

THE
LEO BAECK
MEMORIAL
LECTURE

22

BISMARCKIAN SOCIETY'S
IMAGE OF
THE JEW

BY

FELIX GILBERT

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THE LEO BAECK INSTITUTE was founded by representative organizations of Jews from Germany for the purpose of collecting material on and sponsoring research into the history of the Jewish community in Germany and in other German-speaking countries from the Emancipation to its dispersion. The Institute is named in honor of the man who was the last representative figure of German Jewry in Germany during the Nazi period.

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THIS LECTURE is concerned with the rise of anti-Semitism as a political movement and political force in the Bismarckian era; this problem has puzzled me since my early years, and you will excuse, therefore, if I begin with the personal story of how I became conscious of the issue.

In my youth one of the books regarded as a literary classic, and which I was expected to read, was Gustav Freytag's *Soll und Haben* (*Debit and Credit*).¹ Although this novel is hardly read any longer in Germany, and certainly not outside Germany, there was reason for considering it a classic; at least it was a work of immense popularity. It was published in 1855, and until the end of the nineteenth century had sold 130,000 copies. In our century its popularity increased rather than diminished: by 1925 sales amounted to 753,000 copies—a stupendous figure for a German book fifty years ago.

The remarkable success of this novel can, at least to a certain extent, be explained by what was its principal theme: it was a eulogy of the German bourgeoisie (the German *Bürger*). The story of the novel is based on events which result from the clash between various social groups. One of the contrasts is that between Germans and Slavic people. Whereas, according to Freytag, the Germans were frank, nature-loving and courageous, the Slavic people are dirty, inclined to drunkenness and laziness, cowards and willing to fight only when they are in clear numerical superiority and are promised rich loot. Another contrast is that between the nobility and the bourgeoisie (the *Bürger*). The nobility uses and abuses people of lower social standing and commits fraud when loss of money endangers its social position; the *Bürger*, in contrast, serves by his diligence and energy the well-being of all classes of society. Finally, the contrast which ties the various threads of the novel's action together is that between

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the honest merchant and the Jew. While the honest merchant is concerned with satisfying the needs of the community in which he lives, the Jews are exclusively concerned with their own material gain, using deception, even criminal means, for acquiring wealth. Their exterior appearance reflects their lack of civility and of morality. By their clothes, their movements, and their language they are distinct from the rest of society.

The contrasts between Germans and Slavic people, noblemen and Bürger, form a necessary and significant part of the social situation from which the novel arose and which it depicts, and I shall say something more about this later on. The contrast which appears to the reader as of central importance dominating the entire story is that between German honesty and idealism and Jewish trickery and materialism; the unsympathetic, unpleasant picture of the Jews is the most striking feature of *Soll und Haben*.

When, as a boy, I read this novel for the first time, I was puzzled and this puzzlement only increased when, in the course of time, I learned that Gustav Freytag was a liberal, a friend of the "liberal" Emperor Frederick. The liberals—I had been taught and assumed—were the natural allies and protagonists of giving rights and full equality to the Jews; the fact that the liberals had never come fully to power in Germany, that the reign of the emperor on which they had set their hopes ended after 100 days, was of crucial importance for the situation of the Jews in Germany; it opened the gates for anti-Semitism.

This view, which was widely accepted in my youth, was oversimplified and erroneous. Historians, particularly those of the post-war generation, have embarked on a process of revision that has thoroughly altered the picture of the history of the Bismarckian Reich. Yet, although the interpretation of the facts has changed, the problem has remained: the decline of liberal influence on German politics, and the rise of anti-Semitism are still regarded as interrelated events; they occurred after the foundation of the Reich, and Freytag's novel,

written in the middle of the 'fifties, remains strangely out of time.

This issue has significance which goes beyond the predilection of one writer. It leads into the history of the rise of anti-Semitism in nineteenth-century Germany, into the question of the connection of the rise of anti-Semitism with the political decline of German liberalism, and into the interpretation of the political events which determined these developments. It might be best to start with a brief sketch of what the prevailing scholarly views on these issues are.

The present view about the history of the struggle for Jewish rights in nineteenth-century Germany has been succinctly stated by Reinhard Rürup, one of the best-known younger students of this problem. Rürup writes that the fact that a Jewish question existed in Germany throughout the nineteenth century should not lead us to conclude that this "issue exhibited a picture of continuity, its main features remaining in essence unchanged throughout the nineteenth century." The opposite is the case: during the nineteenth century there existed two Jewish questions. Whereas the demands for equality and integration were the prominent issues until the second part of the nineteenth century, in the later part the decisive issues were the demands for renewed discrimination and erection of new barriers against the now emancipated Jews. The Jewish question in the nineteenth century had two different aspects. First it was dominated by the issue of emancipation, then by the issue of anti-Semitism.²

WHAT BROUGHT this reversal about? In this, Rürup builds on the view of German history in the newly-founded Reich which has emerged from the research of the revisionist historians to whom Rürup himself belongs.³ In the 'seventies of the last century, the so-called Great Depression set in; it lasted into the middle of the 'nineties and hit the economic life of the young German empire particularly hard because of the rapid industrialization on which the German bourgeoisie had embarked since the middle of the century. A stock exchange

crash in 1873 was immediately followed by a collapse in railroad share speculations in which wide circles of the population had engaged in expectation of easy gains. The "Gründerjahre" had ended. But although the time of dramatic economic catastrophes was over, the economy remained sluggish and in a depressed state. Industry and agriculture turned to the government for support and the government responded with the introduction of protective tariffs. To Bismarck this seemed a favorable moment to reinforce the authoritarian character of the regime. Unemployment produced by the depression had increased the appeal of radicalism, of socialists and anarchists. The government, using popular indignation about some acts of terrorism, forced anti-socialist legislation through the Reichstag; it resulted in the suppression of 45 of the 47 socialist newspapers, the dissolution of the trade unions and the expulsion of well-known socialists from big cities like Berlin, Hamburg, Breslau. Moreover, the civil service was purged of all elements which might be less than enthusiastic supporters of the authoritarian course. These measures, as can be expected, were accompanied by an appeal to patriotism, depicting the dangers threatening a Germany surrounded by enemies. The transition to protectionism and, still more, the adoption of a policy of suppression of opposition, represented the break with liberalism, the end of its influence on the government. The divisions among the liberals which had always existed became even more sharp: some liberals went hesitantly along with the government, others opposed it. Liberalism never recovered, at least not until the end of the empire.

