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PUTTING GERMAN (AND BRITAIN) LIBERALISM INTO CONTEXT:
LIBERALISM, EUROPE, AND THE BOURGEOISIE, 1840 - 1914

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"Putting German (and Britain) Liberalism into Context:

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Taking German Liberalism Seriously

It's hardly necessary to rehearse the conventional wisdom about German liberalism and its failings. It was formed, most historians would argue, by a series of political defeats--in 1848, in the 1860s, in 1878-9, in countless smaller compromises, and in the disastrous denouement of the Weimar Republic. Because of the dramatic circumstances of "revolution from above", in which Bismarck seized the initiative from an impressively resurgent liberalism, under novel circumstances of party-political mobilization, with the united German Empire as its result, the 1860s occupy a pivotal place in this approach. This was a major political watershed, in which certain possibilities of constitutional development were foreclosed, and others entrenched. In the "Constitutional Conflict"the Prussian liberals first pushed the monarchy against the wall, butwere then breathtakingly outmanoeuvred, as Bismarck stole much of their programme and proceeded to unify Germany under his own steam. A majority of Prussian liberals made their peace with Bismarck's four years ofunconstitutional government by passing the 1866 Indemnity Bill, and then reached an accommodation within the framework of the small-German, semi-constitutional Reich.

As we all know, the poor political staying-power of the liberals in the 1860s is thought to have had long-range consequences: the absence ofa combative liberalism on the British model meant that Germany failed to develop a parliamentary-democratic and participant political culture based on positive ideals of citizenship, and in this sense the decisions of the 1860s set the points for the long-term future, to use one of several familiar metaphors. These longer-range implications are accurately reflected in Krieger's decision to end his 500-page book with a ten-page "Epilogue", which takes the story all the way up to the Federal Republic in the 1950s. As Krieger says: ".... the pattern ofliberal politics for the half-century of the Empire's duration scarcely changed at all from its structure and posture in 1870". And:

> Political liberalism, which had fought frontally in the main arena over the forms of the state and had been defeated, was calcified into an institutionalized party existence. It became compatible with the recently constitutionalized Germany and pressed only for certain policies from it.[1]

Moreover, in compromising with Bismarck the liberals cleared the ground for the Sonderweg, which was paved from the wreckage of their good intentions. In other words, this was the point at which Germany departed from the norms of Western political development. As Winkler says of the liberal dilemma in the 1860s: ".... there can no longer be any doubt that Germany's deviation from the secular and normative process of democratization laid the foundations for the catastrophes of the twentieth century" (my emphasis).[2] Or, in Wehler's words (although herethe argument already slides from liberalism to the bourgeoisie): "The outcome of this conflict was to seal the political impotence of the bourgeoisie up until 1918".[3]

Now, an enormous amount could be said about the historiographical syndrome such statements reflect. As I've argued elsewhere, the experience of Nazism casts a long shadow over the previous century of

German history, obscuring the rich indeterminacy and internalcomplexities of earlier times, leaving visible only those logics and potentials that seemingly point to a right-wing and authoritarian terminus. But the belief that German liberalism was already fixed in a fifty-year posture of impotence by the decisions of the 1860s, and that the resulting authoritarianism of the Empire's essential political culture was the decisive factor in Germany's future susceptibility to Nazism, is an extraordinarily determinist one. German history under the Kaiserreich becomes a plot whose basic scenario is already inscribed in the circumstances of the Empire's foundation, once the liberals stopped short of a full parliamentary constitution. Of course, a rich combination of major historiographical achievements has been necessary to show how liberalism subsequently failed to recharge itself for further progressive developmentzzfor example, Schieder's essays on the concept of party in the liberal tradition, Nipperdey's account of party organization, Gall's book on governmental liberalism in Baden and his arguments regarding liberalism's "pre-industrial" parameters, Rosenberg'swork on the context of the "Great Depression", the research of Stegmannand others on the economic bases of liberal fragmentation, and Mommsen's study of Max Weber (which is really about the thresholds of liberal creativity in the era of high-imperialism after 1895-6) all come to mind.[4] But because the starting-questions are so firmly in place,research on the intervening period between the 1860s and 1914 becomes very much an empirical exercise, rather than the conceptual construction of new interpretation. It is striking how little innovation there has been since the early-1970s in the analysis of the Kaiserreich, as opposed to the opening of new empirical fronts.[5]

The accepted view of liberal weakness reflects a larger argument about the social forces dominant in the Empire's political system and about the governing bloc that consistently corresponded to them between the 1870s and 1918: the weakness of liberalism is thought to reflect the continuing primacy of "pre-industrial traditions" in the political culture, which in turn bespoke the domination of the traditional power elites, that is, "the aristocratic forces of the military and thelandowners".[6] In other words, the accepted view makes a strong correlation between the possibility of a successful liberalism and the kind of social base that would have been necessary to sustain it. The failings of the German liberals (for instance, their growing inability to transcend the organized sectionalism of the economic interests) are linked to a still larger deficit, namely, the failure to unify the interests and aspirations of the bourgeoisie as a class. A vital consequence of the liberals' cumulative capitulation between 1866 and 1878-9, according to Wehler, was that "there was now no united liberal party to represent the bourgeoisie in internal politics". Or, as Winklerputs it: "What distinguishes the German from the West European bourgeoisie seems to me to be above all the lack of a common consciousness for the bourgeoisie as a whole (gesamtburgerlichen Bewusstseins)--a consciousness which grew out of the conflict with the bearers of the ancient regime, as in France, and which under certain circumstances overlaid the social differentiation within the Third Estate".[7] It has been argued many times that the German bourgeoisie was somehow lacking in political ambitions, and that its "weakness and lack of political maturity" provide the crucial explanation for the liberals' failings.[8] Germany's missing liberalism--its "mis-development"--was at root the "mis-development of the German bourgeoisie", its persistent "inability to develop an independent class consciousness" of its own.[9]

As I've argued elsewhere, there's a lot of conceptual slippage in making this equation. Two categorical non-equivalents--the one political (liberalism), the other social or economic (bourgeoisie)--come to be used interchangeably, and the weakness of the one (liberal capitulation) becomes causally attributed to deficiencies in the other (certain peculiarities of class formation, or the bourgeoisie's willingness to compromise with the forces of the old social order). In the process, the chances of a successful liberalism become linked to the class interests of a strong bourgeoisie in a directly instrumental or expressive way. No (strong, class conscious) bourgeoisie, no (successful) liberalism. The formation of liberal traditions from other kinds of influences--like the positive contributions of subordinate groups other than the bourgeoisie (including the peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, working class), or the role of organized religion (such as forms of popular Protestantism, or varieties of anti-clericalism)--is badly neglected by comparison. That liberalism was a _complex_ political growth, with a richly varied sociology, is often fudged in the German discussion. Imperceptibly, liberalism becomes elided with the class consciousness of the bourgeoisie. As Winkler puts it: "Political liberalism emerged as the political outlook of the rising bourgeoisie".[10]

Finally, this negative judgement on German liberalism has to imply some notion of what a _sucessful_ or _more_ _authentic_ liberalism would have been. In this sense, as Blackbourn and I have argued, most writers proceed from a particular reading of the British and American pasts.

