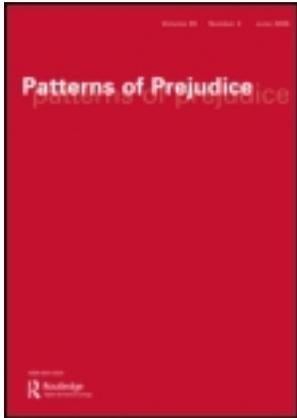


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Cultural difference in the national state: from trouser-selling Jews to unbridled multiculturalism

MARCEL STOETZLER

ABSTRACT Stoetzler explores a series of newspaper and journal articles published in Germany in 1879–81 that are part of what later came to be called the ‘Berlin Antisemitism Dispute’. In these articles, anti-Jewish remarks by the historian and right-wing liberal politician Heinrich von Treitschke were responded to by leading political and academic figures, including Theodor Mommsen, Moritz Lazarus and Ludwig Bamberger. Treitschke’s texts have been seen as crucial to the development of modern antisemitism in Germany, but the debate that they provoked also points to some of the conceptual weaknesses of the liberal critique of antisemitism. Stoetzler suggests that both Treitschke’s support for antisemitism and the ambivalence evident in the views of his opponents are rooted in the contradiction between inclusionary and exclusionary tendencies inherent in the nation-state. To the extent that liberal society constitutes itself in the form of a national state, it cannot but strive to guarantee, or produce, some degree of homogeneity or conformity in the form of a national culture that, in turn, cannot be separated from issues of morality and religion. Stoetzler argues that a discussion of the Berlin Antisemitism Dispute in its specific context of German nineteenth-century liberalism, if interpreted in the more general framework of modern liberal society, can contribute to current debates on nationalism, patriotism, ethnic minorities, immigration and ‘multicultural society’.

KEYWORDS antisemitism, Berlin Antisemitism Dispute, German nineteenth-century history, Heinrich von Treitschke, immigration, liberalism, Ludwig Börne, Moritz Lazarus, multiculturalism, national culture, nationalism, race, religion, Theodor Mommsen

How does the liberal state act when some, or even most, members of civil society find—for good or bad reasons, or both—particular cultural practices of some of its members obnoxious, hypocritical, anachronistic, superstitious, anti-liberal, aesthetically displeasing, clannish and cliquish, or,

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horror of horrors, a threat to ‘community cohesion’?¹ Common sense might tell you that reasonable and well-meaning people would be able to strike the right balance between affirming the ‘multicultural’ right to difference and asserting liberal values, but closer scrutiny points to a fundamental contradiction. The modern liberal state appears to be an institution dedicated to easing societal antagonisms by administering gentle social and cultural reforms in the name of justice and equality. However, in order to be able to do so, the state claims to be the expression of a particular national culture: the liberal state typically comes in the form of the nation-state, the state of a particular nation.² The social harmony, cohesion and inclusion that it promises are in reality those of the national community, and thus inevitably exclusionary at the same time.³ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer remarked on this fundamental limitation of liberal society at the moment it was at breaking point, during the Holocaust, when they observed: ‘The liberal Jews were made to experience at last the harmony of society, which they had embraced and promoted, as the harmony of the *Volksgemeinschaft* . . .’⁴

David Goodhart, a former journalist for the *Financial Times* and editor of the British right-wing liberal journal *Prospect*, managed early in 2004 to capture a crucial bit of *Zeitgeist* and considerable attention with a persuasively written opinion piece entitled ‘Too Diverse’. Goodhart wrote about the ‘progressive dilemma’, quoting the conservative politician David Willetts: ‘Progressives want diversity, but they thereby undermine part of the moral consensus on which a large welfare state rests.’⁵ Goodhart’s primary concern here was with the dangers of ‘tax resistance’: a lack of moral consensus—particularly in the sense that morally ‘undeserving’ people receive hand-outs from the state—could endanger the fiscal basis of the

- 1 On the racist implications of the concept of ‘community cohesion’, see Jonathan Burnett, ‘Community, cohesion and the state’, *Race & Class*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2004, 1–18, esp. 11–12.
- 2 David Lloyd and Paul Thomas, *Culture and the State* (New York and London: Routledge 1998).
- 3 Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class. Ambiguous Identities*, Balibar trans. from the French by Chris Turner (London: Verso 1991).
- 4 This is an amended version of the translation in Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. from the German by John Cumming (London: Verso 1997), 169f. This sentence, from the first section of ‘Elemente des Antisemitismus’, reads in German: ‘Die Harmonie der Gesellschaft, zu der die liberalen Juden sich bekannten, mussten sie zuletzt als die der Volksgemeinschaft an sich selbst erfahren’ (Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Frankfurt-on-Main: Suhrkamp 1971), 152). A more recent translation misleadingly suggests that ‘the harmonious society . . . has finally been granted to them in the form of the national community’ (Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, tran. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2002), 138). All translations from the German, unless otherwise stated, are by the author.
- 5 David Goodhart, ‘Too diverse’, *Prospect*, February 2004.

welfare state. This argument is however only a particular instance of the more general problem (as old as the modern age) that the state itself, not only the apparent beneficiaries of the welfare it may provide, must appear to 'deserve' society's entrusting to it a large portion of its surplus product. Refusing to squander even minute amounts of money on welfare scroungers, work-refuseniks and those who choose lifestyles, beliefs and attitudes that the majority frowns upon is only one of the ways in which the state can score points for legitimacy.

Painfully aware of the fundamental precariousness of the liberal state, Goodhart argued that 'the left ... is ready to stress the erosion of community from "bad" forms of diversity, such as market individualism, but not from "good" forms of diversity, such as sexual freedom and immigration'.⁶ Contrary to what 'the left' proposes, Goodhart's argument implies that we should not rock the boat with too many sexual, immigration and other funny freedoms because 'community', namely in its current form as 'society' (to use Ferdinand Tönnies's concepts),⁷ is already suffering badly from the effects of 'market individualism'. We are warned that exaggerated liberalism, that is, more individualism than what the market economy *inevitably* brings with it, endangers the continued existence of the liberal state itself.⁸

In an earlier episode of the same ongoing discourse, the then British Home Secretary David Blunkett pointed in September 2002 to 'a continuing tension between modernity and the cultural practices of some of those entering highly advanced countries' who, 'because of education or geography, find themselves catapulted into effectively different centuries'. The 'clash of modernity with long held cultural traditions' must be recognized by the liberal state as a 'challenge', something about which Pim Fortuyn (the populist Dutch politician who had then only recently been murdered) 'had a point to make', as Blunkett acknowledged.⁹

In the following essay I will step back from these musings by various contemporary liberals who want 'to assert their antiliberal opinions',¹⁰ and explore a historical debate that took place over a century ago, known as the 'Berlin Antisemitism Dispute'. In this dispute, which began in 1879, the German historian and National Liberal (Nationalliberale Partei) politician Heinrich von Treitschke famously saw hordes of 'trouser selling youths'—that is, Jews—pouring out of the mediaeval darkness of Eastern Europe into the high modernity of the Bismarck *Reich*, giving eloquent

6 Ibid.

7 Ferdinand Tönnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundbegriffe der reinen Soziologie* [1887] (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 2005).

8 This, incidentally, is a concern that has been crucial to the discipline of sociology since it first emerged.

9 David Blunkett, 'Integration with diversity: globalisation and the renewal of democracy and civil society', in Mark Leonard and Phoebe Griffith (eds), *Reclaiming Britishness* (London: Foreign Policy Centre 2002).

10 Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1997), 200.

expression to a pattern of thought that still underpins—I want to suggest—the current debate on immigration, the need for social cohesion in spite of ‘market individualism’ and the clash of civilizations.

In making this move, I am led by the hope that a shift of scenery and historical context may open up a new, and perhaps enlightening, perspective on what I argue was then as fundamental a problem for liberal society as it is today. Although this study will focus on the phenomenon of modern antisemitism, I am in this instance not interested in finding a theoretical explanation for antisemitism as such. But, in a discussion of the relationship of the nation-state to ‘cultural difference’, one of the conditions of modernity that provided antisemitism with a platform from which it was (and in some way or other still is) able to unfold its destructive potential can arguably be exposed.¹¹ As the idea of the nation and, more generally, liberalism’s dependence on invoking social harmony and ‘moral cohesion’ have a plethora of other, perhaps more obvious, implications, the perspective suggested in this essay allows reconnecting antisemitism to issues of inclusion and exclusion in antagonistic societies, from *Volksgemeinschaft* and ‘national community’ to ‘social cohesion’.

As the concept of ‘liberalism’, highly contentious though it is, frames my argument, a few words of definition are needed. A major source of confusion is that, historically, the presuppositions of the liberal world-view (societal liberalism) and the more practical propositions of liberal politics (political liberalism) have not necessarily—and perhaps not even typically—coincided: invocations of progress, civilization, ‘industry and liberty’, individualism and social harmony can in practice lend themselves to very different and contradictory policies.¹² Accordingly, a look at the history of

11 It goes without saying that the presence or absence of further conditions dictated whether or not this potential was realized in one country or another. The present essay abstracts from this particular problem.

12 George L. Mosse suggested distinguishing between ‘liberal thought’—in particular individualism and the concept of *Bildung* as an unending process—from ‘liberal politics’; George L. Mosse, ‘German Jews and liberalism in retrospect. Introduction to Year Book XXXII’, *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. 32, 1987, xiii–xxv (xiv). Jarausch and Jones write similarly that liberalism is not only ‘an organized political movement’ but also ‘a set of cultural attitudes, social practices, and economic principles’; Konrad H. Jarausch and Larry Eugene Jones, ‘German liberalism reconsidered: inevitable decline, bourgeois hegemony or partial achievement?’, in Konrad H. Jarausch and Larry Eugene Jones (eds), *In Search of a Liberal Germany. Studies in the History of German Liberalism from 1789 to the Present* (New York, Oxford and Munich: Berg 1990), 1–23 (13). Arblaster suggests that the only positions that ought to be called ‘liberal’ in the full sense of the word are those that pursue specifically liberal *goals and values*—such as individual rights and freedoms, limited government, religious tolerance, free market economics—against the backdrop of a specifically liberal *world-view*, namely, methodological individualism, secularism, confidence in the use of reason, confidence in progress; Anthony Arblaster, *The Rise and Decline of Western Liberalism* (Oxford: Blackwell 1984), 11ff. This definition has the advantage that it acknowledges that goals that are typically pursued by liberals can also be pursued by people who have

the concept—its *Begriffsgeschichte*—might be of use. The political concept of ‘liberalism’ emerged in the context of the French Revolution (the period of the *Directoire*) as the predominant centrist position in opposition to, at once, reaction and (revolutionary, democratic or socialist) radicalism.¹³ Liberalism was supposed to be the politics that would underwrite social harmony, by implication, the very existence of society itself, in spite of social contradictions. The advent of modern class society as shaped by industrial capitalism and its sharpened antagonisms led to a redefinition of the liberal notion of social harmony and how it was to be secured.¹⁴ German National Liberalism—to which Treitschke, Ludwig Bamberger, Theodor Mommsen and Heinrich Bernhard Oppenheim, whose ideas will be explored in what follows, adhered—emerged out of the experience of 1848 and held that the liberal vision of a harmonious society could only be maintained by an alliance with the traditional ruling classes since democratic-republican populism was ready to take advantage of any power vacuum caused by a defeat of the aristocracy. In the German case, National Liberals entrusted the Prussian state with the task of dismantling traditional social structures in the different German states without allowing any such power vacuum to emerge.¹⁵ German National Liberals assumed that the modernizing dynamic of national unification would quasi-automatically transform non-bourgeois political forms. Therefore, a ‘realist’ alliance with the representatives of such

different (for example socialist or conservative) world-views, and also that liberal presuppositions (in ideological terms) can lead to ‘illiberal conclusions’ (as in the case of Hobbes). Wallerstein makes a similar case with his suggestion that there be a distinction between ‘lower-case’ and ‘upper-case’ liberalism: the former is ‘the global ideology’ or ‘the geoculture . . . of the modern world-system’ while the latter refers to a particular movement or party within this ideological framework; Immanuel Wallerstein, *After Liberalism* (New York: New Press 1995), 1.

