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German modernity, barbarous Slavs and profit-seeking Jews: the cultural racism of nationalist liberals

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ABSTRACT. This paper examines emblematic texts by two important protagonists of post-1848 liberalism in Germany, Gustav Freytag and Heinrich von Treitschke, focusing on their treatment of Jews and Poles. The paper analyses the social content of their statements and argues that the elements of anti-Semitism and anti-Slav racism that they contain were motivated by the specific kind of nationalist liberalism that frames their affirmation of the process of modernisation. This affirmation was directed against the Poles on the one hand, seen as backward Easterners who had to be pushed into civilisation by Prussian–German colonialism, and, on the other hand, the Jews, largely perceived as representing the wrong kind of modernity against which benign (supposedly German) modernity had to be protected. At the same time, the image of the Jew in Freytag and Treitschke also participates in that of the backward Easterner, permitting to see undesirable, allegedly Jewish aspects of modernity also as distortions resulting from an alien and ancient culture. This analysis has consequences for theorisations of both liberalism and nationalism: it suggests that the racism and anti-Semitism of nationalist liberals were intrinsically related to core aspects of the liberal world-view rather than being merely contingent opinions held by particular individuals. It also indicates that the nationalism of many German post-1848 liberals was ethnic as well as liberal. In this way, the paper contributes to the growing body of literature discussing the illiberal aspects of liberalism as well as the shortcomings of the long-established conceptual dichotomy of ethnic vs. liberal nationalism.

KEYWORDS: liberalism, antisemitism, racism, liberal nationalism, colonialism

If liberals became illiberal, the seeds of their illiberal behaviour could be found in liberalism itself. (Judson 2001: 67)

The focus of this paper, liberal racism and liberal anti-Semitism, might appear as a contradiction in terms. By investigating the writings of two important figures of post-1848 liberalism in Germany, Gustav Freytag (1816–95) and Heinrich von Treitschke (1834–96), we hope to illuminate a seemingly paradoxical aspect of German nineteenth-century liberalism and show that what appears to be contradictory is in fact intrinsically related. Freytag and Treitschke were well-known writers, political journalists and editors of leading

liberal journals (*Grenzboten* and *Preussische Jahrbücher*).¹ Freytag's novel *Soll und Haben* [*Debit and Credit*] (1855) was the most widely read German novel of the second half of the nineteenth century, and Treitschke's five-volume *German History in the Nineteenth Century* (published between 1879 and 1894) was another must-have for the respectable middle-class household of the time.

In their writings, one comes across statements that appear, at first glance, contradictory. Treitschke, for example, writes that 'the Semites [. . .] share heavily in the guilt for the contemptible materialism of our age which regards every kind of work only as business' (Treitschke 1896a: 24f; 2008: 313). Yet he also states that '[t]oday [. . .] civil equality of the Jews has long been achieved in all civilized states' and that 'in all of Germany' not one 'sensible politician [. . .] would want to overthrow this accomplished deed' (Treitschke 1896b: 38; quoted in Stoetzler 2008b: 146). Or, in the case of Freytag, the description of immigrant Jews as representing a 'sick and weak part of the population' that the state has to prevent from 'infecting the healthy ones' coexists with the statement that complete emancipation of the Jews is the ultimate goal (Freytag 1849: 148).

Our aim is to elucidate these apparent contradictions through a close reading of key texts, tracing some of the ways in which elements of anti-Jewish and anti-Slavic racism relate to and are grounded in the wider thinking of these two important figures of German National Liberalism. Our argument is that their anti-Jewish and anti-Slavic racism were related to the discourse on capitalist modernisation and state building that is at the core of post-1848 liberalism itself. We refer to their attitudes as 'cultural racism' as they do not explicitly employ the concept of 'race' in terms of biological racial essences. This makes their example instructive for the study of important strands of contemporary, twenty-first-century racism.² Moreover, neither Freytag nor Treitschke would have perceived their own attitudes and perspectives as anti-Semitic (and neither did many of their peers).³ Yet, that both positions were held by the same individuals was not a matter of personal idiosyncrasy; as we will attempt to illustrate, their juxtaposition points to a systematic fault line within liberalism itself.

Recent scholarship has increasingly turned to such fault lines. 'Liberalism itself was part of the problem', Dagmar Herzog (1996: 82) concludes in an important contribution to the recent literature reconsidering the role of liberalism for Jewish emancipation in nineteenth-century Germany. Reinhard Rürup had argued already in the 1970s that the emancipation policy of German Liberals 'was extremely hesitant and contradictory and often enough blatantly at variance with the established principles of liberal theory' (Rürup 1975: 59). In her analysis of the emancipation debate in Baden, Herzog likewise found not only that many liberals opposed emancipation, but that even '[t]he very terms in which liberals advocated emancipation contributed to the persistence of anti-Jewish sentiment throughout the supposedly liberalising period' (Herzog 1996: 82). The sense that something in liberal discourse itself contributed to liberalism's undoing is at the centre of a growing body of

literature that calls into question the received view of liberalism as exclusively defined by universalism, egalitarianism and a concern for human rights (see also Langewiesche 1988: 68, 115ff.; Sheehan 1978: 47f.).⁴

Another fault line concerns the relationship of liberalism to imperialism and colonialism. Whenever liberals held pro-colonialist and apparently illiberal views, received opinion tended to conclude that they were not then acting, by definition, as liberals. More recent studies indicate, however, that the opposite is the case: imperialism and colonialism were core liberal concerns, and not only in Germany.⁵ We hope to elaborate this position with reference to Treitschke's and Freytag's views on Poland.⁶

Finally, our reconsideration of liberalism has implications for the widespread conceptual dichotomy between 'liberal nationalism' and 'ethnic nationalism',⁷ where liberalism is associated with a non-ethnic form of nationalism that is often described as 'civic' or 'political'. A growing body of literature argues that whether or not such a distinction is helpful conceptually, historically no nationalism is either exclusively the one or the other.⁸ Our analysis helps illuminate this by indicating how the political dimension of modern nationalism itself tends to be formulated in ethnic-cultural terms.⁹

An investigation of Treitschke's and Freytag's positions requires contextualising them historically, in particular regarding the character of 'post-1848 liberalism' and the role of nationalism in Germany.¹⁰ From the perspective of German liberals, the events of 1848–52 had shown that the strategy of forming a coalition of liberals with democrats and republicans (including the protagonists of the incipient labour movement) had been mistaken. Liberals had not been able to control a broad-based movement like that of 1848. In order to uphold a liberal agenda rather than drifting towards a democratic-republican one, they had to support the military effort of the old regime (primarily, the Prussian monarchy) against the movement.¹¹ An important split among liberals at the time was that between 'Old Liberals' who trusted in the Enlightenment-driven reform of the absolutist state through *Beamtenliberalismus*, the liberalism of state officials and bureaucrats, and liberals who envisaged more radical change at the levels of both state and society and whose primary form of expression was the national movement. The first organisation in Germany of the latter was the *Nationalverein*, the National Association that liberals and democrats formed in 1859. However, they did so 'by avoiding a programme of domestic policy' (Langewiesche 2000: 83). That is, even among these liberals, domestic reform had its limits. This development in Germany was part of a wider tendency, as Bramsted points out:

After 1830 in most Continental countries liberals stressed the need for national identification, for a national State rooted in the rule of law . . . [whereby] the traditional freedoms of classic liberalism were to be maintained. There arose sometimes a problem of priorities. (Bramsted 1978: 37)

This 'problem of priorities', that between *Freiheit* and *Einheit*, liberty and national unity in the form of a national State, shaped liberalism in Germany at least since 1848.

