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Britain and Germany 1800 to 1914
Two Developmental Paths
Towards Industrial Society

by

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It is not the intention of this paper to reopen the passionate debate, initiated by a thoughtful if somewhat polemical study by David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley five years ago,¹ on the issue of whether there was a German *Sonderweg*. Whatever the merits of their case, German historians, and not they alone, tended to analyse the developmental path of German history, which seemed to have terminated in the cataclysm of National Socialist dictatorship, the Second World War and the Holocaust, against the backcloth of a notion of Britain's development as a smooth and continuous path leading towards modern participatory democracy; in other words, against the myth of Whig historiography. I dare say that the idea of a German *Sonderweg* is no more, but also no less, a myth than the idealised notion of British progress towards democracy, which served it as a counter-factual model. This situation suggests that a concrete comparison of the developmental paths of both sciences which takes into account not only the political, but also the socio-economic dimension, is warranted. In the limited space available here it will only be possible to draw attention to the most conspicuous features of the points where the British and the German developmental paths either converged, ran parallel to one another, or diverged in a significant manner.

Seen from a European vantage point, the developmental paths of Britain and Germany have far more in common with each other than with most other European nations, with the possible exception of the Scandinavian countries. While there has been considerable rivalry, antagonism and, eventually, open conflict and war between Britain and Germany, it has been rivalry and antagonism between societies which, if measured against the rest of Europe, were in many ways similar rather than different.² Only on inspection at closer range, leaving aside the European context, do substantial and apparently far-reaching differences surface, both at the economic and the

political level. Although it is difficult to find a suitable point of departure for comparing the two societies, the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries may be more appropriate for this purpose than an earlier date.

It has been pointed out that at the onset of the industrial revolution in the late eighteenth century Britain and most of western Europe, including the German states, had reached roughly similar levels of social and educational development - those that are essential if industrial activities are to succeed on any larger scale. Yet in social and political terms, English and German society differed widely during the late eighteenth century. England had a central government and its long-term differences with Scotland had been resolved, although the solution was still disputed. The United Kingdom clearly was about to become a fairly homogenous nation-state, but with a considerable degree of devolution of political authority. Germany, on the other hand, was divided into a multitude of small sovereign states and principalities, and the Holy Roman Empire had become a largely nominal political superstructure stripped of any real power. The more important states, or rather, the bureaucratic elites running the governmental affairs of these states tried, with varying success, to increase public resources by implementing mercantilist policies of sorts. While the estates still had a share of power, albeit limited, the aristocracy was in fact gradually becoming dependent upon the state for its economic wellbeing and privileged social status, notably in Prussia. The nobles had by and large retained their feudal rights as large landowners, but these rights were being increasingly undermined by social changes as well as by governmental encroachment, and no longer sufficed for the efficient management of agrarian estates. In those regions where individual peasant landholding prevailed, especially in the south west, overpopulation prevented any economic breakthrough. What economic

dynamic existed was found in the urban centres and was often largely dependent on the demand of the courts.

There was as yet nothing comparable to the agrarian revolution which took place in Britain in the second half of the eighteenth century and which, in many ways, laid the foundations for industrial development. Agrarian structures in Germany were, in fact, far less hierarchical than in Britain, where a tiny minority – the so-called landed aristocracy – controlled most of the land and allowed the development of a class of ‘tenant farmers’ who did most of the work of modernising agricultural production. In the German states, and even in Prussia, the ownership of land was far more evenly spread. Only after the agrarian reforms in Prussia, which emancipated the peasants from feudal tutelage, albeit at a high price, did a large-scale landed aristocracy develop with substantial estates, and then largely only in the east. Despite the fact that peasants were being driven from the land in increasing numbers, two-thirds of all agrarian holdings still remained in the hands of free farmers, especially in the south west, though a tendency towards impoverishment existed. It was not until 1800 that the agrarian revolution began in earnest in Germany, particularly in Prussia. Gradually a new class of agrarian entrepreneurs emerged. While its members were no longer necessarily of aristocratic origin it defined its role and status in rigid aristocratic terms.³ But this new wealth did not in any way provide a basis for industrial development, as had been the case in Britain half a century earlier. The potent entrepreneurial role of great aristocratic landowners who invested in all sorts of infrastructural ventures, or who opened up coal or iron ore mines or other primary industrial enterprises, was almost non-existent in the German case, with the notable exception of the Silesian landed aristocracy and perhaps a small number of substantial landowners in southern Germany. In the industrial sector, Britain – or at any rate England – and the German

states were even further apart, not least because of the different roles of the landed aristocracy in the two countries. By 1800 Britain was in the middle of a process of transformation which has been described, perhaps in all too dramatic terms, as industrial revolution.⁴ The Napoleonic wars resulted in retarded growth and widespread misery, and it was only a generation later that Britain eventually entered the period of Victorian prosperity. Although economic growth rates were still small in absolute terms and the country as a whole was affected rather unevenly by technological progress, by 1847 the stage was set for a period of substantial economic growth which eventually silenced those who denounced the new industrialism for the social misery it caused.⁵

In the various German states there were also early signs of the industrial revolution. But industrial development was patchy, and was concentrated in a few regions only, while the country as a whole remained largely unaffected by these changes.⁶ Industrial growth was not yet strong enough to engulf the whole country in a process of sustained growth such as Britain reached by the 1820s; in fact, this stage of industrial development was not reached in Germany until the 1870s. Much of the initiative for opening up German society to the new economic and technological developments in Britain came from the enlightened bureaucracy, which considered economic progress primarily as a means of political aggrandisement and not from the still small bourgeois sector itself. Besides, there were important differences in the mentality of the educated classes in the two countries. While a strong individualistic tradition prevailed in Britain, though often associated with aristocratic ideals, in Germany the philosophy of the enlightenment had been only cautiously accepted by the elite. In fact, German enlightenment never tolerated any substantial doubt as to the legitimacy of authoritarian rule exercised by a bureaucratic elite in the name of princely rulers.