13 Rudolf Vierhaus, ‘Liberalismus’, in Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck (eds), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 3 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1982), 741–85.

14 German liberalism before the caesura of 1848 was very much centred on the notion of a (quasi-natural) social harmony that ought not to be disturbed by class-based organizations. See Dieter Langewiesche, *Liberalism in Germany*, trans. from the German by Christiane Banerji (Basingstoke: Macmillan 2000).

15 There is a growing consensus now that the dynamics of ‘bourgeois revolution’, and the profile of ‘liberalism’ within it, are similar in the German, French and English cases; see George C. Comninel, *Rethinking the French Revolution. Marxism and the Revisionist Challenge* (London: Verso 1987). Parts of this debate are also shaped by Gramsci’s notion of the ‘passive revolution’; see Jan Rehmann, *Max Weber, Modernisierung als passive Revolution: Kontextstudien zu Politik, Philosophie und Religion im Übergang zum Fordismus* (Berlin: Argument 1998); Christine Buci-Glucksmann, ‘Passive revolution and the politics of reform’, in Anne Showstack Sassoon (ed.), *Approaches to Gramsci* (London: Writers and Readers 1982), 127–48; Wolfgang Dressen, *Gesetz und Gewalt, 1848: Revolution als Ordnungsmacht* (Berlin: Aufbau 1999); and David Blackbourn and Richard J. Evans (eds), *The German Bourgeoisie. Essays on the Social History of the German Middle Class from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Century* (London and New York: Routledge 1991).

forms (Bismarck in particular) could appear to be of long-term benefit to the liberal cause. At the same time, the hostility of National Liberals towards state-led social policy was somewhat equivocal: *petit-bourgeois* liberalism before 1848 held that it was the task of the state to underwrite social harmony; and, in the 1880s, some liberals—right-wing liberals, namely those who opposed left-wing, or ‘Manchester’, free-trade liberalism—likewise advocated moderate state-socialist reform. The continued existence of opposition within liberalism to what German liberals called ‘English conditions’ or ‘Manchester capitalism’ (espousing free trade, individualism, minimal state capitalism)—what antisemites called ‘Jewish capitalism’—on the grounds that they undermined national unity constituted an important ideological bridge between liberal and antisemitic nationalism.

In November 1879 the German National Liberal historian and politician Heinrich von Treitschke (1834–96) reflected, in a review of current affairs, on the anti-Jewish activities of some groups and individuals, particularly in Berlin, in a way that was generally understood to support their cause. This text sparked what later came to be known as the Berlin Antisemitism Dispute (*Berliner Antisemitismusstreit*).¹⁶ The best known among the

16 The moniker ‘Berliner Antisemitismusstreit’ seems to have been coined by the journalist Walter Boehlich who used it as the title of his edited collection of most of the more important texts (in German), *Der Berliner Antisemitismusstreit* (Frankfurt-on-Main: Insel 1965). In 2004 the Zentrum für Antisemitismusforschung in Berlin published the much more comprehensive, annotated, two-volume, 900-page *Kommentierte Quellenedition*, edited by Karsten Krieger. A good survey and discussion of the dispute in English is given in Gary A. Abraham, *Max Weber and the Jewish Question. A Study of the Social Outlook of His Sociology* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press 1992). Apart from this, no English-language contribution has surpassed Michael Meyer’s essay, ‘Great debate on antisemitism: Jewish reaction to new hostility in Germany 1879–1881’, *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book*, vol. 11, 1966, 137–69. Uffa Jensen, in *Gebildete Doppelgänger. Bürgerliche Juden und Protestanten im neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2005), framed his subject as a critique of what he called the ‘bürgerliche Bildungskultur’, the culture of the educated bourgeoisie that was the intellectual milieu of both Treitschke and his critics. The classic sociological interpretation of the dispute is Arthur Rosenberg, ‘Treitschke und die Juden. Zur Soziologie der deutschen akademischen Reaktion’, *Die Gesellschaft. Internationale Revue für Sozialismus und Politik*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1930, 78–83. This article and the respective passages in Paul W. Massing’s classic *Rehearsal for Destruction. A Study of Political Anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany* (New York: Harper & Brothers 1949), are still the backbone of critical scholarship on this subject. An important recent contribution that develops some of the dispute’s implications for political theory is Hans Joachim Salecker, *Der Liberalismus und die Erfahrung der Differenz. Über die Bedingungen der Integration der Juden in Deutschland* (Berlin and Bodenheim: Philo 1999). Also useful is Ulrich Langer’s biography, *Heinrich von Treitschke. Politische Biographie eines deutschen Nationalisten* (Düsseldorf: Droste 1998). Klaus Holz, in his *Nationaler Antisemitismus. Wissenssoziologie einer Weltanschauung* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition 2001), provides an analysis of the semantic structure of Treitschke’s first statement, which he claims is a founding text of

respondents to Treitschke's remarks were the social scientist Moritz Lazarus (1824–1903), the historian Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903) and the banker and politician Ludwig Bamberger (1823–93). The historical background to the dispute is marked by the foundation of the German *Reich* in 1871 after a particularly brutal war between Prussia and France. The year 1879 also saw the formation of some fringe groups of radical antisemites, in the context of which the word 'antisemitism' itself was coined.¹⁷

Treitschke's texts are notorious for catchy antisemitic formulations, such as 'the Jews are our misfortune' or 'our country is invaded year after year by multitudes of assiduous trouser-selling youths from the inexhaustible cradle of Poland'.¹⁸ They are generally acknowledged to have been crucial to modern antisemitism achieving hegemony in Germany, although less for their originality than for their suggestive formulations and resonance. However, Treitschke is not easy to dismiss as a racist and anti-liberal demagogue. He is interesting particularly because he was a figure at the centre, not the margins, of German society.¹⁹ In the dispute, nationalist liberals responded to a fellow nationalist liberals' anti-Jewish remarks, while both sides were equally committed to defending and helping to consolidate the newly founded German nation-state.²⁰ As I will show, both sides shared assumptions about the national state, emancipation and the status of cultural or ethnic minorities. Methodologically speaking, it is arguably by looking at the moment of greatest dissent within any particular historical constellation (in this case, German National Liberalism) that one can best grasp the essence of its implicit consensus. Much of the response to Treitschke confirmed rather than challenged the fundamental premises of his position.

a specific world-view that Holz refers to as 'national antisemitism'. Most instructive and closest to my own perspective are the relevant passages in Detlev Claussen, *Vom Judenhass zum Antisemitismus. Materialien einer verleugneten Geschichte* (Darmstadt: Luchterhand 1987), and Jan Philipp Reemtsma, 'Die Falle des Antirassismus', in Jan Philipp Reemtsma, *u.a. Falun, Reden und Aufsätze* (Berlin: Bittermann 1992).

17 On this stage in the development of antisemitism in Germany, see (in addition to others already mentioned) Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1988), and Massimo Ferrari Zumbini, *Le radici del male: l'antisemitismo in Germania, da Bismarck a Hitler* (Bologna: Il Mulino 2001).

18 Heinrich von Treitschke, 'Unsere Aussichten' [1879], in Heinrich von Treitschke, *Deutsche Kämpfe* (Leipzig: Hirzel 1896), 1–28 (26, 23).

19 On Treitschke's liberalism, see Langer, *Heinrich von Treitschke*; Edward N. Megay, 'Treitschke reconsidered: the Hegelian tradition of German liberalism', *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, vol. 2, 1958, 298–317; Leonard Krieger, *The German Idea of Freedom* (Chicago: Chicago University Press 1957); and Guido de Ruggiero, *The History of European Liberalism* [1927], trans. from the Italian by R. G. Collingwood (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith 1981).

20 Treitschke had been a member of the leading National Liberal Party but left it in July 1879 because it was less than unanimous in its support for the introduction of a number of tariffs.

A systematic reading of the Berlin Antisemitism Dispute can help us relate the development of modern antisemitism in the late nineteenth century to that of modern European thinking about state, society and individual. I let myself be guided here by Reinhard Rürup's suggestive formula that antisemitism is the 'travesty of a theory of society'.²¹

I will present some of the main issues that were at stake in the dispute, drawing on my work on the source material, and then point to some of the ways in which the event and its context illuminate each other.²² I will begin with the debate about the cultural aspect of the Jews' German nationality, or rather their lack thereof, the notions of emancipation and national-cultural amalgamation, the question of the desirability of the mixing of cultures, the Jewish economic spirit, and the role religion played in all of these issues.

In one of the key passages of the article that triggered the Berlin Antisemitism Dispute, Treitschke stated the following:

What we must demand from our Jewish fellow-citizens is simple: that they become Germans, feel themselves simply and justly to be Germans, regardless of their faith and their old sacred memories, which all of us hold in reverence; for we do not want thousands of years of Germanic civilization (*Gesittung*) to be followed by an era of German-Jewish mixed culture (*Mischkultur*). . . . it cannot be denied, however, that there are numerous and powerful groups among our Jewry who definitely do not seriously intend to become simply Germans.²³

The logical structure of this statement is contradictory: the demand that Jews become Germans regardless of 'faith' and 'memories' seems to imply that religion was irrelevant to being German. This 'demand' appears to be a statement about state citizenship and loyalty only. Treitschke's specification of Germanness as 'feeling' oneself to be German, however, seems to characterize 'becoming German' as a process in which a choice that is political as well as cultural is internalized. This impression is confirmed by the subsequent clause—the clause introduced by 'for'—in which Treitschke explains why he demands that Jews become Germans: 'we' do not want 'Germanic civilization' to be replaced by a 'mixed culture'. The desire—a statement about 'civilization' and 'culture'—provides Treitschke with the reason for his demand that Jews 'become German'. If concern about the purity of German culture provides the grounds for the demand, the latter cannot be primarily a state-political issue, but must be a cultural one. It is

21 Reinhard Rürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus. Studien zur 'Judenfrage' der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt-on-Main: Fischer 1987), 115.

22 A comprehensive analysis of the dispute, as well as complete translations of Treitschke's 'Unsere Aussichten' (Our prospects), Lazarus's 'Was heisst national?' (What does national mean?) and the mock-Börne text, are contained in my *The State, the Nation and the Jews. The Antisemitism Dispute in Bismarck's Germany* (forthcoming from University of Nebraska Press).

