate located in the Black Forest. The Berlin public prosecutor investigated the matter and collected evidence that several members of the Kaiser’s inner circle of special friends had demonstrated homosexual activities. Prince Philipp was arrested in 1908, and the prosecutor was prepared to charge other men and even Wilhelm himself with homosexual behavior. Such an act would have resulted in abdication by the Kaiser, and the prosecution was promptly quashed. One of the parties to be named in the charge was Charles Edward of Saxe-Coburg (Rohl, 1996, 53-63, 100, 227; Van der Kiste, 1999, 131). Such claims of homosexual behavior would haunt the young man into World War II decades later (Rohl, 2005, 48).

Charles Edward continued his military study in Potsdam and was named lieutenant of cavalry on his 16th birthday in 1900. Shortly thereafter, his uncle Prince Alfred died, and Charles Edward inherited the crown of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. The Kaiser appointed Prince Ernst of Hohenlohe-Langenburg as regent until the young man reached the age of majority. In a public speech, Prince Ernst asked “God to help him govern in such a way that when Charles Edward takes over the government, he may find his exalted duties in every way facilitated” (Saxe-Coburg Government, 1900). The Kaiser stood by his side as the young Herzog accepted his new position and took possession of the massive Veste Coburg fortress (Sandner, 2010, 29-32).

The Victorian era ended early the next year when the Queen died after a reign of nearly 64 years. Charles Edward and his mother traveled to London and participated in the royal funeral. The new ruler Edward VII was Charles Edward’s uncle and embraced him fondly after the sad affair (Funeral, 1901a-c). Back in Berlin, Charles Edward completed his military training at Lichterfelde and then studied government management in the Prussian Ministries of Interior, Business and Forestry. He enrolled at the University of Bonn where the Kaiser and his sons had studied. His education was not merely personal but had important political implications as well. German citizens watched the development of the young prince because it was now important for the English boy to become a German man and leader of his adopted land. Charles Edward sought to demonstrate

that he was now German in the broadest sense of the word (Sandner, 2010, 36-41).

Despite his acquisition of German culture, Charles Edward retained his connections with his English royal family members. The Kaiser's mother, Victoria Adelaide, Queen Victoria's daughter, brought a priest with her to Germany when she married. He then established an Anglican church in Berlin. A service at St. George's Anglican Church was held in January 1902 to honor the anniversary of Queen Victoria's death. The British chaplain officiated. Charles Edward and his mother attended the service. The Kaiser was also there and wore the uniform of a British field marshal (Funeral, 1902). Charles Edward attended other Anglican services in Berlin, but the details of his participation have been lost due to the destruction of the city in World War II (Jage-Bowler, 2010). Later that spring Charles Edward traveled to London for the coronation of Edward VII and ate luncheon with the new king and queen at Buckingham Palace (Coronation, 1902). As a part of the coronation celebration, the King named Charles Edward a Knight of the Garter (Knight of the Garter, 1902). Charles returned to England in December to initiate an annual tradition of spending the Christmas holidays with his mother at Claremont House. Later he also dined with King Edward and Queen Alexandra, and then visited the Hospital for the Paralyzed and Epileptic. The main building in London was dedicated as a memorial to his late father, Prince Leopold (Christmas, 1903; Luncheon 1903; Claremont, 1904; Hospital Dedication, 1904; Sandringham, 1904).

The Kaiser followed the career of his "seventh son" carefully and noted that he would inherit the Duchy in 1905 at age 21 years. Therefore, an heir would eventually be required. Wilhelm invited Charles Edward to a winter ball in Berlin. He arranged for the young man to meet his niece, the 19-year-old Princess Viktoria Adelheid of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderberg-Glücksburg. The pair enjoyed their time together and soon agreed to marry (Betrothal, 1905; Sandner, 2010, 43). The engaged couple traveled to England in May and visited the royal family at Windsor (Claremont, 1905; Sandner, 2010, 49). The king appointed Charles Edward to be Colonel in Chief of the Seaforth Highlander Regiment (Highlanders, 1905).

As the July date for the coronation in Saxe-Coburg approached, local newspapers in the duchy raised questions about Charles Edward's true intentions for his new role. Was he angry about his fate or did he freely accept that he was being transformed into an authentic German noble? Political sentiment in the duchy was that the new prince should be German, that he should "speak German, feel German and think German"

(Sandner, 2010, 25-26). Would he act aloof and “foreign”? (Urbach, 2015, 33). Everyone hoped that he would devote body and soul to the administration of their government.

The young duke arrived first in Gotha and received a military honor guard there. He swore an oath to meticulously follow and protect the dictates of the Constitution of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. Several days later, Charles Edward traveled to Coburg for further parades and military reviews. His mother and cousin Prince Arthur of Connaught accompanied him. George Prince of Wales represented King Edward VII at the coronation ceremony. Charles Edward read a speech at the Rathaus [town hall] in which he promised to “stand in unalterable loyalty to the Empire and its illustrious head.” Then the royal party rode in an open carriage through the flag- and flower-bedecked streets of the city. The new ruler halted at a food concession and consumed a local bratwurst and sampled a pint of the best beer. The crowd of people appreciated this unexpected human touch, cheering the duke with great enthusiasm. This act broke the ice between the majority of the people and their new governor (Coronation, 1905a,b; Sandner, 2010, 49-50). The young ruler officially ended his childhood English heritage and now had allied his fate with the Kaiser and the German Empire into the future. He thought his lands were beautiful, and he looked forward to governing there.

The next step in the Germanization of the English prince involved his October marriage to Viktoria Adelheid at her ancestral home Schloss Glücksburg in Schleswig-Holstein. The Kaiser attended, and Prince Arthur of Connaught, Charles Edward’s uncle, represented the British royal family. The bride looked splendid, and Charles Edward was very handsome in his uniform of the Ninth German Hussars. The *Times of London* reported that the Duke “has in every way associated himself with the intellectual, military and political interests of the country of his adoption” (Royal Wedding, 1905a-c; Sandner, 2010, 52-58).

The young married couple developed a routine of living in Gotha from December to April, and then in Coburg from May to November. Many days were also spent at the hunting residence Reinhardsbrunn near Gotha, and mountain retreats Schloss Greinburg near Grein and Schloss Hinterriss near Innsbruck in Austria. Charles Edward devoted morning hours to business and the afternoon to hikes and other recreational activities (Sandner, 2010, 58). His annual royal income was approximately 2.5 million marks (12.8 million Euros), and he owned nearly 60 percent of all forestlands in the region as well (Sandner, 2010, 61-62). The carefree life of the Coburg royals involved numerous trips to visit German royal relatives, yacht cruises from the harbor at Kiel on the North Sea, and