Despite these differences, due partly to a considerable time lag in terms of social and economic development, I think it is true to say that until the 1860s Britain and Germany developed along broadly similar lines, and that there were many areas of mutual understanding. In both countries, actual political control remained firmly in the hands of a landed class which was largely, if not exclusively, aristocratic, with, perhaps, a far stronger element of bureaucratic rule in Germany. The Reform Bill of 1832 did little to change this state of affairs. During the 1850s the possibility of a Whig type of government coming to power in Prussia was still a matter for serious consideration, and it was certainly not only the British Crown which considered it quite feasible.⁷ Admittedly, German liberalism was far weaker and more divided than its British counterpart. But while it is true that, in its conflict with Bismarck over constitutional issues in 1862, German liberalism lacked a sufficient power base among the people, much the same could also be said of the British liberals, who suddenly found themselves outmanoeuvred by Disraeli's 'Tory democracy'. Constitutional government had certainly advanced much further in Britain than in the German states, with the possible exception of the German *Musterländle* Württemberg. But if the degree of actual popular participation in decision-making processes, rather than formal constitutional procedure, is taken as a yardstick of constitutional 'progress' – if this notion is applicable at all – then the differences between the two societies appear much less marked, at least during the first half of the nineteenth century. However, Bismarck's victory in the constitutional struggle with the Progressive Liberals in Prussia set the scene for a deviation in the developmental paths of Britain and Germany; after 1867 the two societies diverged at an accelerated pace.⁸

This was, however, not merely a result of the policies of the 'Iron Chancellor' or, as it is more fashionable to say

nowadays, the 'white revolutionary' Bismarck.⁹ At an early stage there were already a variety of fundamental differences in the socio-political systems of the two countries, and they became more obvious in the second half of the nineteenth century. Britain followed a more graduated path than Germany towards industrial society and managed to maintain a large degree of political cohesion despite mounting class divisions, with its ruling class gradually giving way to new social forces, although it maintained its privileged social status amazingly well during this process. In Imperial Germany, by contrast, the ruling elites, which on the whole continued to operate from a fairly narrow social base, hardened, and the constitutional system experienced a certain degree of petrification. Germany was heading for a good deal of internal division and domestic strife which would warrant the existence of a strong authoritarian government transcending political parties and social groupings.

This divergence in the developmental paths of Britain and Germany can be traced back to a number of structural factors which, though initially not very apparent, were clearly of great importance for the emerging political cultures. Perhaps of greatest significance was the *social status of the elites*, and connected with this, their socio-economic base. One general observation is called for at this point. While the Prusso-German aristocracy, and indeed, that of the Continent in general, by and large adhered to the principle that gentlemen should not become involved in commercial business of any kind, the English aristocracy participated in the industrialisation and commercialisation of British society, if only indirectly, by retaining control of the land used for urbanisation and industry. Compared with continental elites, the British ruling class always was, as Harold Perkin aptly put it, an 'open aristocracy'.¹⁰ The Prusso-German aristocracy, on the other hand, was not prepared to make common cause with the upper sections of

the middle classes and, in particular, with the commercial elites, although intermarriage with the daughters of wealthy businessmen was a recurring phenomenon. While the English landed aristocracy perhaps received more than their fair share of the prosperity brought by the industrial revolution,¹¹ the Prusso-German landholding class, with a few notable exceptions, did not. The German landed aristocracy undoubtedly benefited from introducing capitalist modes of production on their estates, and some also succeeded in considerably enlarging their lands by acquiring smaller peasant holdings. The statistical evidence suggests that they did not, after all, fare too badly. Productivity, and with it, returns from agriculture roughly doubled between 1800 and 1850, and by 1913 productivity had again risen by some 130 per cent. But this did not provide an adequate livelihood for the landed aristocracy, all the more as it began to experience the consequences of overseas competition and rising wages in the home market. Grain and food prices came under pressure from staple products produced cheaply overseas. As Max Weber put it, rather acrimoniously, the Prusso-German landed aristocracy eventually became a *Kostgänger* of the state, that is to say, its economic position was heavily subsidised by a variety of legislative measures at the expense of the public and in particular the working classes.¹²

After the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1842 the British aristocracy put up little resistance to the gradual decline of agriculture in both relative and absolute terms. For the new wealthy upper class which gradually emerged, the possession of land was of the utmost importance for social reasons (as was also the case in Prussia), but it derived a growing proportion of its income from commercial and industrial sources of various sorts, especially from the rents of land used for urban settlement and industrial purposes. It is well known that in Germany the primary sector's contribution to national wealth fell considerably over the

years; in the 1890s industry and commerce finally overtook agriculture and forestry. But it is important to realise that while the agrarian sector lost out in relative terms (and as time went by increasingly so), in 1913 it still made up 23 per cent of the national wealth while its British counterpart provided only a meagre 7 per cent. More importantly, in absolute terms the number of people employed in agriculture remained almost constant, despite considerable technological advances. At the turn of the century Imperial Germany, unlike Britain, was still both an industrial *and* an agrarian society, and these two sectors operated alongside each other in what might be called separate compartments – economically, geographically and politically.

As a result of these developments, the position of the ruling elites assumed a very different character in the two countries. While the British upper class had nothing to lose, but rather stood to gain from industrial development, the German landed aristocracy resisted it wherever possible. Indeed, the German landed aristocracy had every reason to fear the eventual social and economic consequences of industrialisation, and its relationship with the upper echelons of the bourgeoisie was therefore always an unbalanced and shaky one, with much open and some veiled rivalry between them. Eventually, the Prussian nobility sought refuge in an alliance with what may be called the feudal sector of industry, namely the ‘iron and steel barons’ of the Ruhr. This alliance was formed under the banner of a protectionist commercial policy which sought to balance the industrial and the agrarian sectors of the economy, for political and social reasons rather than for solid economic ones. It is, in fact, open to considerable doubt whether the German economy as a whole benefited from excessive prices set by the coal and iron industries, protected, as they were, by a comfortable tariff wall. But even this alliance was an uneasy one, and required constant

support by the government. It was mostly a common fear of democratic and socialist forces which held it together.

This leads to a second issue of key importance, namely, the impact of industrialisation on the two societies, and the consequences which it had for the condition of the landless poor and the slowly emerging working class. In the early years of the nineteenth century the similarities between both countries had not yet been totally submerged: industrialisation was concentrated in a few geographical regions, while the country as a whole was only marginally affected by these new developments. It should be pointed out that the speed of industrial development during the so-called 'industrial revolution' in Britain has hitherto been considerably overrated, if we follow Crafts and Wrigley. But in Germany industrialisation certainly proceeded at a much slower pace and in a much more patchy manner than in Britain; only the Rhineland, the Bergische Land, Saxony and Berlin were as yet drawn into the orbit of industrial development on a larger scale, in the midst of widespread poverty in the countryside and relatively depressed conditions in the traditional craft industries.

