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Nationalism, Power and Modernity in Nineteeth-Century Germany

by

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The Intellectual Perspective

Until 2004 I had spent my academic career in history departments in provincial English universities with teaching focused on undergraduates. The move to the Government Department at LSE and a focus on postgraduate teaching also meant working with non-historians interested in subjects like normative political theory, contemporary politics, policy studies, rational choice and game theory. My teaching on nationalism considers theoretical, contemporary and policy aspects of the subject as well as history. This has led me to reflect perhaps more than I might otherwise have done on my work as an historian. It has convinced me that we must introduce theories and concepts of nationalism explicitly into the historical study of nationalism. Only then can we break the subject into distinct elements which can be analysed and brought back together into an adequate interpretative framework.

Professional History and the Nation

National historiography, even when critical of nationalism, shares with it assumptions of a unique and bounded history which must be understood in its own terms. Partly this is because the rise of an historical profession in nineteenth-century Europe was closely connected to the formation of nation-states and the spread of national ideas and sentiments which accompanied that process. The continued predominance of the nation-state — despite claims about globalisation — ensures that the national remains the principal framing device in historical work, even if many kinds of historical research and writing are practised within that frame. Acceptance of that frame involves making assumptions about nation and nationalism which should instead be the object of historical inquiry.[1]

One way of breaking with such assumptions is to draw on the lively debates about nation and nationalism conducted over the last couple of decades. One drawback of these debates is that they are frequently pitched at an abstract level, with at most brief references to cases, and rarely tested against detailed historical evidence, let alone used to structure historical accounts. In a brief talk I cannot do that but I will sketch the outlines of such a theoretically informed history in relation to the German case.[2]

One can understand the close relationship between nation and historical writing in terms of a convergence of power and culture.[3] On the one side, there is the reorganising of state power in post-1815 Europe. These states are more sharply territorially bounded than before and increasingly legitimated in terms of the interests and values of their subjects. Diplomacy accords little recognition to other kinds of polities (e.g., confederations, city-states, ecclesiastical states). Small states survive as neutral zones reflecting or serving relations between larger states. Wars dependent on favourable domestic opinion and conscripts must be justified in populist terms. The enactment or reform of state constitutions, the construction of new institutions such as popularly elected parliaments, the reform of institutions such as schools and universities — these all express and are justified in terms of representing and improving the interests and values of the subjects of the state. New or reformed academic institutions provided the conditions for the emergence of a set of professional historians whose work focused on the processes of nation-state formation. This is particularly clear in the German case and is a well-known story I need not repeat here. This is the 'power' side of the equation; and the formation of a prestigious profession represents a certain kind of power.

On the other side, there is a rich discourse of nationality — in the German case elaborated well before Prussian-led unification — which views the nation as a unique historical process and which can be used to set diplomatic, military, institutional and other changes into a broader, more meaningful framework.[4] This provides the cultural basis on which professional historians can build. The fact that the nation is presented as a historical category makes the work of historians central to the legitimation of states which claim to be national. However, it is important that this combining of nation and history *precedes* the work of the professional historians and the formation of nation-states with popular institutions and legitimations. It is also important to note that the concept of the nation *itself* combines power and culture. Nationalism can be defined as an idea or sentiment or politics which insists on the existence and value of the unique nation and demands statehood to defend and promote this nation. In this way a cultural claim is presented as fact (there is a nation), turned into value (this nation is special and deserving of loyalty and autonomy) and formulated as programme (national self-determination).

National historiography converts these assertions into historical connections by presenting history as the coming into existence of the nation, along with its capacity to induce identity and commitment and to channel this into political struggle and eventually independence. How cultural and power claims are woven together to produce a national history varies greatly. In some accounts there is simply a narrative of political change which is asserted to be the expression of the nation.[5] In others there is some effort to show national cultural development interacting with changes in state power. Heinrich von Treitschke in his unfinished his-

tory of nineteenth-century Germany wrote 'parallel' chapters on German cultural history and political history (the latter focused mainly on the work of the Prussian state and its leaders). However, it is left to the reader to make the parallel lines meet.[6]

This is precisely the problem. It is difficult, indeed I will argue it is impossible, for scientific history to connect power and culture together in the way imagined by nationalism. Nationalism is an ideology, not a set of testable claims; its functions are to motivate, justify and orientate, not to explain. Yet it is a key feature of political ideology that it not admit this shortcoming, that it presents itself as truth. If one takes that point seriously and recognises that *any* national approach to history will be coloured by this ideological character, one becomes alert to the devices by which ideological claims are presented in the guise of truth.[7]

Arbitrary notions are introduced in order to make the connections between power and culture appear plausible. One of these is to focus on some end-point at which power and culture are taken to converge in a satisfactory national fashion. Sometimes that end-point is in the future, as for example in anticipations of the German nation-state which were informing historical work in the 1860s. Sometimes the end-point is the present, as celebrated by historians in 1871. Sometimes the end-point is in the past, though used to inspire the efforts to achieve such convergence again. Whatever the case may be, such end-point perspectives will always be contested by those who have a different view of the national ideal, by those who repudiate any national ideal, and by those who object to teleological history.[8]

Yet precisely because modern history as well as historical writing is dominated by the national, it seems incredible to regard the national convergence of power

and culture as arbitrary, an accident, something that could easily have not happened. The construction of states legitimised as national, the increasing capacity of those states to penetrate the lives of their citizens and in turn the pressures upwards from those citizens on the state — all this means that political conflicts increasingly take the national for granted as the container of such conflicts. The discourse of nationality grows ever-more multi-layered — romantic, liberal, radical, populist, ethnic, racial - but the very containment of these various layers within a national framework means there is also a tendency to 'naturalise' the national, to see it as the undisputed ground on which these layers are constructed and contested. Any one discourse or historical account can be disputed but in the very disputation it becomes more difficult to break from the national.[9]

From Nation to Nationalism

One way of making this break is to privilege nationalism over nation; to see nationalism not as one or more expressions of a unique national history, good or bad, but as a distinct phenomenon with general characteristics which is productive of the national. It was with this abstraction of nationalism from nation that fruitful theoretical debate became possible.

A key text marking this break was Elie Kedourie's book *Nationalism* with its striking opening: 'Nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth-century.' Kedourie's was a general study but he associated the origins of this invented doctrine with German intellectuals: Herder, Kant, Fichte.[10]

There are many problems with Kedourie's thesis, including his way of practising intellectual history in the form of 'unit ideas' which combine in particular ways (e.g. nation and self-determination), the specific claims

he makes about his key thinkers (I will return to one of them, Fichte), the case for selecting those thinkers rather than others, and most importantly, how one establishes connections between these writers, broader processes of the formation of national culture and its transformation into power.[11] Nevertheless, Kedourie laid the basis for modernist theories of nationalism. Modernists make two claims:

1. Nationalism is a product of modernity. In Kedourie's case this is a modern history of ideas and the formation of an intelligentsia which propagated these ideas. Other theorists focus on other aspects of modernity.

2. Nations are functions of nationalism, rather than nationalism being an expression of the prior national. That could mean that nationalism works to form nations or that nation is little more than the key ideological term in nationalism.

Within this framework one can develop different interpretations from that of Kedourie. The key to modernity and hence nationalism might be found in print-capitalism and the capacity to imagine the nation; in the transition from agrarian to industrial society with its formation of standardised written languages, educational systems and broadly shared national cultures; in the development of powerful states with sharply defined boundaries and increased penetration into the lives of their subjects which required democratic-populist legitimation.[12]

I sympathise with this approach and prefer it to those which seek either to reintroduce the national as underlying and prior to nationalism or to divorce the discursive processes of imagining or inventing or narrating nations from broader processes of modernisation.[13]

However, these debates are usually conducted at an abstract level, and use history as an arsenal from which to select, more or less arbitrarily, supportive ammunition. Here I outline how the modernist framework can be used to interpret nineteenth-century German nationalism. My question is: why and how does the modernisation of power, in particular state power, in nineteenth-century Germany come to be framed in national terms? The rest of the talk addresses this question.

A Model of Modernisation

To start with one requires concepts of modernisation and power. This is a complex field and all I can do is outline my own approach.[14]

1. I define modernisation as societal transformation. In the case of the German lands the transformation is from corporations to functionally specialised institutions. An ideal-typical example is the dissolution of the guild and the relocation of such functions as education, production and retailing, and applying coercive sanctions to specialised institutions like schools, firms, markets and law courts.

2. I focus on what this means for how power is exercised, deliberately excluding other matters. I identify three modes of power: coercive, ideological, economic.[15]

3. Central to this approach is that by differentiating the concept of power one avoids projecting any unitary character upon state or society. Such projection offers one route by which the idea of the nation is smuggled into historical accounts.

This model is devised as a general framework for the analysis of many kinds of change as well as suggesting how these can be linked together. Here I select certain moments from nineteenth-century German history in

order to sketch out the emergence of particular kinds of modern power and to relate these to certain kinds of nationalism.

Relating Modernity to Nationalism

I briefly define nationalism as a three-fold set of claims:

1. There is a nation, understood to constitute a 'whole society', usually concentrated into a particular territory and identified by specific characteristics.