Liberalism tends to be equated with parliamentary democracy and civil rights, a conciliatory system of industrial relations (including legal recognition of trade union rights and collective bargaining), and at least the potential for a welfare state, so that German inadequacies become teleologically conceived by reference to an exterior and idealized model. The post-1945 "welfare-state mass democracies" become the measure of maturity for a liberal-democratic form of development, abstracted into an indictment of German omissions, the course of development German history failed to take. In fact, German history becomes the ideal-typification of the *opposite* route, that of the "authoritarianregimes".[11] As Blackbourn and I have observed, this tends to obscure the specificity of Germany's own historical development, using more successful liberalisms as a normative measure of where Germany went "wrong", until the rationality and coherence of the German experience is gradually undermined. In extreme versions--as in Dahrendorf, where the appeal to an idealized western liberalism is both open and partisan--this easily reduces to the question: "Why was Germany not England?".[12]

Of course, there is much more to the standard views of the weakness of German liberalism. Most authors, for instance, see it as the casualty of capitalist development in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, whose scale and unevenness unleased social forces and social contradictions it could not contain. In another sense, it was also disabled before the processes of organized interest-representation that became a defining feature of the Imperial governing system. But in the most fundamental of conceptual terms, the argument hinges on the two major assumptions referred to above: (1) that the weaknesses of German liberalism reflected deeper weaknesses of the German bourgeoisie as a class; and (2) that the appropriate measure of German liberalism's inadequacies is the experience of liberalism in Britain and the USA, which is thereby elevated to superior normative significance.

However, in the meantime there has been some willingness to admit that older notions of bourgeois self-abnegation--the oft-asserted" Defizit an Burgerlichkeit", which cleared a path for the Sonderweg--have been seriously misleading. They obscure the extent to which bourgeois values were in the ascendant after the 1860s--in taste, fashion, and the everyday transactions of polite society; in the ethos of local administration; in the prevailing conceptions of law, social order, and morality; in notions of private property and social obligation; and in the general conduct of public affairs. In effect, the key foundation of the old-established interpretation--the direct correlation between the failure of the liberals and the failure of the bourgeoisie, in which one determines the other--has been removed. Simultaneously, a key assumption about the social bases of liberalism's European success--its class properties as an expressive ideology of bourgeois self-emancipation--is necessarily brought into question.

This uncoupling of bourgeois societal hegemony from a necessary degree of constitutional liberalism is an important gain of recent discussion. Though this has scarcely yet begun, it makes possible a fresh look at the character of German liberalism as a distinct political tradition, unencumbered by the class-reductionist assumptions that have previously stereotyped its character. Moreover, in conducting such a review, it is also worth re-examining the second major pillar of existing interpretation, namely, the normative critique of German liberalism by the standards of liberalism in Britain and the USA. As suggested above,the German liberals' political achievements, consistency, and substantive commitments are conventionally measured against those of "western liberalism" over the longer run (that is, between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries), and are not surprisingly found wanting. Now,these matters are treated in detail in The Peculiarities of German History, and there is no need to traverse the same ground here. But this larger context of existing interpretations does deserve to be kept clearly in view, because it preempts an unprejudiced appraisal of German liberalism in its actual, as opposed to its imputed, characteristics and achievements. If instead we take a genuinely European view of liberalism's emergence and ascendancy as a political creed, focused in particular on the continental transformations of the 1860s, when German unification featured as one of the major progressive changes concerned, there is a greater chance of generating some new perspectives. For, arguably, the conventional bases of comparison tell us as little about the "actually existing" liberalism of Britain in the period between the 1860s and the First World War, as they do about the liberalism of Germany itself. And it is to the more sensible basis for such a German-British comparison that we must now turn.

German Liberalism's European Context

Continuing in the same line of thought, I want to argue that discussion of German liberalism has been too easily subsumed in a larger interpretation of German political culture, which tends to be seen as essentially authoritarian. The bankruptcy or "impotence" of liberal politics is thereby deduced from a kind of zero-sum procedure: the essential authoritarianism of the PrussozGerman Constitution endured between 1867 and 1914; therefore the liberals must have failed. There seems little room for nuanced or intermediate judgements between these extremes. Only the maximum programme of mid-twentieth century Anglo-American liberal democracy, it seems, would qualify the mid-nineteenth century German liberals for success (or approbation). And because a purer form of parliamentary democracy was patently not established before 1914, German historians have customarily disregarded the significance of liberal activity in other respects. This returns us to the idealized developmental model: because an external, ideal-typical standard of liberal fulfilment is preferred, it's been hard to admit that other, less perfect liberal achievements may have occurred. What I want to suggest instead, therefore, is that a more realistic appraisal of the actual context of European liberal politics in the second half of the nineteenth century will allow a different and more positive assessment of German liberalism to emerge. I want to do this via a series of brief points.

(1) The contemporary meanings of "liberalism" for an educated and propertied European observer of the 1860s are difficult to recover, given the disjunctions and transformations of the intervening hundred years. There can be little doubt that the main referent was British rather than French--the abstraction of clear liberal principles from the French experience was far more complicated by the variegated radicalism of the revolutionary republican tradition, which extended from classical liberalism to Jacobin and related forms of popular democracy. What was

taken from the French experience, of course, was a general notion of constitutionalism, but by the 1830s even this was being mediated by the British example of parliamentary reform and representative government. But the basic principle of constitutional government could be realized in all sorts of complicated ways, with stronger or weaker forms of executive responsibility to parliament, and a greater or lesser degree of popular access to the franchise, not to speak of the form of protection for civil liberties under the law. Otherwise, liberalism was defined as much by a type of social morality and philosophical outlook as by a political programme with a highly specific content. In this sense, liberalism involved a theory of the sovereign individual--a particular tradition of thinking about human nature as the constitutive basis for social relations and the moral life, with its dual foundations both in a specific philosophical tradition (the thought of Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, sometimes referred to as "the political theory of possessive individualism") and in the larger public discourse of rights and responsibilities (in the upheavals of sixteenth and seventeenth century England and Holland, eighteenth century Whiggery, the Scottish and French Enlightenments, the American and French Revolutions, and liberal political economy). As Arblaster says, "individualism" is liberalism's "metaphysical and ontological core".[13]

Classical liberalism reached a climax of intellectual sophistication in the thought of John Stuart Mill and his famous tract On Liberty (1859). The interesting thing about Mill is that he took this classical tradition furthest towards democracy--and then stopped. The philosophical basis for representative government in his thinking--therational ideal of humans realizing their potential through active citizenship, with the enhancement of liberty linked to the cultivation of reason, and the possibility of excellence linked to the maintenance of individuality and social difference--easily lent itself to democratic forms of political address, and Mill was unusually consistent in following this through, declaring his support for integrating the working class into the political system, strengthening popular participation indecision-making, and extending the franchise to all women as well as men.[14] But at the same time, he showed an elitist suspicion of the masses that was far from just residual. He advocated plural voting that gave extra weight to those with intelligence and talent, whose demographic distribution was deemed implicitly to follow class lines. Inpractice, the best and wisest came from property and privilege.[15] By comparison, the working class was a "mass of brutish ignorance", whose untrammelled instincts could be not trusted. Mill's statements are littered with references to "the common herd" or "the uncultuvated herd". As he said: "We dreaded the ignorance and especially the selfishness and brutality of the mass".[16]