The spectacular rise in population which partly preceded and partly coincided with the industrial revolution probably hit the German states even harder than England, which had to contend with a considerable influx of landless poor from Ireland. The Germans were spared the squalor and destitution which developed in the rapidly emerging industrial conurbations, especially in Yorkshire and Lancashire, but the misery in the countryside must have been far worse, as the few newly established industrial enterprises were as yet unable to employ even a small proportion of the poor who were leaving the land. Whatever may be said about 'the condition of the working classes' in the rapidly developing industrial conurbations in the north of England, it remains true that here industry was able to absorb large numbers of the landless poor, who were then

subjected to the vagaries of a still rather fragmented employment cycle determined by the ups and downs of market conditions. Not so in Germany. Until the revolution of 1848 the German economy was still largely determined by the natural cycle of good and bad harvests, and only influenced to a limited degree by the cyclical movements of the slowly emerging international commercial system. It was a society dominated by want and shortage of resources of various kinds, with the relatively wealthy classes still a tiny minority in the upper echelons of the social system, often living from public salaries rather than from commercial activity. To escape the misery, significant numbers of Germans emigrated overseas, especially from the south west of the country. In the first four decades of the nineteenth century the masses of both Britain and Germany suffered substantial deprivation regardless of whether industrialisation had already established a firm foothold (as in Britain), or was still in its infancy (as in Germany).

During the 1820s and 1830s in particular, Britain experienced extended periods of mass poverty; the notorious 'hungry forties' were not quite so bad. However, there is general agreement that by the end of the 1840s the British economy was on the verge of a period of continuous growth, although the pace of Victorian prosperity slackened somewhat during what came to be called, rightly or wrongly, the Great Depression. This period brought rising real incomes for all sections of society, though the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' widened considerably. By 1850 the British developmental path towards industrial society seemed to have become somewhat smoother after the initial period of extremely rapid social and economic change in which most of the labouring classes had experienced severe hardship. All social strata were now benefiting from the advance of the industrial economy, although to differing degrees. Indeed, the rise in living standards continued to be extremely uneven during the period of the Victorian boom

and it seems that some sections of the working classes, in particular casual labour, remained largely unaffected by Victorian prosperity; Charles Booth and Benjamin S. Rowntree found that a large number of people were actually living below the poverty line. During this period Germany was spared the extreme squalor to be found in the urban centres which had developed overnight in Britain, largely because industrialisation was still in its early stages in Germany. Here the industrial centres attracted people in large numbers much later, and the flood into the cities reached sizeable proportions only from the 1880s onwards. By this time it was possible to avoid some of the problems of housing, sanitation and infectious diseases which the early Victorians had faced.

It was not until about 1850 that the German economy entered its first industrial spurt, which eventually culminated in the *Gründer* crisis of 1873. The statistical evidence of a significant advance in the industrial economy between 1850 and 1873 tends, however, to hide the fact that economic growth was still very uneven and concentrated in particular areas, whilst most other regions were only marginally affected as yet. Textiles and, in particular, railway construction pulled the economy along the road towards an industrial future with amazing speed. The governments plays some part in this, largely by fostering railway construction, not only for economic, but also for political reasons; at times they also facilitated credit for new industrial ventures. But the active role of the state, notably Prussia, in helping the economy onto its feet has long been considerably overestimated by economic historians, as Wolfram Fischer has shown recently.¹³ Unlike in Britain, where industry relied largely on methods of self-financing, new banking establishments provided a large part of the capital for industrial enterprises in Germany. From the outset this favoured the development of larger industrial units and industrial combinations

which were, perhaps, less favourable to liberal views of a classless society of burghers than their British counterparts.

It seems that the liberal entrepreneur who was typical of the early stages of industrialisation in Britain did not have an exact counterpart in Germany, or rather, his German equivalent was not as close to the centre of affairs as the liberal entrepreneur had been in Britain a generation before. The German states entered upon the path of industrialisation at a considerably later stage, and were thereby able fully to exploit the 'advantages of backwardness'. However, this modified the social stratification and influenced in a decidedly non-liberal manner the outlook of those social groups most directly affected by the rise of modern industry: the still small entrepreneurial class, the traditional handicrafts, industrial labour, the landed aristocracy, and the peasantry.

Throughout the early stages of the industrial revolution industrial units tended to be very small; indeed, larger establishments employing a hundred workers or more were still an exception. They were mostly found in the textile industries which employed a lot of unskilled labour from the start. This was certainly true in both countries. In the British case there was a gradual transition from the older craft industries to modern industry, which kept alive some of the traditions of craftsmanship inside industry. According to Eric Hobsbawm, 'it is now generally accepted that the British industrial economy in its prime relied extensively, and often fundamentally, on skilled hand-labour with or without the aid of powered machinery'.¹⁴ Professional craftsmanship, as it were, seems to have been an important factor in the early stages of industrial development in Britain, and therefore the skilled working class succeeded in maintaining to some degree the traditional values of artisan culture in the industrial age. There was certainly a dividing line between this labour aristocracy and the unskilled work force, as Thomas Wright's statement in

his book *Our New Masters*, published in 1873, shows: 'The artisan creed with regard to the labourers is that the latter are an inferior class and that they should be made to know and kept in an inferior place.'¹⁵ German craftsmen and artisans were even more outspoken on this point; they emphasised the dividing line between them and industrial labour far more vigorously and, in a way, traditional craft and industrial labour kept apart from the start.

In Germany, also, craft labour played a key role in the early stages of industrial development, as is shown by, among other things, the composition and ideological orientation of the German labour movement in the 1850s and 1860s. It is also true that the small workshop in many cases was more than merely the birth cell of what was to become a major industrial enterprise. John Breuilly has rightly pointed out that 'the small workshop played a significant and expanding role in a period in which industrial capitalism was establishing itself in Germany'.¹⁶ In many trades, in particular in engineering, shipbuilding and the construction industries, artisans continued to fulfil key functions. In engineering, for instance, model building, moulding and forging usually were entrusted to highly specialised artisans who had had a proper artisan training and worked in their own workshops, separated from the rest of the factory.¹⁷ The ordinary workforce in the engineering industries was normally recruited from various trades, not necessarily the metal trades. Skilled engineers tried hard to maintain their status and reputation as artisans rather than ordinary workers, but as time went on, this proved more and more difficult to achieve. Industry then began to train its own workforce instead of recruiting qualified artisans. In the early stages of industrialisation there was a considerable interchange between artisans employed in traditional craft shops and in the industrial establishments, but by and large, industrial labour and the artisans parted ways.

In the British case the dividing line between the elite of skilled workmen, proud of their craftsmanship, and unskilled or semiskilled labour ran right across industry. Skilled workers were often entrusted with the organisation of work at the shop floor level, and they considered this a privilege worth defending.¹⁸ In Germany, skilled labour, proud of its roots in the artisan tradition, could certainly also be found, but does not appear to have played anything like the same role in industry. Accordingly, the social phenomenon of a labour aristocracy with a sense of dignity and self-respect which enjoyed a good deal of autonomy on the shop floor did not exist in Germany, or at any rate, not to the same degree.¹⁹ In engineering, those who were, or considered themselves, 'labour aristocrats', were often employed in separate workshops; that is to say, the entrepreneurs also recognised their status as a special one. Below this level, however, craftsmanship and artisan status proved difficult to maintain. What used to be artisans became skilled workers (*Facharbeiter*) who certainly also displayed considerable self-respect, but it appears that they did not enjoy the same status as their English counterparts.