2. This nation has a distinct and special value in the world.

3. To protect and promote its special value, the nation must be free and autonomous. In the nineteenth century autonomy was usually understood to require independent statehood.

This claim can be expressed at different levels. I identify four: ideas, elite discourse, popular sentiment, and organised politics. There are no determinate relationships between these different levels. Instead, the way these levels relate to each other varies between and within particular cases. To anticipate: my argument can be summarised as follows:

1. Although one finds a bewildering and conflicting variety of nationalisms over the course of the nineteenth century, the enduring and most significant forms are those which are articulated with rather than against or apart from processes of modernisation.

2. Nationalism works initially as a mental map, a way of orientating oneself in the strangeness of modernity, rather than as a set of motivations. This is why it is able to combine with different, and even conflicting, interests and motives.

3. Its capacity to shift from orientation and elite motivation to popular sentiment is conditioned by the way in which the fragmenting properties of modernisa-

tion are held together through the nation-state as power container.[16]

I now turn to four periods in nineteenth-century German history in order to put some flesh on these abstract points. These are: the response to Napoleon, the 1848 revolution, the unification period, and the turn to *Weltpolitik*.

The Response to Napoleon

The formation of a German nation-state and a national historiography bound up with the creation of an academic historical profession created the basis for accounts of the response to Napoleon which focused upon the war of 'national liberation' of 1813-15. The central event in this account was the dramatic Prussian recovery in less than a decade from defeated and truncated client state to dynamic military power. This was linked to the work of writers who preached nationalist opposition to the French, and to the work of a reforming — even modernising — elite which strengthened the state and mobilised popular support. One can see how the culture/power connection was made and how the different aspects of nationalism —ideas, language, sentiments and politics — could be presented as parts of one single, coherent narrative.[17]

Modern historiography has largely demolished the myth-making this involved.[18] The problem is replacing the demolition with a satisfactory alternative. Some historians argue that little fundamental changed. Napoleon was defeated because he over-reached himself, especially with the Russian campaign of 1812, and the vanquished German dynasties vigorously took advantage of the opportunity provided by the failure of the Russian invasion to re-assert their power. Others concede importance to changes induced by Napoleonic

power. One is to regard the various reforms, described, for example, as 'defensive modernisation', as central to the recovery of power against Napoleon but as serving dynastic, not national, interests. More generally the revisions produce a complex account in which local, regional, confessional, class, and dynastic interests combine.[19]

The danger is that demolishing nationalist myths excludes *any* significant role for nationalism; and that providing a complex account of the immediate response one makes it difficult to relate to a longer-run story. The argument that nothing much changed and the old order asserted itself cannot explain why the form of this reassertion produced not a restoration but a very different political order. The stress on reforms runs the danger of confusing intention with outcome and not distinguishing between reforms which had important short- or long-term effects and those which did not.

If one adopts a modernisation framework and considers nationalism operating on four distinct levels, I suggest one can deal with some of these problems.

At the level of ideas there is a distinct intellectual response of the kind emphasised by Kedourie. Typical as well as central is the case of Fichte. But one should note that in its own terms, Fichte's nationalism is archaic, focused on the notion of society as a corporation, above all an educational corporation rather like a seminary which will produce an elite and then a larger society shaped by the right national ideas. This view did not and *could not* play any significant role in shaping popular sentiments or politics because the emergent forms of political and military mobilisation could only work through functional specialisation, not corporate solidarity. However, the aggressive ethno-linguistic content of Fichte's nationalism explains why it was taken

up by post-national nationalists opposed to the pluralism of modern society and state. Not only did this later preoccupation misread the meaning and significance of Fichte's nationalism in his own time but it also neglected other, more significant intellectual responses concerned with constructing modern institutions in the German lands, even if these did not initially or exclusively take a German nationalist form.[20]

These other intellectual responses can be related to the beginning of an elite discourse in which power was related to national culture, a discourse which was promoted and institutionalised through specialised institutions such as universities, grammar schools, reading circles and associations which Germans from various states joined, as well as in the common readership of journals and newspapers. In these institutions and networks were generated similar values in different German regions and states which nevertheless responded politically in different ways to Napoleon. However, this culturally specialised class was politically and economically marginal so it was difficult to see how it could exercise much influence *as a class* over popular sentiments or dynastic power-holders.[21]

Popular sentiment remained focused on regional and confessional loyalties, divided between social groups. Governments not only had no wish to mobilise such sentiments but lacked the means (mass literacy and media, universal schooling, electoral representation) to do so, thus inhibiting any 'national' response. Nevertheless there was one major homogenising force which was itself the product of an external form of modernity in the form of Napoleonic military power. This was the impact of Napoleon's Russian campaign. This created the conditions for widespread hatred of the French even if there was no overriding positive focus for such hatred. It did

give substance to the notion that there *was* a popular mood and that governments must find some way of allying with that mood without going the same way as the French monarchy. This helps explain the increasingly circumspect way in which the occupying armies acted as they moved westwards towards France and the propaganda appeals that were made to the 'people'. Nevertheless, as with 'archaic' intellectuals like Fichte, these were short-term responses which ceased to operate with much force after Napoleon's defeat.[22]

There is little evidence that most of the reforms preceding 1813 had positive effects upon popular sentiment. Indeed, reforms such as the Prussian replacement of craft guilds with a tax on anyone wishing to practice a trade, were unpopular.[23] More important were reforms that improved techniques for managing mass participation in political and military institutions which worked with the grain of functional specialisation. The Prussian reforms stand out in these respects, simultaneously improving methods of mass political and military coordination and focusing state activity on political and military tasks, in part by withdrawal from other functions such as guaranteeing guild and seigneurial privileges or running royal estates.[24]

At the level of politics there was little in the way of appeals to the German national idea before 1809. Prussia withdrew from the coalition against France in 1795 and was left in peace with expanded north German influence until 1806, leaving Austria to take on the burden of warfare against France. Austria did not invoke the national idea in the war of 1805 which she fought in alliance with Russia, in isolation from Prussia and where France was allied with south-west German states such as Bavaria. Likewise, Prussia did not invoke national ideas in 1806-7. There was an appeal to the German

national idea by Austria in 1809. This came after Austria had ceased to have any 'official' German position with the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire. Rather it was a way of seeking to mobilise popular support within the western half of what was now a territorial empire. It was also a way of appealing beyond the governments of the *Rheinbund* states and Prussia, all working as allies and satellites of Napoleon, to their subjects. Finally it was an opportunistic response to the Spanish insurrection against Napoleon. Nevertheless, this sudden and improvised politics had limited impact and was abruptly abandoned with Austria's defeat.[25]

Historical interest has focused on the Prussian achievement of 1813-15. This provided the basis of later nationalist claims about a war of national liberation as well as giving support to Borussian historiography which sought to provide an historical foundation and legitimacy to the Prussian-led unification. However, the impressive military mobilisation was achieved more through coercion than enthusiasm, a coercion which can be understood in terms of traditional landowner concerns in East Prussia and Brandenburg to re-establish autonomy after the French ravages and before Russian armies swept in from the east. This local elite effort combined effectively with the reformed administrative and military command structure of Prussia. When one adds to that the swift assembly of other anti-Napoleonic forces (British subsidies, Russian horses) and a great military alliance, one has an adequate explanation of the Prussian transformation without adding the 'miracle' of popular nationalism. At the same time, the need for reformed, functionally specialised institutions to exploit mass military mobilisation means this cannot be understood simply as a re-assertion of pre-Napoleonic dynastic power. In turn this more specialised way of using coercive

power in 1813-14 had an effect upon the language of politics and this relates to the way nationalism came to play a significant role.

Although there was a good deal of coercion involved in raising the mass armies of 1813-15, it was no longer possible to present the process in this way.[26] Conscription is coercion. However, when framed as an obligation applying to a body of equal citizens, it requires a justification which speaks directly to the assumed values or interests — often called 'rights' — of those upon whom it is enforced. The idea of the nation provides such justification.

One also needs to consider the situation in which German princes found themselves in 1813. The Napoleonic order, apparently impregnable just a year earlier, was collapsing. Political objectives were constantly escalating — surviving the Russian campaign, re-asserting authority in core territories, raising, equipping and operating large armies in a grand coalition, moving westwards against the retreating French, occupying Paris, drawing up a Europe-wide post-war settlement. One needed to appeal to large numbers of people, many of them still under the rule of Napoleon or his allies.

The propaganda which this generated was hardly targeted. No-one knew in advance what would work. So there was an almost random, scattergun approach. Christian preachers picked up on the godlessness of the French and their revolution, although the more confessionally minded of them gave this a particular twist. Enlightened reformers appealed to notions of freedom, a freedom promised but not delivered by Napoleon. Conservatives suggested that the removal of Napoleonic empire could mean a return to the good old ways. Ethnic or cultural nationalists envisaged Germandom asserting itself with the removal of French

control and institutions. A common and popular feature was hatred of the French.[27] All of these various and conflicting appeals could be framed in national terms: Christian Germany, reformed Germany, restored imperial Germany, organic national Germany, the high culture of educated Germans.