One of the leaders of the *Nationalverein* was Ludwig August von Rochau who published 'Principles of *Realpolitik*' in 1853 'to widespread liberal acclaim' (Langewiesche 2000: 61). Rochau suggested, on the one hand, that liberals should trust that the 'spirit of the age' was on their side; on the other hand, he asserted that liberalism would not be realised automatically: 'Only through the exercise of power is what is right appointed to rule.' Post-1848 liberalism was in this sense 'realist' liberalism, alert to the necessity that liberal ideals and the 'spirit of the age' still had to be helped by the kind of power that comes from the barrels of guns. This was the basis of the dominant strategy of German liberals to support Prussian attempts to create a united Germany, which would then, in turn, become a liberal state and society. In its restatement by Hermann Baumgarten in 'German liberalism, a self-criticism' (1974 [1866]), this position guided the politics of the National Liberal Party, which emerged in 1867. Its constituency were those who had come to the conclusion that unity – which realistically only the Prussian army and monarchy could deliver – would lead to liberty, whereas the struggle for liberty in itself would lead to neither.

Both Freytag and Treitschke shared this 'realist' pro-Prussianism while criticising the illiberal features of Prussian politics. While decidedly opposed to revolutionary upheavals and universal suffrage, advocating instead an evolutionary process of social change under the leadership of the middle class, Freytag had adopted liberal positions in the *Vormärz*, the years before the March revolution of 1848.¹² From that time onwards and well into the 1850s, Freytag repeatedly faced problems with censorship; he struggled getting his plays staged due to their critical portrayal of the aristocracy and advocacy of free and direct (though not universal) elections (Schofield 62–75, 87). In 1852, Freytag joined an association engaged in circumventing Prussian press censorship, and in 1854 narrowly escaped arrest for allegedly revealing state secrets in his journalistic work. He was forced to flee Prussia and relocate to Saxony until the matter was settled a year later (Ping 2006: 157; Schofield 2012: 85). Together with Julian Schmidt, Freytag took on the editorship of the *Grenzboten* in 1848 and maintained this role (with an interruption 1861–67) until 1870. Freytag and Schmidt turned this journal into one of the leading liberal journals of the *Nachmärz* and the *Gründerzeit* (the decades after 1848). They changed its orientation towards advocating a '*kleindeutsche*' ['small-German'] form of German unification under Prussian leadership in which the bourgeoisie was to play a central role as the representative of national interests.

Treitschke was still in school in 1848 but was already an admirer of the tendency that would subsequently develop into National Liberalism. Treitschke read Rochau's *Realpolitik* enthusiastically, and in 1858 became a contributor to the *Preussische Jahrbücher*, founded by Rudolf Haym, another key figure of post-1848 liberalism. Treitschke became this journal's editor in 1866 and occupied that position until 1889. He met Baumgarten as well as Gustav Freytag and Theodor Mommsen in 1862. Together, they became members of an influential circle of (future) National Liberals in Leipzig.

Treitschke's and Freytag's liberalism combined liberal idealism and power-political realism; they supported the Prussian-led, military unification of Germany.¹³ In the crucial period beginning in 1862, when Bismarck became Minister President and Foreign Minister of Prussia, they developed their unequivocal support for what they – like fellow National Liberals – thought was Prussia's 'mission'. At the same time, they vehemently opposed some anti-liberal aspects of Prussian domestic policy. Freytag, writing in the *Grenzboten*, which appeared in Saxony and hence was beyond Bismarck's reach, provided a scathing critique of the Chancellor and the Caesarist features of the Bismarckian system (Ping 2006: 328, 342f.). He was joined in this critique by Treitschke, who temporarily stopped working for *Preussische Jahrbücher* the same year and instead published an article in *Grenzboten* that challenged what he considered the *Preussische Jahrbücher*'s submission to Bismarck's censorship.

In the work of both men, such outspoken criticism of the illiberal features of Bismarck's regime was combined with a firm belief in Prussia's mission to bring about unification in the interest of the nation, represented through the bourgeoisie. As Heinrich August Winkler wrote in the late 1970s, compromise with Bismarck meant 'not a capitulation of liberalism but the attempt to create a new basis for the representation of bourgeois interests'.¹⁴ Post-1848 liberals believed national unity would further what their intellectual heirs would later refer to as 'modernisation', and that the latter in turn would inevitably overcome the political forms of the old regime. This shift in the character of liberalism implied entrusting the hope for liberty to the dynamics of capitalist development within a unified national territory rather than to the constitutional reform of existing dynastic states. Treitschke's gloss on this was that liberty remains a mere phrase 'as long as no nation exists', because the nation 'is the only basis of any development of the state', and liberty is possible only in the state.¹⁵ Both men also pursued their political agenda in the parliamentary arena: from 1867–70, Freytag was a Member of Parliament (MP) for the National Liberal Party in the North German *Reichstag*; Treitschke was elected to the post-unification German *Reichstag* in 1871, when he formally joined the National Liberal Party, which he left in 1879 in the course of a dispute about tariffs and economic protectionism. He remained in Parliament until 1884. After unification, however, their political paths diverged. Unlike Treitschke, Freytag grew increasingly disappointed with the politics of the new Germany and Bismarck's turn against Liberalism in the 1870s (Ping 2006: 323). Both men also moved in different directions regarding the position of Jews within the new Germany. Treitschke – somewhat inadvertently and by restating in pointed form criticisms of alleged Jewish particularities common among liberals – became a contributor to the new form of 'political anti-Semitism' that emerged around 1879 and its most important voice within the educated establishment of Bismarck Germany (Stoetzler 2008a, 2008b). By contrast, in 1869, Freytag published a critique of Richard Wagner's anti-Semitism, '*Der Streit über das Judenthum in der Musik*' ['The dispute about Jewishness in music'],

and in 1893 wrote an explicit attack on the growing anti-Semitism of his time, *‘Eine Pfingstbetrachtung’* [‘A meditation on the occasion of Pentecost’]. Differing from his position in the late 1840s and 1850s, which we discuss below, Freytag now declared the ‘Jewish question’ to be resolved, since most Jews were now completely assimilated. Nevertheless, Freytag never joined in the public criticism of Treitschke’s position in the 1879 dispute on anti-Semitism (see below). In the *‘Pfingstbetrachtung’*, he exonerated his former friend (without directly naming him, though), describing Treitschke’s intervention as the ‘patriotic complaint of a high-minded man of purest intentions’ that only subsequently had ‘sunk down into the sphere of enraged and malcontent demagogues’.¹⁶ The internal tensions in the positions of both men eventually propelled them in different directions; an analysis of the shared ground between them is all the more revealing.