23 Treitschke, 'Unsere Aussichten', 23.

doubtful then how ‘faith and . . . old sacred memories’ could be bracketed out of the equation. Here lies a blatant contradiction in Treitschke’s discourse. What *ex post* analysis can pinpoint as a theoretical weakness, though, seems to have worked in Treitschke’s favour rather than against him as it reflected—as logical ambivalence—an actual contradiction inherent in the type of society for which he was an eloquent spokesman.

The most authoritative and momentous statement opposing Treitschke’s anti-Jewish remarks was the ‘Declaration of the Notables’, published widely in November 1880 by a group of seventy-five leading politicians, businessmen and academics of Berlin. The declaration was a particularly confident formulation of modern (which means, in the German context, post-1848) liberalism’s emphasis on the intrinsic connection between national unity, individual liberty and market economy. It is implied that endangering one element of this packet endangers all of them.

Fierce struggles have united our fatherland into a powerfully rising Empire. Unity has been achieved because the feeling of necessary belonging (*nothwendigen Zusammengehörigkeit*) brought victory over the tribal and religious divisions that had fragmented our nation like no other. Making individual members [of the nation] pay for these divisions is unfair and vulgar and mostly punishes those who honestly and seriously strive to overcome [their] particularity and achieve true amalgamation with the nation (*in treuem Zusammengehen mit der Nation die Sonderart abzuwerfen*). They experience [this discrimination] as a breach of loyalty from those with whom they feel they are striving for the same goals. It prevents what is and remains the common goal: the harmonization of all past divisions that still continue to exist within the German nation. . . . respect for every denomination; equal rights; equal competition under the sun; equal recognition of merit and achievement for Christians and Jews.²⁴

Although being directed against (among others) Treitschke, the declaration took up the same basic theme—nation-building through amalgamation and the overcoming of particularity—with a different emphasis on its political-economic implications.

The liberal consensus on the necessity of getting rid of antiquated customs is further illustrated by an anonymous pamphlet whose author pretended (or rather, pretended to pretend) to be Ludwig Börne (who had died in 1837). Using formulations by Börne, this pamphleteer told the following parable:

The storm and the sun had an argument about who was more powerful. The storm tried to snatch a coat away from a wanderer—in vain; the more it blew the more the wanderer wrapped himself into the coat. The sun came out with its light and

24 ‘Erklärung’ [1880], quoted in Boehlich (ed.), *Der Berliner Antisemitismusstreit*, 202, 204. The complete text of the declaration in English is in Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Antisemitism*, 326–7.

mildness—the wanderer took off the coat. The Jews are such wanderers, rabbinism is such a coat, you [Treitschke] are the storm—but the sun has started to shine!²⁵

This text is as optimistic and confident as the declaration, invoking assimilation as an inevitable effect of increased social opportunities.

Ludwig Bamberger, a leading member of the National Liberal Party that Treitschke had left just a few months earlier, reminded Treitschke of what tended to be at the time the National Liberal understanding of the concept of culture: ‘... culture is just the opposite of the linear propagation of a single national spirit (*Volkgeist*), and German culture has such high standing because it has managed to assimilate and digest so much.’²⁶ Treitschke responded with a more sophisticated restatement of his own view, commenting on what, in today’s parlance, would be referred to as cultural ‘hybridity’:²⁷

The intellectual work of past millennia is given to all modern peoples to lean on. Although our German culture (*Gesittung*) flows ... from three sources, classical antiquity, Christianity and Germanity, it is not at all a mixed culture: we have amalgamated the Christian and the classical ideals with our own essence (*Wesen*) so totally that they have become part of our flesh and blood. But we do not want the neo-Jewish spirit (*das neujüdische Wesen*) to join these three cultural powers as a fourth one because whatever elements of Judaism fit in with the German genius have long been included in our culture through the mediation of Christianity. ... the neo-Jewish spirit leads our people astray when it faces them independently.²⁸

Bamberger and Treitschke shared the notion of national cultures emerging over time through the ‘amalgamation’ or ‘assimilation’ of disparate

25 Löb Baruch (Ludwig Börne), *Börne und Treitschke. Offenes Sendschreiben über die Juden von Löb Baruch (Dr. Ludwig Börne) an den deutschen Reichstagsabgeordneten und Heidelberger Professor Dr. Heinrich Gotthard von Treitschke* (Berlin: Verlag von Stein 1880). This passage, like most of the text, is taken from (the real) Börne’s brilliant ‘Der ewige Jude’ (literally ‘The eternal Jew’ but principally meaning ‘They go on and on about the Jews ...’, a somewhat tongue-in-cheek moan) of 1821. The parable is introduced in the original text as a children’s morality tale; Ludwig Börne, ‘Der ewige Jude’ [1821], in *Über den Antisemitismus. Ein Mahnruf aus vergangenen Tagen* (Vienna: Frank 1885), 21–67 (35f.). The last sentence of the passage in the 1880 pamphlet is different to Börne’s original of 1821: ‘... but the sun has started to shine’ was originally ‘and the sun—is now forced to shine in America’ (36). This small shift says a lot: whereas the real Börne only saw the sun shining in post-revolutionary ‘America’, mock-Börne had it shining in the German *Reich*, Treitschke notwithstanding.

26 Ludwig Bamberger, ‘Deutschtum und Judentum’ [1880], in Boehlich (ed.), *Der Berliner Antisemitismusstreit*, 149–79 (171f.).

27 See Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge 1994).

28 Heinrich von Treitschke, ‘Noch einige Bemerkungen zur Judenfrage’ [1880], in Treitschke, *Deutsche Kämpfe*, 47–63 (54).

elements, a pivotal idea of nineteenth-century liberal nationalism.²⁹ Their disagreement was over the particulars of the recipe. At what point was the ideal mixture found? Should there be another helping of Judaism in the mix or would that mean over-egging the cake?

A different articulation of the liberal conception of German nation-building was offered by the historian Theodor Mommsen.³⁰ Mommsen reacted to Treitschke's reference to a passage in Mommsen's widely read major work, *Römische Geschichte* (*Roman History*),³¹ a passage that Mommsen did not want to be seen as supporting the antisemitic cause. In *Römische Geschichte*, Mommsen depicted the formation of the Roman Empire as a process of 'national decomposition' in the course of which 'the Greek and the Latin nationality find a peace with each other' that is based on 'the rubble of second rate peoples'.³² Greek and Latin elements are the 'positive' elements of the new citizenry, while the Jews and others form the 'parasitical' Hellenistic-Oriental population of Rome (*Ostjuden avant la lettre*). The 'barbarian' nations had to be destroyed, but the Jews—that 'peculiar, flexible but enduring people'—could act 'as it were' as a third party.³³

Already then we find the distinct antipathy of the Occidentals against this thoroughly Oriental race and its foreign opinions and mores. Nevertheless, this Jewry—although it was not the most pleasant aspect of the nowhere pleasant picture of the miscegenation of peoples (*Völkermengung*) of the day—was a historical element that developed in the natural course of things.³⁴

Caesar wanted to take advantage of two characteristics of the Jews: first, their indifferent behaviour towards any state; and, second, their tendency to adopt any nationality to a certain extent in order to 'wrap up' (*umhüllen*) their 'national particularity'. The passage to which Treitschke referred in 1880 was:³⁵

29 On the liberal notion of *Mischkultur* (mixed culture), see Abraham, *Max Weber and the Jewish Question*.

30 Mommsen was also one of the key signatories of the 'Declaration of the Notables'.

31 The first three volumes were published between 1854–6, a fourth volume was never written and the fifth volume appeared in 1885. Mommsen's *Römische Geschichte* had considerable influence among the German educated classes, especially through the positive depiction of Julius Caesar, often seen as an endorsement of the kind of politics for which Bismarck came to stand.

32 Christhard Hoffmann, *Juden und Judentum im Werk deutscher Althistoriker des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts* (Leiden: Brill 1988), 89.

33 Theodor Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, vol. 3, 2nd edn (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung 1857), 529f. (book 5, ch. 11).

34 Ibid.

35 Heinrich von Treitschke, 'Eine Erwiderung' [1880], in Treitschke, *Deutsche Kämpfe*, 123–5.

Already in the old world, the Jews/Judaism (*Judenthum*) created a powerful ferment of cosmopolitanism and national decomposition and for this reason were/was a particularly legitimate member of the Caesarian state whose polity was nothing but cosmopolitanism, whose nationality (*Volksthümlichkeit*) was nothing but humanity.³⁶

In his response to Treitschke, Mommsen emphasized that this earlier passage (which became a staple reference in antisemitic literature after Treitschke quoted it) actually had been meant to *celebrate* the constructive role that Jewish destructiveness has for the processes of state-formation:

Without doubt the Jews are an element of tribal decomposition in Germany just as they once were an element of national decomposition in the Roman state. This is why in the German capital, where the tribes actually mingle more thoroughly than anywhere else, the Jews hold a position for which they are envied in other places.³⁷

The equivalent of the *nationes* in the Roman Empire was the 'tribes' (*Stämme*) in the new German Empire. Their decomposition was a precondition of state-formation. By using Mommsen's formulation of the 'ferment' of 'national decomposition', Treitschke associated Mommsen's view of the Jews with his own and that of the antisemites. Liberal defence of the Jews was henceforth vulnerable to the embarrassing fact that Mommsen, one of not too many non-Jewish defenders of Jewish emancipation, had himself provided a formulation that became a much used antisemitic slogan.³⁸ Treitschke's use of Mommsen's formulation was not as disingenuous as Mommsen furiously claimed it was.

Mommsen connected his rejection of Treitschke's position to his own view of nation-building:

I am not so estranged from my homeland, however, that I would not painfully feel [the loss of] something I used to have and that my children will miss. But the happiness of children and the pride of men do not go together. A certain amount of a mutual grinding down [of their peculiarities] on the part of the tribes (*ein gewisses Abschleifen der Stämme an einander*) is unconditionally demanded by the current situation, that is, the formation of a German nationality that is not identical with any particular tribe (*Landsmannschaft*). The big cities, and first of all

36 Mommsen, *Römische Geschichte*, 529f. Christhard Hoffmann points out that the notion of the Jews as a fermenting agent or 'Gärungsmittel' and as instrumental to the development of western civilization was already developed by Moses Hess in his *Europäische Triarchie* of 1841 (Hoffmann, *Juden und Judentum*, 95).

37 Theodor Mommsen, 'Auch ein Wort über unser Judenthum' [1880], in Boehlich (ed.), *Der Berliner Antisemitismusstreit*, 210–25 (217).

38 Hoffmann references among others Paul de Lagarde, Hitler and Göbbels (Hoffmann, *Juden und Judentum*, 102).

Berlin, are its natural protagonists. I do not consider it at all a misfortune that the Jews have been active in this direction for generations. It is my opinion that Providence, much more than Herr Stöcker, has understood very well why a few per cent of Israel had to be added to form the Germanic metal.³⁹

Progress in nation-building was presented as a quasi-natural process that had to be somewhat painful. So, stop whining and grow up, was Mommsen's message to Treitschke. A large part of the rhetorical and emotive power of Mommsen's statement lay in its ambivalence: Mommsen admitted that the process of nation-building came with pain and losses that needed to be acknowledged, without, however, letting oneself be locked into provincialist melancholia and regression. His affirmative depiction of the role of the Jews for the modernizing process still left the antisemitic stereotype intact: Mommsen implicitly accepted the antisemitic diagnosis of the 'Jewification' of society but recommended putting up with and embracing it, rather than opposing what was inevitable.