It was in this atmosphere that anti-Semitism became a significant factor in German political life. Some of the middle classes, suffering from the depression, and perhaps even more from the changes brought about by industrialization, formed a fertile soil for anti-Semitism. Almost unavoidably the Jews whose emancipation coincided with the development of industrial society were made the scapegoat when economic decline resulted in hardship and misery; the fact that the chief entrepreneur in the ruinous railroad boom, Stroussberg, was of Jewish descent, gave this notion apparent substance. The

years 1874 and 1875 saw the beginning of an anti-Semitic press campaign with articles by Otto Glagau in the *Gartenlaube* and Franz Perrot in the *Kreuzzeitung*. The targets were rich Jews who, I quote, are "Always pushing us Christians aside," and were accused of exerting a corrupting influence on the government. Whereas Stroussberg appeared more as a dangerous, unscrupulous gambler and soon receded into the background, the center of a more poisonous and also more sustained attack became another prominent Jewish figure: Bleichröder. Close to Bismarck, dominating the press by financial means, backed by the Rothschilds and all the rich Jewish bankers of Europe, he was viewed as the embodiment of a mysterious and corrupting Jewish influence on German politics.⁴

The man who realized that this wave of anti-Jewish feeling might be used for reorienting German politics in a conservative, authoritarian direction was Stöcker, a Protestant minister. First he tried to create an independent Christian social party, then he cooperated with the conservatives, infusing in the party platform demands which, in opposing economic liberalism, had an anti-Jewish emphasis: special taxes on trade on the stock exchange, renewal of guilds, laws against usury, prohibition of peddling.⁵

ORIGINALLY THE Jews had aroused the hostility of Stöcker because he regarded them as protagonists of an a-religious attitude in the contemporary world; Stöcker was a demagogue, and in order to increase his appeal, he mixed economic, nationalistic and social argumentation in his program. Because of Stöcker's vague and vulgar demagoguery, another anti-Semitic attack, which followed almost immediately the beginning of Stöcker's agitation, had greater impact, confirming those who held anti-Jewish views in their prejudices and making anti-Semitism an issue of discussion among educated groups. This was Treitschke's essay in the *Preussische Jahrbücher* entitled "*Unsere Aussichten*" (Our Prospects) dated November 1879.⁶ This article contained the famous statement: "The Jews are our misfortune." Although such a sentence

seems to leave little doubt about the extreme anti-Semitism of the author, actually the article is strangely ambiguous, almost contradictory. It is by no means clear what Treitschke envisaged as solution of the problem. He complained bitterly about the predominance of the Jews in the press and the malevolent tone of criticism which Jewish journalists had introduced into the newspapers, about the "filthy materialism" which Jewish eagerness for money had brought into every kind of work. Although Treitschke admits that the emancipation which had taken place could not and should not be retracted, he alluded to measures which ought to be taken to eliminate the harm which the Jewish participation in economic and intellectual life had caused; briefly, he seemed to favor measures of restrictions and discrimination. But this is not the only contradiction in Treitschke's argumentation. He proposed still another handling of the problem: to make the Jews full participants in German life they ought to become Germans; that meant for Treitschke that they ought to give up their old faith and their old holy customs, for which, as a matter of fact, Treitschke finds some respectful words, and accept Christianity. But this demand for conversion is in contradiction with another argument that Treitschke used, namely, that there has always been a gulf between the Western and the Semitic people, that this gulf could never be bridged and that Jews would never be anything else but German-speaking Orientals.

It is possible that the inconsistencies in Treitschke's passionate, but also rather disorganized, essay may indicate some uncertainty about the correctness of the position which he had taken. Treitschke's article had a great impact—this can hardly be denied—not only because Treitschke was a great publicist, a well-known historian, but also because the attack came from the pen of a man who had been a prominent liberal. The problems which we raised when we discussed Freytag's *Soll und Haben* occur again. Was the liberal commitment to Jewish emancipation as strong as is generally believed? Was the reversal from emancipation to renewed discrimination primarily the result of the economic downturn? Did the anti-Semitic movement which arose in the

'seventies have roots in the preceding decades? What had happened that seemed to influence some of those whom one would expect to favor Jewish emancipation?

Perhaps I should say first that nobody will deny the existence of a pre-industrial anti-semitism, which can be found in Germany as in other countries, especially among the lower classes, and expressed itself in hostility towards Jews as moneylenders, horse-traders, peddlers. But these attitudes and feelings—and this again is generally accepted—were of no great or decisive influence for the rise of anti-Semitism in modern industrialized society, for anti-Semitism as a political force. The question is whether the ideas and notions which had brought about the demand for giving Jews citizen rights and for integrating them into German society had lost its strength, whether a weakening of the impulses for emancipation of the Jews had prepared the ground for the rise of anti-Semitism in the Great Depression, whether by 1870 the idea of emancipation was no longer the *categorical imperative* which it appeared to be to all men of good will when the idea was launched in the second part of the eighteenth century. It is the story of the evolution of the idea of Jewish emancipation which I want to discuss, because it seems to me a needed link for the explanation of what happened in the Bismarckian Reich regarding the Jewish issue after 1870.