It is difficult to know what worked in these many forms of propaganda. However, from the point of view of authority the national idea in such propaganda had to be kept vague and ambiguous: vague because it could not be allowed to underpin any politics threatening monarchy; ambiguous because it must compete with other identities and loyalties based on religion, region or state.[28]

For German patriots like Stein the language of a nation was a way of appealing beyond the 'collaborators' of the *Rheinbund* and the left-bank of the Rhine to the common people. For the allied monarchs it could justify the switch of allegiance by those very collaborators as well as implying that Austria and Prussia, as the leading German powers, should shape the post-war settlement in the German lands. Finally, the legacy of the old Empire could be used by the medium-sized states which changed sides in 1813 to support a programme of political federalism, often combined with the promotion of German national culture.[29]

The period following 1815 is often depicted as one of restoration and repression. There was a good deal of both. Radical, constitutionalist and nationalist zealots were prosecuted. The language of monarchical legitimacy was imposed. Yet the archaic elements of pre-Napoleonic Germany were not restored, above all the ecclesiastical and knightly states. Instead the system of territorial states subject to no over-arching legal-political authority which Napoleon had instituted was pre-

served. Admittedly the German Confederation (*Deutscher Bund,* henceforth *Bund*) established at the Congress of Vienna echoed features of the old *Reich* with its Austrian presidency, a diet at which all the rulers met and plans for a confederal army. However, this was explicitly a confederation in which sovereignty was vested in the individual states. There was nothing like the web of overarching imperial institutions and ceremonial associated with the old *Reich.* If the *Bund* was used to intervene in the affairs of individual states this was by virtue of agreed Austro-Prussian action and dominance of a kind first made manifest in 1819 and not in the original articles of Confederation.

In terms of ideas it is less the repression of radicalism and nationalism that should be noted as how easily this was implemented. A system of political policing was developed in Germany. Archaic visions based on corporate notions of nation or people were expressed by minorities of student and other groups who were distanced from political power and had little popular appeal. Some attention has been paid recently to popular support for certain kinds of direct democracy which have been variously called liberalism and radicalism, with links drawn to later modern liberal and democratic ideas and movements. I think this is misleading as these pre-, even anti-modern movements were rooted in the worlds of small-town artisans and small peasant proprietors. This continued to be an important part of German life well into the nineteenth-century and therefore is a significant object of study.[30] However, they have little in common with bourgeois liberalism or urban working-class social democracy which were shaped within transnational capitalism, industrial enterprise and city. There are undoubtedly connections — both personal (e.g. the origins of the first generation of labour move-

ment leaders) and intellectual (ideas of constitutional rule and popular accountability) — but such connections, the stuff of narrative history, need to be set within the broader context of the disruption and discontinuity of modernisation.[31]

What proved more difficult to repress were ideas associated with early liberalism, above all for constitutional government subject to rule of law and confined to public functions, leaving economic activity to the market and permitting freedom of thought, expression and association. The advocates of such ideas were no braver or cleverer than radicals or nationalists. The difference was that their ideas were grounded in the growth of an increasingly rich elite discourse focused on reformed educational institutions, new media (newspapers and journals but also more extensive letter correspondence and private gazettes linked to economic interests). These in turn were related to an increased amount of supra-local economic transactions organised through increasingly free markets, extending well beyond the German lands, and which exercised influence in the new territorial state administrations.[32]

This is where one can see the long-term significance of the Prussian reforms. Administrative reforms which permitted the operation of mass military mobilisation were significant in the short-term and necessary if Prussia was to recover great power status. However, with the almost equally fast military demobilisation after 1815 and a shift to diplomacy rather than war as the principal instrument in international relations, that had little longer-term significance.[33] More important in the long-term were reforms permitting freedom to practice a trade, creating a free land market, removing internal tariff barriers and pursuing a customs union along with a low-tariff policy. That created the space for

more specialised economic and cultural institutions, and related forms of power.

Elements in the Prussian state opposed many of these trends and there are counteracting tendencies, such as opposition to limited liability companies, refusal to introduce modern forms of political representation and continued restrictions on freedoms of assembly, speech and publication. In part these could be evaded by shifting from one German state to another, which in turn provoked Austria and Prussia to seek *Bund*-level repression.

However, the repression was quite imperfect, in part because the sheer dynamism of commercial growth in agriculture and manufacturing generated its own 'elementary' civil society, for example in the shape of correspondence and intelligence gazettes reporting on the economy, reports which necessarily moved on to speculate about the broader conditions for economic activity, such as government policy. Furthermore, the attempt to restrict associations and publications at the *Bund* level drew attention to the need to reform 'German', not merely individual state institutions. That made specifically political reform a national matter. But more generally the formation of an increasingly 'abstract society of strangers', expressed through the growth of a diverse set of networks and institutions not tied to any particular state, created a puzzling situation which the language of the national could help one understand. In these ways liberal and national ideas and movements converged with the modernisation process and proved impossible to repress, as more intelligent state officials came to understand.[34]

The 1848 Revolution

Background

The 1830s and early 1840s saw the continued development and elaboration of a German political-cum-cultural system as measured through the expansion of such institutions and networks as universities, *Gymnasia*, *Vereine*, letter-writing, journals and newspapers.[35] There were the beginnings of German official networks, for example the *Zollverein* administration and the political police. Some of these were in conflict with one another but precisely such conflict conferred upon the idea of a national politics, economy and culture an appearance of existence independent of any one state, interest or ideology. This coincided with an historicist turn in many of the human sciences in the German lands, for example in the studies of language and literature, art and economics. All this contributed to the construction of a rich conception of the national even if it was strongly held amongst small elites and not yet related to any political programme.[36]

However, it could be related to political demands which were not explicitly nationalist. Take the case of press freedom which was raised as a prominent issue by associations and demonstrations in the early 1830s.[37] First, this came to be presented as a *German* demand, the modern equivalent of the free assemblies of Germans in earlier times. In this way these early liberal nationalists could draw upon the previous nationalist discourses but placing these within a new framework.

Second, the underlying reason for the raising of this demand was the recognition that Germans could not come together in assemblies and express views directly. Rather the nation would make itself known as 'opinion', as 'the public', notions which only make sense in an

extended print culture and communications across individual state boundaries. Third, the very repression directed at such demands from *Bund* level made it both emotionally plausible and politically realistic to insist that only German-level action could achieve results.

One can make similar points about other demands being raised by liberal nationalists, for legal reforms such as trial by jury, for the rule of law, for freedom of movement and, what in the 1840s emerged increasingly as the central demand, for 'national representation'.

This has to be put into a broader political and economic perspective. The period c.1820-50 might be described as 'modernisation without industrialisation' in many of the German lands.[38] Modernisation in the sense of the increased specialisation of economic activity can be discerned in state withdrawal from regulation and the inner erosion of corporations such as guilds and lordships, and in the increased importance of supra-local transactions. This had the simultaneous effect of increasing differences between regions while intensifying contacts between those regions, contacts beyond state control.[39] That alone created an elementary need for better economic intelligence. The first pages of many newspapers of the time were devoted to ship movements, share and commodity prices, and exchange rates rather than to political or cultural matters. But one cannot tightly shut off 'economic' from other kinds of intelligence. Merchants and entrepreneurs need to know about the likelihood of political upheavals or changes of government policy and that requires political reasoning and argument, not just factual reportage. They want to know about likely markets, tastes and how they change, and that requires cultural reasoning and argument. In keeping with the trend of modernity, there emerged

specialists in such reasoning, in particular as editors and journalists.

Perceptive government officials recognised the functionality of much of this and opposed over-blunt censorship or banning of publications. To that was added a new political policing approach that it was better to permit and therefore more easily monitor new forms of communications such as journals and associations than to ban them and find it difficult to obtain intelligence on truly dangerous tendencies. Thus economic modernisation in the form of commercial growth and regional and enterprise specialisation underpinned liberal national elite discourse, extending it to wider audiences and making its arguments about freedom and communication more persuasive.[40]

But why should this take a national form? I suggest a general and a specific answer which need to be combined. The formation of a modern society of strangers, organised through specialised institutions which promote increasingly dense horizontal ties between many mutually unknown persons (citizens, conscripts, producers and consumers, readers), has a tendency also to promote discourses which confer substance, including that of a unity of interest, value and even character, upon these collectivities. Such discourses go beyond specifying roles and positions to make identity claims. There are many such discourses: of humanity, civilisation, people, producers, class, gender, race. The discourse of nation is another. These discourses combine and conflict with one another in different ways. Furthermore, I think one can make a good argument that the beginnings of these discourses which stress identity rather than values/beliefs or actions/roles can be traced back to roughly the period from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. These discourses are a

necessary part of the modernising process, not so much motivating or guiding that process as providing maps to new and strange terrain.[41] The discourse of nation prospered because of its 'fit' with the rise of the specialised territorial and participatory state which was part of the modernising process.[42]

However, this raises a specific question in relation to Germany. The preceding argument makes most sense for what one might call 'state-nations' where there is a pre-existing territorial state for which an argument about a congruent national identity can plausibly be made. France and England/Britain are obvious examples. What such an argument might suggest in the German case is the formation of a discourse of national identity around the larger and more powerful territorial states: above all Austria and Prussia but also Hanover, Bavaria, Württemberg, Saxony and Baden. Something along those lines did take shape but in combination or conflict with a discourse of German identity. The puzzle this presents can lead to two very different arguments. The first privileges state over nation and argues that the discourse of German nationality only became important when existing states — above all Prussia — took it up. German unification is a matter of state conflict and power and German national discourse legitimates that prior political process. The second privileges nation over state and insists that no amount of state power could work against the powerful identity of nation. Multinational Austria could not make itself national and Prussia could only expand as a German power harnessing national forces.[43]

The arguments are too polarised and abstract and difficult to test. It is better to focus on a range of comparisons — the central European cases of 'unification nationalism' — involving Polish, Italian, Hungar-

ian and German nationalism.[44] There, I would argue, the project of forming a nation state, allied to elite culture and state power, was only significant in the German case. This suggests a very specific set of relationships between modernity, power and the discourse of nation. This starts to become clear after 1815.