Treitschke connected the 'Jewish question' to the question of statehood in several ways. Central to Treitschke's view of the Jews was what seemed to him their lack of ability to build a state of their own:

The question cannot be denied: why did so many noble and highly gifted nations vent the base and—I do not avoid the word—diabolical drives slumbering in the depths of their souls exclusively on the Jewish people? The answer is simple. Since its dispersion over the whole of the world, Jewry existed in an irresolvable inner contradiction; it suffered the tragic fate of a nation without a state. The Jews always wanted to live under the protection of Occidental laws . . . and yet claimed to be a strictly separate nation. Such an attitude always had to provoke new struggles because it stands in such fierce contradiction to the hard necessity of the unity of the state (*zu der harten Nothwendigkeit der Staatseinheit*).⁴⁰

The root of all Jewish defects was this lack of statehood, an argument that seems to echo the Hegelian notion of the 'historyless people'. In an environment that was characterized by the necessity that all (other) nations form states, this anomaly of the Jews could not but lead to trouble; even 'noble and highly gifted nations' (we think of the Germans for example) are driven by the Jews into hating them. One can also sense an element of projection here as a 'nation without a state' is just what German nationalists had thought Germany was until less than a decade earlier.

39 Theodor Mommsen, 'Auch ein Wort über unser Judenthum', 218. The court chaplain in Berlin, Adolf Stöcker, perhaps the most prominent populist antisemite at the time, had given a widely reported speech just a few months before Treitschke published 'Unsere Aussichten' that overlapped considerably with Treitschke's argument.

40 Heinrich von Treitschke, 'Herr Graetz und sein Judenthum' [1879], in Treitschke, *Deutsche Kämpfe*, 29–46 (37f.).

But Treitschke argued that, on top of, and in spite of, being unable to form a state, the Jews still maintained a sense of separate nationhood:

Today the unfortunate struggle is settled, civil equality of the Jews has long been achieved in all civilized states (*Kulturstaaten*), and in all of Germany I do not know one sensible politician who would want to overturn this accomplished fact. . . . 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 play a role that is peaceful and conducive to civilization (*der Gesittung förderliche*) only if they decide to dissolve into the civilized peoples (*Kulturvölkern*), whose languages they speak—as far as religion, tradition and tribal characteristics (*Stammesart*) allow this to happen.⁴¹

Not being able to build a state, the Jews ought to give up their nationality in order to be ‘conducive to civilization’, that is, not to stand in the way of the other nations’ nation-building. Although all their reasonable demands had been met, the Jews continued to be a hindrance to the civilized integration of national society. Treitschke appealed to the Jews to give up their stubborn resistance to assimilation but added the important caveat that they might be prevented from doing so by their ‘religion, tradition and tribal characteristics’. The hidden complicity between the liberal expectation that the Jews give up their Jewishness (like that old coat mentioned in the mock-Börne text), and the (implicitly racist) suspicion that they could not do so was cleverly exploited by the radical antisemite Naudh: ‘According to the liberal textbook, all men (*Menschen*) are equal and thus it is a mere matter of impoliteness on the part of the Jews that they are Jews.’⁴²

One contributor to the dispute, the social scientist Moritz Lazarus, advocated diversity in terms astonishingly close to today’s liberal multiculturalism. He commented:

Mores, customs, strivings, lifestyles can, may and should be diverse; they will have to be objectively different because they are meant to be the ultimate, the

41 *Ibid.*, 38.

42 H. Naudh, ‘Professoren über Israel. Von Treitschke und Bresslau’ [1880], in Boehlich (ed.), *Der Berliner Antisemitismustreit*, 180–202 (184). Naudh, apparently a pseudonym of Heinrich Nordmann, was the author of one of the most emblematic texts of racial, anti-Christian antisemitism, ‘The Jews and the German state’, first published in 1862 or even earlier. Naudh succeeded Wilhelm Marr in April 1880 (according to comments in the publication) as editor of the extreme and short-lived but highly influential journal *Die Deutsche Wacht. Monatsschrift für nationale Kulturinteressen: Organ der antijüdischen Vereinigung*.

most pure, the most certain for everyone [subjectively]. . . . How will truth grow if not through spiritual struggle . . . through the competition of forces?⁴³

Lazarus defended diversity in the name of ‘the competition of forces’ and the notion that ‘truth’ grows thanks to it. His choice of words located his argument not far from the view of political economists that general wealth grew through economic competition. For Lazarus, ‘the permanent vocation of the Jews’ was to be promoters of difference, a role Jews and Germans held in common. The Jews, ‘by participating in various national spirits’, became themselves more and more diverse, while ‘the generic’ increasingly became their own particular characteristic, replacing what previously had been their nationality.⁴⁴ Lazarus saw at the root of the problem of Jew-hatred a conception of history that was teleological and linear. He rejected the notion that the earlier ‘stage’ of a development had a right to exist only in so far as it ‘gave birth’ to the subsequent ‘stage’ or form of existence.⁴⁵ He argued that ‘the generic’ or ‘humanity’ was not the *result* of an evolutionary process but the totality of all the forms or individuals that evolved during the process. Rather than believing that history was evolving towards an ‘end’—be this the end of ‘the individual’ or of ‘the nation’—it ought to be understood that ‘the whole great diversity of spiritual life and creation’ was ‘precious in itself’.

Here [in the linear and teleological conception of history] lies the deepest root of all intolerance. This is why for the Catholic, Protestantism is nothing but heresy, while for the Protestant, Catholicism is but a preparatory stage. . . . It has been held as an ideal that the whole world should adopt the culture of one people: all should become Roman or French. True culture, though, consists in diversity.⁴⁶

In a Herderian tone, Lazarus condemned the cultural imperialism of Roman and then French culture although he did not reject the notions of development and progress in general. The ‘ultimate’ though consisted for him not in ‘unity’ but in ‘totality’ and ‘diversity’, ‘which neither can nor should be destroyed’.

In a key passage of his speech Lazarus discussed Treitschke’s ‘demand’ that the Jews become Germans, developing his concept of the specific role of the Jews within the German nation. First of all, Lazarus asserted—following Treitschke—the necessity of ongoing struggle for national unity: ‘All of us

43 Moritz Lazarus, *Was heisst national? Ein Vortrag* (Berlin: Dümmlers 1880), 42. This lecture was delivered on 2 December 1879 to a general meeting of the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums, an opportunity that Lazarus used for promoting self-understanding among the Jewish community in relation to the issues addressed by Treitschke. The printed version of the speech was widely circulated.

44 *Ibid.*, 44.

45 *Ibid.*, 41.

46 *Ibid.*

who care for the ideal and its fulfilment should struggle together against all those who fail to participate truly and energetically in the national idea.⁴⁷ Any separation on the basis of confession and descent would damage the struggle for national 'ideality'. Lazarus's understanding of the 'national ideality' included a cosmopolitan dimension: 'true Germanity' must be 'free of any felony against received traditions as well as against universal human principles', 'high minded and generous'.⁴⁸ Lazarus aimed to reconcile his quasi-multicultural celebration of diversity (including Jewish particularity) with his endorsement of German nationalism. A crucial aspect of his argument was the idea that German nationalism was particularly liberal: 'the idea of humanity stands higher than any *Volksthum*'. But granting humanity priority over nationality was a typically German attitude: never 'had the particular spirit (*Gemühtsart*) of any one people a more direct relationship to this idea of humanity than the particular spirit of the Germans'.⁴⁹

We have often been reprimanded for not estimating our own but instead admiring the alien. It has never been possible to vaccinate us with a decent dosage of national pride . . . With all the will in the world we do not manage to despise the alien, to answer the hate of the enemy with equal hate; we cannot help searching for and acknowledging the good wherever it may be.⁵⁰

Lazarus's claim to be participating in a particularly liberal and inclusive variant of nationalism strongly resonated with contemporary discourses in Germany, Britain, the United States and probably many other countries: nationalism would basically be a liberal thing were it not for the failure of various other peoples to be nationalists in the proper way.⁵¹

At this point in the argument, Lazarus introduced the concept of 'mixed culture'. He argued that it had been 'long established' that the most diversely mixed peoples turned out to be the strongest culturally and historically, a variant of the National Liberal argument already mentioned above. For Lazarus, though, it followed that the German Jews had 'a duty . . . to remain Jews' and to put their Judaism 'to the service of the German national spirit as a part of its strength'. This was not, however, an issue of the 'mixing of blood' but of 'spiritual abilities, moral drives', and a 'longing to shape the world'. These 'spiritual abilities' were incorporated individually in the tribes that came together to form the nation: only in the nation were they harmonized and able to transcend the individual and the

47 *Ibid.*, 36.

48 *Ibid.*, 36f.

49 *Ibid.*

50 *Ibid.*, 38.

51 See Robert Fine, 'The "new nationalism" and democracy: a critique of *Pro Patria*', *Democratization*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1994, 423–43; Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage 1995); and Anthony W. Marx, *Faith in Nation. Exclusionary Origins of Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2003).

tribal towards the generically human. Lazarus remained in this way, and in spite of his ‘multiculturalism’, within the National Liberal framework.

One of the characteristics Treitschke held against the Jews was their economic spirit. He wrote:

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 brazen greediness of the boom-time mischief (*Gründer-Unwesen*),⁵² and that they shoulder a lot of the blame 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*).⁵³

Treitschke was strongly reprimanded by fellow liberals. Heinrich Bernhard Oppenheim (1819–80) wrote: ‘The whining about the lack of pleasantness (*Ungemüthlichkeit*) of modern production comes from the bunglers who fail to produce up-to-date products and who would be saved if they could hide behind the privileges of a guild or a system of protective customs.’⁵⁴ Ludwig Bamberger likened propaganda against the exploitation of the Germans by the Jews to that against the Germans in Russia: Russian nationalists and pan-Slavists similarly accused the Germans of being foreign conquerors exploiting the native population. Bamberger insisted that a group of economically successful immigrants served rather than exploited their new country. He added:

I hope that Herr von Treitschke, who used to profess sound economic principles, does not intend making concessions to the simplistic delusion—currently coming back into fashion—that those who make money through their labour exploit society and do not through their services make society so much the richer.⁵⁵

52 During the period of economic boom, around and especially after 1871, the glut of money resulted, in the absence of state regulation, in high-risk and sometimes fraudulent investments.

53 Treitschke, ‘Unsere Aussichten’, 24f. Treitschke’s term ‘Arbeitsfreudigkeit’ seems to signify a sense of duty combined with pride in good work, and to be a variant of the term ‘Arbeitsfreude’, which was central to Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl’s celebration of the German bourgeoisie in his book *Die deutsche Arbeit*: the bourgeoisie had the capacity to work joyfully, while the lower classes could be expected, at best, to be modest and honourable; Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, *Die deutsche Arbeit* (Stuttgart: Cotta 1861). Riehl claimed to have deduced these notions empirically from ethnographic fieldwork. On Riehl, see Joan Campbell, *Joy in Work, German Work. The National Debate, 1800–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1989).