In the early stages of industrial development in Germany the demarcation line between craft labour, whether masters or apprentices, and industrial labour was blurred, or rather, it did not yet exist at all. But it seems that on the whole, artisans showed greater resilience *vis-à-vis* the emerging factory system. Certainly industry recruited a fair proportion of its labour force from various crafts, usually from those which were irreparably declining. In addition, certain groups of artisans were highly sought after in industry; however, their status was in some ways comparable to that of their compatriots in the traditional craft shop. Peter Borscheid argues that most of the workers in the Württemberg textile industries were recruited from an artisan background.²⁰ But, as other case studies show, this was by no means the rule. While artisans, especially from depress-

ed trades and sometimes from home industry, did enter the factories, all those who could tried hard to avoid this step, which was identified with social decline. In their self-estimation, at any rate, artisans distanced themselves from industrial labour.

In her pioneering study, *Die Arbeiter der Maschinenfabrik Esslingen*, Heilwig Schomerus demonstrates that in this factory (one of the early engineering establishments in south west Germany) the bulk of the work force was drawn straight from agricultural labour. Only an insignificant number of craftsmen chose to seek their livelihood in this new industrial establishment, even though it would have guaranteed them a considerably higher standard of living than their traditional occupation.²¹ The crafts in this region and in Esslingen itself demonstrated a remarkable resilience in the face of the opportunities offered by industry. A recent study of the crafts in Düsseldorf by Friedrich Lenger also shows that, on the whole, artisans shunned working in newly established industrial enterprises; the social division between artisans and industrial labour was strong and remained so, despite the fact that craftsmen, with the exception of those engaged in the food trades, experienced a secular decline in their standard of living, while the social and economic differences between masters and apprentices dwindled into insignificance. It was considered acceptable for factory workers to marry into artisan families, but the sons of artisans, irrespective of whether they succeeded in becoming masters or remained apprentices, were not supposed to enter the factories, and they did so only in very small numbers.²²

These observations permit at least one conclusion, namely that in the composition and the mentality of the workforce there was far less continuity between the older craft traditions and industrial labour in Germany than in Britain. Certainly craft traditions were not altogether absent in the German working class. For instance, the miners were

a group of workers with long, cherished traditions going back to pre-industrial times. But on the whole in Germany a clear division came about between artisans and industrial labour, regardless of the fact that market forces gradually induced the crafts to adjust their methods of production to the new industrial environment, perhaps by setting up larger production units, or by developing corporate institutions like the Raiffeisen associations,²³ wherever the market place, which was increasingly dominated by demands from industry and building construction for subsidiary services, permitted them to do so.

Thus, some of the features typical of the organisation of industrial labour in Britain did not exist in Germany in the early stages of industrialisation, nor did they develop later to any appreciable degree. At least in industry there was no equivalent to the 'labour aristocracy' of highly skilled craftsmen who were proud of their origin and their particular trade, and who often exercised a high degree of control over production on the shop floor. Nor was there any subcontracting by skilled craftsmen to unskilled workers, which was fairly common during the early stages of industrial development in both Britain and the USA. From the very start skilled workers undoubtedly played a key role in the German trade union movement and, apparently, also in the socialist movement, which was out of all proportion to their actual numbers, measured in terms of the workforce as a whole. But it seems that in the bigger industrial establishments they never enjoyed quite the same status in the process of production – not even in the early stages. From the start, they were subjected to a comparatively rigid system of control exercised by specially trained engineers who had often graduated from one of the newly founded *Technische Hochschulen*. Indeed, until 1914 there was a sharp dividing line between the traditional craft industries which managed to survive at a comparatively

low, but rather comfortable level, particularly in agricultural regions not yet substantially affected by industrialisation, and modern industry.

The consequences for the political culture of both countries must have been far-reaching indeed. It must have made a great difference whether there was 'an elite of skilled, relatively well paid, and relatively secure workers who came to dominate . . . much of the politics and the organised social life' as in many regions of Britain,²⁴ or whether the workforce was subjected to strict factory discipline from the start, which allowed only little autonomy at the work place and consequently permitted only a smaller degree of 'self-respect' to develop amongst the top echelons of the working class.

On the other hand, it is obvious that under these conditions, the introduction of more efficient methods of production and large-scale economies into the industrial system was likely to find far less resistance among the German than the British workforce. This does not necessarily mean that German labour was more docile or displayed an attitude of unrestricted deference to the masters of industry. Rather, their chances of improving their lot were less favourable than those of their British counterparts. For instance, in the German case, small craft unions of various kinds could hardly be expected to exploit the strategically important role of their members in the production process; the far more unified structure of the labour force in German industry required trade union organisation on the basis of branches of industry. Further, it needed an autonomous, political working-class organisation, since the struggle for improved working conditions, protection against unfair work practices and better wages was unlikely to be won on the shopfloor alone, quite apart from the fact that the political conditions under which this struggle had to be fought were less favourable than in Britain, where governmental interference in trade disputes

had largely come to an end with the great Victorian boom.

Perhaps the greatest difference between the British and German political systems in the latter part of the nineteenth century was that whereas in Britain the working class by and large continued to support a somewhat radicalised Liberal Party right up to 1900 and even later (I am thinking here of the so-called Lib-Lab strategies in the years after 1905), in Germany the working class and the liberals had already parted company in the 1860s. This was to a considerable extent the result of Lassalle's rather headstrong political strategies, as he considered direct opposition to the radical wing of the Progressive Party under Schulze-Delitzsch's intellectual leadership to be in his interests as the potential leader of an independent German working-class movement. But the rift between the political organisations of the German working class and the Progressive Liberals, which opened up in the 1860s during the constitutional conflict in Prussia, reflected the fact that from the very beginning class divisions were more marked in the German industrial system than in the British.

The parting of the ways of middle class liberalism and labour in Germany in the mid 1860s must be seen as a major turning point in German history, in contrast to British conditions. In Britain, even during the industrial age, 'influence politics' of sorts survived and at any rate the two great parties succeeded in integrating labour to some degree into parliamentary politics. As time went on 'Tory democracy' proved less successful in this respect. Gradually, the radical wing of the Liberal Party managed to win the allegiance of those sections of labour that had the right to vote and took an active part in politics.