It's vital to grasp this limited quality of the liberal concept of citizenship. Most nineteenth century liberals bitterly resisted democratic notions of political organization. Citizenship--meaning in the first instance the vote--was not a natural or universal right so much as a faculty to be learned and a privilege to be earned. It was heavily qualified by possession of property, education, and a less tangibl equality of moral standing--what Gladstone called "self-command, self-control, respect for order, patience under suffering, confidence in the law, and regard for superiors".[17] In fact, most liberals were a lot less restrained in their disparagement of the masses' civic capabilities than Mill, whose thinking about democracy stands out by comparison as an example of radical and courageous consistency. From Burke to de Tocqueville through to the ideologues and practitioners of liberalism in its 1860s heyday, a powerful motif has been the fear of the mass, reaching a crescendo in the 1848 Revolutions and the first general European upsurge of popular enfranchisement in 1867-71. In liberal discourse "the democracy" was virtually synonymous with tyranny and rule of the mob, and only with the turn of the century did liberals begin seriously rethinking their attitudes on this score. More recently, the older tradition persists in the widely diffused theories of totalitarianism. Thus in Bernard Crick's view, "The democratic doctrine of the sovereignty of the people _threatens_... the essential perception that all known advanced societies are inherently pluralistic and diverse, which is the seed and root of politics" (my emphasis). Democracy should not be "taken to an extreme". "Liberal democracy is limited democracy. Unlimited democracy is potentially, if not actually, totalitarian, and _threatens_ the liberal values and institutions of personal freedom, private property and the market economy" (my emphasis again).[18] As Guidode Ruggiero put it, in liberal democracy "the adjective Liberal has theforce of a qualification".[19]

This necessarily has a bearing on how we evaluate the particular limitations of German liberalism in the same period. The most "progressive" exponents of the most "advanced" liberalism in later-nineteenth century Europe--Mill and his co-thinkers in Britain--explicitly limited the polity against democratic participation. Moreover, the _actual_ extent of the franchise in Victorian and Edwardian Britain remained highly restricted: by contrast with the German

Constitutions of 1867 and 1871, the 1867 Reform Act conceded the vote to only a small section of the working class, while the Third Reform Act of 1884 fell far short of democratic manhood suffrage, leaving Britain the only representative system of government in Europe apart from Hungary without manhood suffrage by 1914.[20] Of course, some classical liberals were democrats, such as many in the radical wing of the Gladstonian party after 1867 (which amounted to roughly a third of the parliamentary party between 1868 and 1885), and other groups falling more ambiguously within the bounds of the latter, like the small group of English Positivists who acted as advisors and advocates of the British trade unions in the 1860s and 1870s. But such minorities of liberal democrats had the luxury of keeping the possibility of an independent labour movement politics at arm's length, given the restrictive nature of the franchise; it's unclear how they'd have reacted to the circumstances liberals had to deal with in Germany, where universal manhood suffrage opened the way for an independent socialist party at a very early stage. In other words, it was less some peculiar national failings of the German liberals that left them so cautious in their constitutional inclinations than the respective configurations of popular democratic politics German and British liberals had to face: for the latter the parliamentary constitution contained working-class political aspirations within the available liberal framework; for the former any further parliamentary reforms would only strengthen those aspirations' independent social democratic expression.[21]

(2) At the most general level, it's worth remembering that the 1860s provided a global moment of significant liberalization in Europe as a whole. Indeed, by contrast with the French Revolution, when

European liberalization was largely imposed by the expansion of French arms, and 1848, when the popular constitutionalist movements were largely suppressed, the 1860s amounted to one of the three great constitution-making watersheds of modern European history, together with the two political settlements after the world wars, during which the territorial and institutional landscape of the continent was radically redrawn. The most dramatic changes were the unifications of Germany and Italy under broadly liberal auspices, but to these we may also add: the Second Reform Act in Britain (1867); the collapse of the Second Empire and foundation of the Third Republic in France (1871); the Austro-Hungarian constitutional compromise in the Habsburg Empire (1867); the liberal revolution in Spain (1868z9); constitutional reforms in Greece and Serbia (1864, 1869); and the emancipation of the serfs in Russia (1861), which stimulated the first independent constitutionalist movement among sections of the gentry and the attendant concession of limited local government measures in the zemstvo reform of 1864. This catalogue may befurther extended by adding the transatlantic upheaval of the U.S. Civil War. Altogether, this amounted to an impressive victory for specifically liberal principles of political order, as we encounter them on a European scale in the middle third of the nineteenth century. Given the European-wide parameters of this process of reform, it's unclear why the British experience in particular should be singled out as the absolute standard for the authenticity of the rest.

(3) If liberal constitutional norms became generalized during the 1860s into the predominant--or "hegemonic" (after Gramsci)--mode of organization of European public life, it's also important to remember that the accepted territorial framework for the latter was the nation-

state. There's a tendency in the literature to present German liberalism as being somehow compromised by German nationalism, so that the acquiescence in Bismarck's resolution of the German question is taken to be the critical moment of liberal betrayal. Yet this is an extraordinarily "westocentric" way of judging German liberalism. By contrast with the "core" states of Western Europe, nationalities east ofthe Rhine lacked the advantages of an early-acquired statehood, so that demands for a liberal constitution became indissolubly linked to the prior achievement of national self-determination within the territorial framework of a viable nation-state, which by the mid-nineteenth century was generally regarded as a condition of "progress" in the liberal sense. Moreover, given the survival in Central Europe of pre-national state forms--petty monarchical and aristocratic jurisdictions of one kind or another--the real work of constituting the "nation" had to be conducted in opposition to the existing sovereign authorities by private rather than public bodies, and by civil initiative and voluntary association rather than by government--in brief, by the political action of the people organized as potential citizens. In other words, the process ofproposing the category of the German nation was identical with the growth of a public sphere, with the "nation" conceived simultaneously as a new political community of citizens. The fusion of these two terms--"nation"and "citizenry"--in liberal discourse was an inescapable reality of liberal politics east of the Rhine and south of the Alps in the middle third of the nineteenth century.

(4) From this aspect, the creation of a united Germany (whatever its particular agency) may be justly regarded as the highest achievement

of German liberalism in its classical phase, for all the parliamentary shortfall of the 1871 Constitution. This was so in three principal ways: first, the very creation of a centrally constituted national political arena on the ruins of the region's historic particularist jurisdictions was a decisive liberal advance; secondly, unification created the legaland institutional conditions for a Germanwide process of capitalist industrialization, involving the political consolidation of a national market and an impressive body of forward-looking economic legislation; and thirdly, unification also embodied the characteristically liberal vision of a new social order. Between 1867 and 1873, demands for a new national constitution and other national institutions, for national economic integration, and for the rule of law became the centrepiece of the new German state. Moreover, beneath this level of dramatic political innovation were deeper social processes of class formation, bringing self-conscious bourgeois notables to regional, municipal, and local predominance, and precipitating their claims to moral leadership in society. In this sense, unification brought the cultural ascendancy of a distinctive set of values, stressing merit, competition, secularism, law and order, hostility to hereditary privilege, ideas of personal dignity and independence, and generalized belief in the modern morality of progress.