THE NOTION OF emancipation which embodied the essence of the ideas of the political opponents of the ancien regime was not only concerned with Jews and the lifting of the oppressive legislation under which they lived. Emancipation meant the abolition of all those privileges, regulations and laws which established a hierarchy among social classes, restricted the economic activities which the individual could pursue, and gave members of the superior class the right to command the services of those of lower status; emancipation implied full equality of every member of the state—every citizen—before the law. In order to characterize the comprehensive nature of the issue, I would like to quote a passage from Heinrich Heine which, although written in a somewhat later

stage of the struggle for emancipation, reflects the world of expectations, the philosophical beliefs, the confidence in the future of humanity which inspired the preceding century that had raised the banner of emancipation.⁷ "What is the great question of the Age?" Heine asked, and his answer was: "It is that of emancipation. Not simply the emancipation of the Irish, Greeks, Frankfurt Jews, West Indian Negroes, and other oppressed races, but the emancipation of the whole world, and especially that of Europe, which has attained its majority, and now tears itself loose from the iron leading-strings of a privileged aristocracy. . . ."

Every age has its problem, whose solution advances the world. The earlier inequality established by the feudal system in Europe was perhaps necessary, or a necessary condition of the advance of humanity; but now it impeded the latter, and repressed the pulsations of the civilised heart.

. . . It will be some time, I know . . . before emancipation is finished up; but it is bound to come, this blessed time, when we, all reconciled and on a par, will sit together around the same table. Then in union we will fight against other evils of the world, perhaps at last against death itself—death, whose stern system of equality is not, to say the worst, so oppressive as the smiling theory of *inequality* held by aristocracy.

Laugh not, thou later reader. Every age believes that its battle is the most important; this is the true creed of the time in which it lives and dies, and we, too, will live and die in this religion of freedom . . ."

JEWISH EMANCIPATION FORMED a particular aspect of this process of emancipation. It was hardly possible to proclaim that all men are equal and to make an exception for one group of human beings. Christian Wilhelm Dohm, the great advocate of Jewish emancipation in Germany at the end of the eighteenth century, stated that it was not only in the Jewish, it was even more in the Christian interest to remove the dangerous outsider position of the Jews.⁸

Because of the difference of religion, however, Jewish emancipation had special aspects and encountered particular difficulties. Insofar as the emancipation of the Jews was concerned, the attainment of emancipation extended beyond legislative measures necessary to remove class privileges and to establish legal equality. Emancipation of the Jews was also an ideological question. You could not liberate or emancipate the Jews if you regarded the ritual and the doctrines of their religion to be inferior to Christianity in moral prescriptions and ethical demands. Emancipation of the Jews required toleration.

In Germany the most influential appeal for toleration was Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* (1779) which had as its special target the overcoming of the prejudices against the Jews. The heart of the play is contained in Lessing's revised version of the old tale of the three rings: Christianity, Judaism and Mohammedanism were placed on the same level and the message was that the truth of a religion does not lie in its doctrine, but in the behavior which it produces in its believers. Although through *Nathan* Lessing's demand for toleration reached a wide public, he had treated the same issue before, as a young man, in another play. Its title, *The Jews*, indicates that it was directed specifically to the Jewish question rather than to the general idea of toleration. It is a comedy with a rather flimsy action which, because the play is relatively unknown, I might briefly recount. A traveler saved the life of a noble estate owner whom two masked men had attacked. The nobleman invited the traveler to his castle. The traveler is able to discover that the men who assailed the nobleman were the nobleman's servants. The intelligence and charm of the traveler wins him the enthusiastic favor of the nobleman and also the attachment of the nobleman's daughter. Although the traveler has not yet revealed his name he is believed to be a great gentleman, perhaps a prince traveling incognito and the nobleman offers him the hand of his daughter. But when the traveler hesitates and is asked why he is reluctant, he explains that he cannot accept because "I am a Jew." The nobleman recognizes that being a Jew makes a marriage of his daughter to the traveler impos-

sible and he asks him whether he could do anything else to show his gratitude. The traveler says: "As recompense I ask you for nothing else but that in future you think of my people with more benevolence and speak of them less in generalizations."

Whatever differences there might exist between peoples in appearance and behavior, they are all human beings, and as such, they are all equal, endowed with reason and with the capacity to distinguish between good and evil. Accordingly all religions—at least any faith that can truly be called a religion—must contain the same basic moral message corresponding to the precepts of reason. Religions might vary in ritual or particular rules; it depends on the individual whether he wants to adhere to one or the other. In the center of each religion lives the same moral code and this code will rule in the heart of every human being. In this sense no discrimination for religious reasons, particularly not a discrimination of the Jews, can be justified.

Perhaps a *philosophie*—and this, of course formed the justification for Moses Mendelssohn's remaining in the Jewish faith—might feel that a particular religion reflects with particular clarity the moral doctrine which ought to be the essence of every true religion. But that does not establish a hierarchy among various religious faiths, it does not allow to say that one is better than the other, that one is good and the other is bad.

It is well known, of course, that in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century a number of Jews converted to Christianity. This appeared to be the easiest way to attain emancipation and full equality and the step was eased by the Enlightenment assumption of the identical philosophical basis of each religion. I might refer here to two men who justify the abandonment of the Jewish faith explicitly in this manner. Heinrich Marx, the father of Karl Marx, who had converted to Christianity, wrote that "all religious dogmas are based on the same morality," and Abraham Mendelssohn Bartholdy explained to his daughter when she was

received in the Christian faith why he considered this step justified: ". . . I know that there exists in me and in you and in all human beings an everlasting inclination towards all that is good, true, and right, and a conscience which warns and guides us when we go astray. I know it, I believe it, I live in this faith, and this is my religion. . . . The outward form of religion your teacher has given you is historical, and changeable like all human ordinances. Some thousands of years ago the Jewish form was the reigning one, then the heathen form, and now it is the Christian. We, your mother and I, were born and brought up by our parents as Jews, and without being obliged to change the form of our religion, have been able to follow the divine instinct in us and in our conscience; we have educated you and your brothers and sister in the Christian faith, because it is the creed of most civilised people, and contains nothing that can lead you away from what is good, and much that guides you to love, obedience, tolerance, and resignation."⁹

ABRAM MENDELSSOHN, the son of Moses Mendelssohn and the father of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, said of himself that he was no personality in his own right; in the first half of his life he had been the son of his father and in the second, he was the father of his son: this remark contains a truth which has bearing beyond Abraham Mendelssohn's personal situation. The Europe which emerged from the turmoil of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars was so different from that of the Enlightenment that these two ages seem to be separated by a wide gap; we can hardly imagine the existence of a generation which stands between them and leads from one to the other.