This was not so in Germany. Almost from the start the Social Democratic Party found itself politically isolated and the trade union movement met with concerted opposition from employers, governments and the general public. It is a

moot point whether this constellation was at the root of the increasing radicalisation of the German political labour movement, or vice versa. In any case, as Max Weber once remarked, the existence of a numerically strong, radical labour movement had the effect of blocking all constitutional reform;²⁵ it was all too easy for the government to bring its adversaries to heel by conjuring up the alleged 'red danger'. Likewise the liberal parties found it risky, if not self-defeating, to plead for far-reaching democratic reforms from which the Social Democrats stood to gain most benefit. The political polarisation between liberalism and labour made it possible for the conservative elites to maintain their dominant position in state and society for longer than would otherwise have been the case. This development was aggravated by the continued existence of a body of artisans with a group identity of its own which, while initially favouring the political left, gradually shifted its political allegiance to conservatism or, in Catholic regions, its Centre variety.

In Britain, however, the trades lost much of their status as a separate socio-economic group. The majority of the crafts merged with the new working class, and artisans saw themselves as members of the respectable working class rather than as members of a profession entirely distinct from industrial labour. Admittedly, in Germany too, artisans and workers had been largely indistinguishable in the early stages of industrialisation. But the crafts fought hard to maintain an identity of their own. They claimed to fulfil a specific role in economy and society and, although they had difficulty in getting their views accepted by governments and parliamentary bodies in the era of free trade, by 1897 they were assisted by special legislation which restored some of their traditional privileges and restricted work practices. Although the crafts underwent substantial changes, their contribution to national wealth remained significant. However, contrary to the expecta-

tions of liberalism, the artisans became a potential reservoir for recruitment into the conservative camp; eventually the New Right found its supporters among them in particular. It is noteworthy that British society, however class-ridden it may have been, did not fall apart quite as distinctly into particular social groupings which not only had strong economic interests of their own, but also displayed extreme ideological allegiances.

In Germany, a process of differentiation and social polarisation was already apparent during the era of the Reich's foundation. The German liberals lost their struggle with Bismarck on constitutional issues in Prussia largely because they dared not mobilise the masses against the apparently authoritarian regime of this 'shabby Junker', as Heinrich von Treitschke, who was later to become an unqualified admirer of Bismarck's *Realpolitik*, put it at the time.²⁶ Indeed, Bismarck and Disraeli both had good reason to believe that under the existing conditions a fairly wide or even general suffrage would result in a strengthening of the conservative rather than the liberal bourgeois forces in society. Charles Greville had argued in 1858 that 'there is more danger in conferring political power on the middle classes than in extending it far beneath them and in point of fact . . . there is so little to be apprehended from the extension of the suffrage that universal suffrage itself would be innocuous'.²⁷ In 1867 both Disraeli and Bismarck acted upon this assumption, although Bismarck was somewhat more courageous and introduced a barely restricted universal suffrage into the constitution of the North German Confederation which was, after a few years, adopted with few amendments as the constitution of Imperial Germany.

The political system that Bismarck established in 1867 was far more anti-liberal than the 'Tory democracy' that Disraeli and his successors were to practise for many years to come. But in economic matters the German system gave

the bourgeois forces more leeway, at least until 1879, sacrificing quite a few well entrenched positions of the Prussian landed aristocracy in the process. The economic legislation of the 1870s created a long overdue modern legal and institutional infrastructure for commerce and industry. It undoubtedly helped Germany to achieve industrial growth on a hitherto unprecedented scale in the years to come. It also completed the economic unification of Germany, which had been demanded by the liberal movement since the 1830s and was only partly achieved by the cumbersome machinery of the *Zollverein*. In this respect there is much justification in arguing, as Blackbourn and Eley have done, that this period was the equivalent of what elsewhere had been a silent bourgeois revolution.²⁸ In economic terms the German bourgeoisie was allowed to arrange matters in accordance with its ideals, and at the lower levels of government, especially in local government, it was given a fairly free rein which it then exploited to the full by laying the foundations for a genuine bourgeois culture.²⁹

But it cannot be doubted that on the central plane of government the ascendancy of liberalism was interrupted before it had really got anywhere. By 1878 Bismarck thought it advisable once and for all to forestall the potential danger that the National Liberals would attempt to trade off a willingness to let the Imperial Exchequer have a higher share of taxes against concessions in constitutional matters. He therefore decided to extend the system of financing central government entirely from customs duties and other forms of indirect taxation, the returns from this being less liable to close scrutiny by potentially hostile parliamentary coalitions. In 1879, therefore, Imperial Germany introduced tariffs not only on agrarian products, but also on industrial goods of various kinds. In social terms this new policy marked an alliance between agrarian interests and the representatives of heavy industry. The ensuing passionate

debate about protectionism symbolised the growing rift within the liberal camp. In a way, this new departure in German economic policy split the liberal parties right down the middle. This can be seen as part of a secular process which pointed to the gradual disintegration of the liberal movement under the impact of industrialisation.

There were parallel trends at work in Britain also. The breakaway of the Unionists from the Liberal Party under Chamberlain's leadership in 1885 must be seen in a similar light. In both cases the conservative forces in society were strengthened while those sections of liberalism pleading for social reforms and a greater degree of participation in the political process for the people at large lost out. But the developments in Imperial Germany had a noticeably more reactionary flavour; a kind of informal coalition developed between agrarian interests, the interests of heavy industry and the backward-looking and traditionalist sections of the middle classes, the crafts and more traditionalist sections of small business foremost among them. This coalition soon found a common ideological platform in a passionate anti-socialism, associated with a hardening in attitudes towards social reform. Neither the export industries nor the consumer goods industries were very happy with the new policy, and much the same was true of the traditionally liberal-minded banking community. Such a policy was likely not only to increase the cost of primary products and investment goods, but also to raise the cost of living and consequently, no matter how indirectly, labour costs as well.

In Britain things never got anything like as far as in Germany. The British remained faithful to free trade, although it could be said that the established commercial connections with both the formal and informal empire made this decision inevitable. In socio-economic terms a new upper class gradually emerged as a result of the traditional elites merging with the new industrial and

commercial elites, which had made considerable headway in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as W. D. Rubinstein and F. M. L. Thompson have shown.³⁰ Whereas labour relations were not always smooth here either, there were no attempts to block the steady integration of the working class into a society gradually becoming more democratic. In Imperial Germany, on the other hand, despite a buoyant economy, the social system became more polarised, with the traditional agrarian elites, the governmental bureaucracy, the Officer Corps and certain sectors of industry, (representing the huge combines and cartels of heavy industry, but also the trades and certain small-scale industries) rallying behind what came to be called *Sammlungspolitik*. This policy was directed at containing any further advance of the forces of progressive liberalism and the working class movement. The traditional middle classes, in economic terms the consumer goods industries and the banking sector, found themselves in an uneasy position between these hostile social groupings. The great advances of industry, banking and trade could not undo the fact that the German developmental path towards industrial society had permitted the survival of substantial traditional sectors in the economy. Technological and managerial progress did not foster further liberalisation; instead, it went hand-in-hand with an increasing polarisation of German society. It is surely not an idealisation of the British developmental path to say that as far as Imperial Germany was concerned the political balance sheet was unfavourable despite, or perhaps because of, its momentous economic advances in the last three decades before 1914.