First, unlike the Polish and Italian cases, there *was* a German political system, although not a national state. (There was also a Hungarian political system but one located within a larger, imperial state and thus lacking the autonomy of the German one.) The *Bund* was a nominally confederal system of some thirty-nine independent states. It retained elements of the old imperial hierarchy with Austria holding the Presidency. Together Austria and Prussia were able to impose limitations on the policies of the other states. Indeed the requirement in Article 11 of the *Deutsche Bundesakte* of 1815, that members of the Confederation could not make agreements with external states which posed a threat to the *Bund* as a whole or any of its members, could be seen as imposing a formal restriction on a key component of state sovereignty.[45]

The Carlsbad decree of 1819 and further restrictive laws in the early 1820s and a renewed set in the early 1830s had the effect of blocking moves towards liberalisation in the various German states. If those liberal movements could not be repressed — and the arguments presented above about the relationship between liberalism and modernisation lead me to this conclusion — then this would force liberal movements eventually to turn to the issue of reforming the *Bund* as a whole, if only as a way of securing reform in individual states. At this point, the logic of the political reform programme converges with the cultural national discourse which was sustained through universities, schools and elite cul-

ture.[46] By 1840 this had fostered connections between liberal and radical elites in the smaller and medium states, especially of south-west Germany, and the start of connections between them and liberal elites in some of the Prussian provinces, most notably the Rhinelands and East Prussia. Austria was less involved both because patterns of censorship and communication tended to cut Austrians off from other German states, and also because economic interests in Austria tended to look south and east as much, if not more, than north and west. Furthermore, Prussian economic and political interests increasingly sought closer integration with the smaller states, a view coming to be shared, if reluctantly, by similar interests in those smaller states.[47] The customs union led by Prussia and formed in 1834 for reasons which initially had more to do with state integration and state-strengthening also, by the 1840s, was fostering an economic discourse of the national.[48] These developments are important for an understanding of the widespread anti-French movement in response to aggressive French claims about the left bank of the Rhine in 1840, quite unlike the reactions to the July revolution of 1830.[49]

A comparison with Italian nationalism is illuminating but cannot be pursued here. There were not the abundant cultural, political and economic networks in the Italian lands that existed in the German lands, and therefore the discourse of nationality was not as complex, dense, orientating, and embodied in institutions. One cannot imagine any exile nationalist writer from Germany having the status of a Mazzini, although someone like Heine writes about national cultural identity in a more sophisticated, nuanced, persuasive and detailed way than does Mazzini. That is because by now

the German discourse is primarily one generated within various German states, unlike the Italian case.[50]

The Revolutionary Period

It is against this background, therefore, that one can understand why the collapse of government resistance to a set of widespread but diverse and uncoordinated popular protests in March 1848 led so rapidly to the convening of a German National Assembly in which liberal nationalists were the dominant element. Of course, one can argue that the 'real' revolution was in the regions and individual states and that the liberal nationalists at Frankfurt never worked out how to insert themselves effectively into that revolution. Nevertheless, it was a significant political factor and one needs to consider it.[51]

The discourse of nationality was vital to the work of this assembly. It met through the demand for national representation, calling itself the German National Assembly, and charged with the task of creating a national political structure in place of the collapsed *Bund.* The men who met here literally were strangers, but strangers who had been reading the same newspapers and journals in German and as Germans.[52] Debates were founded upon, and further developed, complex shared understandings about a common national culture and its political implications.[53] The exception proves the rule; the Austrian deputies never integrated as well with non-Austrians, even when these were fellow Catholics, as did Germans from other states with one another.

The point is not that the culture of the national was being cultivated for political purposes but rather that it was an integral part of how bourgeois elites — commercial and professional, as well as state officials — came to articulate group consciousness. Obviously there were

many bars to this, many internal differences such as those of confession, state membership and on a radical to conservative political spectrum, but a sense of national cultural identity was essential to the capacity of 'strangers' to come together in Frankfurt and co-operate with one another quickly.

However, this broad but essential sense of common national identity could not be put in the service of any one particular political programme, as the debates and conflicts within the Frankfurt Parliament made clear. Indeed, only in this first experience of 'national representation' could such programmes themselves be clearly articulated, and one necessary feature of that articulation was conflict between different, emergent programmes.[54]

It was important that the men of Frankfurt shared and even embodied a national culture, and had at least connections to others who collectively could claim the same in relation to a national economy. However, these were not qualities which extended much beyond these quite narrow bourgeois elites. To be turned into effective politics one needed at least one and ideally both of two things: a capacity to mobilise and organise popular support for particular programmes and/or to ally with current holders of political power. This takes us beyond the levels of nationalism as ideas and as elite discourse to nationalism as popular sentiment and politics.

First, let us consider the issue of popular sentiments. Economic modernisation without industrialisation had created the basis for extending the language of strangers bound by common nationality beyond elite levels. One can see it, for example, in the radical artisanal labour movement in which exile experience was of great importance but so also was constant movement across state boundaries. However, it was exceptional to have

widespread social movements organised 'from below' in this period. By contrast, where established authoritarian institutions with access to popular constituencies and their values were specialising outside the sphere of the state, these already proved capable of mass mobilisation. The best example is the Trier Pilgrimage of 1844 where the oppositional Catholic church in the Prussian province of the Rhinelands demonstrated this capacity, although this political gesture had to be camouflaged as piety.[55]

A major problem confronting liberal nationalists in 1848 was their distrust of popular politics, which was precisely due to their acute awareness that they lacked access to most of the institutions and arguments which could animate popular sentiment. The very way in which the revolution had broken out and had then, in the resultant vacuum of authoritarian control, provided the basis for many different and escalating kinds of mass mobilisation, made liberals even more anxious about their lack of popular connections.[56] In Frankfurt the deputies failed to cultivate the large numbers of people who had elected them on a constituency basis while state parliaments — concerned with social issues rather than the abstract 'national question' — became more the focus of political agitation and propaganda.

Insofar as there were representations of the national in popular politics they should be understood pragmatically. For example, the appeal to the national constitution in the second revolutions of 1849, was a way in which radicals in marginal territories such as the Bavarian Palatinate and the Prussian Rhineland could appeal to the national idea to justify resistance to their respective states.[57] The 'national' was here imagined as a realm of freedom which could not be realised in the existing state but also was not available in the form of local

autonomy. All this contributed to a notion of the failed democratic and national revolution which would figure in much subsequent European, including German, historiography.[58]

Second, at the level of politics there is the well-known story of how liberal nationalists were brought under the control of the various states, in particular those of Austria and Prussia, and how the transparently partial and manipulative uses of national language by those states deprived them of a capacity to appeal beyond interests within their own states. Once Austria and Prussia directly clashed on the politics of the national question, culminating in the 'humiliation' of Olmütz in November 1850, the result was a restoration of the *Bund* and a disavowal of any nation-state programme linked to liberalism.[59]

Many power holders were aware that this restoration lacked legitimacy. They knew that modernisation and the Napoleonic legacy of arbitrarily constructed territorial states could no longer be legitimised by tradition, given the emergence of specialised politics and political opinion. Increasingly the demands for legal-rational legitimation of state authority were irresistible, as recognised by the Prussian granting of a constitution in December 1848, and even the Austrian return to the constitutional road some ten years later.[60]

There was counter-revolution with its familiar litany of military repression, harsh laws, imprisonments and even judicial executions, though nothing like as savage as in France, Hungary and Italy. Arguably, political policing was smarter and more efficient after 1848 than it had been before. As a consequence the radical movement, including nationalists, was forcibly marginalised. Where exiles could find new fields for their energies, above all in the USA, they did not plot and endeavour

to shape future German politics. However, this only had the effect of increasing the weight of moderate liberal nationalists in post-1848 nationalism. At the same time, the acceleration of economic growth, now taking increasingly industrial forms, made it impossible to repress the most immediate expressions of collective interest within various social groups.[61] This was demonstrated, for example, in the proliferation of such organisations as cooperatives and educational associations.

Rather than treat 1848 as a 'success' or 'failure', one should understand it as hastening the extinction of certain species of political thought and action which were inappropriate under the conditions of modernity which promoted representative politics, bureaucratic administration, market economics and specialised cultural institutions and practices.[62] One can illustrate this by taking three individuals embodying radical, liberal and conservative values: Karl Marx (1818-1883), August Ludwig von Rochau (1810-1873) and Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898). All three had come to maturity before 1848, operating in milieus in which politics was not a separate specialised activity but the work of court and bureaucratic elites at state level (for Bismarck), of professional and economic elites with supra-state connections (Rochau) and of exiled intellectuals and radical artisans with their secret societies (Marx). Pragmatic politics was about informal deals; oppositional politics was about bringing external pressure to bear upon existing authority, through petitioning, demonstrations and ultimately insurrection. Politics as a routine matter of party organisation and contest had made little progress in the German lands by 1848.