Because a different political and intellectual era opened with the fall of Napoleon, the attitude towards Jewish emancipation underwent important changes. These developments deserve to be discussed in some detail because they form the basis for an understanding of the events which happened later in the century and in the Bismarckian Reich.

During the 25 years between the French Revolution and the Congress of Vienna emancipation of the Jews had become an issue of practical politics. The fact that in the French Revolution the Jews had acquired French citizenship had wide repercussions in the territories of the former Holy Roman Empire. In regions which had been under temporary French control the French legal code had been introduced, but also in other parts of Germany Jews had attained citizen rights or an improvement of their situation—consequences of the realization that defeat of the forces which revolutionary France could mobilize demanded a thorough change in the structure of society. It soon became evident that granting the Jews equality before the law was only a first step which raised many further questions, such as, could they become civil servants? If they received the right to vote for local councils or a representative assembly, could they themselves also become councillors or representatives? Should they now be allowed to engage in all kinds of economic activities? Were they permitted to acquire land, particularly landed estates to which domanial rights were tied? The recognition of these issues provoked disputes; these as well as other issues provoked a reaction in the years after 1815. The governments of the various German states followed different policies in the handling of the Jewish question.¹⁰ In Prussia the monarchical ruling group tried to limit and even rescind the rights which had been given to the Jews in the emancipation decree of March 1812. In contrast the government in the Grand Duchy of Baden pressed for wider application of emancipation. But legislation to permit Jews full participation in economic life and give both Christians and Jews the right to positions in government service had to be submitted to the Baden legislature and there this policy met stiff opposition. Opponents of the government proposal even demanded a change in Jewish rituals because their observance prevented the integration of the Jews with the rest of the population. The attitude of the other German states to the Jewish question moved between these extremes of Prussia and Baden: return to discrimination *and* resistance to completion of the promised emancipation. The force to retard emancipation and to resist its completion could not have been so effective had there not

been a general change in the intellectual outlook.

This new intellectual climate rather than the hostility of interested groups determined the course of Jewish emancipation in Germany in the next decades. Intellectual trends, all in opposition to the notions of eighteenth-century Enlightenment, had evolved in Germany; when the storms of the French Revolution and of Napoleon subsided, these new trends dominated German thought. Although related to each other, they were concerned with different aspects of political and social life. The most striking event was the awakening of national enthusiasm; for a Germany divided into a great many small states, national feeling was a particularly novel and revolutionary phenomenon. Closely allied to nationalism was Romanticism; in contrast to the Enlightenment's emphasis on future and progress, Romanticism extolled the beauty and the value of the past, it looked with particular longing back to the Christian Middle Ages and the Holy Roman Empire. It awakened feeling for national individuality but also for tradition and authority; it set great value on the beliefs of the past and that meant that religion now was seen as integral element in the life of a nation. Finally, the struggle for emancipation—partly because of the victory of the third estate in France, partly in consequence of the economic growth in regions like the Rhineland—took on a somewhat more restricted but also a more organized form. It became the fight of a particular class, the bourgeoisie, against the pre-dominance and rule of the nobility. Liberalism organized as a political movement. The bourgeoisie became aware of its right to political power because it felt it was the class on which the well-being and progress of society depended.

THESE TRENDS—Nationalism, the demand for a closer connection between state and church, and increased pride in the traditions and values of the German "Bürgertum"—all had a bearing on the question of Jewish rights and Jewish emancipation. The concern with these issues raised problems which previously had been disregarded, or sharpened doubts which had existed.

The problem which nationalism posed for the Jews was immediately envisaged by Hegel, the philosopher who more than anyone else can be regarded as dominating and reflecting the spirit of this time. Hegel wrote in his *Philosophy of Right*,¹¹ which was published in 1821: "Technically it may have been right to refuse a grant of even civil rights to the Jews on the ground that they should be regarded as belonging not only to a religious sect but to a foreign people (*Volk*). But the fierce outcry raised against the Jews, from that point of view and others, ignores the fact that they are, above all, *men*; and manhood, so far from being a mere superficial, abstract quality, is on the contrary itself the basis of the fact that what civil rights arouse in their possessors . . . is the feeling of selfhood, infinite and free from all restrictions, is the root from which the desired similarity in disposition and ways of thinking comes into being. To exclude the Jews from civil rights, on the other hand, would rather be to confirm the isolation with which they have been reproached . . ." But after this declaration which sounds like a strong appeal for full emancipation, Hegel adds that the actions of the German governments have proved to be wise and dignified. Hegel tried to maintain the position which he had held consistently since his youth when he had welcomed the outbreak of the French Revolution: that of the need of full legal equality among the citizens of a state, but the last sentence in which he expressed his satisfaction with the existing situation shows that he reduced his views on what is concretely involved in emancipation: the notion had become problematical to him. Hegel's somewhat equivocal attitude is characteristic of the more doubtful, more hesitant mood which the awakening of German nationalism had brought into the consideration of Jewish emancipation and integration.

For instance, the appearance of some uncertainty is reflected in the political encyclopedia of Rotteck-Welcker, the German treasure-trove of political wisdom in the first half of the nineteenth century. Its articles expressed progressive, liberal opinions and accordingly its piece on emancipation of the Jews ended with the statement that it can be confidently

expected that the cause of emancipation will win out in all civilized states. However, the article contains a lengthy discussion of the question whether "the nationality of the Jews is an obstacle which makes it impossible for them to become members of the political organization in which they live." And it ought to be added that the article ends with a footnote in which the editor Rotteck declares that he is not in full agreement with the views and principles of the author of this article and refers to a discussion in the Assembly of the Baden estates in which he has expressed his objection to emancipation. These are examples of the quandary into which the enthusiasm for national individuality had brought some of the German liberals.