54 Heinrich Bernhardt Oppenheim, ‘Stöcker und Treitschke’, *Die Gegenwart*, vol. 17, no. 1, 3 January 1880, 20.

55 Bamberger, ‘Deutschtum und Judentum’, 164.

Bamberger suggested here that Treitschke's rejection of the 'contemptible materialism of our age' was a turn towards a covert form of socialism.⁵⁶ Attacking Treitschke, a most prominent enemy of both *Kathedersozialismus* (socialism of the lectern) and social democracy,⁵⁷ for succumbing to socialism was a knowingly unfair move by Bamberger.⁵⁸ Treitschke specifically attacked the Jews for being unproductive, whereas socialist antisemites attacked unproductive wealth as such for being 'Jewish'. Bamberger rhetorically conflated Treitschke's liberal antisemitism with the socialist antisemitism of, for example, Naudh and Wilhelm Endner (see below), and, by implication, with socialism *tout court*.

Arguably, with this remark, Bamberger sought to dissociate Treitschke from the liberal tradition; while he could not convincingly denounce him as a conservative, he branded him, polemically, a socialist. A deeper aspect of this particular strategy is especially problematic. Bamberger's formulation that it was a 'simplistic delusion' to say 'that those who make money through their labour exploit society and do not through their services make society so much the richer' was precisely the kind of liberal argument that Adorno and Horkheimer must have had in their minds when they claimed that a specifically bourgeois delusion was implicated in the overall social process that produced antisemitism: 'Bourgeois antisemitism has a specific economic foundation: the concealment of domination in production.'⁵⁹ The industrial capitalist usually lacks the boldness to admit to being an appropriator of value,⁶⁰ but understands himself instead as a producer among other producers. It follows that exploitation must then be the work of the sphere of circulation. However, appropriation and exploitation take place 'not only in the market but at the very source', in

56 He anticipated the complementary argument formulated later by some in the Social Democratic Party that the antisemitic critique of capitalism was a *petit-bourgeois*, incomplete form of socialist criticism that would sooner or later more or less automatically transmute into proper socialist consciousness. See Robert S. Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews. The Dilemmas of Assimilation in Germany and Austria-Hungary* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press 1982).

57 Oppenheim first coined the term 'Kathedersozialisten' in 1871, and he published an influential collection of articles the following year as *Kathedersozialismus* (Berlin 1872). He argued that trade unions were a corrupting influence on workers, and academic theorists of (state) socialism were a threat to academic freedom. See Ernest Hamburger, *Juden im öffentlichen Leben Deutschlands. Regierungsmitglieder, Beamte und Parlamentarier in der monarchischen Zeit 1848-1918* (Tübingen: Mohr 1968), 268.

58 Treitschke supported the anti-socialist laws in their sharpest form and had, in 1874, created a furore with the anti-socialist essay 'Der Sozialismus und seine Gönner', *Preussische Jahrbücher*, vol. 34, 1874, 67-110. Bamberger pointed out, later in the same text, that Treitschke suggested fighting socialism by invoking religion.

59 Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1997), 173.

60 By contrast, in the labour theory of value, classical political economy admits that much, more or less explicitly; see Isaac Ilyich Rubin, *A History of Economic Thought*, trans. from the Russian by Donald Filtzer (London: Ink Links 1979).

production.⁶¹ Any serious theory of modern society must be able to explain the decisive social fact of capital accumulation, unless it is passed off as *creatio ex nihilo*.⁶² In situations in which liberals are forced to fight Marxist social democracy (as in imperial Germany), they need to denounce the rational explanation for the apparent miracle of accumulation (the labour theory of value) along with the irrational ones (for example, the cheating Jew), thereby helping to create the sort of intellectual confusion that typically benefits the latter. It is in this sense that the liberal position, exemplified by Bamberger's generic declaration that 'those who make money' are producers not exploiters, is indirectly complicit with the antisemitic attack on 'the Jews'.

Treitschke abandoned the economic line of antisemitic reasoning in reaction to these reprimands by his former party colleagues. The radical antisemites, however, showed themselves to be grateful for Treitschke's acknowledgement of one of their pivotal and most popular arguments and developed it further. Naudh, one of their leading propagandists, wrote:

Although eighty Germans might be able to feed one unproductive Jew, the burden is distributed too unevenly over the country. In Berlin for example—and Berlin doesn't even show the most unfortunate ratio—only eighteen locals have to sustain one Jew who on average might perhaps appropriate more than is left to his breadwinners.⁶³

Naudh's text also demonstrates how much the (racial) discourse of the Jewish body depended on that of work: the Jew's 'bones are crooked and askew and his muscles are weak, which is why he has little fitness for work coupled with even less enthusiasm for it'.⁶⁴ The invocation of race was used in order to explain, generalize and naturalize a point about certain people's alleged fitness and enthusiasm for work. The similarly inclined Wilhelm Endner demanded 'that the Jews become members of the working classes in the same ratio as the Germans; that they produce instead of merely enrich themselves through trade. Then the—until now justified—judgement that the Jews bleed the country dry will possibly change.'⁶⁵ The antisemites here

61 Ibid. See also Moishe Postone, 'Anti-Semitism and National Socialism', in Anson Rabinbach and Jack Zipes (eds), *Germans and Jews since the Holocaust: The Changing Situation in West Germany* (New York: Holmes & Meier 1986), 302–16; and Werner Bonefeld, 'Nationalism and anti-semitism in anti-globalization perspective', in Werner Bonefeld and Kosmas Psychopedis (eds), *Human Dignity: Social Autonomy and the Critique of Capitalism* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2005), 147–71.

62 See Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor and Social Domination. A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996).

63 Naudh, 'Professoren über Israel', 196.

64 Ibid., 188.

65 Wilhelm Endner, 'Zur Judenfrage. Offene Antwort auf das offene Sendschreiben des Herrn Dr. Harry Bresslau an Herrn von Treitschke' [1880], in Boehlich (ed.), *Der Berliner Antisemitismusstreit*, 96–124 (112, 118), emphasis in the original.

exploited ambiguities in the notion—originating in the ‘bureaucratic liberalism’ of the era of ‘enlightened absolutism’, that is, from the discourses of emancipation—that the Jews ought to be turned into productive workers.⁶⁶ While the idyllic concept of the liberating effects of artisanry that it was grounded in was already in the late eighteenth century somewhat anachronistic, it was maintained by (Jewish as well as Gentile) liberals until the middle of the nineteenth century. As the imperatives of the developing industrial bourgeois society shifted, the concept gradually disappeared in the liberal discourse and found a new home in the more plebeian forms of antisemitism.⁶⁷ Another disturbing aspect of Endner’s argument is the way it partially anticipates the logic of late twentieth-century ‘positive discrimination’: by implication, such measures break down the population statistically into ethnic or racial groups, and then determine how many individual members of each group should be holding jobs or offices of a particular kind, a process that implies notions of ‘group rights’ and ‘justice’ between ethnic or racial groups.

Perhaps surprisingly, given that ‘modern antisemitism’ is often construed in opposition to ‘religious anti-Judaism’, a discourse on the role of religion was quite central to the way state, nation and culture were debated in the Berlin Antisemitism Dispute, and also in the wider antisemitic literature of the time. *Die deutsche Wacht* (The German Guard), the most important of the radical antisemitic publications, carried on its front page a quotation from the Greek writer and philosopher Plutarch: ‘You can rather build a city in the skies than see a state endure without religion.’⁶⁸ The editors Wilhelm Marr and Naudh chose quite cleverly to refer to a writer from antiquity as if the *religio* of the Roman Empire was indeed straightforward state ideology. The modern concept of religion, as in the cases of Protestantism and (post-Reformation) Catholicism, differs from classical *religio* in so far as its claims to individual, private, *innerliche* but nevertheless universalist truth always stands in some tension to any specific state ideology. It was quite clear from the overall discourse of Marr and Naudh—they were basically atheists—that, for them, religion was just an

66 See Tamar Bermann, *Produktivierungsmythen und Antisemitismus. Eine soziologische Studie* (Vienna: Europaverlag 1973), and Jacob Katz, *Emancipation and Assimilation. Studies in Modern Jewish History* (Farnborough, Hampshire: Gregg International 1972).

67 It was subsequently also mirrored in labour-Zionist arguments that the agent of Jewish liberation from antisemitic projection was ‘Jewish labour’, an ethnic restatement of the traditional socialist belief that the self-assertion (or auto-emancipation) of the empirical working class (rather than the negation of class as such) would redeem modernity from the grip of capitalism. See Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism. The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson 1981).

68 *Die deutsche Wacht*, July 1880, 629. The quotation is taken from an article on Adolf Stöcker’s Christlich-Soziale Arbeiterpartei (Christian Social Workers’ Party).

element of *raison d'état*. For Treitschke, the same seems to have been true despite his more emphatic and more regular professions of piety.

In a key passage of his third contribution to the dispute, Treitschke argued that the state, although it ought to be secular, needed a degree of societal unity with regard to its 'emotional life', which in turn depended on some degree of clerical unity within the nation:

That living consciousness of unity that constitutes nationality [can usually not be formed] among people who think in fundamentally different ways about the highest and most sacred questions of emotional life. . . . I am not a follower of the doctrine of the Christian state, because the state is a secular order and has to exert its power with impartial justice also against non-Christians. But without doubt we Germans are a Christian nation.⁶⁹

Treitschke revealed here a puzzling contradiction that lay at the heart of his thinking: the state must be secular, but the 'consciousness of unity' that is pivotal to the state must be based on a consciousness of the religion shared by the nation.

The secular state based on the Christian nation could only afford to be tolerant from a position of strength. In this sense, the attack on the Jews had a disciplinary dimension that was also targeted at Gentile Germans:

We have allowed ourselves to be misguided by the great words of tolerance and Enlightenment towards some mistaken decisions on schooling that now threaten to damage the Christian education of our youth . . . Tolerance is a wonderful thing but it presupposes that one already has a firm religious conviction oneself. . . . Jewish pride has been nurtured by the unfortunate disunity of our clerical life, by the compulsive mocking and materialism of so many Christians. In the frivolous, infidel circles of Jewry it is a strongly held belief that the huge majority of educated Germans have long since broken with Christianity. The time will come, though, and perhaps it is close, when urgency will teach us again to pray, when modest piety will regain its proper place next to pride in education. In the last instance, every grave social question leads the serious observer back to religion. The German Jewish question will not come to rest completely . . . before our Israelite fellow citizens are convinced through our attitude that we are a Christian people and want to remain so.⁷⁰

Treitschke received (not necessarily welcome) assistance from Naudh with regard to this issue. Naudh argued that, 'since nationality has come back to life within the peoples, talk about the separation of state and church has lost its meaning'.⁷¹ This argument implied that the separation of state and church

69 Treitschke, 'Noch einige Bemerkungen zur Judenfrage', 57f.

70 Ibid., 61ff.

71 Naudh, 'Professoren über Israel', 194.

had meaning only under the conditions of non-national states, that is, the early modern territorial states that did not (yet) make claims to ethnic-cultural unity.⁷² Naudh connected his argument to the tradition of right-wing Hegelian readings to which Treitschke also belonged:

Religion is the supreme expression of the morality (*Sittlichkeit*) of a people and God is the embodiment of its consciousness of right (*Rechtsbewusstsein*). ... Right, morality (*Sitte*) and religion originate from the same source. ... Church and state are not hostile to each other but perform the same task in different spheres. In the sphere of the state lie the deeds: these, though, have first been thoughts and have had to negotiate with mind and conscience, which lie in the sphere of the church. It is better and safer that the church educates conscience than that the state punishes deeds. The church does work in advance of the state in the world of thoughts, while the state merely needs to catch up with what might have escaped the church.⁷³

In a mocking note directed to Lazarus, Naudh suggests that the latter 'could have learned' from Hegel's 'Philosophy of History' that 'religion has the closest connection with the principle of the state: *the concept of God is the general foundation of a people*'.⁷⁴

It has to be admitted that Naudh's notion that 'church and state ... perform the same task in different spheres' and 'originate from the same source' contains something of a valid critique of the conceptual separation of spheres that often characterizes liberal thought. The decisive difference between a critical and a reactionary critique, however, would be the determination of what actually constitutes this 'source': rather than the *Volksgeist* that lurks between the lines of Naudh's argument, a concept of society would be needed. Antisemitism gives fatally wrong answers to some of the real problems of the limits of liberal theory.