Treitschke on Jewish materialism

The best-known fact about Treitschke today is probably that he formulated the words *‘Die Juden sind unser Unglück’* [‘The Jews are our misfortune’] (Treitschke 1896a [1879]: 26), which later came to adorn the front page of the Nazi paper *Der Stürmer*. These notorious words stem from the article *‘Unsere Aussichten’* [‘Our Prospects’], written in 1879, that is now widely recognised as one of the key documents of the constitution of political anti-Semitism in nineteenth-century Germany.

In that article, Treitschke accuses the Jews in Germany, both recent immigrants and members of the long-established community, of being unwilling to amalgamate (*verschmelzen*) with German society (Treitschke 2008: 312). Underlying his argument is the view that ‘the hard necessity of the unity of the state’ demands a high degree of cultural homogeneity, especially in times of political crisis both domestic and international (Treitschke 1896b: 37f.). Crucial for an analysis of the text are two questions: why are the Jews said to refuse to amalgamate, and what exactly are they allegedly refusing to amalgamate into?¹⁷ The dominant theme in Treitschke’s ‘Our Prospects’ is that the Jews are a backward, medieval, superstitious, illiberal, anachronistic group, washed up from an Oriental Third World, and that they should simply stay where they belong – a theme that exemplifies the kind of xenophobia that the inhabitants of relatively more developed countries all too often voice against poor immigrants. Treitschke saw hordes of ‘trouser selling youths’ – i.e. Jews – pouring from the medieval darkness of Eastern Europe into the high modernity of the Bismarck *Reich*: ‘Our country is invaded year after year by multitudes of assiduous trouser-selling youths from the inexhaustible cradle of Poland’ (Treitschke 2008: 312). There is a second, more sinister underlying theme, though: the despicable arrivals from the East have a strange capability to transform themselves from trouser sellers into the ‘rulers of our stock markets’ (Treitschke 2008: 312), and thereby to endanger the orderly

unfolding of social, economic and political modernity. One of the characteristics Treitschke attributed to the Jews was the nature of their economic spirit:

There is no German merchant city that does not count many honest, respectable Jewish firms among its number. But it cannot be denied that the Semites have contributed a large part to the dishonesty and deception and the bold greediness of the boom-time mischief [*Gründer-Unwesen*], and that they share heavily in the guilt for the contemptible materialism of our age which regards every kind of work only as business and threatens to suffocate our people's ancient good-natured willingness to work [*die alte gemüthliche Arbeitsfreudigkeit unseres Volkes*]. (Treitschke 1896a: 24f; Treitschke 2008: 313)

This theme is different from that of the invasion of Eastern paupers. The latter is based on the contrast between Jewish–Polish backwardness and German modernity, proudly affirming the degree of modernisation that has already been achieved in (the now finally united) Germany. The passage just cited, however, seems more in line with the conservative–romantic rejection of capitalist ‘materialism’ as it was frequently associated with Jewishness: profit-seeking Jewish assiduousness (already displayed by the newly arrived trouser sellers and evolved into large-scale speculation in the ‘boom time’) is contrasted to, and said to corrupt, German ‘*Arbeitsfreudigkeit*’, a term which denotes a sense of duty combined with the pride of good work. ‘*Arbeitsfreudigkeit*’, ‘willingness to work’, is pivotal for the cohesion of society. Allowing the Jews to endanger a traditional mentality upon which modern industrial society still depends means playing with fire. Treitschke appears as a defender of the modernity that the Bismarck *Reich* represented (Blackbourn and Eley 1984), i.e. the modernity of the capitalist nation-state that post-1848 German liberals had fought for; at the same time, he is concerned with defending this modernity from its own excesses (exemplified by the ‘boom-time mischief’). Somewhat paradoxically, for Treitschke ‘the Jews’ seem to stand for pre-modernity and corrosive hyper-modernity at the same time.

When, in what later came to be called the ‘Berlin Anti-Semitism Dispute’, he was attacked for expressing anti-Semitic positions in ‘Our Prospects’, he asserted his defence of Jewish emancipation in this passage, published only a few weeks after the text just quoted:

Today the unfortunate struggle is settled, civil equality [*bürgerliche Gleichberechtigung*] of the Jews has long been achieved in all civilized states [*Culturstaaten*], and in all of Germany I do not know one reasonable politician who would want to overthrow this accomplished deed. The German Jews enjoy unrestricted freedom of worship; nobody interferes with their old customs and traditions nor with their distinct cosmopolitan scholarship; civic life even widely respects their Sabbath although this is undeniably for us Christians a very inconvenient institution. With emancipation achieved, however, the old Jewish claim to separate nationhood has also become totally obsolete. In the present century of national state formations, the European Jews can have a role that is peaceful and conducive to civilization [*der Gesittung förderliche*] only if they decide to dissolve into the civilized peoples [*Culturvölkern*], whose languages they speak – as far as religion, tradition and racial characteristics [*Stammesart*] allow this to happen. (Treitschke 1896b: 38)¹⁸

Here, Treitschke affirms emancipation, civil equality, freedom of worship and scholarship, while pointing out that these achievements are supported by ‘us Christians’ even at the price of putting up with something as inconvenient as the Jewish Sabbath. Within the same passage Treitschke makes three different points that are not easily reconciled: first, he asserts as a matter of fact that no reasonable person would even speak about reversing Jewish emancipation, since this would weaken the very foundations and the dignity of the liberal state; second, he demands assimilation in the strongest possible terms and states that the Jews’ failure to ‘dissolve completely’ would mean their existence is not ‘conducive to civilisation’; third, he states that cultural and racial characteristics [‘*Stammesart*’]¹⁹ might not actually allow for complete assimilation.²⁰ The position taken by Treitschke illustrates what we describe as ‘liberal anti-Semitism’, a world-view based on general concerns of liberalism while coloured by anti-Semitism even when defending, or arguing for, Jewish emancipation.

Treitschke’s political interventions are more pronounced in their critique of Jewish behaviour than Freytag’s journalistic and political writings had been. However, similar themes to those raised by Treitschke in 1879 can be found in Freytag’s earlier journalistic work and in his main achievement as a novelist, *Debit and Credit*.