The heightened feeling of religiosity created strong, openly-expressed opposition to the integration of the Jews into German society. It raised doubts about the possibility and usefulness of emancipation by stressing the superiority of the Christian over the Jewish religion and it asserted that politics could not or should not be conducted without being inspired by definite religious principles.

For many, change from Judaism to Christianity was—as we mentioned before—no serious problem as long as it could be assumed that the basic philosophy of the two faiths was identical. Of course, some continued to take this step without many scruples, baptism remaining Heine's "entry ticket" into society. But the essence of the new attitude towards religion was that religion was not philosophy but revelation: it was the experience which the holy books, the rituals and the traditions of a single faith provided; only by this experience might the individual grasp divine truth. And since religious doctrines, holy writ, and customs differed, only one religion could reveal the truth. Conversion meant a break with the past; adoption of the new meant rejection of the old. Let me refer as example to the young David Mendel who, under the sway of Schleiermacher's religious pantheism, became convinced that the divine could not be experienced through a code of prescriptions and laws but only by feeling and emotion through which every phenomenon of the world

could become a revelation. Having decided to become a Christian he chose as his name Neander—in Greek: the new man. The young David Mendel in the commencement speech at his Gymnasium in Hamburg had advanced the need for Jewish equality before the law although even then he recommended revisions and modifications of what he called the Mosaic Law;¹² as Neander he continued to advocate legal equality for the Jews. Yet it can hardly be doubted that the emotional richness of Christianity which the famous church historian Neander proclaimed in his scholarship made, for him, the Christian religion superior to all others.

THE OTHER OBSTACLE to Jewish emancipation which the intensification of religious feeling raised was the advocacy of the idea that politics must be guided by Christian principles; full participation in political life was possible only for a member of the Christian church. The most systematic and most influential formulation of this doctrine was provided by another convert from Judaism to Christianity, Friedrich Julius Stahl, who was able to combine a strongly legalistic formation of mind with the feeling of religiosity which was the signature of this time. What the practical consequences of this doctrine meant for Jewish emancipation was much more directly and succinctly, but also more ruthlessly, stated by Bismarck in the speech which he made when, in 1847, the estates debated the position of the Jews in Prussia. "I am no enemy of the Jews and if they consider me as their enemy I forgive them. Under certain circumstances I am willing to love them. I am willing to concede them all rights but not that of being a magistrate in a Christian state. . . . The Christian state is not a fable, the invention of a modern political philosopher. The concept is as old as the former Holy Roman Empire, as old as any European state. It is the soil in which they grew up and took roots. Every state if it wants to be secure in its being, if it wants to be justified in its existence, must stand on a religious foundation."¹³

Bismarck spoke as a member of the agrarian nobility, of the group which ruled in Prussia. The increasing strength and

importance of the bourgeoisie made these landed estate owners defensive and extreme in their views. Their rights and privileges, their attempt to maintain a hierarchically organized social structure, made them fierce opponents of the bourgeoisie; they upheld the barriers and restrictions which impeded economic development. But would the Jews be reliable allies of the bourgeoisie in its struggle against the nobility? In the agrarian sector of the economy Jews were in business the bourgeoisie wanted to take over. Jewish bargaining and business methods were frequently regarded as compromising the strict standards of which the bourgeoisie was proud and which it considered as its distinguishing feature, justifying its claim to a dominant role in society. The very rich, prominent Jews were court Jews. They cooperated with the rulers of the German states and some of them were anxious to be ennobled or to acquire estates whose possession would raise them into the nobility. Karl Spindler, a novelist now happily forgotten but well-known in his time, published in 1827 a more than a thousand pages long novel entitled *The Jew*. It was by no means hostile to the Jews, but the Jews appear as favored by the princes and, despite good will on both sides, it was not possible to establish and maintain a connection between the Jews and the Bürgers of a German free city. In preparing this lecture I looked through some volumes of the "Gartenlaube," that insipid periodical much read in good bourgeois families in the nineteenth century. The "Gartenlaube," although later anti-Semiticly inclined, was not so at the beginning. I found a long story about the Rothschilds entitled "The Prince-Elector and the Prince of Money." Its main point was that originally living pressed together in the Frankfurt ghetto, the Rothschilds were contemptuously treated by the German princes. But at the end the mother of the sons who were now established in all the capitals of Europe, was still living in the same house of the Frankfurt ghetto but could demand whatever she wished from the rulers of Europe. The rise of a self-conscious bourgeoisie in Germany created distrust against Jews who seemed to have no firm place in the social order.

I don't want to give the impression that these trends:

strengthened national consciousness, deepened emotional attachment to religion, or greater awareness of social gradations—all these characteristics of the first half of the nineteenth century—were sufficiently strong to extinguish the view that the emancipation of the Jews was an integral element of the great process of emancipation. The liberal aims of constitutionalism, guarantee of basic individual rights and removal of the restrictions on free development were still believed to be attainable only with equality for Jews. Only a very few well-known liberals—Paul Pfizer, a prominent political publicist from Württemberg was one of them—became opposed to Jewish emancipation. But a feeling that the Jewish emancipation involved greater problems than had been originally envisaged undoubtedly emerged. The always existing hostility against the Jews—the pre-industrial anti-Semitism—became more vocal and the articles on Jewish emancipation in the great political encyclopedias—the later editions of *Rotteck-Welcker* and the *Ersch-Gruber*—though they continued to adhere to a line favorable to Jewish emancipation, extended their articles, giving more space to the counter-arguments. They contained remarks that lengthy education was needed before integration could be accomplished and they gave attention to Jewish voices which suggested reform in the religious usages of their faith.

