# *LIBERALISM AND THE CITY: THE CASE OF FRANKFURT AM MAIN, 1866-1914*

*by*

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*Lincoln College*

*D. PHIL. thesis*

*Trinity 1995*

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# 'Liberalism and the City: The Case of Frankfurt am Main, 1866-1914'

Although in the German Empire the cities were major strongholds of political liberalism, this fact has until very recently attracted little attention from scholars preoccupied with the history of 'high politics' leading up to the two World Wars. This thesis is one of the first analyses of German liberalism at city level, and proceeds from the assumption that in a country with such a regionally and locally diverse political culture as Germany, this type of 'history from below' is a necessary precondition for any satisfactory understanding of the nature of German liberalism in general.

Following the introduction, chapter two demonstrates that in Frankfurt, local government became politicised as early as the 1870s. Indeed, chapter three shows how the early experience of Frankfurt liberals in municipal politics was crucial as they defended themselves against emerging political groups during the following decades, particularly the Mittelstand and the SPD. The fourth chapter analyses the development of liberal attitudes towards municipal finance as a background to chapter five which uses the example of Frankfurt to demonstrate how crucial the issue of municipal finance was to the viability of local liberalism not just in theory, but also in practice. Chapter six considers the importance of education to local liberalism as it touched on a number of themes which were central to urban liberals' understanding of themselves, in particular the issues of local self-government and religion. The final chapter looks at the crucial area of social policy, to see to what extent local liberals were merely reactive, and to what extent they were innovative as they faced the new problems of urbanisation and industrialisation.

The sophistication of liberal politics in local government, the only level of government where liberals were in the position of carrying out their policies, underlines the gravity of the problem which the lack of parliamentary government posed for liberals at the state and national level. Furthermore, the thesis points to a central dilemma, because, to be successful in Frankfurt and other regions, liberals had to respond to the particular culture at the local level, a requirement that was in direct contrast to the necessity of finding a coherent political consensus at the level of national and state politics. Even though at the local level the liberal capacity of responding to the social and political challenges of their rapidly changing environment has been proved beyond doubt, their policies, their rhetoric and their organisational lead could have only a very limited effect on German liberalism in general. The urban liberals' ideal of creating a more liberal society from 'the bottom up', through the cities, was undermined by the fact that the political future of German liberalism at the state and national level came to rest increasingly on its electoral appeal in the countryside, just at a time when urban liberal self-consciousness reached its peak.

Thís thesis investigates the nature of urban liberalism during the German Empire with particular reference to the case of Frankfurt am Main, in order to test some of the assumptions that have been made with regard to the nature of German liberalism in general, and of urban liberalism in particular. The starting-point of the thesis was James Sheehan's argument of 1971, in which he pointed out that whereas in German national and state parliaments the liberal share of the vote was declining, at the local level they remained in the majority throughout the Empire. Sheehan's study of 'Liberalism and the City' was intended to be a stimulus for further work to be undertaken on the subject. However, in his seminal study of German liberalism published in 1988, Dieter Langewiesche admitted that the important subject had still received scant attention among historians. In the past decade, there have been a considerable number of studies about the growing role of local government, but none of these has considered the implications of this increased local government activity for those who were responsible for this - the liberals. As a result, this investigation into the establishment and the nature of local liberal politics, and the analysis of the political background and repercussions of the liberals' policies whilst in local government, is the first of its kind.

Apart from the intrinsic importance of the local arena as 'the last bastion' of a 'declining' liberal movement, this thesis is also a necessary contribution to a better understanding of the nature of German liberalism in general. Contemporaries and subsequent historians have argued that one of the biggest impediments to the progress of German liberalism was that Germany did not have a parliamentary system of government and that as a result German liberals could never hope to form a government in most German states or at national level. Until the last decade or so, historians had largely concluded from this that German liberals were politically naive and inept, and that the style and content of their politics failed to adjust to a rapidly modernising and industrialising society. Yet given that it was only at the local level that liberals really had the chance to take the political initiative, any conclusion about the state of

the German liberal movement, in particular about its ability to offer pragmatic and appropriate policies to reflect the political and social changes that occurred in German society during the Empire, must remain premature. This thesis, then, provides an analysis of liberal politics at the grass roots, in order to investigate for the first time the nature of liberal politics in the city, and to set these conclusions into the context of current questions about the viability of German liberalism as a political force into the twentieth century.

The subject chosen for analysis is liberalism in Frankfurt am Main. The reason for this is not that Frankfurt is more 'typical' than another city or region in its political culture; it is 'peculiar' in the same degree as anywhere else. Nevertheless, in particular the city's prevalent left liberalism can be said to represent a relatively advanced and progressive type of urban liberalism. This is of little relevance in the study, for example, of a local milieu, but it is of importance when discussing the 'modernity' of German liberalism. For Frankfurt liberals could be placed at the progressive end of a wide spectrum of liberal movements. A study of some of the most progressive liberals in German municipal government can show, therefore, the extent to which liberals recognised the social and political challenges of urbanisation, industrialisation and the emergence of mass-politics, and how far they were prepared to go to accommodate them.