All three men had to come to terms not so much with the 'failure' of 1848 as the fact that it signalled that this pre-modern political world no longer worked. Marx

broke with insurrectionist radicals and focused his efforts on the long march through industrial capitalism and the organisation of the working-class, even if its final triumph was still envisaged in the traditional form of violent revolution. Rochau broke with liberal idealism and concentrated on what power liberals could bring to the negotiating table, which would enable them to construct mutually profitable arrangements with those running the present state, especially the Prussian state. Bismarck broke with his legitimist conservative allies and sought a politics in which the monarchical state could harness popular interests and the German cause to its own concerns. It would be, of course, the politics of organised labour, pro-Prussian liberalism, and Bismarckian populism which — along with political Catholicism — came to dominate Germany in the second half of the nineteenth century. What we see developing here, and accelerated by 1848-49, are modern forms of ideological power in which ideas are related to popular opinion and organised politics. Nationalism, especially that articulated by post-1848 liberals, was one kind of ideological power.[63]

The Unification Period

Thus, despite political-militarist repression, popular national discourse spread more rapidly after 1848 than it had been able to before, above all with the rapid industrialisation of the late 1850s and 1860s. There was a proliferation of associations and contacts, of mass regional migration, of social movements based on new class conditions. With the weakening of political repression from the late 1850s this meant that such typically national organisations as choirs, gymnastic associations, sharp-shooting societies, and educational asso-

ciations had even larger memberships — now extending into the hundreds of thousands — than ever before.[64]

The elite discourse of nationality shifted towards the elaboration of political programmes. There was no longer any doubt about the existence of a cultural national identity with extensive networks and popular resonance. The problem 1848 had revealed was how this was to be realised politically. Political historians have written of the rise of the notion of *Realpolitik*.[65] Cultural historians have written of the development of realistic idealism. A key feature of this is the sense of progress going with the grain of power. By the 1860s this sense of an imminent future in which national and liberal ideals would be realised generated a discourse so dense and politicised that at elite level a future unified state could be regarded primarily as a problem of power and will, not any longer as a problem of the imagination.[66]

However, the increasingly national form of the economy (above all through the post-1850 development of the *Zollverein*), the rich associational life, a strong sense of cultural nationality and its link to a programme that increasingly looked to Prussia as the instrument of unification — these forms of economic and ideological power could not produce a national state without coercive power. Coercive power was concentrated in the hands of the two major territorial states, Austria and Prussia. Although both flirted with nationalism they did so in a manipulative manner, sometimes dropping it when either conflict or cooperation between them made that seem appropriate.[67]

If, once again, we are to avoid the polarised extremes of accident and inevitability in the convergence of state power with German nationalism in the formation of the Second Empire, we need to insert in between them the concept of modernisation. This will enable us to see why

the modernisation of state power promoted cooperation with nationalism.

There are two aspects to coercive power: political and military. I begin with an example of problems faced by political power-holders during a period of rapid modernisation. This is the Prussian constitutional crisis. The confrontation between the liberal-dominated *Landtag* and the monarchy over the expansion and reform of the army had led to an impasse and in September Wilhelm I turned to Bismarck, appointing him Prime Minister (Minister-President).[68] On the face of it, Bismarck represented a reactionary attempt to undo the advances made by Prussian liberalism during the period of rapid economic growth from the mid-1850s. Certainly Bismarck began with harsh anti-liberal rhetoric and action, continuing to raise taxes on the dubious grounds that the drafters of the constitution could never have intended that parliamentary refusal of supply bring the day-to-day activity of government grinding to a halt. Yet already his famous 'blood and iron' speech in which he declared that this was how to solve the national question, not through resolutions and constitutions, could be seen as an appeal to liberal nationalists to recognise they needed Prussian power to achieve their goals. Many of his actions were designed more to bully liberals into cooperation than to marginalise them. Bismarck understood that a state without the new bourgeoisie on its side was a weak state. He had no wish to retain 'despotic' state power which condemned Prussia to second-rate status at the cost of 'infrastructural' power which could raise it into the first rank.[69] He constantly referred in his writings and conversations to the need to get the 'social forces' (*soziale Kräfte*) on to the side of the government. With the crushing success of Prussian arms in the war with Austria in 1866 he moved

decisively to repair relations with liberals, thereby laying the foundations of the political arrangement which underpinned the formation and first decades of the Second Empire. The economic, cultural and electoral dominance of national liberalism was crucial to the formation of a modern nation-state, even if incapable of applying the force needed to create that state in the middle of Europe, against Austrian and French power. This is where we turn to the military aspect. The reforms which precipitated the constitutional crisis initiated a rapid military modernisation.[70] The key aspects were an expansion in army size which meant a return to the mass conscription instituted in 1813, and marginalising the role of the reserves by increasing the term of full-time military service. Mass armies alone were not an indication of modernisation but rather the new ways this force was to be deployed. Under the leadership of Moltke it was planned to bring these initially dispersed forces to concentrate on key points at unprecedented speed, above all exploiting the new resource of railways, and at those key points to use devastating firepower against the enemy, with new weaponry such as the breach-loading rifle and steel artillery. These had only recently become available through the rapid increase in railway building, the development of new mass but also precision engineering production, and the related growth of a complex of production and technological innovations such as deep-seam coal-mining in the Ruhr and integrated iron-and-steel factories.[71]

Prussia was the first to exploit, often in fortuitous ways, this complex modernising process. One can suggest various reasons, including the more specific power-political focus of a smaller, second-rank power compared to the major continental powers of Austria, France and Russia. There is also the tension created between

the increased significance of territorial sovereignty as the principal expression of state power (e.g. through tariff policy, passport controls, citizenship rights, electoral politics based on constituencies, bureaucratic surveillance) and the confederal politics of Germany. Bismarck regarded the *Bund* as an obsolete form, which constrained Prussian power. Liberal nationalists agreed, though were concerned that expanding Prussian power might set back their own agenda of a modernising and constitutional state. This fear, rather than objections to military modernisation, was what motivated their opposition to the military reforms.

The great asset liberals had was that the Prussian monarchy could not find an imagery, a persuasive political ideology, with which to sell their military reform programme to public opinion. By contrast, liberals demonised the planned reforms with images of conscription as brainwashing to militarise society and the army as a potent weapon in the hand of an autocrat. (As well as more basic apprehensions about being conscripted.) Hardly anyone appreciated the implications of Moltke's innovations in weaponry and logistics and that alternative models, such as a popular militia, or a large reserve in relation to a core of conscripts, could not exploit these innovations. The crown lost the battle for opinion against the liberals, even as Bismarck, von Roon and Moltke, with the king's strong backing, forced through the military reforms. [72]

Bismarck thus found himself in a difficult situation. He wished to pursue a modern politics based on a sharp division of the German lands between the two dominant states, part of and a contribution towards a Europe of such states. He also believed that such states, to be powerful, needed the willing support of key social forces and command of popular opinion. It is reasonable

to call such states nation-states without prejudging just what will be their boundaries and how their governments will justify them both to their own subjects and other states.

At the same time, until 1866 Bismarck could not command popular opinion or support from the significant social forces embodied in the liberal nationalist movement. He could continue to practice the diplomacy of treaties and coalitions, war-alliances, and dynastic – to modern liberal eyes, arbitrary — transfers of territory. The Schleswig-Holstein crisis, the war against Denmark and its immediate aftermath demonstrate this clearly. Bismarck's justification for war was observance of international treaties, not defence of German territory. The war was conducted as a dynastic alliance between Austria and Prussia; the territories acquired were ruled as two military colonies. All this was opposed to the modern politics of gaining press and party support, claiming to defend national interests and constructing national institutions.[73]

Only once modern military power had been deployed to devastating effect in 1866 was Bismarck able to embark on a modern politics. The key act was the Indemnity Bill put before the Prussian *Landtag*. Bismarck used his new-found electoral and popular support (an election to the Prussian *Landtag* held on the eve of Königgrätz had confirmed this) not to marginalise parliament and the liberals but to broker a deal with them. With the formation of the National Liberal party which backed Bismarck, his manipulative and unpersuasive use of national rhetoric was replaced by effective nationalist discourse. One clear example of this is what one can only call the rapid re-imagining of the military, a process which culminated in the war of 1870-71 against France. During the constitutional crisis an

army based on universal conscription and three-year full time service had been described as a weapon in the hands of the crown and a means of militarising society, while a militia was the virile expression of a free people. Now the Prussian conscript system was portrayed as importing the sober and disciplined values of an educated and patriotic nation into its army, while the French volunteers (*francs-tireurs*) who continued the war against the German occupiers were mobs of fanatics led by demagogues.[74]

There were strict limits to this appeal. National liberalism was not a narrow elitist politics but neither did it command broad popular support. There were competing forms of nationalism (*großdeutsch*, radical democratic). These and political Catholicism opposed the Bismarck/national liberalism politics after 1866. Equally, however, the other forms of nationalism lacked that rich social and cultural underpinning based on the supra-state networks of universities, grammar schools, much of the press and other media, pressure groups, and associations.