Bamberger's comment on Treitschke's invocation of religion was characteristically ambivalent. On this issue, Bamberger's opposition was rather moderate:

Herr von Treitschke, who fights socialism, takes the position of those who hope to be able to fight the evil at its root by restoring religion. ... socialist ideas are undeniably linked to irreligious ones. The instinct of the ruling classes of England, France and America has established a form of church life necessary for

72 See Marx, *Faith in Nation*.

73 Naudh, 'Professoren über Israel', 194f.

74 *Ibid.*, 200, emphasis in the original. Naudh is probably quoting from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte, Band 1: Die Vernunft in der Geschichte* [1830] (Hamburg: Meiner 1955), 127 (section Bc, 'Das Material seiner [des Geistes] Verwirklichung'). If this is the case, Naudh is misquoting: Hegel does not leap (as Naudh does) from 'state' to 'people' but is explicitly talking about *states* and *not* peoples.

respectability, one that is essentially based on the awareness of the link between religion and order. This is not the place to discuss whether something similar or better can be successfully developed in Germany. However, should it be attempted, the Jews certainly will not stand in the way. They have no particular interest in the realization of the big socialist redistribution of wealth. It is only that they think one could use other means of reinforcing Christianity than arousing hatred and contempt of the Jews.⁷⁵

Bamberger avoided taking a clear position on whether he thought religion needed to be maintained as something indispensable in the fight against social democracy. He also admitted that a religion that could supplant the cohesion of social order needed to be somewhat unitary and that, in the German case, it needed to be Christian. The point he did make was that Christianity could be reinforced without attacking the Jews who offered themselves as allies rather than obstacles in the fight against socialism. One of the most significant conclusions from the analysis of the dispute is thus that not even Bamberger, the left-wing, 'Manchester' liberal and old republican, dared to reject Plutarch's claim about the necessity of religion as invoked by the most radical antisemites. Despite the transformation that the concept of religion had undergone, Plutarch still seemed correct. This dovetails with (for example) Tocqueville's classic argument on American democracy's dependence on religion,⁷⁶ and also with the empirical fact that, in the contemporary world, religion has nowhere actually been overcome.

The title of Moritz Lazarus's lecture, 'Was heisst national?' (What does national mean?), one of the first responses to Treitschke—the most systematic and in many ways the most fascinating one—went right to the heart of the matter. The principal perspective from which the so-called 'Jewish question' was discussed in the dispute was that of the need for the successful formation and consolidation of the nation-state, how these could be negotiated with the contradictions intrinsic to modern culture and society. This has led most academic commentators to the conclusion that Treitschke's was a 'nationalist' antisemitism,⁷⁷ distinguishable from both 'racial' and 'religious' antisemitism. A close reading of the body of texts that constitute the dispute shows that Treitschke's antisemitism was indeed driven by a concern about the nation, but this does not mean that it was not driven by a concern about race, culture, ethnicity, the economy, morality and religion, categories that are overlapping and complementary rather than mutually exclusive. The point is that an overriding concern

75 Bamberger, 'Deutschtum und Judentum', 174f.

76 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* [1835–40], trans. from the French by Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2002).

77 The latest of these is Holz, *Nationaler Antisemitismus*.

with the national state gives specific meaning, direction, shape and urgency to all of the above. And, *vice versa*, the example of Naudh shows that the thinking of an explicitly racist antisemite is likewise shaped by a wider concern with state, nation, society, culture and the economy.⁷⁸ The Berlin Antisemitism Dispute was predominantly about the ways in which national culture was understood to mediate between state, society and individual in the modern context: it was this larger concern, central to nationalist liberalism, that gave antisemitism a discursive place, relevance and meaning, and that objectively implicated some liberals such as Treitschke in antisemitism becoming hegemonic, whether or not they themselves thought they did.⁷⁹

The multiple and complex differences between the positions expressed in the dispute also indicate a consensus shared by all involved. At the most basic level, there was a consensus that the nation-state was the form most suitable for liberal society, and that this form of state and society needed to be consolidated through some form of national culture, including a sense of morality and a 'moral economy'.⁸⁰

Furthermore, there was a general sense that morality (including economy) was in some way implicated with religion. Opinions varied as to whether national culture required a shared (positive) religion or merely general religiosity.⁸¹ Crucial to the dispute were differing conceptions of 'culture'

78 In any case, hasn't the religion that motivates and gives form to 'religious antisemitism' already been determined by a comparable constellation of concerns about state, society, culture and economy in the first place?

79 This is not the place to discuss to what extent German National Liberalism differed from its equivalents in other countries at the time. An indication of commonalities is the following by Emile Zola, from his essay 'Pour les juifs' (1896) addressed to the anti-Dreyfusards: 'If there are still Jews, that is your fault. They would have long disappeared and melted away had you not forced them to defend themselves, to stick together, and to pass on their race'; quoted in Alan T. Levenson, *Between Philosemitism and Antisemitism. Defenses of Jews and Judaism in Germany, 1871-1932* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 2004), 96. As Levenson points out, Zola's tone is 'indistinguishable' from that of German liberals such as Mommsen. As for the 'German *Sonderweg*' in general, it may suffice to point to Jürgen Kocka, 'German history before Hitler: the debate about the German *Sonderweg*', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1988, 3-16, as an early formulation of the moderate position that seems now to have become the consensus.

80 Edward Palmer Thompson, *Customs in Common* (London: Merlin 1991). I use Thompson's expression not quite in his sense as my point is that modern liberalism has a 'moral economy' of its own no less than the old regime did, and that most liberals were aware of this.

81 On religion and religiosity, see Olaf Blaschke and Frank-Michael Kuhlemann (eds), *Religion im Kaiserreich. Milieus, Mentalitäten, Krisen* (Gütersloh: Kaiser/ Gütersloher Verlagshaus 1996); Helmut Walser Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870-1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1995); and Helmut Walser Smith (ed.), *Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany 1800-1914* (Oxford and New York: Berg 2001).

that ranged from a monolithic, quasi-racial concept,⁸² through the majority opinion that culture was based on an 'amalgam', to the opposite extreme that held that culture was, and ought to be, 'mixed' and open-ended. The notion of 'culture' as an 'amalgam' tended to imply that there was a point at which enough 'mixing' had taken place, when the amalgam was complete and had created a new (quasi-'pure') culture.

The national question framed the value judgements of all sides. The movement that used the neologism 'antisemitic' to refer to itself was understood by National Liberals (except Treitschke) as a threat to national unity: the nationalism of the antisemites was seen to be dangerous, first of all, because it was 'exaggerated'. Nationalism was 'exaggerated' when it turned on the nationalist endeavour itself. It was in this sense that antisemites were denounced as 'enemies of the *Reich*' as well as of National Liberalism. Although Treitschke rejected pan-Germanism and pan-Slavism in similar terms as harmful forms of nationalism,⁸³ he believed that antisemitism would strengthen national consciousness in Germany.

For Treitschke, in contrast with most of the more radical antisemites of the time, Jewish immigration seems to have functioned as the acute problem that triggered the more general transformation of his latent, traditional antisemitism into political antisemitism. Significantly, there was virtually no opposition to the notion that immigration by 'Eastern Jews' had a negative impact on national cohesion. The difference of opinion concerned how much immigration would be harmful. There was a general consensus that some groups were 'too different' to be integrated into the nation. It is unclear, however, where exactly lay the threshold of difference that members of the nation ought not to cross. The defenders of the Jews argued either that they were less different than the antisemites claimed, or that, despite their being different, they were not numerous enough to do much damage and, in addition, that they constituted not the only, and not even the most pressing, problem: other groups (Catholics, socialists) were more different as well as more numerous, that is, more problematic.

There is a clearly articulated clash of opinions between, on the one hand, Treitschke's concern about the 'Jewish' (that is, modern capitalist) threat to

82 There is only a quantitative difference between the claim that a particular characteristic is racial as opposed to cultural. As Stuart Hall says: 'Both the discourses of "race" and "ethnicity" ... work by establishing a ... "chain of equivalences" ... between the social/cultural and the biological registers that allows differences in one signifying system to be "read off" against equivalents in the other chain. ... Biological racism and cultural differentialism, therefore, constitute not two different systems, but racism's two registers. ... [or] two logics'; Stuart Hall, 'Conclusion: the multi-cultural question', in Barnor Hesse (ed.), *Un/Settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, 'Transruptions'* (London and New York: Zed 2000), 223.

83 Treitschke denounced pan-Slavism in 'Unsere Aussichten'. The rejection of pan-Germanism was integral to his 'small-German' pro-Prussianism.

the Germans' 'good-natured willingness to work' and, on the other hand, support for market capitalism, individualism and utilitarian ethics (championed by most but at least silently accepted by all, including Treitschke). It was the priest (a convert from Judaism, and a Conservative rather than a Liberal) Paulus Cassel who suggested that the public debate on the pros and cons of revoking Jewish emancipation pointed to a more general lack of liberty in society at large: people 'begrudged them [the Jews] liberty' because 'they were not liberated themselves'.⁸⁴ This suggestion and its implicit criticism of liberal society's failure to deliver what it continued to promise was not taken up by anyone.

Having outlined what was and what wasn't in dispute in the Berlin Antisemitism Dispute, the remainder of the essay will be dedicated to the question *why*. Given that Treitschke and his liberal critics were leading and esteemed representatives of the political, cultural and social milieu they inhabited, the discursive web of statements that they produced in the dispute can be analysed like a snapshot that might—with the help of more general conceptual work—reveal the character of the society that produced the dispute, and that recognized it as a highly significant and symbolic event. In other words, the statements that are not disputed between Treitschke and his critics may simply be true of the society they both inhabited. I want to suggest that the sympathies of Treitschke, a late nineteenth-century liberal nationalist in Germany, for antisemitic attempts to curb if not reverse Jewish emancipation—as well as the current tendency of centrist liberals to criticize 'unbridled' multiculturalism (Blunkett),⁸⁵ and reassert the necessity of cultural and national-patriotic unity—are rooted in one of the intrinsic contradictions of modern liberalism: it entrusts the realization of legal equality, emancipation and individualism to a state that it is not able to imagine other than as a national state, that is, a state that, according to its own claim, is based on and expressive of a cultural-ethnic community.⁸⁶ The analysis of both the links between modern antisemitism and liberal nationalism and the vicissitudes of contemporary multiculturalism

84 Paulus Cassel, *Wider Heinrich von Treitschke. Für die Juden*, 7th edn (Berlin: Stahn 1880), 11. On Cassel, see Levenson, *Between Philosemitism and Antisemitism*, ch. 8.