Freytag on Poles, Jews and German economy

If Treitschke helped make political anti-Semitism acceptable among the educated bourgeois in Germany, the *Bildungsbürgertum*, Freytag’s novel *Debit and Credit* had a similar effect on a significantly larger, socially much broader scale; his book remained a bestseller throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century (Carter 1967/68: 328f.; Steinecke 1980: 147). The analysis of anti-Semitic motifs in Freytag’s work points to a dialectic of liberalism and anti-Semitism that is not dependent on conscious and explicitly voiced hatred or disdain of Jews. In his more explicitly political and journalistic writings, Freytag supported Jewish emancipation and, in his later years, explicitly criticised the rising anti-Semitism of the times. If, as we argue, Freytag’s as well as Treitschke’s positions contain anti-Semitic elements, then theirs is an anti-Semitism of people who would neither describe themselves as such nor express subjective ‘hatred of Jews’. On the contrary, their anti-Semitism is, paradoxically, one of people who (by and large) endorsed Jewish emancipation.

This is already visible in one of Freytag’s early journalistic texts, ‘The Jews in Breslau’ [‘*Die Juden in Breslau*’], published in 1849, shortly after legal equality for Jews had largely been realised in Prussia, only to be limited again a few years later. Because of its pro-emancipation stance, the article is frequently cited in order to rebut allegations that Freytag’s work had furthered anti-Jewish positions (cf. Cadot 1976: 293f.; Horch 1985; Schneider 1981: 388).²¹ A closer look, however, reveals a more ambiguous picture. Although Freytag ultimately affirms Jewish emancipation in this paper, he is mainly

concerned with depicting the problems generated by ‘a continuous infiltration of huckstering Polish Jews into the province’, and by the fact that ‘[s]ince the process of distillation begins here, most of the dirt also remains with us.’ (Freitag 1849: 145)²² Freitag describes the traditional Polish–Jewish immigrant as running ‘black and busy, like an ant, through the streets of the city’ (Freitag 1849: 145) and emphasises the need to find a solution to the social problems created by this invasion by depicting Jewish dishonesty, speculation, crudeness, cultural backwardness and incomprehensible religious rituals. Freitag warns that this ‘sick’ part of the population will ‘infect the healthy ones’ and that the ‘weak will paralyse the strong’ unless the state takes drastic measures. The paper concedes that this sorry state of affairs might be due to the fact that the Jews used to live ‘under the pressure of civil unfreedom in the German states’. However, having now been granted legal equality, Jews were under an obligation to assimilate, and it had become ‘the duty of the state to *force* the weak and crippled among the Jews to become men of the nineteenth century, to the degree to which the state is permitted to coerce the individual’ (Freitag 1849: 147). Despite this liberal caveat, the state’s licence to coerce, according to Freitag, goes quite far in this case: it includes complete state control of Jewish religious life, including excising from prayer texts and liturgy anything that might be liable to foment reservations against non-Jews or the state, obligatory training for rabbis at state institutions, and moving the Sabbath to Sunday. Those Jews who do not accept these conditions should be excluded from legal equality and remain ‘tolerated Jews’. Freitag clearly indicates the ultimate aim of this enforced assimilation:

Believe me, such a course of action will make two thirds of the Jews disappear and will largely efface the peculiarities of their character over the next two or three generations; the remaining third, however, will steadily shrink. (Freitag 1849: 149)

In ‘The Jews in Breslau’, the goal is not their emancipation, but the ultimate disappearance of Jews as Jews. At the same time, however, the text undermines this assimilationist aim. Freitag’s article implicitly advocates a partial revocation of rights already attained in order to make them conditional upon prescribed steps towards assimilation. By denouncing qualities and behaviour perceived as ‘Jewish’, his assimilationist argument, ostensibly pro-emancipation, arguably fuelled the dislike of Jews and the perception of an essential Jewish difference, thus in effect sabotaging their social integration and assimilation rather than advancing it.²³

This image of the Jew is developed further in Freitag’s *Soll und Haben*, a realist novel that attempts to provide a picture of modern mid-nineteenth-century German society as a whole. It therefore affords the opportunity to investigate the function of the Jewish stereotype for his more general vision of capitalist modernity.²⁴ The book is a *Bildungsroman*, a novel of education, recounting the development of the young protagonist Anton Wohlfart from a romantic youth to a sober young merchant through his apprenticeship in the merchant house of Traugott Schröter. On the way, he has to struggle against

his infatuation with the young noblewoman Lenore von Rothsattel as well as against the machinations of evil Jewish characters and against rebellious Poles. Anton's attempt to save the Rothsattel family from ruin brought about by the Jewish trader Ehrental and the anti-hero of the novel, Anton's former Jewish schoolmate Veitel Itzig, takes Anton to Poland. There, Anton Wohlfart is converted to German national values while defending the castle of the Rothsattels and the Prussian cause against the Polish revolution.²⁵

The nobility, Jews and Poles serve as contrast foils to the German middle class characters in the novel. This allows Freytag to develop an image of a specifically 'German' kind of modern society, which is presented as potentially free of fragmentation, conflict and alienation, that is, of the undesirable features of modern capitalism. This idea of a harmonious and non-alienated form of bourgeois modernity is centred around what in the novel is explicitly called 'labour in the German way [*Arbeit in der deutschen Weise*]', a notion that could be seen as similar to Treitschke's 'ancient good-natured willingness to work' that supposedly distinguishes Germans from 'the Jews'.²⁶ In *Soll und Haben*, this 'German labour' is not done for profit, but for the greater good of all; it is a concrete, creative, productive activity, which brings about social cohesion and harmony and is governed by moral principles. As Anton declares:

Each of us does his work in the German way [. . .]. It occurs to none of us to think: I get this many *Taler* [silver coins] from the company, and therefore I value the company this much. What has been won through the labour we have shared in is a joy for us as well, and fills us with pride. (Freytag 1855, vol. 1: 302)²⁷

The nobility, the Jews and the Poles are incapable of this form of labour – either because they do not work at all, like the nobility and the Poles, or because they only work for profit, like the Jews.

Furthermore, the contrast to these groups also helps develop a specific image of modernity and modernisation. Both the nobility and the Poles represent, if in different ways, a pre-modernity that needs to be overcome. The novel develops a paradigmatic colonial discourse in which Prussian rule over Poland is justified, first and foremost, by a deep-seated Polish inability to enter into modernity without the help of the ruling power. The Poles are portrayed in the words of Schröter, who seems to act as the mouthpiece of the narrator,²⁸ as singularly unable to 'advance and to acquire humanity and education through their own capital' (vol. I: 371). They are presented as a nation of noblemen and peasants who are peculiarly 'incapable of creating out of their own resources that stratum which represents civilisation [*Kultur*] and progress and transforms a rabble of scattered peasants into a state' (vol. I: 371). This absent stratum, the reader is informed, is the middle class [*Bürgerstand*] (vol. I: 371). The Poles therefore represent the stage of 'half-barbarity of privileged free men and serfs. Only since our towns grew are there civilised states in the world, only at that point has the secret been revealed: only free labour can make the life of peoples great and secure and lasting' (vol. I: 372). It is because the Poles are stuck at an earlier stage of this

developmental ladder that they are rebellious and destructive. The power to effect modernisation justifies German domination, as driven by the middle class, when Anton exclaims:

I am standing here as one of the conquerors who have taken the rule over this soil from a weaker race in the service of free labour and human civilisation (*Kultur*). Us against the Slavs, it is an ancient struggle. And we proudly sense: education, joy in work, and credit are on our side. (Vol. 2: 241)

This contrast between a good, productive, organised German modernity and a bad, unproductive, disorganised Polish pre-modernity is supplemented by another opposition that introduces a split *within* the image of modernity itself. Here, 'good' German modernity is opposed to 'bad' Jewish modernity. The former represents progress, order, productivity and community building, whereas the latter stands for those aspects of modern society which seem to threaten this national community: materialism, antagonism, social fragmentation and self-interest. In general, the Jews represent the rule of the abstract over the concrete in social and economic relationships, the predominance of contractual relations over relationships based on emotions, loyalty or the individual's position in an organic social order. The novel thus not only introduces a conceptual split between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (community and society) within the bourgeois order (cf. Tönnies 1991 [1887]) – but in associating both forms of community with different ethnic groups, it narratively purges good German *Gemeinschaft* from unwelcome admixtures of bad Jewish *Gesellschaft*.

This opposition is developed in the depiction of such emblematic aspects of modernity as the city, which has a 'Jewish' and a 'German' face, and the economy. Interestingly, though, the opposition developed in the novel is not the common one between 'good' production and 'bad' circulation. Instead, both spheres have a concrete, positive dimension, furthering the material welfare of all, which is associated with the German characters, and a negative, abstract, destructive dimension, which is associated with the Jews. The face of the city that is associated with Veitel Itzig, for example, is characterised by all the threatening aspects of the modern metropolis: it is chaotic, confusing, dirty, noisy, full of criminals, prostitutes and other morally dubious people (vol. I: 42). Veitel restlessly prowls the squares and lanes of this city as a place of chance encounters between isolated individuals without moral obligations to each other, always on the lookout for the next small deal, the next opportunity to take advantage of an unsuspecting customer (vol. I: 116f.). By contrast, the German city Rosmin in Poland is a place of structure and permanence, of social as well as legal order. It is not a place of fragmentation and antagonism, but of mediation and progress, one of the 'knots in a firm net that the German has laid over the Slav, artful knots joining innumerable threads through which the small labourers of the field are connected with other people, with education, with freedom and a civilised state' (vol. II: 197f). This paradoxical metaphor encapsulates the idea of liberation through bondage and domination that underpins the colonial discourse in *Debit and Credit*.

Similarly, Freytag contrasts two types of industry: on the one hand, there is 'natural', productive industry, which appears as a quasi-organic continuation of the improvement of agricultural methods. Such industry seems to grow out of the soil, its winding pipes mirroring the stems of the plants (vol. I: 447f.). On the other hand, industry built on credit and for profit – the kind of industry Ehrenthal and Itzig seduce Rothsattel into establishing on his estate – enslaves its owner to alien forces, violates nature and leads to failed harvests, proletarianisation and social decay (vol. I: 449f.).

Like production, distribution also has two faces: Itzig's and Ehrenthal's business is governed by exchange value, money and profit. Veitel is only able to see the commodity as exchange value; he buys in order to sell and thus to turn money into more money in unending, breathless activity (vol. I: 117). The German merchants, on the other hand, seem to be engaged exclusively in the distribution of use values. Freytag's text features long descriptions of the colours, shapes and smells of the commodities in the cellar of the German merchant's house, as well as how, where and by whom they have been produced (vol. I: 70f.). Wohlfart, Schröter and his employees are not interested in profit but in social mediation and the promotion of the greater good of all. In conversation with the one 'good Jew' of the novel, Ehrenthal's son Bernhard, who despairs about his father's dubious business practices, Anton Wohlfart extols the virtues of German trade:

Whenever I put a sack full of coffee onto the scales, I am tying an invisible thread between the colonist's daughter in Brazil who has picked the beans and the young farmhand who is having the coffee for his breakfast. (Vol. I: 268)

Bourgeois economic activity, German style, is thus presented as conscious and concrete mediation between producers and consumers, rather than blind and abstract mediation through money and the market.

Although Jews and Poles generally occupy structurally opposite places in the narrative of modernity in Freytag's novel, there is also an interesting connection between bad Eastern premodernity and bad Jewish modernity that is rather similar to that projected decades later by Treitschke. The more assimilated Jews in the capital, as in 'The Jews in Breslau', are described as the descendants of former immigrants from the East. Some Jewish characters constantly travel between Prussia and Poland, West and East, undermining any clear division between these two very different spaces, half belonging to both and really to none.²⁹ The novel also suggests a continuity of certain features between the unassimilated Eastern Jew in his caftan and the assimilated, wealthy Jewish trader in the Prussian capital, despite all differences in education and wealth – a doubtful sense of morality, a strong interest in money, a mixture of obsequiousness and brazenness and a faulty, Yiddish-influenced use of the German language. The process of assimilation, whose different stages are personified in the different Jewish characters, thus appears to be superficial, a mere change of manners, not of mind-set or morals. In fact, the more assimilated the Jewish characters, the more dangerous they become.³⁰

The novel thus seems to suggest that the form of *assimilation* that the National Liberals would have deemed satisfactory, consisting in an actual change of heart and an adoption of German values, is highly unlikely. The text seems to presuppose a Jewish cultural ‘essence’ that can at best very slowly be changed – a notion that is supported by frequent allusions to the biblical, ancient, or oriental character of the ‘Jewish people’.

The effect of this mode of presentation is to hypostatise, de-historicise and ethnicise what is regarded as the negative sides of modernity: if the latter are separable from modernity *per se*, a consequence of a contingent ‘Jewish’ attitude, they are not really an integral part of modern society at all. They are alien, perhaps anachronistic, elements, associated with the peculiarities of an ‘ancient’ people, which need to be politically and culturally controlled and, if possible, made to disappear. This is not envisaged in Freytag’s or Treitschke’s writings in terms of the literal disappearance of the actual Jews. The difference between a racially motivated politics of expulsion, persecution or genocide, and a politics of enforced assimilation is obviously a fundamental one. Common to both positions, however, is the association of Jews with the apparent troubles of modernity and the perception of Jewish difference as a problem that has to be overcome. In both views, the Jew – *as Jew* – must disappear. This is a discourse to whose constitution not only anti-liberal but also liberal nationalists have contributed and that could later be invoked by advocates of a more radical, ‘final’ solution to the perceived problems of modernity.³¹