The events of the Revolution of 1848 showed that the overwhelming majority of German liberals continued to consider the emancipation of the Jews to be an integral element of their program. When the Frankfurt National Assembly, in which German liberal opinion came together in full strength, deliberated on basic human rights and took up the question of the freedom of the churches and of legal equality of all religious confessions, Moritz Mohl, a liberal from South Germany, proposed that the question of Jewish religious rights ought to be treated in special legislation. This proposal was decisively rejected. The greatest impression in this debate was made by a speech by Gabriel Riesser. "Until recently," he said, "it would have been impossible for me to become a night-watchman in my home city of Hamburg. I consider it to be the work, I ought to say the miraculous

result, of the notions of right and freedom that I am entitled to defend here the great cause of justice and equality without having had to convert to Christianity."¹⁴ Riesser's intervention in this debate was one of the spectacular events in the Frankfurt Assembly and made him one of the most respected politicians in Frankfurt. Nevertheless it deserves some attention that at the end of his speech Riesser expressed the view that to become true German patriots the Jewish population still needed to become educated and that the granting of full equality would, he believed, accelerate this policy of education.

THE FAILURE OF THE Revolution of 1848 represented a break in German history, and a break also in the development with which we are concerned here. For the first time the Jews were seen in a new role, as direct participants in German politics. The notions about Jews were enriched by a new figure: the Jew as revolutionary leader. Soon after the Revolution, in 1850, a pamphlet attacking Karl Marx used for the first time anti-Semitic arguments and some of the trials organized against those who had participated in the revolts following the end of the Frankfurt Assembly had anti-Semitic undertones.¹⁵ But only a decade later the image of the Jew as leader of movements aiming to overthrow the social order was firmly stamped on the mind of the German public. It was the combination of attractiveness, intelligence, arrogance and Don Quixotery in Lassalle which for years to come established a connection between revolutionary leadership and Jewish intelligentsia.

The general transformation, however, which the revolution of 1848—more precisely the failure of the revolution of 1848—brought about in Germany had wider impact on the history of the Jews in Germany than the appearance of the Jew as a particular political type. The revolution had led to a conflict with Denmark which was denying the Germans in Schleswig-Holstein their right of self-determination. The Poles had threatened to contest German possessions in the east. The Slavic people in the Habsburg Empire had indi-

cated their unwillingness to continue under German domination. National unification, once a remote goal to be attained by rational persuasion, cooperation and the natural progress of history, became an object of practical politics, to be won against powerful opponents within Germany and outside Germany. The attainment of German national unity meant the assertion, if necessary by military means, of German claims against other nations. National feeling gained a sharper edge; it became arrogant and aggressive.

The result was not only a strong emphasis on German national superiority. There was also an increased tendency towards distinguishing Germans from other nationalities, and other nations from each other. Each nation was regarded to possess a unique and distinctive character. It is startling to what extent national characters became stereotyped—the French were regarded as restless, voluble, vain; the Slavic people were thought to be subservient and lacking in individuality, and so on.

Another consequence of the failure of liberal idealism to create a German national state was the development of a diametrically opposed attitude: the emergence of a contempt for idealistic and ideological considerations in politics. To use the word which was coined at this time: what was needed was "Realpolitik." The paramount aim to which all efforts ought to be directed was the establishment of Germany as a power among powers. Considerations of domestic policy, the internal form which the German national state would assume, became issues of secondary importance. Certainly the achievement of liberal desiderata—a constitutional, progressive Germany—remained the long-distant goal; but its realization would have to wait until the precondition, national unification, was fulfilled. This was what the liberals—or at least a good part of the liberal leadership—believed they had to learn from their experiences and their failure in the years 1848 and 1849. Turning away from domestic issues to the problems of power and foreign policy had also its advantageous aspects from the liberal point of view. The events of 1848 had revealed the great differences existing between the various

parts of Germany, between north and south, between the industrialized Rhineland and the agrarian areas of the east, between Catholic and Protestant attitudes to government and education. The forging of a unified liberal program had proved to be extremely difficult. In order to maintain some kind of organized liberal movement against the combined forces of reaction and dynastic particularism, it became necessary to concentrate on the *one* issue on which liberals were united: the need for a German national state, and to lower the emphasis on internal problems that divided. It seemed a practical necessity to place emphasis on the goal of national unity without spelling out a social and democratic program.¹⁷ It has been said that "the emphasis on power at the expense of the spirit corrupted the values and stunted the political growth of the German people." This was of crucial importance for German history in general; it was of special importance with regard to Jews.

The same assumption which was applied to other peoples, namely, that each nation had a distinctive, individual character, that the persons who belonged to a nation, despite great differences among them, reflected a national type, was, of course, also applied to the Jews. This does not mean that all those who viewed Jews as possessing distinguishing national features considered their integration into Germany an impossibility; discerning a national type behind individual features became a customary way of describing and evaluating people. Certainly in the 1850s we encounter frequently descriptions of a general Jewish type, with distinct and distinctive features. Richard Wagner published in 1850 his *Judentum und die Musik*, and although his writing was certainly determined and inspired by personal motives, by his aim to gain a place in the musical world, then dominated by Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, Wagner's argumentation—weak as it was—is based on the assumption of the existence of a particular Jewish mentality. Five years later Freytag's *Soll und Haben* was published; we are now better able to fit that book in its context. In placing the honest German Bürger against the superficial and arrogant noble, the book continues the struggle of the revolution for emancipation of the bour-

geoisie; in ascribing not only to the Jews but also to the Slavic people, particularly to the Poles, a national character widely inferior to the Germans, Freytag employs categories of national characterization which had come to the foreground in German political thought. Material of this nature is extensive, and it might be enough to quote from the article on the Jews in Bluntschli's encyclopedia, one of the most respected political handbooks, published in 1860. Bluntschli himself was the author of this article; the passage which deserves attention runs: "Admittedly the Semitic race of the Jews is even today, as it was one-thousand or two-thousand years ago, recognizable by movements and posture, and this contrast of races is still felt as something alien by the Aryan Germans and Latin Peoples in their contacts with Jews. It still forms an impediment to closer contacts and community. . . . The Jewish people have inherited from the patriarchs of their tribal era preference for bargaining and business gains . . ." ¹⁸ Now Bluntschli was an adherent of legal equality for the Jews and he advocated this policy in the article from which I quoted. He simply uses a conceptual framework that was widely, almost generally adopted.