This is not to argue that such nationalism was essential to the Prussian successes of 1866 and 1870-71. (Arguably, the capacity to raise the loans needed for wars did depend on good relations with financial and industrial circles associated with liberal nationalism.) However, it was essential to the rapid formation of a strong national state with a working parliamentary majority for the government, good credit and the integration of non-Prussian territories.

This shift from a plurality of states to a national state was not a matter of 'cultural nationalism' giving way to 'political nationalism'. Rather it was a process of modernisation in the middle third of the century, transforming an elite conception of German identity into a popu-

lar ideology of nationalism, which was essential as a complement to the modernised, that is specialised, forms of economic and coercive power which were taking shape in the German lands. This ideology was already becoming significant in an oppositional political movement of the 1860s. What turned the forcible destruction of the German confederal political system — seen by many as the destruction of the established forms of national identity — into a national rather than anti-national process was the way in which this modern opposition was able to integrate with the modern forms of coercive power constructed in Prussia since the end of the 1848-49 revolution.[75]

Postscript: the Turn to World Power

German unification was the work of modernisers: the political, administrative and military specialists in the exercise of specialised coercive power and the entrepreneurial and professional bourgeois elites who were developing specialised economic and ideological power. However, these were elite rather than popular achievements. The period after 1871 witnessed a more thorough-going modernisation of Germany, as measured in patterns of urban and industrial growth up to 1914.[76] This transformation was only possible in a global context but one which had the effect of making national, now state, territory, increasingly important not only as 'decision' but also as 'identity' space.[77] Although the national continued to be associated with modernity and the imperative to innovate, within this rapidly modernising state the ambivalences and contradictions of modernity became increasingly apparent and undermined liberal dominance of the ideology of nationalism.

First, there was the constant tension within liberalism itself between hierarchy and freedom, expressed in

tensions between 'free' markets and hierarchical firms, authoritarian rule and democratic suffrage. Second, there was the increased containment and regulation of social activity within the nation-state framework, measured in such forms as the shift to tariff protection, welfare reforms in pensions and medicine. The national was set sharply against the international, increasingly understood in global and not merely European terms and expressed in conflicts over such issues as colonialism and navy-building. Third, there was the general problem posed by modernisation of how to coordinate the different, specialised forms of modernity. It was not possible for holders of economic power to impose on the holders of coercive power or *vice versa*. Instead there developed an elaborate politics of interest-group coalitions, increasingly targeted at the nation-state level.[78]

Even as conflict was increasingly well-organised and popular (e.g. growth in Reichstag voting participation, political party membership, trade-unions and employer organisations) so it was also increasingly contained by the nation-state. Class identity shifted from the transnational to the national.[79] The idea of the national became increasingly contested and acquired more layers of meaning. This had the effect of creating a dual form of national identity: on the one hand the specific and contested forms (imperialist against socialist, civic against ethnic, democratic against authoritarian, etc.); on the other hand, a common acceptance by all parties of the nation as the container of such conflict, as a 'natural' identity.[80]

Yet, though challenged, the liberal association of modernity with nation-state remained dominant. Even if one takes the well-worn juxtaposition of 'culture' against 'civilisation' which German nationalists raised against the 'west', it was an elite culture with a stress on

German leadership in science, technology, art and music.

Yet the defence of this liberal-national modernity was increasingly difficult. One sees this sharply exemplified in the life and ideas of Max Weber. Weber was militantly bourgeois, modernist and nationalist, preoccupied with the 'rise of the west' and with the place of German culture and power in the modern world. He feared the rise of specialised forms of power such as the bureaucratic state though organisationally this seemed to him to be inevitable. But just as he feared power exercised without any sense of ultimate values, so he also thought that the highest forms of culture were only possible when combined with power. The nation became, for Weber, the arena within which culture and power could intersect, an arena itself constantly energised by internal social conflict and external conflict with other powerful states. Thus Weber supported the building of a powerful navy designed to pursue colonies beyond Europe and the deliberate promotion of German culture within central Europe, including Germanisation of Germany's eastern provinces. Weber's example makes it clear that we cannot see *Weltpolitik* and the concern with Germandom in Europe as detached from modernity, as somehow a politics of diversion from internal political struggles or a fantasy of radicals reacting against the difficulties of modernity. Yet at the same time Weber was acutely aware that his options were precisely that; choices which reflected personal values rather than a morally or aesthetically superior position compared to others, and furthermore which had no guarantee of realisation in some determined historical process. Weber '... reflected the crisis of liberalism in exemplary form in his political thought.'[81]

Conclusion

German historiography, like most modern historiography, has been shaped by the national framework which came to dominate the political world and the practice of professional history. Making the initial assumption that history is national blocks out a critical investigation of just what the national is, how it came about and how significant it is. It means that even when historians demolish particular nationalist myths, they find it difficult to break with or at least examine the national framework itself.

It is probably not possible to do this by seeking positions outside the national framework. After all, nation-state formation has come to dominate the organisation of power as well as cultural imagination, and so a view that the world is divided into nations which ideally form their own states looks realistic. What I suggest instead is to bracket out the nation and national and to focus on nationalism as constructing, not expressing, the national. However, even to take this any further one must recognise that nationalism can be understood on a range of levels — ideas, elite discourse, popular sentiment, and politics.

To be able to relate these different levels both to each other and to a broader historical context one requires some explicit concept of societal change. Given a modernist understanding of nationalism I look for that in a concept of modernisation which I define in terms of changes in the forms of economic, coercive and ideological power associated with the functional specialisation which is at the heart of modernity.

On that basis I argue that the enduring forms of nationalism, forms which increasingly link across the different forms of power, are associated positively with the development of the modern in the German lands.

There are other forms which at key moments are intense and even significant (such as anti-French hatred in 1813-15), but they tend to be discontinuous and quickly marginalised.

There are specific German features to this development but they reside not in some mystical quality of the national but in such features as a particular kind of elite national discourse associated with high cultural institutions, and with the formation of a powerful, if negative German political system after the defeat of Napoleon. Only comparisons with other cases analysed in the same kind of way will bring out these specific qualities. I have only had time to make sketchy comparisons with Italian unification.

Much of the study of German nationalism has been concerned with its bearing upon the rise of Hitler to power. I have deliberately bracketed that out of what is a treatment of the nineteenth-century and which seeks to avoid teleology. However, if one accepts the argument that nationalism is an essential component of modernity, not some irrational or purely contingent accompaniment to modernity, and not a virulent reaction against modernity, and that this modernist character is dominant in Germany up to 1914, this creates a particular and problematic context for the historical investigation of twentieth-century German nationalism.[82] However, that challenge is for another lecture and another lecturer.

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(ed.), *Collaboration and Resistance in Napoleonic Europe: State Formation in an Age of Upheaval, c.1800-1815* (London, 2003). On defensive modernisation see Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte I: 1700-1815* (Göttingen, 1987).

[20] For the text of *Reden an die deutsche Nation* see now J. G. Fichte, *Werke 1808-1812*, ed. Reinhard Lauth et.al., vol. 10, Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 2005). The introduction to the *Reden* by Erich Fuchs contains details of the contemporary reception. For further such detail see Erich Fuchs (ed.), *J. G. Fichte im Gespräch: Berichte der Zeitgenossen: 1806-1812*, 6 vols, vol. 4 (Stuttgart, 1978). On the nationalist character of Fichte's ideas see Arash Abizadeh, 'Was Fichte an Ethnic Nationalist? On Cultural Nationalism and its Double', *History of Political Thought* 26 (2005), pp.334-359.

[21] Individuals from this educated background could become influential but were aware of working with a majority of government officials, army officers and landowners who did not share their views. The point is made in Barbara Vogel's study of reformers in Prussia in relation to issues of economic liberalism. Barbara Vogel, *Allgemeine Gewerbefreiheit* (Göttingen, 1983). On the 'codes' by which these educated Germans communicated with one another see Bernhard Giesen, *Intellectuals and the Nation: Collective Identity in a German Axial Age* (Cambridge, 1998).

[22] Dominic Lieven, who is writing a book on the Russian campaign, tells me that special care was taken about the selection, billeting and freedom of movement of Russian soldiers in Paris. Although in the German lands Allied armies — if not as bad as the French — initially operated fairly brutally, there were efforts at control. See Peter Graf von Kielsmansegg, *Stein und die Zentralverwaltung 1813/14* (Stuttgart, 1964).

[23] Vogel, *Allgemeine Gewerbefreiheit* (note 21).

[24] The literature on the Prussian reforms is huge. See Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (London, 2006); Barbara Vogel, *Preußische Reformen* (Königstein im Taunus, 1981).

[25] Walter Langsam, *The Napoleonic Wars and German Nationalism in Austria*, 2nd edn; 1st edn 1930 (New York, 1969); Ernst

Zehetbauer, *Landwehr gegen Napoleon: Österreichs erste Miliz und der Nationalkrieg von 1809* (Vienna, 1999).