Treitschke on the Poles, the Polish nobility and Eastern Jews

In Treitschke’s writing on Poles, Prussians, Germans and the process of modernisation, we encounter very similar motifs to those in Freytag’s work. In his *German History in the Nineteenth Century*, Treitschke interpreted recent Polish history in a manner that clearly expresses his liberalism. For example in his discussion of the November 1830 Warsaw uprising, Treitschke puts the blame for the Polish disorder squarely on the Polish nobility and their ‘incurable dissoluteness [*Zuchtlosigkeit*], implying a lack of concern with civic and cultural matters: ‘To the nobility [. . .] the country’s most severe problem, the peasants’ disenfranchisement and mistreatment, seemed not to be an evil at all’ (Treitschke 1907 [1889]: 57). In the course of centuries of disorder, the Polish nation had lost ‘the simple virtues of the middle class [*des Bürgers*’ (Treitschke 1907 [1889]: 58): ‘the Polish nobleman only knew how to fight for his fatherland, how to suffer and how to conspire, not, though, how to serve it through sober work’ (Treitschke 1907 [1889]: 58). While the nobility seemed to regard uprisings as a sport for angry young men, Treitschke asserts, the peasantry and ‘the new middle class [*Bürgertum*] whose first seeds now began to sprout under the protection of an orderly administration’ stayed away from nationalism and radicalism. Treitschke’s portrait of the nobility-led revolution is characterised by an almost orientalist tone:

Meanwhile in Warsaw things ran the usual course of all Polish revolutions: battle spirit and heroism by the gallon, fiery speeches and brotherly hugs, raving priests and high-minded beautiful women, punch for good measure and mazurkas to everybody's heart's delight, but also factional hatred, unruliness, angry indictments hither and thither, and in this entire sea of brave, enthusiastic men not one statesman-like mind [*staatsmännischer Kopf*], not one great personality. The orators of this aristocratic conspiracy failed to pay any attention to the masses of the people and their suffering. (Treitschke 1907 [1889]: 59; similar motifs in Freytag 1923 [1855], vol. 1: 393f.)

Treitschke adds that the Polish nobility had an 'indestructible penchant for shady dealings' (Treitschke 1907 [1889]: 63). Here, Treitschke's elitism works against his racism: the Polish peasants are not credited with any agency in the historical process, but they are therewith also exempted from being condemned for their Polishness; after all, they are just peasants.

Later in the same volume, Treitschke sings the praises of a key figure in the Prussian administration of Poznan, *Oberpräsident* Flottwell, whom Treitschke characterises as having been trained in the spirit of Kant, a detail that seems to gesture to his background in the Prussian bureaucratic-liberal tradition. When Treitschke now contrasts Slavs with what he considers a paradigmatic Prussian, his language becomes more essentialist:

Although they saw in him their political arch enemy, personally he got on reasonably well even with the Polish nobles, because all Slavs regard with silent awe those two virtues which nature has forsaken them – straightforwardness and firmness. (Treitschke 1907 [1889]: 557)

This is followed by a statement that provides, like a slip of the tongue, a particularly interesting insight into Treitschke's thinking on Poland:

German and Polish peasants adored him as their protector, and with him his friend, the general-in-command, Grolman, whom the Poles hated almost even more grimly.³²

Polish peasants adored Flottwell and Grolman, whereas 'the Poles' hated Grolman: in this somewhat failed sentence, Treitschke reveals that, by 'the Poles', he actually means the Polish nobility, whereas he thinks of the Polish peasants as being on the side of the German peasants and their modernising Prussian protector-administrator. Treitschke's value judgements are inspired here by the classically liberal class analysis of the modernisation process: the Polish nobility stand for the feudal order that is to be overcome, whereas the peasants are expected to be integrated into the new society of producers. Treitschke states further that Grolman, in turn, wanted to help the Poles so that 'their Polish nature may evolve into a human one', a formulation that is quoted by Treitschke without clear indication of a source (judging from the context, it is probably from a letter by Flottwell).

In the fifth volume of his *History* (first published in 1894), dealing with the early 1840s, Treitschke remarks that Poznan peasants did not trust Polish 'communist' radicals (again, of aristocratic background) 'if only because the peasant had already learned from his interactions with the Jewish usurer [*Schacherjuden*] the maxim: he who flatters me wants to cheat me' (Treitschke

1908 [1894]: 541). While it is quite plausible that Polish peasants saw little merit in throwing in their lot with the wayward sons of the aristocracy, there is no reason to assume that the peasants had derived their wisdom from interactions with Jews; this little flourish is entirely fictional and introduced by Treitschke as a rhetorical device to give expression to the link between 'communist' radicals, a backward, non-productive nobility, and Jewish usurers that only existed in his own mind. Treitschke seems to perceive in the historical material that he uses evidence of the practical interconnectedness of the two-fold enemy of benign, Prussian–German modernity: the premodern and the hyper-modern (or rather, if one wants to adopt a social–psychological term, Treitschke projects this vision onto the historical material).

Treitschke writes that in the 1840s, 'Germandom' [*Deutschtum*] and modernisation, 'based on property and education, still progressed unstoppably, in spite of all Polish machinations' (Treitschke 1908 [1894]: 560). Only in the 1860s a 'tragic backlash' occurred:

Educated by Prussia's schools, Prussia's freedom of trade, Prussia's agrarian legislation, a Polish middle class emerged slowly in the towns and in the countryside that would reward its benefactors with the inevitable historical ingratitude. (Treitschke 1908 [1894]: 560)

It is not quite clear why Treitschke regards Polish middle-class 'ingratitude' as inevitable. It seems, though, that Treitschke senses here a fundamental contradiction inherent in the process of modernisation, and thus also of the liberalism that accompanied it: although in its essence a transnationally evolving structure, capitalist modernity is driven forward by the actions of economic and state elites that are *nationally* constituted. The reactions that it produces, whether affirmative or negative, are therefore also nationally constituted: the modern 'civilisation' of which Prussia is a (regional) locomotive produces its own enemies exactly where and when it successfully fulfils its imperial 'mission'. The imperial power cannot expect 'gratitude' from the local modern middle class which colonial subjection helped to create.

Conclusion: the cultural racism of nationalist liberals

In this paper, we have suggested that the anti-Semitism of nineteenth-century German liberals is consistent with and grounded in their overall social, cultural, economic and political assumptions rather than a contingent, illiberal peculiarity of their thinking. Post-1848 liberalism in itself must be understood as part of the constellation of social, political and cultural forces out of which modern anti-Semitism emerged, although other aspects of the liberal tradition – notably its universalist impetus – were part of the constellation that opposed it.