At the beginning of the movement for Jewish emancipation—for instance, in Lessing's play *The Jew*s—it was believed that the only differences which exist among human beings are those of moral behavior; evaluation of an individual based on generalizations about his religion or nationality have no validity and ought never to be undertaken. Now, in the 1850s and 1860s, the peoples of different nations not only look and move differently, they also have different innate qualities. The Jews are becoming stereotyped, in their exterior as well as in their professional behavior. It seems superfluous to go into details about the characteristics given to the Jews, to analyze in detail what were considered to be special Jewish types. ¹⁹ One needs to read only German novels—from Karl Spindler's *The Jew*, and Freytag's *Soll und Haben* to Raabe's *Hungerpastor*—to have these types: the peddler who becomes rich through fraud and subservience, the rich banker eager for acceptance in society, the speculator who converts to Christianity for reasons of advancement, the

intelligent reticent scholar preaching reason but withdrawing from the world where his philosophy might be tested, and finally the revolutionary leader. ²⁰

AS INDICATED EARLIER, this thinking in typical categories has its origin in a general method of characterization; it is not, or not primarily, an expression of anti-Jewish feeling or hostility. Freytag, for instance, in later years, when anti-semitism had become a political force in Germany, claimed loudly that he was not an anti-Semite. Wilhelm Busch's *Schmulchen Schivelbein*—like some of his other figures, for instance *Baldwin Baehlamm*, the clerk with poetic aspirations—is one of the social misfits at whom Busch smiled with ironic detachment. But this indulgence in the depiction of a Jewish type has its dangers, and some of those who lived in this period were aware of this. The best-known German novelist of this era was Friedrich Spielhagen; although one cannot call him a great artist, he deserves praise as an honest and unswerving protagonist of liberal and progressive ideas. In his novels Spielhagen treated problems of the contemporary world. In the 1860s he wrote a political novel about the problems of industrialization; in the middle of the 1870s he wrote a novel on stock-exchange speculations. Every reader of these novels soon becomes aware that the hero of one of them was Lassalle, that a main figure of the other was Stroussberg. But neither the Lassalle nor the Stroussberg of Spielhagen's novels is a Jew. On the contrary, there is emphasis on the good Christian middle-class background of these figures. Clearly Spielhagen was aware of the rising wave of anti-semitism and wanted to communicate the message that revolutionary leaders or stock-exchange speculators do not need to be Jews.

We have now reached that point in time at which we started: the years of the foundation of the Empire—the time when anti-semitism emerged as a clearly distinguishable, much-discussed political phenomenon—and we might now be able to draw some conclusion. First I ought to emphasize that I do not want to deny the importance of those factors that are usually considered to be responsible for the rise of anti-

Semitism as a political force in Germany: the Great Depression, the upsetting effects of industrialization and modernism, the increase of the Jewish population in the great urban centers, the growth of political radicalism. I want to propose, however, that, before 1870, the movement for Jewish emancipation and integration had weakened and that especially among the liberals, the main advocates of Jewish emancipation and equality, doubts and hesitations had arisen: they had been still responsible—and this needs to be acknowledged and emphasized—for introducing in the constitution of the North German League in 1867, and then of the Reich in 1871, the clause which gave equal political rights to members of all confessions. But while liberals had remained loyal to the principles, the Enlightenment origins of liberal ideas, the attitude of influential liberal groups within the general context of German policy was not favorable to the implementation of this policy, to the integration of the Jews in German society. In subordinating domestic issues to the imperatives of foreign policy, in collaborating with the ruling group rather than insisting on the demolition of the class structure, they had relinquished the possibility to create that equalitarian and democratic society which would have eased the integration of the Jews into German life. The liberals' enthusiastic surrender to the appeal of nationalism contributed to the construction of national images stressing differences rather than eliminating them. What occurred before 1870 gives some explanation for the apathetic attitude of many members of the middle classes towards the rise of anti-Semitism in later years.

This complex relationship between nationalism and the Jews can perhaps be seen more clearly if we consider briefly the opinions of two German leaders—Marx and Bismarck—neither of whom was particularly impressed by the spirit of German nationalism. Much has been written about Marx' attitude towards the Jewish question, and it remains a much-disputed issue.²¹ He was not above using the pattern that had been created and Marx could characterize, rather haughtily, a person whom he disliked, as a Jew; for instance Lassalle he characterized as a "German Jewish nigger." But

Marx did not accept the opinion that there was a special Jewish morality and that there was a difficult Jewish question. The fact that the Jews were discriminated against was an example of the viciousness of the capitalist system, and they would receive justice and equality when capitalism would be replaced by a socialist system.

It may seem absurd to suggest that in the thought of Bismarck—the statesman who created the German Empire—nationalism was not a dominant factor. Bismarck certainly did not lack German national feeling, but his main aim was to strengthen Prussia, and the Reich which he created was a greater Prussia, maintaining Prussia's authoritarian system. In the 1850s, after Bismarck had sloughed off his youthful notion of a Christian state and had become converted to "Realpolitik" of which he became the uncontested master, he also viewed the Jews with a kind of cool realism.²² His criterion was whether they could be useful for his political aims; seen from this angle, the Jews did not form a unified bloc, nor had they any particular character; they had different interests and aims according to their position, wealth, and personal inclinations. There were times when Bismarck thought that Lassalle could perhaps be useful; in general wealthy Jews were of importance and ought to be supported as a conservative element interested in maintaining the status quo. It is amusing that Bismarck was one of the few who had friendly words for the little Jew, the peddler; he found among them good honest people.

The Socialists were not always free from anti-Semitism, and Bismarck was enough of a member of the Junker class not to be outspokenly pro-Jewish. Yet Marx and Bismarck were less involved in the problem, had a somewhat detached attitude, less obsessed with the national image and, for this reason, they confirm the central importance of the originally liberal middle class for the problem of the rise of anti-Semitism.