[26] Nationalist myth-making makes much of Prussian volunteering units. However, these were of minor numerical or military importance. Furthermore, one can be cynical about what volunteering means in a system of conscription; in practice it could mean choosing a congenial form of military service before being compelled to do something less attractive. On the nature of Prussian volunteering see Rudolf Ibbeken, *Preußen 1807-1813: Staat und Volk als Idee und in Wirklichkeit. (Darstellung und Dokumentation)*, Veröffentlichungen aus den Archiven Preußischer Kulturbesitz, vol. 5 ([Cologne], 1970). A good example of the myth-making is provided by Karen Hagemann, 'Gendered Images of the German Nation: the Romantic Painter Friedrich Kersting and the Patriotic-National Discourse during the Wars of Liberation', *Nations and Nationalism* 12 (October, 2006), pp. 653-679.

[27] Clear in both title and content of Ernest Moritz Arndt, 'Über Volkshaß (1813)', in Michael Jeismann and Hennig Ritter (eds), *Grenzfälle. Über neuen und alten Nationalismus*, (Leipzig, 1993), pp. 319-334.

[28] For examples of vagueness and ambiguity see Friedrich Wilhelm's appeal to his people ('An Mein Volk') of 17 March 1813 and the Kalisch Declaration of 13/25 March 1813 issued by the Russian Tsar and the Prussian king. Abridged translations are in John Breuilly, *Austria, Prussia and Germany 1806-1871* (London, 2002), pp. 118-120.

[29] On Stein's efforts in 1813-15 see Kielsmansegg, *Stein und die Zentralverwaltung* (note 22). The use of national language both to threaten and appeal to *Rheinbund* rulers is clear in the Kalisch declaration: 'May every German still worthy of the name quickly and decisively join with us. May everyone, prince, noble or from the ranks of the people, support the liberation plans of Russia and Prussia … Thus we demand true cooperation, especially from every German prince, and gladly we want to see that there will be none amongst them who will be unfaithful to the German cause, thereby laying himself open to a merited destruction through the force of public opinion and the power of just weap-

ons.' On Metternich's more conservative use of the national idea once Austria entered the coalition, see Ernst Kraehe, *Metternich's German Policy,* Vol.1*: The Contest with Napoleon, 1799-1814* (Princeton, NJ, 1963). On the policies of the medium-sized states after 1815 see Abigail Green, *Fatherlands: State-Building and Nationhood in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge, 2001).

[30] For a recent study which shows this significance into the twentieth century see Jonathan Sperber, *Property and Civil Society in South-Western Germany 1820-1914* (Oxford, 2005).

[31] For the debate on liberalism see L. Gall, 'Liberalismus und "Bürgerliche Gesellschaft". Zu Charakter und Entwicklung der liberalen Bewegung in Deutschland', *Historische Zeitschrift* 220 (1975), pp. 324-356; W. J. Mommsen, 'Der deutsche Liberalismus zwischen "klassenloser Bürgergesellschaft" und "organisierten Kapitalismus". Zu einigen neueren Liberalismusinterpretationen', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 4 (1978), pp. 77-90. For more recent discussions see Paul Nolte, *Gemeindebürgertum und Liberalismus in Baden 1800-1850* (Göttingen, 1994) and Michael Rowe, 'Napoleon and the 'Modernisation' of Germany', in Philip G. Dwyer and Alan Forrest (eds), *Napoleon and his Empire: Europe, 1804-1814* (London, 2007), pp. 202-220. I discuss some of the issues in John Breuilly, 'State-Building, Modernization and Liberalism from the Late Eighteenth Century to Unification: German Peculiarities', *European History Quarterly* 22 (1992), pp. 257-284.

[32] For a good political history see Wolfram Siemann, *Vom Staatenbund zum Nationalstaat: Deutschland 1806-1871* (Munich, 1995). On economic development and the growth in social communication see Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte,* Vol 2: *Von der Reformära bis zur industriellen und politischen "Deutschen Doppelrevolution" 1815-1845/49* (Munich, 1987). On the growth and significance of liberalism in Germany after 1815 see Dieter Langewiesche, *Liberalism in Germany* (London, 2000).

[33] There is little continuity between the army which beat Napoleon and the victorious army of 1866 and 1870-71. Universal conscription remained the law but was not enforced for decades. When the army was expanded in the early 1860s it was in new

ways. Moltke revolutionised the role of the General Staff in the 1860s.

[34] On patterns of economic development in this period of commercial growth with little in the way of classical industrialisation see Gary Herrigel, *Industrial Constructions: The Sources of German Industrial Power*, 1st edn, Structural Analysis in the Social Sciences, 9 (Cambridge, 2000) and Sydney Pollard, *Peaceful Conquest: The Industrialisation of Europe, 1760-1970* (Oxford, 1981). On Prussian state attitudes towards economic development see Eric Dorn Brose, *The Politics of Technological Change in Prussia: Out of the Shadow of Antiquity, 1809-1848* (New Jersey, 1993). For some of the countervailing tendencies see Hermann Beck, *The Origins of the Authoritarian Welfare State in Prussia: Conservatives, Bureaucracy and the Social Question, 1815-1870* (Ann Arbor, 1995). On the communication implications of economic change see Rachid L'Aoufir, *La Prusse de 1815 à 1848. L'industrialisation comme processus de communication* (Paris, 2004).

[35] An interesting pioneering attempt to measure these patterns of 'social communication' and link them to Austro-Prussian rivalry is Peter Katzenstein, *Disjointed Partners: Austria and Germany since 1815* (Berkeley, CA, 1976).

[36] For an early linking of modernity, associations and nationalism in this period see Otto Dann, 'Nationalismus und sozialer Wandel in Deutschland 1806-1850 (1978)', in id. (ed.), *Vereinsbildung und Nationsbildung. Sieben Beiträge* (Cologne, 2003), pp. 101-159.

[37] I draw upon Jörg Echternkamp, *Der Aufstieg des deutschen Nationalismus (1770-1840)* (Frankfurt and New York, 1998), esp. pp. 444-453.

[38] For a study of a German case see Rudolf Boch, 'The Rise and Decline of Flexible Production: the Cutlery Industry of Solingen since the Eighteenth Century', in Charles Sabel and Jonathan Zeitlin (eds), *World of Possibilities: Flexibility and Mass Production in Western Industrialisation* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 153-187. The volume as a whole deals with many such cases.

[39] This was not a German process up to mid-century but took place within a European, even global economic context. For a specifically focused German study on this see Rolf Dumke,

German Economic Unification in the 19th Century: The Political Economy of the Zollverein (Munich, 1994). Pollard, *Peaceful Conquest* (note 34), considers this at a European level. To place this within a global economic context see Kevin O'Rourke and Jeffrey Williamson, *Globalisation and History: The Evolution of a Nineteenth Century Atlantic Economy* (Cambridge, Mass, 1999).

[40] On the arguments within the Prussian government between more and less 'liberal' elements see the classical study of R. Koselleck, *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution*, 3rd edn (Stuttgart, 1981).

[41] The argument about a shift in discourse links centrally to Ernest Gellner's theory of nationalism which argues for the centrality of culture ('identity') in the modern world of strangers (Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* [note 12]). On the problems of securing cooperation in such abstract networks see Paul Seabright, *The Company of Strangers: a Natural History of Economic Life* (Princeton, 2004). For an argument like mine in relation to the discourses of civilisation and race see Bruce Mazlish, *Civilization and its Contents* (Stanford, 2004).

[42] Liberal and Marxist cosmopolitan creeds failed in the face of nationalism because they fatally underestimated the nature and significance of specialised coercive power under modern conditions, regarding instead specialised economic institutions as the dominant force in modernity.

[43] An early example of the first approach is Heinrich Friedjung, *Der Kampf um die Vorherrschaft in Deutschland 1859-1866*, 2 vols (Vienna, 1897), available in abridged English form as Heinrich Friedjung, *The Struggle for Supremacy in Germany 1859-1866*, A.J.P. Taylor and W.L. McElwee trans. (London, 1935). Nationalist historiography takes the second position although the focus on 'failed' versions (radical, pan-German, federalist) sometimes also stress the (unfortunate) contingency of Prussia military success.

[44] On the specific nature of unification nationalism see Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (note 7), chapter 4. In that book I classified Magyar nationalism as separatist but would now argue that after the failure of 1849 it sought to unify Magyar control over the eastern half of the Habsburg Empire.

[45] Austria and Prussia avoided the formal limit by having territories outside the *Bund*. Hence they were both members and non-members of the *Bund*. For the text of the *Deutsche Bundesakte* see Ernst Huber (ed.), *Dokumente zur deutschen Verfassungsgeschichte,* Vol.1*: 1803-1850*, 3rd edn (Stuttgart, 1978), pp. 84-90 (87).

[46] There was no such cultural and educational network in the Polish, Hungarian and Italian lands. National culture in the Polish and Hungarian cases was connected to gentry, plus political exiles in the Polish case. Italian national culture is really a construct of a later national age projected back on some isolated intellectual groups of the first half of the nineteenth century.

[47] On the liberal movement see Langewiesche, *Liberalism* (note 32); on the relative insulation of Austrian Germany: Katzenstein, *Disjointed Partners* (note 35).