This broader cultural front of activity was at least as important to liberals' sense of themselves as the formal political demand for an advanced constitution. They saw themselves as engaged in a struggle to unlock the potential for social progress--to free society's dynamism from the dead hand of archaic institutions, not the least of which in much of the continent (as liberals saw it) was the Catholic Church and its control of key institutions, from schooling to charities and the agencies of popular sociability. The attack on clericalism was a general European phenomenon in this respect, of which the *Kulturkampf* was the particular German form. Moreover, the attack on the Catholic religion *per se* was less important, one might even say, than a positive ideal of how the future German--or French, or Italian, or British (given the salience of Non-Conformity to Gladstonian liberalism)--society was to be shaped.[22]

(5) Mid-nineteenth century liberalisms displayed a common sociology. On the one hand, liberal coalitions always extended downwards from the industrial, commercial, and professional bourgeoisie into the petty bourgeoisie, peasantry, and nascent working class. On the other hand, they were never exclusively an urban formation, but always had strong links to the countryside, not just by appealing to the rural masses, but through close relations with the landed interest. At the same time, while this heterogeneity as such applied to most liberalisms to a greater or lesser degree, its specific manifestations appeared differently across different societies. Both the forms of dominant class integration (e.g. among urban and landowning fractions, through intermarriage, associational networks, commercial interpenetration, corporate political alliance, etc.) and the precise relationship to different kinds of popular constituency were a powerful source of variation in national liberalisms, and a major factor affecting their political cohesion. In this respect, there's an enormous amount of work still to be done on German liberalism between the 1840s and 1880s.

(6) The extent of the specifically democratic change the various national liberalism proved willing to sponsor depended very much on the character of the popular coalitions that had to be formed. Specifically democratic initiatives owed far less to the spontaneous inclinations of liberal leaderships themselves than to the pressures applied by independently constituted popular forces. Such pressures materialized in a variety of ways--in a dramatic revolutionary crisis (as in 1789 and after, in 1848, and so on), in the course of more protracted struggles (the various reform agitations in Britain), or by being articulated into the liberal coalitions themselves (as in the primary case of Gladstonian liberalism in the 1870s and 1880s). Here again, we're very ill-informed about the German case, although there is now a good monographic base for liberalism's popular constituencies in certain regions during the 1860s and 1870s, of which the south-west is the most important.[23]

(7) When liberalism came in for attack at the end of the century,its dominance was questioned not just in ideas, but because its earlier social bases were starting to decompose. Liberal parties' former strengths derived in large part from an ability to speak convincingly forbroadly based popular aspirations in the peasantry, petty bourgeoisie, and working class. To a great extent their decline resulted from the loss of that same moral-political leadership, once subordinate classes began demanding a more independent voice of their own. This raises the question of the distinctive forms of political life that had sustained the liberal parties' popular credibility--or, to put it another way, it brings us to the question of the liberal mode of politics, in terms both of its restrictive and exclusionary definition of the public sphere through the franchise and other means, and of the

more informal participatory structures through which popular politics was actually engaged. From this point of view, we know vastly more about the bases ofpopular liberalism in Britain as these took shape between the ebbing of Chartism in the 1840s and the emergence of the Gladstonian Liberal Party in the 1860s.[24]

If we put these seven points together--(1) the actual meanings of the liberal outlook in the mid-nineteenth century; (2) the European-wide ascendancy of constitutionalist principles of political order by the end of the 1860s; (3) the imbrication of those liberal constitutionalist principles with nationalist ideals of self-determination; (4) the specific liberal content of Germany's unification settlement; (5) the social heterogeneity and social cohesion of liberal coalitions, including the forms of integration between urban and landed elites and the patterns of popular incorporation; (6) the origins of a specifically democratic impulse; and (7) the forms of political life associated with liberal movements, hinging on the specific problem of voluntary association in civil society or the public sphere--putting these seven points together, it seems to me, we have an admirable framework for comparing different national liberalisms. At all events, this seems a better way to begin than by simply measuring the success and authenticity of the German case against an ideal-typical standard of maximal liberal democracy, which is also projected backwards from the mid-twentieth century, quite misleadingly, onto the mid-nineteenth century British case. To measure German liberalism in this way seems to me heavily teleological. Otherwise, it's not clear why British liberalism is being privileged analytically in that kind of way. Or, at least, that particular construction or representation of the British liberal experience has to be explicitly argued through, as opposed to being simply assumed.

Comparing Germany and Britain

If we're to compare German and British liberalism more sensibly, therefore, we have to change the terms on which the comparison is discussed--or rather, the terms on which the comparison is assumed, as there's actually surprisingly little explicit comparison in the literature.[25] This requires both dethroning British liberalism from its privileged place in perceptions of later-nineteenth century liberalism and according greater recognition to what German liberals positively achieved. It means both relativising the British, and normalizing or de-pathologizing the German case. I want to illustrate this by a few remarks about the 1860s, followed by a few on the New Liberalism between the 1890s and 1914.

(1) When dealing with the 1860s, it's easy to overlook the crucial fact that it's only in the 1860s that the British Liberal Party is actually formed. When the so-called capitulation of the German liberals is bemoaned, their failure is implicitly measured against an ideal of successfully realized liberalism that's thought already to be in existence in Britain. Now, it's true that between the Whig revival of the late-1820s and the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 certain recognizably liberal ideals came to dominate the practice of government in Britain, to do with the political economy of free trade, a definite conception of the state-society relationship, and a social morality of propertied individualism. But it's also possible to make similar claims of Germany after 1850, where, despite the failure of the 1848

Revolution, governments proceeded to adopt economic and social policies that were by and large liberal.[26] Obviously, the power of the aristocratic landed interest in Germany didn't disappear overnight, but the post-Peelian Conservative Party was also a powerful repository of traditional aristocratic interests in that way; and the tendency of recent British scholarship has been to stress the resilience of the landowning aristocracy more generally in British society and government during the nineteenth century. The point is that both societies were in flux, gripped by fundamental process of social transformation, with far-reaching debates about the distribution of power and social value that were extremely divisive: the difference was in the chronology, pace, and intensity of economic development, but also in the forms of political articulation and the nature of the balance struck between the forces of inertia and the "party of movement". Likewise, while we can also point quite properly to the conservative nature of the 1850 Prussian Constitution, the British reformed electoral system of 1832 was hardly a glowing example of functioning parliamentary democratic representation. What I'm saying is that in neither case, the British or the German, was the ascendancy of liberal ideology accompanied by any significant liberalization of the political system before the 1860s.