85 Blunkett recommended 'shared identity based on membership of a political community' as an alternative to 'forced assimilation into a monoculture, or an unbridled multiculturalism which privileges difference over community cohesion'; Blunkett, 'Integration with diversity'. 'Difference' ought to be protected from forced assimilation, but 'community cohesion' ought to be protected from too much difference.

86 It should be added that the form of nationalism for which Treitschke was a major spokesman was as much of the 'political', allegedly 'western', kind as of the ethnic, romantic kind that received opinion holds to be typically German. On Treitschke's Hegelian background, see Langer, *Heinrich von Treitschke*, and Megay, 'Treitschke reconsidered'.

testify to the same fundamental contradiction of liberal society. By way of conclusion, I want to outline two of the major dimensions of the problem that is at stake here: first, that of culture and the state, and, second, that of the nation and race.

The existence of the nation-state creates a pressure to enforce some degree of cultural homogeneity, especially in times of crisis. The issue here is why did 'the Jewish question' seem so important that a nationalist like Treitschke would risk threatening social peace rather than accepting what was in his view the 'fact' of the increasing 'Jewishness' of society. Treitschke stopped subordinating a general and rather diffuse feeling of antipathy to Jews to the larger objective, national unity, therewith adopting 'political antisemitism', and this is why fellow liberals like Mommsen attacked him.

For Treitschke, the Jews were a 'misfortune' because they threatened the precarious unity of the national state and national society as mediated by national culture. Even those who explicitly invoked 'race' presented racial difference as dangerous not in itself but because it referred (like shorthand) to differences of cultural, religious, moral and economic social practices. Whether such differences were considered to be 'immutable' (that is, 'racial') or merely to be amenable to change very slowly over periods of hundreds or thousands of years (that is, 'cultural') was often of only limited relevance as not only 'race' but also 'culture' was inscribed in the body.⁸⁷

If a relevant minority appears not to be assimilating into the culture of the national state to the extent anticipated, representatives of the established national culture tend to draw one of three conclusions: first, that members of the minority are *prevented* from assimilating by social and historical circumstance, the classic position taken by Enlightenment figures such as Dohm and Humboldt and echoed by several of Treitschke's liberal critics in the Berlin Antisemitism Dispute; second, that members of the minority are *unwilling* to assimilate, which was Treitschke's dominant theme, namely, that the Jews' stubbornness needed to be overcome by a variety of more persuasive or more repressive means (they had to be bribed and seduced, for example, by access to education or, more recently and cheaply, by the public funding of some cultural activity); or, third, that members of the minority are *unable* to assimilate, which was the 'racist' position held by Naudh and, sometimes, by Treitschke, namely, that the Jews were a 'different race', there was no point in even trying to persuade or push them to

87 Even the most radical racists sometimes credit socio-cultural practices (even if unaccompanied by carnal miscegenation) with the power to corrupt the racial essence of the 'master race'. Likewise, the fists that beat up 'Third-World-looking' persons in the street have probably been put into motion not so much by the (abstract) idea of race but by the (concrete) reality of the nation (i.e. nation-state and national society); see Ghassan Hage, *White Nation. Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society* (Annandale, NSW: Pluto and West Wickham, Kent: Comerford and Miller 1998). The person with the fists may or may not imagine these characteristics to be inscribed in the DNA.

assimilate, and they must rather be prevented from exerting any influence by marginalization, isolation, expulsion or murder, depending on a variety of conditions. These three options work towards the same end, the consolidation of nation-building. Furthermore, as the idioms of culture and race can be translated into each other, a call for cultural unity can never be immune to being transformed into a call for racial unity. Treitschke endorsed antisemitism because he expected it would accelerate the assimilation of the German Jews and strengthen national consciousness among all Germans. The racist side of his argument came from his suspicion that Jewish assimilation might not be possible, and his belief that the overriding objective—the strengthening of nationality—could also be achieved without the lesser objective—intensified Jewish assimilation: if inclusion didn't work, exclusion would. As Treitschke was ambivalent about the racial make-up of the Jews, he reserved exclusion as a fall-back option in case assimilation should fail. His liberal critics held that the nation-state could be consolidated without threatening non-indigenous elements with exclusion, and that antisemitism was counter-productive.

How little the basic problem has changed in the last century and a quarter can be read off the recent argument by John Gray—an influential voice of centrist liberalism—that

a stable liberal civil society cannot be radically multicultural but depends for its successful renewal across the generations on an undergirding culture that is held in common. This common culture need not encompass a shared religion and it certainly need not presuppose ethnic homogeneity, but it does demand widespread acceptance of certain norms and conventions of behaviour and, in our times, it typically expresses a shared sense of nationality.⁸⁸

Now as then, the liberal critique of the exclusionary tendencies of nationalism finds its limits at what Treitschke called 'the hard necessity of the unity of the state',⁸⁹ which is a necessity produced by liberal society itself. The liberal discourse collapses and gives way to an anti-liberal one—in which it revokes its promise to expand emancipation to all groups of the population gradually—at the point at which a whole series of conceptual dichotomies that are foundational to it prove unstable: 'mixed culture' is difficult to distinguish from 'amalgamation'; 'culture' from 'race'; 'politics' from 'religion'; the 'national state' from 'national society'; '*Sittlichkeit*' from 'religion'; 'religion' from 'religiosity'. All these distinctions and differentiations, in spite of their intellectual appeal and importance, melt away when brought into the discursive force-field of 'the hard necessity of the unity of

88 John Gray, *Enlightenment's Wake. Politics and Culture at the Close of the Modern Age* (London and New York: Routledge 1995), 23–4.

89 Treitschke, 'Herr Graetz und sein Judenthum'.

the state', especially in a historical context characterized by economic and political crisis and the 'red danger' lurking in the background.

The modern nation-state, according to its advocates and functionaries, is based on the congruence of the political and the ethnic-cultural. The 'nation' is here—different to where it had been located in premodern times—the crucial mediator between a state and the society whose political form that state is. In the concept of the nation, society is articulated simultaneously as a cultural community and as a political one in as much as it forms a state. Conversely, the (emerging or already existing) political formation is ethnicized to the extent that it is articulated as national. The respective state that demands loyalty and 'identification' from its members (beyond the mere payment of tributes or taxes) tends to demand that ethnic or religious minorities assimilate or convert. Although this is not an exclusive characteristic of modern state and society, the relevance of such processes immensely increased in the modern context, especially since the nineteenth century. It is in this context that state and culture in their interplay have come to be understood as furnishing 'sites of reconciliation for a civil and political society that is seen to be riven by conflict and contradiction'.⁹⁰

The decisive shift in the modern context is that an arbitrary relation between state and population is now seen as illegitimate: the state is now seen as the historically developed 'unifying representation' of a 'popular will'.⁹¹ The state 'expresses at a higher level the still developing essence' of 'its' people. Culture, though, is supposed to sublimate competing partial interests by developing every individual to his/her 'full human capacity'—actually the capacity to be bourgeois—which promises an end to all conflict. Culture 'educates' the 'citizen' from the mere 'human being'.⁹² This 'educing', or 'education', maintains a dialectic between partial interests and 'full human capacity'; liberal society constitutes the individual two-fold, as an 'abstract' and a 'concrete' individual.⁹³ To the same extent to which *Gesellschaft* (society) is always underpinned by some form of *Gemeinschaft* (community), the 'abstract individual' is always underpinned by a more specific (cultural, ethnic) 'identity' whose 'characteristic role is to structure and limit the choices the individual makes'.⁹⁴ So far, no liberal society has anywhere dared to rely only on the purely 'abstract identity' of its citizen-individuals.

One of the crucial points in this context is which characteristics of an individual ought to be relevant to how he/she will participate in state and society, and which characteristics are irrelevant (that is, 'private'), and

90 David Lloyd and Paul Thomas, *Culture and the State* (New York and London: Routledge 1998), 1.

91 *Ibid.*, 3.

92 *Ibid.*, 5.

93 Moishe Postone, 'The Holocaust and the trajectory of the twentieth century', in Moishe Postone and Eric Santner (eds), *Catastrophe and Meaning. The Holocaust and the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2003), 94.

94 Ross Poole, *Morality and Modernity* (London: Routledge 1991), 94.

whether the line between the two is solid, precarious or perhaps non-existent. David Lloyd and Paul Thomas describe well the processes of 'emancipation' of various groups of the population (women, Jews, workers, 'ethnic groups') into the 'maturity' or adulthood of being bourgeois subjects and citizens: it is 'the function of culture to interpellate individuals into the disposition to disinterested reflection' that alone allows the state to mediate conflicts between social groups:⁹⁵

The idea of culture produces the consensual grounds for representative democracy and the liberal settlement by annulling individual differences and drawing or eliciting the formal or 'representative' disposition in every person out of the real, particular conditions of that person's life.⁹⁶

The modern state assumes direct, unmediated authority over the individual, challenging and transforming traditional community. This authority is legitimized by the claim that the state is the political embodiment of a new form of community that (logically, not necessarily temporally) existed before the state. This new form of community, the nation, is supposed to 'speak' through 'its' state as it also speaks through 'its' culture. The open-ended and dynamic character of actual culture is in this process contained, neutralized and partially denied by the claim that it is the expression of the nation, an imaginary entity that is an abstraction from culture in its actual diversity. The claim that culture is national is based on fetishistic reversal, for if culture is understood as national culture, that is, the basis of a collective national 'identity' ('sameness' in time and space) underpinning a state (that is, almost by definition, something static),⁹⁷ then the concept of culture must also be static: it must to some extent reify and negate the dynamism that constitutes actual culture. A consistently dynamic concept of culture, as Lazarus attempted to formulate, is therefore not possible within the nationalist liberal framework.

In the liberal context, and, following it, also in the socialist one, nation-formation has often been construed as the overcoming of ethnic-racial

95 Lloyd and Thomas, *Culture and the State*, 14. Lloyd and Thomas see this conception best expressed in Matthew Arnold's synthesis of Hobbes's concept of civil society as the 'war of all against all' and Friedrich Schiller's idea (from the fourth 'Letter on Aesthetic Education') that the state represents the 'ideal man' whom every individual carries within but is unable to realize except as a member of a state (47, 117).

96 *Ibid.*, 146. It is significant that Matthew Arnold, on whose interpretation Lloyd and Thomas base their account of 'culture and the state', relied on Schiller and Humboldt, as did John Stuart Mill, powerfully illustrating the unity of European liberalism in the nineteenth century.