[48] Apart from Dumke, *German Economic Unification* (note 39), see id., 'Tariffs and Market Structure: The German Zollverein as a Model for Economic Integration', in W. R. Lee (ed.), *German Industry and German Industrialisation: Essays in German Economic and Business History in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London, 1991), pp. 77-115 and H.-J. Voth, 'The Prussian *Zollverein* and the Bid for Economic Superiority', in Philip Dwyer (ed.), *Modern Prussian History 1830-1947* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 109-125.

[49] For a specific study see Irmline Veit-Brause, *Die deutsch-französiche Krise von 1840* (Cologne, 1967). Echternkamp, *Der Aufstieg des deutschen Nationalismus* (note 37), pp. 476-9, stresses the novel form of the nationalism of 1840, more focused on German integration and less on hatred of the French compared to 1813-15, even if the war of liberation was constantly invoked in the propaganda of 1840.

[50] For a good short introduction to the Italian case and historiography see L. Riall, *The Italian Risorgimento: State, Society and National Unification*, 1st edn (London, 1994).

[51] For a good general account of the German revolution of 1848-49 see Wolfram Siemann, *The German Revolution of 1848-49* (London, 1998).

[52] Some of them had met across state or regional borders in some of the congresses and other meetings which were increasingly convened in the 1840s but many were meeting for the first time. On the composition of the assembly see in German Heinrich Best, *Biographisches Handbuch der Abgeordneten der Frankfurter Nationalversammlung 1848/49* (Düsseldorf, 1996) and in English F. Eyck, *The Frankfurt Parliament 1848-49* (London, 1968).
[53] See Brian Vick, *Defining Germany: the 1848 Frankfurt Parliamentarians and National Identity* (Cambridge, Mass and London, 2002).
[54] For a good study of one of the major programmatic and political differences, that between a *kleindeutsch* and *großdeutsch* objective see Günter Wollstein, *Das "Großdeutschland" der Paulskirche: nationale Ziele in der bürgerlichen Revolution, 1848/49* (Düsseldorf, 1977). I consider the range of differences over the national question in John Breuilly, 'Nationalbewegung und Revolution', in Christoph Dipper and Ulrich Speck (eds), *1848. Revolution in Deutschland*, (Frankfurt/M, 1998), pp. 314-337.
[55] W. Schieder, 'Kirche und Revolution: sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte der Trierer Wallfahrt von 1844', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 14 (1974), pp. 419-454.
[56] The argument about the specific anxiety of mid-nineteenth century liberals is pursued in James Sheehan, *German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century*, 2nd edn (Chicago and London, 1995). A general argument about the anxiety of liberalism because of the sense of the secondary sphere of 'politics' being subjected to pressures from the primary sphere of 'society', pressure which liberals could not control, is put by Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought*, 2nd edn (Princeton and Oxford, 2004), chapter 9, 'Liberalism and the Decline of Political Philosophy'.
[57] Nolte, *Gemeindebürgertum und Liberalismus* (note 31); Jonathan Sperber, *Rhineland Radicals: The Democratic Movement and the Revolution of 1848-49* (Princeton, 1991).
[58] There are variants on this: the liberal democratic, the radical populist and the marxian socialist. It also has regional connotations, for example the notion of a federalist democratic movement

based on the south and west being crushed by Austria and Prussia, especially Prussia with its military involvement.

[59] This was made abundantly clear by Bismarck in a speech to the Prussian *Landtag* of 3 December 1850 defending the Olmütz agreement. See document 44 in Breuilly, *Austria, Prussia and Germany* (note 28), pp.151-2.

[60] For the post-1848 period see Wolfram Siemann, *Gesellschaft im Aufbruch: Deutschland 1849-1871* (Frankfurt/M, 1990).

[61] Toni Offermann, for example, has shown this for what he calls the 'elementary labour movement'. Toni Offermann, *Arbeiterbewegung und liberales Bürgertum in Deutschland 1850-1863* (Bonn, 1979). One could develop similar notions of elementary peasant, artisan and bourgeois movements.

[62] The case is cogently argued for Prussia, especially in the political sphere, by Clark, *Iron Kingdom* (note 24), pp. 500-509.

[63] On Rochau see Langewiesche, *Liberalism* (note 32), pp. 61-63. On Bismarck see Lothar Gall, *Bismarck. Der weiße Revolutionär* (Frankfurt/M, 1980). There is an English translation. Chapter 2 'Der Weg in der Politik' deals with the impact of 1848. For Marx, a biography which focuses on his political work rather than his ideas is Boris Nicolaevsky and O. Maenchen-Helfen, *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter*, 2nd edn (London, 1973).

[64] On the spread of associations and nationalism see D. Düding, *Organisierter gesellschaftlicher Nationalismus in Deutschland (1808-1847). Bedeutung und Funktion der Turner- und Sängervereine für die deutsche Nationalbewegung* (Munich, 1984). On regional migration see Steve Hochstadt, *Mobility and Modernity: Migration in Germany 1820-1989* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1999) and James H. Jackson, *Migration and Urbanization in the Ruhr Valley 1821-1914* (Atlantic Highlands, 1997).

[65] The use of the term is especially associated with Rochau.

[66] See Rolf Parr, 'Identity in Difference: Collective Symbols and the Interplay of Discourses in the Two German Unifications', in Breuilly and Speirs (eds), *Germany's Two Unifications:*(note 8), pp. 76-100 and Ronald Speirs, 'German Literature and the Foundation of the Second Empire', ibid., pp. 185-208. A key theme in the whole book is the capacity to imagine vividly the novel form of

the nation-state before 1871 but the lack of such a capacity before 1989.

[67] For a sketch of these changes in Austrian-Prussian relations after 1848 see Breuilly, *Austria, Prussia and Germany* (note 28), chapters 5 and 6.

[68] For the situation from the perspective of Bismarck see Gall, *Bismarck* (note 63), pp. 248-292.

[69] I borrow this distinction between despotic and infrastructural power from Mann, *Sources of Social Power* (note 12).

[70] Arden Bucholz, *Moltke and the German Wars 1864-1871* (London, 2001); Denis Showalter, *Railroads and Rifles: Soldiers, Technology and the Unification of Germany* (Hamden, CT, 1986).

[71] Ulrich Wengenroth, 'Industry and Warfare in Prussia', in Stig Förster and J. Nagler (eds), *On the Road to Total War: the American Civil War and the German Wars of Unification, 1861-1871* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 249-262.

[72] Frank Becker, *Bilder von Krieg und Nation. Die Einigungskriege in der bürgerlichen Öffentlichkeit Deutschlands 1864-1913* (Munich, 2001); Ute Frevert, *Die kasernierte Nation. Militärdienst und Zivilgesellschaft in Deutschland* (Munich, 2001).

[73] For the diplomacy see L.D. Steefel, *The Schleswig Holstein Question* (Cambridge MA, 1932). For the broader political and military aspects see William Carr, *The Origins of the Wars of German Unification* (London, 1991), chap. 2. On Bismarck's role see Gall, *Bismarck* (note 63), pp. 293-339; and for the shifts in liberalism see Langewiesche, *Liberalism* (note 32), chapter 3.

[74] Becker, *Bilder von Krieg und Nation* (note 72).

[75] The comparison with Italian unification is once again instructive. The language of nationalism was deployed to justify the political and military re-ordering of the Italian states between 1859 and 1871 but it was not underpinned by a specialised and popular politics, and could not be given that there had been no broader process of modernisation which could have provided the space for such a politics. For a sharp critique of national myths of Italian unification see David Laven, 'Italy', in Timothy Baycroft and Mark Hewitson (eds), *What is a Nation? Europe 1789-1914* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 255-271.

[76] See the essays focused on the 1800-1914 period in Sheilagh Ogilvie and Richard Overy (eds), *Germany: A New Social and Economic History,* Vol. 3: *Since 1800* (London, 2003).
[77] Johannes Paulmann, 'Beginning and End? The Two German Unifications and the Epoch of Territoriality', in Breuilly and Speirs (eds), *Germany's Two Unifications* (note 8), pp. 26-48. Charles S. Maier, 'Transformations of Territoriality, 1600-2000', in Gunille Budde, Sebastian Conrad and Oliver Janz (eds), *Transnationale Geschichte. Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien* (Göttingen, 2005), pp. 32-55.
[78] Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte,* vol. 3: *1849-1914* (Munich, 1995), esp. section 4; Sebastian Conrad, *Globalisiering und Nation im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Munich, 2006).
[79] A key argument in Mann, *Sources of Social Power* (note 12).
[80] Breuilly, 'On the Principle of Nationality' (note 9).
[81] Wolfgang Mommsen, *Max Weber and German Politics, 1890-1920* (Chicago, 1984), p.432. Max Weber, 'The Profession and Vocation of Politics', in *Max Weber: Political Writings*, ed. Peter Lassmann and Ronald Speirs (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 309-369. A recent biography which stresses the emotional commitment Weber brought to his ideas, reflected in its subtitle, see Joachim Radkau, *Max Weber. Die Leidenschaft des Denkens* (Munich, 2005).
[82] There has been much written about the relationship between Nazism and modernity/modernisation but it tends to be detached from longer term concepts of nationalism and modernisation which need to be extended back to the late eighteenth century.

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