But what about the industrial performance of both societies by the end of the century? It is generally agreed that somewhere in the late 1890s Germany surpassed Britain in terms of industrial production. Much has been made of the successful penetration of the British home

market by the German steel industry, and there was and still is a considerable debate about whether British entrepreneurs lagged behind in innovation and the use of new technologies. But in commercial terms the British steel producers had good reasons for not reverting to the Thomas process, given the geological and geographical conditions and the level of scientific knowledge of steelmaking available at the time (as a new study by Ulrich Wengenroth shows³¹). The German steel industry forged ahead in some sectors, partly because it was allowed to operate under favourable political conditions, which made it possible to control the German home market at prices which were considerably higher than those in the world market. But, however efficient the new combinations of heavy industry may have been, the protectionist policies which made this possible in the first place were a mixed blessing. Restricted competition in the market for investment goods and relatively high prices for agrarian products were certainly not advantageous to the German economy as a whole.

Germany's great success in the two decades before 1914 was achieved not because, but in spite of, these economic policies. It was the electrical and chemical industries above all which surged ahead thanks to substantial technological advantages over their overseas competitors. Due partly to a carefully planned strategy in which the German 'universal' banks played a major part, they established a firm hold on the European and, to a lesser degree, on the world markets. Heavy industry, on the other hand, was seduced by the favourable investment climate and its strong position in the domestic market into building up excess capacities. After the First World War this policy was to have a detrimental effect on the German economy. It adversely influenced labour relations, causing considerable social tensions, which eventually undermined the stability of the political system itself.

Let us finally take another look at the relative economic performances of Britain and Imperial Germany in the decades before 1914 and try to relate this to the political conditions in each country. In terms of industrial production the German economy had by then surged ahead. Growth rates continued to be higher in Germany and real wages were still rising, though more slowly, while in Britain real wages stagnated from 1900 onwards. The great success of the German electrical and chemical industries in particular made British industry appear in a very unfavourable light: the pace of technological innovation had apparently slackened. Was Britain about to fall back 'into the status of a *rentier* nation', or even to enter upon the path of 'de-industrialisation', while Imperial Germany had established the basis for lasting industrial success?³² Or was Britain already on the way to becoming a service economy, concentrating on banking, insurance, shipping and other services? To a certain extent, both observations are true. In terms of industrial production Britain had indeed fallen behind. But at the same time it had once again moved a step ahead, in that its national income no longer derived solely from its industrial base. This was in marked contrast to Imperial Germany, where banking and the service industries were still primarily geared towards promoting the investment and consumer goods industries and facilitating German exports, often by financing the establishment of subsidiary companies in other European countries and increasingly also overseas (notably in South America and even the Middle East). Besides, it was thought that Germany's commercial and political world position would be endangered if this daring spirit of promoting industry, which allegedly dominated German high finance and commerce, were eventually to give way to a '*rentiers*' mentality'; Max Weber, for one, was worried that this was likely and he entreated his countrymen never to succumb to this vice, as Germany's economic position in the world

would inevitably suffer severely.³³ But was this so-called 'rentiers' capitalism' necessarily a vice, or was it merely another way of promoting national wealth?

While it is undisputed that by 1913 German industry was doing markedly better than its British counterpart, one must take into account that the German economy was still operating from a lower base in terms of national wealth. Although real wages continued to rise until 1913, they were still about 10 to 20 per cent lower in real terms than in Britain. As S. B. Saul points out, one must also take into account 'that the areas of obvious German superiority were narrowly based in terms of men employed' and related largely to the new chemical and electrical industries. In other sectors, however, (leaving aside the agrarian sector where productivity per employed worker was substantially lower than in industry) Germany's economic performance was by no means as impressive. Thus it is not surprising to find that Imperial Germany was still lagging behind in terms of *per capita* income; Saul estimates Germany's *per capita* income as about £44 as opposed to Britain's as £55.³⁴ Comparisons of this nature are, of course, notoriously problem-ridden. The data available do not allow levels in the standard of living to be reliably compared across national borders, if only because of the differences in life style and actual living conditions in various countries. But in any case, it may safely be concluded that while Imperial Germany had been catching up fast, in terms of national wealth it was still lagging behind. This is, of course, neither surprising nor new. It may well be explained in part by the fact that the bargaining position of the German trade unions *vis-à-vis* the employers was still comparatively weak, notoriously so in heavy industry, which had extremely low levels of unionisation or which, to put it in terms which are becoming fashionable again nowadays, was non-unionised.

In a way it could be argued that Britain did very well to exploit to the full the export opportunities provided by its

well-established trade links both inside and outside its empire, instead of embarking upon expensive and, in the short term at least, not always remunerative innovations in its industrial plant. In the short term at least the possession of empire was certainly advantageous to the British economy, in terms of both exports and investment. On the other hand, it could be argued that Germany profited from British imperialism, as it conducted a considerable share of business as a third party within the British formal or informal empire, or the empires of other nations (where it did not have to share the costs of policing and defence), particularly in India, Egypt and South America, but also in some of Britain's and France's African possessions.

A cursory glance at the foreign investments of both countries (a full analysis of this complex subject, made more difficult by the lack of reliable statistical data for Germany, would require more space than is available here) confirms that in this field Britain was not only far ahead, but also poised to increase its lead still further. The precise figures for the contribution made by foreign investments to the British National Product are a matter of some dispute, but in any case it was far higher than in the German case. German overseas investments were, as far as we know, mainly connected with promoting exports of industrial goods, particularly investment goods, in other European and in overseas countries. The only major finance-imperialist venture not primarily connected with promoting overseas trade was the Baghdad Railway enterprise. It is open to question whether German foreign investments were always quite as profitable as comparable British investments, which were not normally tied to particular export activities. As a result of the First World War the balance sheets of each country were, so to speak, wiped out and it is, therefore, difficult to say whether British '*rentiers*' capitalism' or German finance capitalism would have done better in the long run. It could, however, be said that the

former was a suitable strategy for a country like Britain with a rich capital base, while the latter was perhaps inevitable for a latecomer to the international system like Germany which, apart from being chronically short of surplus capital, had to rely entirely upon the strategies of the market place, given the fact that German formal imperialism had proved politically ineffective and economically unrewarding.