This fault line within liberalism frequently runs through the individuals themselves. In the case of Freytag in the 1840s and 1850s, for example, it

appears that support for emancipation and the construction of anti-Semitic imagery occupy different compartments of his National Liberal mind. When Freytag, the political journalist writes about actual Jewish people and their social situation, he remains true to universalist political principles and advocates emancipation and assimilation, even though he does so in terms that are liable to cement a perception of Jewish difference and hence undermine his own liberal, assimilationist cause. When the novelist creates his narrative panorama of the modern world, though, in which the construction of a harmonious German modernity requires declaring all contradicting evidence as inessential, and to present it as caused by contingent and 'external' forces, he reveals his anti-Semitic other self. Moreover, while still combining both components of the image of the Jew, *Debit and Credit* illustrates a gradual shift in emphasis from a critique of Jewish backwardness to one of destructive Jewish modernity, from a critique of Jewish weakness to one of Jewish strength, foreshadowing the development of political anti-Semitism in later decades. In the case of Treitschke, whose historical scholarship, political interventions and quasi-poetic world-view are less clearly sorted into distinct genres, similar contradictions tend to appear more clearly within the same texts. Our findings evoke Furet's observation that 'the misfortune of the bourgeois is not only to be divided within himself. It is to offer up one half of himself for the criticism of the other half.'³³

The splits and oppositions expressed by both Freytag and Treitschke can be read as indicating a historical shift in the nature of liberalism. In the case of Prussia, the earlier *Beamtenliberalismus* – the liberalism of enlightened officials who inherited the mantle of enlightened absolutism – was able to acknowledge Huguenot, Jewish and ethnically Polish citizens of Prussia. The more modern National Liberalism, however, was less and less able to do so unless the modernisation process had made those – as it were – 'hyphenated Prussians' more or less indistinguishable in their actual behaviours, mores and norms from 'proper Prussians'. This does not mean, however, that late nineteenth-century National Liberals 'betrayed' the true values of liberalism. Already at the end of the eighteenth century, a tension existed between the ideas of idealist liberals and the realities of incipient modernisation and the nature of what was to become the modernising nation-state.³⁴

The anti-Semitism of liberals is, in this sense, modern not merely in its specific understanding of its object (it operates with a secular, i.e. national, socio-cultural, sometimes racial, definition of 'the Jew' more than a theological/religious one) but also in terms of its essential motivation and dynamic: liberal anti-Semitism is indeed a liberal form of anti-Semitism rather than merely a conservative or reactionary attitude that some individual liberals just happen to share. Nineteenth-century liberalism regarded the creation of a national culture and of a nation-state that mobilises and utilises this culture as a key element of modernisation and as furthering the progress of humanity. This serves to consolidate and promote a specific form of modern society, namely the *liberal* vision of modern society that differed from

conservative resistance to modernity as well as from democratic, republican or socialist alternative visions of it. The anti-Semitism of liberals was primarily motivated by ideas about social cohesion and homogeneity and about socio-economic ethics and patterns of behaviour adequate to a modern, capitalist society that is sustainable, i.e. warrants its own reproduction and cohesion.

In this context, the national community, even where it is not circumscribed by descent, is not simply defined by citizenship as a merely legal status. To be a member of this community requires adhering to a set of values and rules of conduct that supposedly make this community viable, in spite of forces and dynamics that are liable to break it apart. These values and rules of conduct – societal ethics, as it were – and their supposed opposites are liable to translate into notions of ethnicity. In the *liberal* variety of ethnic, sometimes racist and/or anti-Semitic stereo-typing – in contradistinction to forms of such stereotyping that are *not* grounded in the liberal project – the ethnic, or racial, category is mutually articulated with a bourgeois, progressive notion of moral economy or economic ethics. The ethnic stereotypes (reasonable, community-building, productive German capitalism vs. the two-fold threat of Jewish egoistic profit orientation and Polish backwardness) and the ethical norm (the ethics of the honest producer, of progress, civilisation, development and bourgeois perfectibility) are continually projected onto each other within a framework of the nation understood as a community of producers. If notions of race emerge in this context then they are abbreviations – shorthand as it were – for the fundamentally ‘cultural’ imagery thus described which constitutes in this context the substantive content of ‘race’.

In this sense, when (nationalist) liberals reference what we would now regard as ethnicity, they make, in the language of *ethnos*, a statement about who belongs to the *civitas*. Ethnicity here points to ideas about social attitudes and economic ethics; the *ethos* that is central to the *civitas* is interpreted in terms of *ethnos*. There is therefore an intimate connection between *ethnos* and *civitas* here, and the more the National Liberal conception leans towards its national side, the less is it able to differentiate between them.

It is for these reasons that the conceptual distinction between ‘ethnic’ and ‘civic’ nationalism obscures rather than illuminates the character of the nationalism of writers like Freytag and Treitschke. The concept of ‘citizenship’ that ‘civic nationalism’ points to cannot be abstracted from its historically specific social, cultural and economic content, and it is this specific content (a specifically modern, bourgeois, capitalist set of mores, morals, norms, habits, ideas) whose reified reflection is what we call ethnicity. It is on these grounds that we argue that the specific social and historical content of specific instances of liberal thinking can help explain why and to what extent those who subscribe to it might also embrace elements of anti-Semitism. That the anti-Semitism of liberals is grounded in their liberalism, and is not merely contingently related to it, helps explain why they were often not able to recognise it for what it is.

Notes

1 Hamerow 1969, vol. 1: 291.

2 On the concept of 'cultural racism', see Balibar 2005; Guillaumin 1995: 90–94.

3 This aspect makes their case also an illuminating precedent for some current disputes on 'left-wing' anti-Semitism (cf. Bonefeld 2014; Fine 2009; Postone 1977/78, 2011).

4 Challenging idealised notions of nineteenth-century liberalism, Herzog pointed out that 'many reluctant, initially anti-emancipationist liberals eventually came to support emancipation as a central plank in the liberal platform' for a variety of reasons, not, however, because of the 'logical unfolding of liberal principles' (Herzog 1996: 53). Cf. also Judson 2001; Katz 1990: 148–52; Mosse 1970: 70; Rürup 1975: 59; Volkov 2000: 63f.

5 Cf. Fitzpatrick 2008, Mehta 1999, Guettel 2010.

6 These two concerns of the current paper are paralleled by contributions criticising liberalism from a feminist perspective, and by the Marxist literature that challenges liberal conceptions of class relations, capitalist production methods and relations and the liberal concept of the State.

7 On liberal nationalism cf. Langewiesche 1988: 32, 68; Sheehan 1994: 853–4; Varouxakis 2002.

8 Cf. Balibar and Wallerstein 1991; Fine 1994.

9 Those who maintain the notion of two differing 'types' of nationalism are in fact at variance with the predominant academic tradition that defines nationalism as 'primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent' (Gellner 1983: 1), whereby 'the national' by implication refers to the ethnic-cultural. 'Civic' in the sense of 'non-ethnic' nationalism, if it existed, would in this perspective simply figure as not highly developed nationalism. Gellner's definition is supported by the work of historical sociologists such as Marx (2003), who shows that the search for this congruence of the political with the cultural-ethnic unit was the historical project of (early modern) nationalism that sometimes succeeded (England, France), sometimes failed (Spain, Germany). The backbone of the tradition out of which Gellner worked, like the authors of most of the canonical literature on nationalism, is Max Weber's nuanced statement in *Economy and Society* that the concept 'nation' refers 'to a specific kind of pathos which is linked to the idea of a powerful political community of people who share a common language, or religion, or common customs, or political memories; such a state may already exist or it may be desired' (Weber 1978: 398). In the same context, Weber defines 'ethnic groups' as 'those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonisation and migration' whereby 'it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists' (Weber 1978: 389). Weber's definitional statements make explicit what were implicitly held perspectives in the National Liberal milieu that Weber came from.