More specifically, what both Germany and Britain lacked till the 1860s was an independently constituted and politically coherent liberal party. In both cases this absence was then made good by an impressive upsurge of liberal organization, which was also accompanied--in both cases--by a broader-based mobilization of popular aspirations for political reform, partly directed through the emergent liberal parties, partly autonomously organized on a radical-democratic footing. The literature on Germany in the 1860s is now extensive, that on Britain rather less so, although we do have two great classics of the 1960s, namely, Royden Harrison's Before the Socialists (London, 1965), and John Vincent's Formation of the Liberal Party (London, 1966). As Vincent showed, it was only in the 1860s that the loosely connected parliamentary groupings of liberals became freshly constituted as the national representation of a flourishing substructure of locally grounded political cultures, that is, the familiar Gladstonian Liberal Party. Moreover, there were really two distinct processes at work: not only "the slow adaptations of the parliamentary party", but more importantly "the adoption of that parliamentary party by a rank and file" in the country.[27] Vincent sees this latter process as a conjunction of three new extra-parliamentary forces--"the new cheap Press, militant Dissent in its various forms, and organized labour"--whose emergence was then "ratified" by Gladstone's "placing himself in a relation to popular feeling quite new in a minister".[28] And the practical and institutional intersection of these three forces occurred in local structures of associational activity, taking philanthropic, charitable, educational, recreational, high-mindedly cultural, social-political, and moral-crusading forms, which allowed the energies of notables and people to be joined in a common enterprise of moral-political improvement.[29]

Now, if this is so--if, that is, the 1860s were the crucial founding period for both German and British liberalisms as independently constituted party-political phenomena, and if consequently we're dealing with novel attempts at synthesis in both countries--if this is so, then the case for a conjunctural and synchronic comparison becomes very compelling. In fact, I would argue that both sociologically and ideologically the similarities of British and German liberalism in the 1860s are very great. On the critical questions of popular politics there's the same qualified openness to certain kinds of trade union reform, the same willingness to sponsor forms of popular improvement, and there's the same associational nexus of locally grounded popular participatory forms. In the German case it's usually said that in the later-1860s this popular basis of liberal politics was decisively lost via the fundamental rupture between party-political liberalism and the labour movement, what Gustav Mayer called the "separation of the proletarian from the bourgeois democracy", in his famous phrase.[30] Moreover, this rupture is usually attributed to certain ideological shortcomings of the German liberals--their insensitivity to the specific concerns of politically conscious working men--so that the latter becomes simply the sociological or class dimension of German liberalism's essentially flawed character and the general liberal betrayal. But despite the precocious formation of a separate socialist labour movement by comparison with Britain, it seems to me, we shouldn't exaggerate the strengths of either the two wings of the German socialist movement, the Lassallean or the Eisenacher, for it wasn't until the final years of the Anti-Socialist Law in the later-1880s that the SPD promised to become a genuinely mass movement on a genuinely national scale. In the meantime, one might argue, German liberals managed to maintain their links to popular constituencies in town and country rather more successfully than existing accounts tend to give them credit.

In saying this, I'm not trying to suggest that there were no real differences between British and German liberalisms in the 1860s. Gladstonian liberalism was clearly far *more* of a popular formation and was far more successful at containing the labour movement within its own structures. Conversely, an independent space for socialist politics *was* created in Germany as a result of the 1860s. Various explanations might be cited in this respect, including the relatively more favourable circumstances of those skilled craftsmen who formed the bulk of the trade-unionized workers who were integrated into the Gladstonian coalition, or the constitutive importance of the Nonconformist tradition for popular liberalism in Britain, for which there is no real German equivalent.[31] My own preference is for an argument recently advanced by Breuilly, stressing the differences in the overall political context in Britain and Germany at the end of the 1860s. Whereas in *Britain* the novel liberal synthesis was forged in a state structure that was constitutionally modified in 1867 but was territorially fundamentally unchanged, in *Germany* it proceeded in a territorial-constitutional context that was being totally transformed. As Breuilly says, it was the fact that the first stage of Germany's unification occurred through a North German Confederation dominated by a narrowly restricted Prussian polity that not only drove a wedge between the "proletarian" and the "bourgeois" democracy (to use Mayer's terms), but which also divided North German from South German liberals. This not only reduced the incentive for North German liberals to pursue a more generous social definition of the constitutional nation, but even rendered the latter nugatory; in Britain, by contrast, the logic of the 1867 settlement pushed Gladstonian Liberals further into forms of popular accommodation.[32]

After 1867-71, in fact, the countervailing political logics of the respective national situations continued to differentiate the two liberalisms' political effectiveness. Thus, in Germany (no less than everywhere else in Europe apart from Britain) liberals faced a set of objective circumstances which structurally undermined their claim to a classless and universalist representation of society's general interest. For one thing, Germany was confessionally divided, and the aggressive anti-Catholic confrontationism of the _Kulturkampf_--which (again, no less than in Italy and France) was an essential rather than an optional or contingent aspect of the liberal outlook--ensured that a majority of German Catholics were practically ruled out as a potential liberal constituency. Moreover, under the duress of the depression of 1873-96,the structural indebtedness of small-scale agriculture in many of the old liberal heartlands, the transformation of the world market in agricultural produce, and the accelerating transition into a mainly urban and industrial form of society, it became harder and harder to hold small farmers, handicraftsmen, and other categories of traditional property-owners and tradesmen to a liberal political allegiance: stressing the virtues of economic progress, liberalism inevitably possessed adiminishing appeal for the latter's perceived casualties. To a great extent, of course, these two problems also coincided, because some of the most recalcitrant bastions of popular Catholicism (the regions of Trier, Catholic Baden, southern Wurttemberg, and large parts of Bavaria) were simultaneously the backward agrarian periphery of the Empire. When the crisis of liberalism's popular support arrived in the

1890s, it was a variegated phenomenon of independent agrarian and Mittelstand mobilization that did the most damage.

In Britain, by contrast, neither the Gladstonian nor the post-Gladstonian Liberal Party had to deal with those problems, for the simple reason that the peasantry and traditional petty bourgeoisie were an insignificant part of the English social structure, while Catholicism was a much smaller minority creed than in Germany. To the contrary, in a mirror image of German liberalism's metropolitan prejudices, Gladstonian liberalism made itself precisely the mouthpiece of these disadvantaged groups: not only the Nonconformist masses of the industrial North, but also the Irish and the surviving peasantries of the "Celtic fringe". Moreover, the key to this popular allegiance, and the constitutional foundation of the Gladstonian Liberal Party's exceptionally resilient popular coalition in European terms, was not British liberalism's democratic modernity by comparison with the Germans, but in a sense its very backwardness. Paradoxically, it was the absence of universal suffrage in Britain until after the First World War that permitted the Liberal Party's greater popularity and political stayingp-power before 1914. For, while the franchise was held to the quite restrictive levels of the Second and Third Reform Acts, the kind of independent breakout of popular constituencies that proved so damaging to the German liberals in the 1890s were simply not feasible in Britain. This was most dramatically illustrated by the respective progress of the two countries' labour movements. In Germany, universal suffrage was the sine qua non ofthe SPD's independent advancement. But in Britain, the practical disfranchisement of around half the male working class after 1884 remained a decisive impediment against launching an independent party of labour. This, and all the weight of existing tradition, remained a powerful argument for keeping labour's liberal alliance, until wartime conditions and the further Reform Act of 1918 laid the basis for the Labour Party's complete independence. The British labour movement was totally exceptional in European terms in this respect.

But whatever specific explanatory strategies one prefers, the main point is that a conjunctural comparison is the appropriate framework for judging German liberalism in the 1860s rather than one that presumes theessential superiority of the British case from the beginning. In both cases the 1860s saw an impressive effort at liberal synthesis, in innovative party-political frameworks, on an expanded popular basis, and with a commitment to far-reaching constitutional change. The divergent forms of liberal politics thereafter arguably had more to do with the radically different overall political contexts than with the inherent qualities of the respective liberal movements themselves. What this argument does, I think (just to re-connect it with the argument in _The Peculiarities of German History_), is to re-emphasize the importance of Bismarck's revolution from above in radically restructuring the necessary and possible agendas for future liberal politics in Germany--_not_ in ways that necessarily rendered the latter less "authentic", but which certainly determined a particular _national_ coloration, which had more in common with liberalism in Italy, the Balkans, and the rest of Central Europe than in Britain and, say, Scandinavia.