Finally, let us look at the political implications of the partly converging, partly parallel and partly diverging developmental paths of Britain and Germany throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By 1900 both countries had witnessed the re-emergence of strong anti-liberal trends in both the economy and the political system. Both countries saw the development of strong currents of lower middle class patriotism, which played into the hands of the conservative elites.³⁵ In Imperial Germany the Pan-German League, the Navy League and other nationalistic associations gained a substantial following among the intellectuals and the lower middle classes who favoured an aggressive expansionist policy. In Britain comparable endeavours found far less response. Here the reservoir of potential supporters for a policy of the New Right proved to be considerably smaller than in Imperial Germany, even at the high water mark of jingoism during the Boer War. In 1903 Joseph Chamberlain launched a powerful campaign for a system of 'imperial preference' which intended to tap this popular nationalism and channel it into support for a reinvigorated Conservative Party intent upon strengthening the British empire against mounting hostility from rival powers, not least Imperial Germany.³⁶ It is of some interest to note that some of his ideas were directly inspired by the teachings of German conservative economists who, in the tradition of Hegel and Schmoller, pleaded for a strong interventionist state. The British electorate withstood these temptations, and Lloyd George eventually succeeded in

seeing through both major social reform legislation and far-reaching constitutional changes which brought Britain a great deal nearer to being a democratic society.

In Imperial Germany, under William II, things turned out differently. The impressive achievements of 'high capitalism' (if we may use Max Weber's phrase in this context) played into the hands of anti-modernist forces. Although the landed aristocracy had long lost its autonomous economic base and was dependent on direct or indirect governmental protection and support for its economic survival, it had found powerful allies among sections of the industrial elites. Besides, there were enough small, traditional craft industries to provide a broad social basis for an anti-modernist policy, all the more as the latter draped itself in blatant nationalist and anti-socialist colours. Economic success increased rather than mended the deep social rifts which ran right through the fabric of Wilhelmine society. Thus, all endeavours to adjust the constitutional system to the changed socio-economic structure failed; even in the field in which the German political system had been most successful, namely social reform, all legislation came to a halt, while social tension flared up again to an alarming degree. By 1912 a social and political stalemate had been reached. Among the ruling elites it gave rise to the idea that one should seek one's fortune in aggressive foreign policies or even in war, despite the fact that German industry and commerce was about to conquer the world market by peaceful means. And this required, above all, the maintenance of peace in Europe and the world.³⁷

References

- ¹ See David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *Mythen deutscher Geschichtsschreibung. Die gescheiterte bürgerliche Revolution von 1848* (Frankfurt and Berlin, 1980) and also my review of it in *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, 8 (Autumn 1981). In the meantime Blackbourn and Eley have published a revised and enlarged English version, *The Peculiarities of German History. Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford, 1984).
- ² This point should be taken into account in any study of Anglo-German relations. Paul Kennedy's remarkable book, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London, 1980) makes things appear worse than they were merely because Anglo-German relations are here treated in relative isolation from developments in the rest of Europe.
- ³ Cf. Hanna Schissler, *Preußische Agrargesellschaft im Wandel. Wirtschaftliche, gesellschaftliche und politische Transformationsprozesse von 1763 bis 1847* (Göttingen, 1978), pp. 108 ff.
- ⁴ Recent research, in particular by N.F.R. Crafts, has shown that during the so-called 'industrial revolution' growth rates were very much lower than previously assumed. These findings suggest that Britain deviated less from the general European pattern than is generally held to be the case.
- ⁵ It is impossible to refer to the intense debate on the impact of industrialisation on the livelihood of the lower classes in any detail. The positions are admirably summarised in R.M. Hartwell *et al.*, *The Long Debate on Poverty. Eight Essays on industrialisation and the 'condition of England'* (London, 1972). See also Wolfgang J. Mommsen, 'Die Lage der Unterschichten in der Durchbruchskrise der industriellen Revolution in England 1825-1847', in Hans Mommsen and Winfried Schulze (eds), *Vom Elend der Handarbeit. Probleme historischer Unterschichtenforschung* (Stuttgart 1981), pp. 274-92.
- ⁶ The essentially regional nature of industrialisation was not only a German, but also a European phenomenon, as Sidney Pollard recently emphasised in his book, *The Industrialisation of Europe 1760-1970* (Oxford, 1981).
- ⁷ The Conservative Wochenblattpartei, led by the elder Bethmann Hollweg, praised the British constitutional system as the ideal model for enlightened Prussian policy. Harmonious co-operation between the ruler and the people of Prussia could be achieved by imitating the English governmental system. Cf. Walter Schmidt, *Die Parthei Bethmann Hollweg und die Reaktion in Preußen 1850-58* (Berlin, 1910), p. 100.
- ⁸ For a more detailed discussion see Wolfgang J. Mommsen, 'Preußen/ Deutschland im frühen 19. Jahrhundert und Großbritannien in der viktorianischen Epoche. Eine komparative Betrachtung', in Adolf M. Birke and Kurt Kluxen (eds), *Viktorianisches England in deutscher Perspektive* (Munich, 1983), pp. 38 ff.
- ⁹ Cf. Lothar Gall, *Bismarck: Der weiße Revolutionär* (Berlin, 1980).
- ¹⁰ Harold Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society 1780-1880* (London, 1969), p. 17. Lawrence Stone recently strongly attacked this view in his book, with J.C.F. Stone, *An Open Elite? England, 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1984). He

points out that the number of people from the middle classes with a commercial background who entered the ranks of the aristocracy was actually comparatively small. Even so, there can be no doubt that in England the barriers between the aristocracy, the business groups (perhaps with the exception of the industrialists) and the professions were much less marked than anywhere else. Lawrence Stone himself concedes this much: 'two things made England very different from Continental Europe . . . The first was the homogeneity of cultural values and behaviour among the landed classes, the wealthier merchant and banking patriciates, and the gentrified "middling sort". The second was the lack of any legal barriers based on privilege clearly to demarcate the different sectors and status groups one from another, as there were elsewhere.' Quoted from the abridged edition, (Oxford, 1986), pp. 305-6.