10 Following Langewiesche (2000), we prefer to talk about 'liberalism in Germany' rather than 'German liberalism' as we do not think German liberalism was categorically different from liberalism in other European countries. The way in which the generic problems of nineteenth-century liberalism played out differently in different national contexts can only be addressed by detailed comparative research, of which there is little. Despite differences in the trajectory of nation formation or the centrality of the state for processes of economic development, however, fundamental characteristics of large-scale societal processes ('modernisation', modern state formation, the emergence of the capitalist mode of production) were common to most European countries, and the cultural, social and political problems encountered and responses to them, such as liberalism, shared many broadly similar features (cf. Blackbourn and Eley 1984). Liberalism, which emerged during the French Revolution as the politics of the Gironde and the upper bourgeoisie, was characterised as the struggle against royalist reaction on the one side, egalitarian popular movements on the other. Its two-fold character remained the signature of liberal politics in the centuries to come (Vierhaus 1982: 749).

11 Different from most of their twentieth-century successors, nineteenth-century liberals regularly advocated a constitutional monarchy as in Britain, not a democratic state based on universal

suffrage, let alone a republican state. In the nineteenth century, liberals and democrats were different groups of people.

12 He opposed the treatment of a group of seven Göttingen professors who were dismissed and some of whom were exiled for speaking out in defence of the liberal Hanover constitution in 1837 (according to his memoirs; cf. also Schofield 2012: 22) and supported the liberal poet Hoffmann von Fallersleben when the latter was forced to resign from his post at Breslau University for political reasons in 1842 (Schofield 2012: 41). In 1844, he joined an association to help raise funds for the impoverished Silesian weavers (without, however, addressing the social causes of their poverty; Schofield 2012: 25). Despite their political differences, Freytag associated with authors of the radical *Junges Deutschland* and was a friend of Heinrich Laube (Schofield 2012: 71).

13 See, e.g. Freytag 1888 [1848]: 83, quoted in Ping 2006: 23.

14 Winkler 1978: 10

15 From a text of 1854 (quoted in Krieger 1957: 366). In a lecture on Fichte given in 1862 (published in *Die Grenzboten*), Treitschke quotes approvingly Fichte's statement that 'in Germany there will arise a true Empire of Right [*Reich des Rechts*] and of personal freedom, based on the equality of all human beings' (Langer 1998: 91).

16 The published correspondence between the two (Dove 1900) is likewise conspicuously silent on the issue. Examination of their unpublished correspondence might of course show another result.

17 Superficially, the notion of a Jewish refusal or hesitancy to 'amalgamate' echoes the traditional accusation of Jewish stubbornness, a familiar theme of anti-Jewish discourses that stems from the field of theology.

18 Quoted in Stoetzler 2008b: 146; the passage is from Treitschke's response to Heinrich Graetz.

19 'Stamm' literally means the trunk of a tree. The term *Stamm* 'was a central concept in German debates about national unity and diversity' in the period (Rahden 2006: 29); a 1819 edition of *Brockhaus* encyclopaedia stated for example that nations emerge from the mixing of *Stämme* (Rahden 2006: 36), in such contexts usually translated 'tribes'. *Stämme* are seen as the ethnic-racial-cultural 'raw material' of modern nations.

20 The last phrase of the quoted passage, 'as far as religion, tradition and racial characteristics allow this to happen' could be read in a more benign way as meaning that amalgamation should realistically not be understood to mean complete dissolution; even if that was the intended meaning, this would still merely gesture towards a rather unfriendly form of toleration of people who due to their characteristics cannot be entirely 'conducive to civilisation'.

21 Critical analyses of this text, questioning the all-too-simple assumption that pro-emancipation and anti-Jewish positions are mutually exclusive, are offered by Burdekin (2002: 79–86) and van Rahden (2008: 197).

22 The widespread image of a huge influx of Eastern Jews into Breslau that allegedly caused a plethora of social problems is wildly inadequate (van Rahden 2008: 194–7).

23 Freytag's text can thus be seen as emblematic for the problems besetting liberal assimilationist politics; cf. Berding 1996: 195; Herzog 1996: 59; Katz 1990: 147.

24 For a detailed interpretation of *Soll und Haben*, see Achinger 2007.

25 Tellingly, 'Prussian' and 'German' are largely used synonymously in the novel.

26 On the concept of a specifically German attitude to labour see also Campbell 1989.

27 Henceforth referred to as 'vol. 1' resp. 'vol. 2' in brackets in the text.

28 While it is not possible to assume, without further analysis, that quotations from fictional characters represent the value system governing a text, the congruence of Schröter's sentences, the explicit narrator commentary and the overarching system of values transported by the plot development as a whole support such an assumption in this case.

29 This is mirrored in their language: whereas in Rosmin, the Poles speak Polish and the Germans German, the Jewish trader slips through the crowd on market day 'like an eel', 'asking questions and answering in two languages at the same time' (vol. II: 198).

30 The only exception, apart from two marginal characters, is Bernhard, Ehrenthal's son and the token 'Good Jew' of the novel who seems to personify the liberal postulate of the possibility of acceptance and emancipation. As an intellectual and Orientalist, Bernhard briefly seems to

embody not just a model of a respectable German–Jewish existence but the promise of a different life beyond the narrow confines of German work ethics, and of a kind of ‘otherness’ that is neither threatening nor despised. Significantly, though, Bernhard is portrayed from the start as sickly and moribund, and dies early on in the novel, partly out of desolation about his father’s unscrupulous behaviour. In this way, he not only appears as a sort of principal witness against Jewish immorality, but the possibility of fruitful coexistence, ephemeral from the start, seems to die with him. On the status of this complex figure, see in more detail Achinger 2007: 233–44.

31 *Soll und Haben* was frequently invoked by National Socialists in support of racially anti-Semitic views.

32 ‘Die deutschen und die polnischen Bauern verehrten ihn als ihren Beschützer, und mit ihm seinen Freund, den kommandierenden General Grolman, der von den Polen fast noch grimmiger gehaßt wurde.’

33 Quoted in Kahan 2003: 170. Our argument on liberal anti-Semitism touches upon some of the same issues that Kahan addresses in his discussion of what he calls ‘aristocratic liberals’, including J. S. Mill, Tocqueville, and Jacob Burckhardt. Kahan points out that ‘[b]ourgeois culture, and liberalism, could and occasionally did include attitudes that ran counter to the commercial attributes associated with the middle class’, such as ‘an intense dislike for the “commercial spirit”, for money grubbing’ and such like (Kahan 2003: 170).

34 Cf. Dohm 1781, 1783; Möller 1980.

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