(2) Once we turn to German liberalism in the 1890s, we're dealing with a situation in which the majority tendency, the National Liberals, were experiencing serious difficulties, which by 1900 had resulted in a

permanent reduction of that party's parliamentary base, with a loss of some forty Reichstag seats to the liberal strength overall. These difficulties were partly precipitated by a crisis of popular support, as the liberals' historic post-1860s constituency began to defect, *either* to the SPD on the left, morn to new agrarian movements on the right. Simultaneously, Germany's transition to a predominantly urban-industrial capitalist economy imposed itself more powerfully onto public consciousness, and with the end of the Depression in the mid-1890s German capitalism began to face a new expansionist challenge in the world market. In other words, liberals not only had to re-design their practice for the dictates of the new mass politics; the changing socio-economic environment also compelled the reorientation of liberal ideology.

German liberalism was partially reinvigorated before 1914 by a dynamic synthesis of imperialism and social reform, hinged on a new ideology of state intervention, social welfare, and national solidarity. In the course of their rethinking, liberals revisited some shibboleths of existing liberal thought--concerning the nature of the state and its field of relations with the individual, the economy, and civil society--and registered a sharp break with the classical liberal tradition. A principal incubator of these new ideas was the *National-Sozialer Verein*, which (despite its small size) richly fertilized the ideological landscape of German politics during its brief existence (1896-1903). In the 1890s and at the turn of the century such departures were mainly confined to left liberal discourse. But by the time of the *Bulow Block* in 1907-9 such ideas had also won considerable resonance in the National Liberal Party too, particularly through the Young Liberal movement. I would also say that the diffusion of such perspectives in the National Liberal Party was also facilitated by a re-stabilizing of the National Liberals' parliamentary influence in the later-1890s, which in conjunction with the emergence of the Centrum under Ernst Lieber from its previous confessional ghetto promised to restore the party to something resembling its former centrality to the governing system. This somewhat heterodox viewpoint is hard to justify in the context of a short paper. But basically I would say that between the mid-1890s and 1902 a series of successful and moderately liberal parliamentary fronts took shape, organized around a National Liberal/Centre Party axis, and enabling a relatively stable parliamentary culture to emerge. I'm thinking of the passage of the Code of Civil Law (1896), the naval legislation (1898, 1900), the consistent blockage of government attempts to pass new anti-labour legislation (1895, 1897, 1899), and the tariff legislation (1902). Clearly, much else needs to be said in elaboration of this argument. Here I will simply say that the relative stabilization of political life within given parliamentary and electoral forms, lasting roughly from 1897 to 1911-12, created enough space for certain sections of the National Liberals--basically a younger generation led by Stresemann--to respond creatively to the new thinking coming from the left liberals. This facilitated a gradual convergence which by the eve of 1914 was delivering the materials for a potential liberal regroupment.

Now, with respect to the British comparison in this later period, I have two points to make--one concerning a similarity, the other concerning a difference. First, the post-1890s ideological innovations--the state interventionist synthesis of imperialism and social reform--

are remarkably like the departures occurring in Britain during the same period, which are usually taken to characterize the New Liberalism. Allowing for certain major differences of context--most importantly to do with position in the world market, and the presence/absence of an independent socialist party--the British New Liberalism was a response to economic, social, and political problems that, *mutatis mutandis*, also existed in Germany and elicited a very similar response. Furthermore, much of the impetus for the British New Liberalism came from an intense intellectual engagement with specific features of the German social and political system. The British ideology of "national efficiency" was predicated to a great extent on the German example. As Karl Rohe has said, if we view Imperial Germany "as many interested Britons saw it, there is much to be said for the case that behind an historically outmoded constitutional facade were concealed politico-cultural and in part politico-institutional realities which in their content and formal aspect must be described as typically modern".[33] And, of course, if the British New Liberal intellientsia could view the *Kaiserreich* as a model for "modernization" in this way, there may be grounds for reappraising both the usual view of German liberal "failure" and the much-vaunted "backwardness" of the Imperial-German political system.

If that's the similarity with British New Liberalism in the same period, the *difference* concerns the relative success in composing a popular political coalition under the New Liberal *aegis*. Controversy over the long-term viability of the British Liberal Party by 1914 has not exactly been resolved in recent years, and the Liberal resurgence of 1906 may have rested on very volatile and precarious bases. But there was nonetheless an extremely interesting juncture of "Progressivist" ideology in the decade before 1914 that retained profound implications for the Labour Party traditions of the interwar years.[34] In Germany the new liberalism's outreach to the working class was far less successful, partly because the political space was already aggressively occupied by the SPD, partly because the liberal appeal was always positively directed much more towards the peasantry, the *Mittelstand*, and the white-collar petty bourgeoisie. The new reform liberalism was far better at devising potential legislative packages for the so-called "new *Mittelstand*" than for the working class, and consequently proved an unstable basis for effecting a lasting juncture with moderate elements in the labour movement. In the parliamentary arena it proved feasible to imagine new levels of cooperation with the SPD, particularly for certain kinds of "modernizing" constitutional, administrative, fiscal, and economic reform, especially during the war, and it was that surely that laid the basis for the original Weimar coalition after 1918. But the peasant and white-collar constituencies of the left liberals proved extremely difficult to hold by the reform banner, and (as we know) it was partly the defection of such elements in the laterz1920s that fed the growth of the NSDAP. The problem of how such strata could be won lastingly for a liberal-cum-democratic politics is one of the most important, but least-investigated and least-understood questions of pre-1914 German history, comprising the single most important area of difference from the kind of problems faced by the New Liberalism in Britain.

Conclusion

Heuristically speaking, this essay has pursued the autonomy of politics quite far. If we are to take German liberalism seriously, it has argued,the liberal politics of the unification decades should not only be freed from the grid-like and anachronistic comparison with a model of British liberal democracy which is itself historically misconceived; it should also be uncoupled from the determinist and class-reductionist assumption that the fate of liberalism was causally dependent on the "strength" or "weakness" of the bourgeoisie--not because there was *no* empirical relationship between bourgeois interests and aspirations and the character of German liberalism, but because a (mistaken) analysis of the one has been allowed too often to substitute for a proper analysis of the other. Consequently, German liberalism should be evaluated more sensitively in *its own terms*, by recognizing its national authenticity and restoring the actual, as opposed to the imputed, parameters of its activity. It should be emphasized that this does not require a turning away from theory, or a historicist denial of comparative understanding. On the contrary, it means searching for the *right* comparative context in which to mount such an analysis. The Gladstonian Liberal Party was not the only liberalism in Europe in the 1860s: as I argued, it was only then being shaped, and there were many other national liberalisms to be found. In other words, the appropriate context for comparing the German liberals is not just the bilateral juxtaposition across the North Sea, because that limited framework necessarily skews the terms of the discussion, privileging certain questions and judgements which have more to do with ideal-typical (and ideological) representations of the two national histories over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries than with the actual context of the time. Instead, the comparative context should be *European* liberalism in the fullest sense: the European-wide conjuncture of constitutional revision, nation-forming, and state-making in the 1860s, powerfully over-determined by the global process of capitalist boom, spatial expansion, and social penetration, articulated through the pattern of uneven and combined development. In that sense, the *more* appropriate and illuminating comparison for Germany would be Italy.