- ¹¹ Partly as a result of different legal regulations on landholding the English aristocracy profited from the leasing of land for industrial or commercial development on a scale entirely unknown on the Continent. The landed aristocracies of Prussia and south Germany were neither as rich as their English counterparts at the beginning of the period, nor did they manage to gain a proper share of the profits from the development of the land. Urban property-holding by aristocratic landlords is common in Britain to the present day, but almost entirely unknown in Germany. For a conspicuous case, namely the Bloomsbury Estate of the Dukes of Bedford, see the study by Hermann Wellenreuther, *Repräsentation und Großgrundbesitz in England 1730-1770* (Stuttgart, 1979).
- ¹² 'To preserve the Junker as Junker, as a status group with its traditional social and political character . . . would not be possible even with the economic means at our disposal. Can the state continue to base itself on a status group which itself requires state support?' Quoted from *Verhandlungen des Evangelisch-sozialen Kongresses 1894*, p. 92.
- ¹³ Wolfram Fischer, 'Industrialisierung und soziale Frage in Preußen', in *Preußen. Seine Wirkung auf die deutsche Geschichte*, ed. by Fritz-Thyssen-Stiftung (Stuttgart, 1985).
- ¹⁴ 'Artisan or Labour Aristocrat?', *Economic History Review*, 37(1984), p. 355; republished in Eric Hobsbawm, *Worlds of Labour. Further Studies in the History of Labour* (London, 1984).
- ¹⁵ Cf. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men. Studies in the History of Labour* (London, 1968), p. 275.
- ¹⁶ John Breuilly, 'Artisan Economy, Artisan Politics, Artisan Ideology: The Artisan Contribution to the Nineteenth-Century European Labour Movement', in C. Emsley and J. Walvin (eds), *Artisans, Peasants and Proletarians, 1760-1860* (London, 1985), p. 195.
- ¹⁷ Cf. Wolfgang Renzsch, *Handwerker und Lohnarbeiter in der frühen Arbeiterbewegung. Zur sozialen Basis von Sozialdemokratie und Gewerkschaften im Reichsgründungsjahrzehnt* (Göttingen, 1980), pp. 152-53.
- ¹⁸ See on this point in particular Richard Price, 'The New Unionism and the Labour Process', in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Hans-Gerhard Husung (eds), *The Development of Trade Unionism in Great Britain and Germany, 1880-1914* (London, 1985), pp. 133 ff.

- ¹⁹ The notion of a 'labour aristocracy' is, of course, rather controversial, in Britain and to some degree in the Federal Republic of Germany as well. In addition to the studies by Hobsbawm already quoted, see Robert Gray, *The Aristocracy of Labour in Nineteenth-century Britain c. 1850-1914* (London, 1981) for a survey of the debate in Britain. Labour aristocracy ought not be defined in strictly economic terms only; relative independence on the shop floor and self-esteem would also appear to be important. For a British-German comparison see John Breuilly, 'Arbeiteraristokratie in Großbritannien und Deutschland', in Ulrich Engelhardt (ed.), *Handwerker in der Industrialisierung. Lage, Kultur und Politik vom späten 18. bis ins frühe 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1984), pp. 497-527. An English version in *Society for the Study of Labour History, Bulletin*, 48 (1984), pp. 58-71. For a discussion of the concept of labour aristocracy in the context of the German labour movement see G. Beier, 'Das Problem der Arbeiteraristokratie im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Zur Sozialgeschichte einer umstrittenen Kategorie', in G. Beier, *Geschichte und Gewerkschaft. Politisch-historische Beiträge zur Geschichte sozialer Bewegungen* (Frankfurt, 1981), pp. 118-80.
- ²⁰ Peter Borscheid, *Textilarbeiterschaft in der Industrialisierung. Soziale Lage und Mobilität in Württemberg (19. Jahrhundert)* (Stuttgart, 1978), pp. 318 ff.
- ²¹ *Die Arbeiter der Maschinenfabrik Esslingen. Untersuchungen zum innerbetrieblichen und innerstädtischen Status 1848-1914* (Stuttgart, 1977), pp. 66 ff.
- ²² Friedrich Lenger, *Zwischen Kleinbürgertum und Proletariat. Studien zur Sozialgeschichte der Düsseldorfer Handwerker 1816-1978* (Göttingen, 1986), pp. 113-14.
- ²³ The German *Genossenschaftswesen* is another of those phenomena which do not have a direct equivalent in Britain. In Britain the co-operative movement became largely subsidiary to the working class while in the German context it remained for the most part a lower middle class affair. For the origins of the *Genossenschaftswesen* see *inter alia* Rita Aldenhoff, *Schulze-Delitzsch. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Liberalismus zwischen Revolution und Reichsgründung* (Baden Baden, 1984).
- ²⁴ Geoffrey Crossick, *An Artisan Elite in Victorian Society: Kentish London 1840-1880* (London, 1978) p. 213.
- ²⁵ See Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Max Weber and German Politics, 1890-1920*, (Chicago and London, 1985), pp. 111-12.
- ²⁶ Heinrich v. Treitschke, *Briefe*, ed. by M. Cornicelius, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1913), p. 238.
- ²⁷ Cf. Robert Steward, *The Foundation of the Conservative Party* (London, 1978), p. 359.
- ²⁸ *The Peculiarities of German History*, p. 176 ff.
- ²⁹ James J. Sheehan, *German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1978) also emphasised the continued dominance of liberal politics at local government level in Imperial Germany. However, it should be noted that liberal hegemony in the urban centres, aided by the three class suffrage, operated within distinct limits. For instance, the election of lord mayors had to be confirmed by the Emperor, which allowed the government to exercise control in urban affairs.
- ³⁰ Cf. W. D. Rubinstein, *Men of Property: The Very Wealthy in Britain Since the Industrial Revolution* (London, 1981); F.M.L. Thompson, 'English Landed

Society in the Nineteenth Century', in Pat Thane, Geoffrey Crossick and Roderick Floud (eds), *The Power of the Past. Essays for Eric Hobsbawm* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 209-11.

³¹ Cf. Ulrich Wengenroth, *Unternehmensstrategien und technischer Fortschritt. Die deutsche und britische Stahlindustrie 1865-1895*, Veröffentlichungen des Deutschen Historischen Instituts London, 17 (Göttingen and Zurich, 1986).

³² S. B. Saul, *Industrialisation and De-industrialisation? The Interaction of the German and British Economies before the First World War*, The 1979 Annual Lecture of the German Historical Institute (London, 1980), p. 16.

³³ Cf. Max Weber, *Zur Politik im Weltkrieg. Schriften und Reden 1914-1918*, ed. by Wolfgang J. Mommsen in conjunction with Gangolf Hübinger, Max Weber Gesamtausgabe, vol. 15 (Tübingen, 1984), pp. 352 ff.

³⁴ Saul, *Industrialisation and De-Industrialisation*, p. 10.

³⁵ See Richard N. Price, 'Society, Status and Jingoism: The Social Roots of Lower Middle Class Jingoism, 1870-1900', in Geoffrey Crossick (ed.), *The Lower Middle Class in Britain 1870-1914* (London, 1977), pp. 89-112.

³⁶ Cf. Wolfgang Mock, *Imperiale Herrschaft und nationales Interesse. 'Constructive Imperialism' oder Freihandel in Großbritannien vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg*, Veröffentlichungen des Deutschen Historischen Instituts London, 13 (Stuttgart, 1982).

³⁷ Wolfgang J. Mommsen, 'Domestic Factors in German Foreign Policy before 1914', in James J. Sheehan (ed.), *Imperial Germany* (New York, 1976), pp. 244 ff.