WITH SOME JUSTIFICATION it might be asked whether all this matters. Is it of any importance to set the rise of modern

anti-Semitism back from the twentieth, first to the later nineteenth century and then to the middle of the nineteenth century?

In my opinion more is involved than correct chronology; I feel sure that it is important to place the beginning of this movement in its right historical context. Anti-Semitism is not limited to Germany; one needs only to think of the Dreyfus case to become aware that, at the same time when anti-Semitism became vocal in Germany, also in other countries anti-Semitism became a disturbing and dividing political issue. But in France anti-Semitism could be contained, it received no official recognition of any kind. This was different in Germany; anti-Semitic political parties continued to appear and to find adherents, and in certain areas there remained official discrimination. There was no united resistance of the liberal bourgeoisie;—of what might be called the broad center of the political spectrum—to this attitude. Liberalism never recovered from the split which the events of the middle of the nineteenth century, the Revolution of 1848 and its failure, the subordination of the question of freedom to the question of power had brought about, and of the neglect of basic individual rights under the consuming fire of nationalism. The fact that Jewish emancipation and integration remained only half-solved was part and parcel of the inability of liberal Germany to realize a constitutional and democratic solution of the German problem, the result of sacrificing the wider to the narrower aim. Certainly it was not only, not even primarily, the fault of the liberals that they had failed to attain their original aims. It was the reflection of the uneven development of German society, of the many divisions within German society which resulted in continuous tension between reactionary and progressive elements and made unification possible only by blood and iron, and on an autocratic basis. Even what later happened reflects this fundamental problem of modern German history; as many reasons as there are for the rise of Hitler and the Nazis, it would not have been possible if democratization had been more complete, if the Nazi movement had not been able to draw strength from the autocratic element which had remained

built into German political institutions. But the view I want to leave is not that the course of history is set and cannot be deviated from; on the contrary, that there are always moments of decision and that at such moments it is always best to ask what are one's most fundamental beliefs and principles and to stand with them.

NOTES

1. The importance of this novel as a reflection of rising anti-Semitism has been well characterized by George Mosse, *Germans and Jews*, New York, 1970; Peter Heinz Hubrich, *Gustav Freytags 'Deutsche Ideologie' in Soll und Haben*, Kronberg Ts., 1974, is the most recent analysis of the political significance of this novel. The book by Eleonore Sterling, *Judenhass*, Frankfurt, 1969, is particularly concerned—like this lecture—with developments before the foundation of the Reich; it deals with concrete events rather than with ideology.
2. See Reinhard Kürup, "Emanzipation and Crisis. The 'Jewish Question' in Germany 1850-1890," *Year Book XX (1975)* of the Leo Baeck Institute, p. 13; but see also Kürup's many other writings on this problem, most of all his *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus*, Göttingen, 1975.
3. The point of departure was the book by Hans Rosenberg, *Grosse Depression und Bismarckzeit* (Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin, vol. XXIV), Berlin, 1967; Rosenberg's thesis has been worked out in great detail by several German scholars, most of all Hans Ulrich Wehler. For a brief recent statement, see Gordon A. Craig, *Germany 1866-1945*, New York, 1978, chapter 3.
4. See Fritz Stern, *Gold and Iron*, London, 1977, especially chapter 18, for a careful analysis of this new wave of antisemitism.
5. Walter Frank, *Hofprediger Adolf Stöcker und die christlich-soziale Bewegung*, Hamburg, 1935, remains important because it contains most fully the relevant material.
6. The discussion evoked by Treitschke's article is now collected in *Der Berliner Antisemitismustreife*, ed. Walter Böhlisch, Frankfurt, 1965.
7. The passage can be found in Heine's *Reisebilder*, "Reise von München nach Genua"; I use the translation by Charles Godfrey Leland.
8. See Kürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus*, pp. 13 et seq.
9. From the English translation of Sebastian Hensel, *Die Familie Mendelssohn*, pp. 79.
10. In general see *Das Judentum in der Deutschen Umwelt*, ed. Hans Liebeschütz and Arnold Paucker (Schriftenreihe Wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts, vol. XXXV), Tübingen, 1977; for Baden, see Kürup, "Die Emanzipation in Baden" in *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus*, pp. 37-73, but the various German Encyclopedias of the first half of the nineteenth century (Rotteck-Welcker, Ersch-Gruber) contain detailed data about the legal situation of the Jews in the various German states in their articles on "Emanzipation."

11. In Paragraph 270.
12. David Mendel's (Neander's) Rede, "gehalten beim Abgang vom Johanneum im Jahre 1805" has recently been reprinted: Hamburg, 1956.
13. My translation.
14. My translation. The speech is given in full in the protocols of the Frankfurt National Assembly, but also carefully mentioned in the books by Rudolf Haym and Heinrich Laube, describing the developments in Frankfurt.
15. See Jerrold Seigel, *Marx's Fate*, Princeton, 1978, p. 114.
16. The classic statement about the impact of the Revolution of 1848 on heightening the temperature of German nationalism is still L. B. Namier, 1848: *The Revolution of the Intellectuals*, London, 1944.
17. This point has been emphatically made by James J. Sheehan, *German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century*, Chicago, 1978. The following quotation comes from Friedrich Meinecke.
18. My translation.
19. For an attempt at a "Typology of German Jewry," see *Year Book XIX (1974)* of the Leo Baeck Institute.
20. The best treatment of the image of the Jew in German literature is Pierre Angel, *Le Personnage Juif dans le Roman Allemand (1855-1915)* Paris, 1973.
21. For the following, see Seigel, *Marx's Fate*, pp. 112-119.
22. A convenient collection of the material can be found in Otto Jöhlinger, *Bismarck und die Juden*, Berlin, 1921, although the Bismarckian enthusiasm of this pro-Jewish author smoothes down the edges; interesting material on Bismarck and rich Jews in Frank, *Hofprediger Adolf Stöcker*, pp. 90 et seq. Basic is Fritz Stern, *Gold and Iron*, chapter 18.