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2. Heinrich August Winkler, "Burgerliche Emanzipation und nationale Einigung: Zur Entstehung des Nationalliberalismus in Preussen", in Winkler, *Liberalismus und Antiliberalismus. Studien zur politischen Sozialgeschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Gottingen, 1979), p. 35.

3. Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire 1871-1918* (Leamington Spa,1985), p. 21.

4. Theodor Schieder, *Staat und Gesellschaft im Wandel unserer Zeit* (Munich, 1958); Thomas Nipperdey, *Die Organisation der deutschen Parteien vor 1918* (Dusseldorf, 1961); Lothar Gall, *Der Liberalismus als regierende Partei. Das Grossherzogtum Baden zwischen Restauration und Reichsgrundung* (Wiesbaden, 1968), and "Liberalismus und burgerliche Gesellschaft. Zu Charakter und Entwicklung der burgerlichen Bewegung in Deutschland", in *Historische Zeitschrift*, 220 (1975), pp. 324-56; Hans Rosenberg, *Grosse Depression und Bismarckzeit* (Berlin, 1967); Dirk Stegmann, *Die Erben Bismarcks* (Cologne, 1970); Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Max Weber und die deutschePolitik 1890-1920* (Tubingen, 1959).

5. One exception to this has been the work of Rauh, but the form and tone of his contribution have not been especially constructive, while the simple "parliamentarization" thesis remains unpersuasive. See Manfred Rauh, *Foderalismus und Parlamentarismus im wilhelminischen Reich* (Dusseldorf, 1972), and *Die Parlamentarisierung des Deutschen Reiches* (Dusseldorf, 1977). For a more interesting contribution, see the late Stanley Suval's *Electoral Politics in Wilhelmine Germany* (Chapel Hill, 1985); and for a general discussion, David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History. Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1984).

6. Wehler, *German Empire*, p. 31.

7. Ibid.; Winkler, "Zum Dilemma des deutschen Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert", in *Liberalismus und Antiliberalismus*, p. 20.

8. Gerhard A. Ritter (ed.), *Historisches Lesebuch 1871-1914* (Frankfurt, 1967), "Einleitung", p. 12.

9. Dirk Stegmann, "Zwischen Repression und Manipulation: Konservative Machteliten und Arbeiter- und Angestelltenbewegung 1910-1918", in *Archiv fur Sozialgeschichte*, XII (1972), p. 351. The second phrase comes from Werner Sombart, *Die deutsche Volkswirtschaft im 19.Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1909), p. 508.

10. Winkler, "Liberalismus: Zur historischen Bedeutung eines politischen Begriffs", in *Liberalismus und Antiliberalismus*, p. 15. When these points were made at greater length by Blackbourn and myself in the

German edition of Peculiarities, it was protested by Winkler and others that no such simple identity of "bourgeoisie" and "liberalism" had ever been assumed in their writings, although statements such as the one quoted are surely clear enough. Moreover, in the meantime, Jurgen Kocka and others have begun the overdue process of arguing through the conceptual difficulties of terms like bourgeoisie/Burgertum/middle class, with their frustrating variations of meaning across different linguistic cultures, and simultaneous connotations of social class,citizenship, and culture or way of life. However, as the various quotations I have used should suggest, such complexities have rarely been registered in the particular literature on German liberalism in the middle-to-later nineteenth century, where historians like Winkler and Wehler write about liberalism and the bourgeoisie as though they were coterminous. At the very least, there has been a conceptual fuzziness at work, to which Blackbourn's and my work was meant to draw attention, and which Kocka's recent work has begun to sort out. For the latter (which, so far as I can see, seems to have conceded much of the argument in Peculiarities), see especially the following: Jurgen Kocka, "Burgertum und Burgerlichkeit als Probleme der neueren Geschichte", SFB-Arbeitspapier Nr. 1 (August 1986),Universitat Bielefeld; and "Burger und Arbeiter. Brennpunkte und Ergebnisse der Diskussion", in Kocka (ed.), Arbeiter und Burger im 19. Jahrhundert (Munich, 1986), esp. pp. 335-9.

11. See, e.g., Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Krisenherde des Kaiserreichs (Gottingen, 1970), p. 131. For the locus classicus of such an ideal-typification of the German experience in comparative social science, of course, see Barrington Moor Jr., Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy (Harmondsworth, 1966). W

12. Blackbourn and Eley, Peculiarities, p. 164.

13. Anthony Arblaster, The Rise and Decline of Western Liberalism (London, 1984), p. 15. See also C.B. Macpherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism (Oxford, 1962); and for a recent general discussion, Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill, Bryan S. Turner, Sovereign Individuals of Capitalism (London, 1986).

14. The role of government in this view was to protect the bases of individual liberty and to maintain the public sphere as a political arena for the pursuit of individual interests. See Mill's classic statement of the liberal principles of government as he saw them, in On Liberty, ed. by Gertrude Himmelfarb (Harmondsworth, 1974), esp.p. 68f.: " .... the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others .... Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign". Here, it goes without saying, the sovereign individual is still gendered.

15. This was linked to the idea that legislation should originate in the projects and counsels of experts and the talented few, which would then go for approval to Parliament, rather than issuing directly from the elected assembly itself. Government by democracy, untempered by the directive initiative of intellectuals, was a recipe (in Mill's view) for mediocrity. The role of the democratically elected assembly was "not to

make the laws, but to see that they are made by the right persons, and to be the organ of the nation for giving or withholding its ratification of them". For Mill "rational democracy" was "not that the people themselves govern, but that they have security for good government .... thebest government (need it be said?) must be the government of the wisest, and these must always be a few. The people ought to be the masters, but they are masters who must employ servants more skilful than themselves ....". See J.H. Burns, "J.S. Mill and democracy, 1829-61", in J.B. Schneewind (ed.), Mill (London, 1969), p. 315; Geraint L. Williams (ed.), John Stuart Mill on Politics and Society (London, 1976), p. 182.

16. Quoted from Arblaster, Rise and Decline, pp. 280, 279.

17. Ibid., p. 273.

18. Bernard Crick, In Defence of Politics (Harmondsworth, 1964), p. 62; Arblaster, Rise and Decline, p. 78. See also C.B. Macpherson, The Real World of Democracy (Oxford, 1966), esp. pp. 1-11. For the prototype of contemporary (i.e. postwar) liberal critiques of democracy "taken to the extreme", see J.L. Talmon, The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy (London, 1970).