97 That's why it is called 'state'. See John Holloway, *Change the World without Taking Power. The Meaning of Revolution Today* (London: Pluto Press 2002). On 'identity', see Lutz Niethammer and Axel Dossmann, *Kollektive Identität. Heimliche Quellen einer unheimlichen Konjunktur* (Reinbek: Rowohlt 2000), 253.

divisions, as it was in the Berlin Antisemitism Dispute; nationalism tends to appear in these contexts indeed as the opposite of racism. This notion lives on in the contemporary discourse that opposes republican 'patriotism' (good, moderate nationalism) to bad, ethnic nationalism.⁹⁸ The opposite position that emphasizes the dialectic between inclusion and exclusion as intrinsic to the nation form is implied in the already quoted formulation by Adorno and Horkheimer: 'The liberal Jews were made to experience at last the harmony of society, which they had embraced and promoted, as the harmony of the *Volksgemeinschaft*',⁹⁹ that is, the mobilized national community, the community on the attack. This sentence reads as if it has been deduced from an interpretation of the Jewish liberals' responses to Treitschke: the antagonistic society defended by liberalism has no better community to offer than the national community, and some of the most committed liberals failed to anticipate that the harmony of liberal society would turn against them for no other reason than their Jewishness.

In the period of the French Revolution, what are today described as the 'civic' and the 'ethnic' discourse of the nation were developed and used *together* against that of the legitimist, traditional, historical rights of princes and nobility.¹⁰⁰ Talk about the 'will of the nation' needed to be based on a determination of who the nation was. This implied a definition not only in socio-economic terms (the nation, for example, as Sieyès's 'third estate'¹⁰¹) but also in cultural-geographical ones. One of the implications of the fact that

98 Critical of this are, for example, Bernard Yack, 'The myth of the civic nation', *Critical Review*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1996, 193–211, and Rogers Brubaker, 'The Manichean myth: rethinking the distinction between "civic" and "ethnic" nationalism', in Hanspeter Kriesi, Klaus Armingeon, Hannes Siegrist and Andreas Wimmer (eds), *Nation and National Identity. The European Experience in Perspective* (Zurich: Verlag Rüegger 1999), 55–71. On the intrinsic affinity between race and nation, see Balibar and Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class, and Fine*, 'The "new nationalism" and democracy', which draw on Marx and Arendt. See also Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, which talks about 'hot' and 'cold' modes of nationalism.

99 Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (see note 4 above).

100 As Brubaker argued, the difference between French and German nationalism is not a distinction between political on the one side, and cultural/ethnic nationalism on the other side, but between a comparatively *integrated* political-cultural/ethnic nationalism as it emerged in France, and that of a tension-ridden *dualism* between political and cultural/ethnic nationalisms (in the plural) characteristic of nineteenth-century Germany; see Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1992), and Brubaker, 'The Manichean myth'. In both countries, furthermore, the 'inner' nation-building through state-led unified educational and communication institutions occurred on a large, truly national scale only from the 1870s onwards; see John Breuilly, 'The national idea in modern German history', in John Breuilly (ed.), *The State of Germany. The National Idea in the Making, Unmaking and Remaking of a Modern Nation-State* (London: Longman 1992), 1–28.

101 See William H. Sewall, Jr, *A Rhetoric of Bourgeois Revolution. The Abbé Sieyès and What Is the Third Estate?* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press 1994).

the new society emerged as a national one was that it reinterpreted state borders by subjecting them to culture, ethnicity, race (and also redrawing them wherever possible and advantageous). The citizens of the new regime learned to expect borders to be meaningful and expressive of deep history rather than contingent and arbitrary. Since the nineteenth century the full-blooded, warm-as-life discourse of ethnic statehood has increasingly flushed out traditional political legitimacy and continues to do so. Contemporary liberals and socialists who believe it is enough simply to 'cool down' and de-ethnicize the discourses of the state (that is, redress liberal nationalism as 'constitutional patriotism' or 'postnational nationalism') borrow eighteenth-century ideas to deal with twenty-first-century realities: the nation may be a phantasm, the nation-state is not.¹⁰²

As John Gray writes, the notion 'that a common allegiance can be sustained by subscription to abstract principles, without the support of a common culture', is a 'rationalist illusion'.¹⁰³ Likewise, though from a different perspective, Stuart Hall writes that the modern liberal state is of necessity 'enmeshed' and 'embedded' in the social practices and imaginaries of national culture.¹⁰⁴ Bhikhu Parekh confirms that 'a morally neutral state, making no moral demands on its citizens and equally hospitable to all cultures, is logically impossible'.¹⁰⁵ The basic point, however, was made in its classic form already in 1835 by Alexis de Tocqueville: 'Despotism can do without faith but freedom cannot. . . . How could society fail to perish if, while the political bond is relaxed, the moral bond were not tightened?'¹⁰⁶ Indeed, nineteenth-century liberals were acutely aware of the fact that one of the tasks of the liberal nation-state was to *create* social coherence. Sadly, the nation-state in the twentieth century was astonishingly successful in creating homogeneity, using more brutal (fascist) as well as more subtle (democratic) means. As a result, today's society is simultaneously as differentiated and as homogeneous as no other preceding form of society.¹⁰⁷ In this context, 'ethnic diversity', especially the thin trickle of cultural alterity that results from immigration, has grabbed public attention out of all proportion. An increasingly homogeneous society holds on to the debate about ethnic

102 Similar arguments apply to the 'red republicanism' of classical Marxism; see Marcel Stoetzler, 'On Michael Forman's *Nationalism and the International Labor Movement. Anarchist and Socialist Theories of the Nation*', *Historical Materialism*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2006, 295–314, and Gaspar Miklos Tamás, 'Telling the truth about class', in Leo Panitch and Colin Leys, *Socialist Register 2006: Telling the Truth* (London: Merlin 2005), 228–68.

103 Gray, *Enlightenment's Wake*, 25.

104 Hall, 'Conclusion: the multi-cultural question', 228–9.

105 Bhikhu Parekh, 'Integrating minorities', in Tessa Blackstone, Bhikhu Parekh and Peter Sanders (eds), *Race Relations in Britain. A Developing Agenda* (London and New York: Routledge 1998), 6.

106 Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 280f.

107 Russell Jacoby, *The End of Utopia. Politics and Culture in an Age of Apathy* (New York: Basis Books 1999).

difference as if to a fetish that helps it suppress its well-founded fear of a cultural death by self-imposed monotony. It also compensates for the silence on differences other than cultural ones, and helps forget also that many vibrant cultural differences have fallen victim to destruction by the 'culture industry' (such as the working-class culture that once formed the milieu of the labour movement). The actual differences that have survived elimination tend now to be reduced to differences between 'ethnicities' or 'cultures', indeed a telling aspect of society's increasing homogenization.¹⁰⁸

The related paradox that liberal society is simultaneously increasingly homogeneous *and* antagonistic is indirectly reflected in another remark by John Gray: 'Pressure for the integration of ethnic minorities into the mainstream culture may indeed be unhealthy when, as perhaps in Britain today, the cultural traditions of some ethnic groups embody virtues of community better than the larger society does.'¹⁰⁹ Gray admits here between the lines that the culture shared by 'larger society' does not 'embody virtues of community' very well. Its sociability is 'unsociable'.¹¹⁰ This adds additional irony to the problematic of multiculturalism: the members of liberal society are aware and perhaps envious of the fact that there is more 'community' in those stubbornly particularistic 'minority cultures' than in the 'national community' that aims to integrate all and sundry but that never really 'is'. The need to defend the cohesion of national culture alone cannot explain the venom with which contemporary battles against headscarves are fought, and with which some of the forebears of today's liberals' fought trouser-selling youths from the East: in real terms, both matters are negligible. Perhaps it is not too far-fetched to say that some of the conservative practices of 'minority cultures' mirror back to the liberals the implications of their own melancholy longing for community: 'minority' communitarianism lets slip the truth about what liberals themselves need to impose (or, alternatively, need to allow others to impose) in order to glue together the liberal society of owners and sellers of commodities, of whose dark sides the self-hating liberals are only too aware. The look-how- cliquish-and-clannish-they-are side of liberal antisemitism mirrors and complements the equally self-hating look-how-modern/capitalist/liberal/socialist-they-are side of antisemitic anti-liberalism. The nods that the Labour Home Secretary David Blunkett made towards Pim Fortuyn quoted at the beginning of this paper testify to this, as did Tocqueville's enthusiasm for the religiosity of civil society in the United

108 Failure to recognize and criticize this reality is one of the conceptual weaknesses of the discourse of 'multiculturalism' that is based on a rather thin concept of culture: 'No divergent political or economic vision animates cultural diversity. From the most militant Afrocentrists to the most ardent feminists, all quarters subscribe to very similar beliefs about work, equality and success. The secret of cultural diversity is its political and economic uniformity' (Jacoby, *The End of Utopia*, 39f.).

109 Gray *Enlightenment's Wake*, 25.

110 Immanuel Kant, 'Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht', in Immanuel Kant, *Ausgewählte kleine Schriften* (Hamburg: Meiner 1969), 31.

States. My suggestion is that Treitschke's support for antisemitism has the same roots. Cultural conservatism as well as liberalism's open flank to reaction appear thus as hidden necessities of liberal society. Liberalism has to mimic what it fights against to the extent that the struggle for national-cultural cohesion makes (some) liberals embrace antisemitism, an extremely divisive (and potentially anti-national) ideology. Having touched this painful scar on the liberal consciousness is perhaps the gravest offence those young Muslim women are committing, and perhaps this echoes some of the ways in which the trouser-selling youths from the East offended the sensibilities of German liberals a century and a quarter ago.¹¹¹ Value judgements, or 'taking sides', are extremely difficult in this area if one's principal allegiance is to the vision of a state of things in which the free development of each individual is the condition of all. This—the notion of an actually humane culture—is something neither the liberal state and society nor the 'communities' or 'cultures' are on their own able to provide.

The persistence, as well as more specifically the reform, of liberal society depend on the existence of a state. A state in the modern context can only be a nation-state in which the construction of a national culture mediates between state, society and individual. National culture consists of inseparably interwoven assumptions about morality, social practices (including 'the economy') and religion.¹¹² Religious and other cultural difference are tolerated only on the condition that they are hidden away in the private realm but, at the same time, the public realm cannot do without invocations of religiously informed culture. For these reasons 'the better state of things ... in which people could be different without fear'¹¹³ must within this framework perpetually remain a utopian dream.

111 This is an aspect that antisemitism shares with the liberal anti-Catholicism of the same period. The 'envy' (and projection) of strong community cohesion (from 'cliquishness' to 'conspiracy') is a powerful although only partial aspect of both.

112 It is hard to see either how membership in the state on the one hand, and in the 'cultural community' on the other, can be strictly separate, or how the state can be fully separate from religion as long as religion remains an integral part of civil society. The continued existence of religion in bourgeois society, however, needs to be addressed on two levels: one, as cultural artefact handed down by tradition, and, two, as a constantly reproduced response to the social need for some form of (transcendental) resolution of suffering that society fails immanently to resolve. Every form of society so far known seems to have produced forms of fetishistic consciousness, and, due to the relative inertia of cultural tradition, some of this is inevitably channelled into positive religion even in a predominantly secular society. It seems that the same forces are at work in the production of the modern secular state and the continued (albeit transformed) production of religion.

113 'Politics that are still seriously concerned with [an emancipated] society ought not, therefore, to propound the abstract equality of men even as an idea. Instead, they should ... conceive the better state of things as one in which people could be different without fear'; Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia. Reflections from Damaged Life*, trans. from the German by E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso 1978), 103. The German word here rendered as 'state of things' is *Zustand*.

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