19. Guido de Ruggiero, The History of European Liberalism (Boston,1959), p. 379.

20. The most authoritative estimate (Blewett) puts the enfranchised population at around 59% of adult males in 1911. Moreover, Matthew, McKibbon, and Kay have shown that the franchise was disproportionately low in the boroughs as against the counties, sinking to lower than 57% in 32.6% of all borough seats (70 in all,of which 34 were in London, including figures as low as 20.6% in Whitechapel and 35.7% in Tower Hamlets). See Neal Blewett, "The franchise in the United Kingdom, 1885-1918", in Past and Present, 32 (Dec. 1965), pp. 27-56; H.C.G. Matthew, R.I. McKibbon, J.A. Kay,"The franchise factor in the rise of the Labour Party", in English Historical Review, XCI (1976), pp. 723z52.

21. Ibid., p. 737: " .... the growth of the Labour Party before 1914 was limited not by 'natural' social and political restrictions, but by an artificial one: a franchise and registration system that excluded the greater part of its likely support".

22. By far the most illuminating recent discussion of German liberalism from this cultural point of view, to my mind, is the collection of papers edited by Gert Zang on the Konstanz region, Provinzialisierung einer Region (Frankfurt, 1978). An excellent study from another perspective is Jonathan Sperber, Popular Catholicism in Nineteenth-Century Germany (Princeton, 1984). Also stimulating, though ultimately perverse (arguing that political Catholicism was the real liberalism of late-nineteenth century Germany), is the work of Margaret L. Anderson. See her Windthorst: A Political Biography (Oxford, 1981), and "The Kulturkampf and the course of German history", in Central European History, XIX, 1 (1986), pp. 82-115.

23. E.G. Zang (ed.), Provinzialisierung; Dieter Langewiesche, Liberalismus und Demokratie in Wurttemberg zwischen Revolution und Reichsgrundung (Dusseldorf, 1974); Wolfgang Schmierer, Von der Arbeiterbildung zur Arbeiterpolitik. Die Anfange der Arbeiterbewegung in Wurttemberg 1862/63-1878 (Hanover, 1970); David Blackbourn, Class, Religion and Local Politics in Wilhelmine Germany. The Centre Party in Wurttemberg before 1914 (New Haven and London, 1980).

24. For a brilliant exploration of this question in the maturity of Gladstonian Liberalism, see Stephen Yeo, Religion and Voluntary Organizations in Crisis (London, 1976). There are a number of fruitful theoretical starting-points for approaching the German experience in this way, including Schieder's Staat und Gesellschaft, Habermas's conception of the public sphere, and Gramsci's reflections on the Risorgimento, on the role of intellectuals in social movements, and on the concepts of hegemony and civil society. See Jurgen Habermas, Strukturwandel der Offentlichkeit (Neuwied, 1962); and Antonio Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks (London, 1971).

25. See the following exceptions: John Breuilly, "Liberalismus oder Sozialdemokratie? Ein Vergleich der britischen und deutschen politischen Arbeiterbewegung zwischen 1850 und 1875", in Jurgen Kocka (ed.), Europaische Arbeiterbewegungen im 19. Jahrhundert (Gottingen, 1983), pp. 129-66; Karl Rohe, "The British imperialist intelligentsia and the Kaiserreich", in Paul Kennedy and A.J.Nicholls (eds.), Nationalist and Racialist Movements in Britain and Germany before 1914 (London, 1981), pp. 130-42; Paul Kennedy, TheRise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914 (London, 1980); Wolfgang J. Mommsen, Britain and Germany 1800 to 1914. Two Developmental Paths Towards Industrial Society (London, 1986). The German Historical Institute under Wolfgang Mommsen played a vital role in stimulating the beginnings of serious British-German comparison, partly via the framework of its conferences, partly viaits sponsored research. E.g. a number of the monographs produced by fellows of the GHI have been implicitly comparative, including Peter Alter, Wissenschaft, Staat, Mazene. Anfange moderner Wissenschaftspolitik in Grossbritannien 1850-1920 (Stuttgart, 1982); Wolfgang Mock, Imperiale Herrschaft und nationale Interesse. 'Constructive Imperialism' oder Freihandel in Grossbritannien vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg (Stuttgart, 1982); Ulrich Wengenroth, Unternehmensstrategien und technischer Fortschritt. Die deutscheund britische Stahlindustrie 1865-1895 (Gottingen and Zurich, 1986).

26. This point is made especially forcefully and compellingly by EricHobsbawm in The Age of Capital 1848-1875 (London, 1975).

27. Vincent, Formation (Penguin ed., Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 19.

28. Ibid., p. 289.

29. Aside from Vincent's general and pioneering account, see the collection edited by Patricia Hollis, Pressure from Without (London,1974), which provides a good introduction to the associational world of British liberalism in the mid-nineteenth century, and Eileen and Stephen Yeo (eds.), Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590-1914

(Brighton, 1981), which opens a window on its relationship to popular culture. See also the essays on "Animals and the state","Religion and recreation", "Traditions of respectability", and "Philanthropy and the Victorians", in Brian Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom. Stability and Change in Modern Britain* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 82-259, which (despite the book's overall complacency) remain fundamental to this subject. Monographs on particular associations and places may be cited indefinitely: Stephen Yeo's *Religion and Voluntary Associations in Crisis* (on Reading) is the most unruly, but also the most interesting. And for an excellent view of the whole Gladstonian show in motion, see Paul McHugh, *Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform* (London, 1980).

30. Gustav Mayer, "Die Trennung der proletarischen von der burgerlichen Demokratie in Deutschland, 1863-1870", in *Radikalismus, Sozialismusund burgerliche Demokratie*, ed. by Hans-Ulrich Wehler (Frankfurt,1969, orig. pub. 1912), pp. 108-78.

31. In a real sense the functional equivalent in Germany of populist religion in Britain (i.e. Nonconformity) is political Catholicism. See esp. Blackbourn, *Class, Religion and Local Politics*, and Anderson, "The *Kulturkampf*". For the argument concerning artisans/craftsmen, see John Breuilly's various essays: "Arbeiteraristokratie in Grossbritannien und Deutschland", in Ulrich Engelhardt (ed.), *Handwerker in der Industrialisierung* (Stuttgart,1984), pp. 497-527; "Artisan economy, artisan politics, artisanideology: the artisan contribution to the nineteenth century European labour movement", in Clive Emsley and James Walvin (eds.), *Artisans, Peasants and Proletarians, 1760-1860* (London, 1985), pp. 187-225; and "Liberalismus oder Sozialdemokratie?". There is a helpful summary in Mommsen, *Britain and Germany 1800 to 1914*, pp. 14ff. As always on such matters, the discussion is heavily indebted to the essays of Eric Hobsbawm. See most recently, *Worlds of Labour. Further Studies in the History of Labour* (London, 1984).

32. See Breuilly, "Liberalismus oder Sozialdemokratie?".

33. Rohe, "British imperialist intelligentsia", p. 141.

34. The main protagonists in this British discussion have been Peter F.Clarke and Kenneth O. Morgan. For the former, see his original *Lancashire and the New Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1971), and the more general "The Progressive movement in England", in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 24 (1974), pp. 159z81, together with the more recent *Liberals and Social Democrats* (Cambridge, 1978). Morgan's ideas are best approached through his many reviews in the *Times Literary Supplement* over the last fifteen years, esp. "The Liberal regeneration", in *TLS*, 22 August 1975, and subsequent correspondence. For a useful introduction to the terms of the controversy, see Alun Howkins, "Edwardian Liberalism and industrial unrest", in *History Workshop Journal*, 4 (1977), pp. 143-62.

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