The choice of Frankfurt was also dictated by the fact that it was virtually the only city where three strong liberal movements existed, and moreover that the various liberal movements there were of considerable importance to German liberalism as a whole. One of the National Liberals' most important politicians, Johannes Miquel, was Lord Mayor there until he was called to become one of the few liberal politicians ever to serve as a Prussian minister. At the other end of the political spectrum, Friedrich Naumann launched his career from Frankfurt, and the city's largest liberal party, the Democrats, formed the largest local political branch of

the German People's Party. So important were the city's Democrats and Progressive Liberals that they were the linchpin of left-liberal moves towards unification from 1903 to 1910. Therefore, even though Frankfurt is no more 'typical' than other cities, it is particularly suited as a case study because its political environment raises many of the questions which have been put in the wider historiographical debate, the answers to which form a thread through the various chapters of this study. To begin with, when the Free City was annexed by Prussia in 1866, how did the city's liberal politicians cope with the city's new position, its transformation from the epicentre of Germany to the periphery of Prussia? How and why did Frankfurt become such a liberal stronghold, and to what extent did liberals manage to maintain the allegiance of their voters until 1914, in the face of increasing opposition from other political groups, including the SPD? Once the relationship between the electorate, the liberals and municipal government has been established, it is important to ask what role liberal politics played in the social and economic modernisation of Frankfurt, and whether the liberals were true visionaries, or whether they merely reacted to the inevitable. Finally, it must be considered to what extent all this mattered, that is, what possible repercussions the actions of Frankfurt liberals had on their peers in municipal, state and national politics.

The second chapter considers the years of the establishment of municipal party politics from 1866 to the end of the 1870s, and subsequent developments until the advent of the SPD in local politics at the end of the century. Of particular interest will be the ways in which liberals reacted to the political changes in the wake of Frankfurt's incorporation into Prussia. It will be argued that at least as far as Frankfurt was concerned, municipal government had become distinctively politicised by the end of the 1870s. By that time, the various liberal parties had different political programmes, they organised regular party meetings, and they used the newspaper press to the best of their ability. In substantial agreement with the ideas put

forward by Karl Rohe, it is indeed possible to point by the mid 1870s to the emergence of a distinctive local political culture which in many ways lasted until 1914 and beyond. This contradicts the established view, of which Frankfurt had been held up as an example, that politics played no part in local government until the advent of the SPD around 1900. Indeed, liberals did not so much react to as create themselves the advent of popular politics.

Almost as soon as this political culture embodied in the unchallenged dominance of the three liberal parties had been established, it came under increasing strain from the late 1870s onwards, as will be demonstrated in chapter three. Inevitably, the nature of municipal politics changed in response to the social diversification inherent in the rapid change in the nature of Frankfurt's economy, but this development did not start with the advent of the SPD in 1900, when they captured their first seat in the municipal council. Rather, it started twenty years earlier with the establishment of the Bürgervereine, which in increasing numbers tried to influence municipal politics from the 1880s, and the more serious challenge of the Mittelstandsparteien, which acted as an agent of many citizens' discontent during the 1890s and into the mid-1900s. In this way, the appearance of the SPD in municipal politics is merely the continuation, and not the start, of this trend of a diversification of municipal politics. Nevertheless, the appearance of a rival socialist political milieu posed the most formidable threat to liberal dominance in local politics. Here, the National Liberals fared worst. Squeezed in between the left liberals and the SPD, they all but lost their identity in local politics and became integrated into the left liberal milieu. The left liberals, strengthened by increasing co-operation and finally unification, fared rather better. Indeed, they actually increased their influence in the council and the Magistrat. Furthermore, there are clear signs that the liberals had managed to check the SPD advance in municipal politics by 1912, so that this thesis can confirm and elaborate on recent studies which have suggested a left-liberal revival after 1910.

Once these questions about the establishment and the development of Frankfurt's political culture have been analysed, certain liberal policies are considered in greater depth. Chapter four outlines the evolution of liberal attitudes towards municipal finance during the second half of the nineteenth century. It argues that liberal theories of municipal finance were closely intertwined with liberal theories of local government, both of which were carried by a broad consensus not just of left- and right-liberal, but also of conservative and even Social Democratic opinion. Through his local finance reform of 1893 which built upon this consensus, the Prussian finance minister and former mayor of Frankfurt, Miquel, reflected and confirmed the growing importance of effective local self-government in the Prussian governmental structure, which was already very much in evidence, both in academic theory and in grass roots reality.

Having established the general outlines of a liberal theory of local government, chapter five demonstrates the dramatic growth of local government in Frankfurt as evidenced by the extraordinary growth in Frankfurt's municipal budget, particularly during the last two decades before the First World War. Against this increase, liberals seemed relatively unconcerned about the concurrent increase in public debt, because at the local level too, there was a broad agreement that high municipal spending effectively meant a high degree of local self-government. In this sense, expenditure on municipal services and other measures to improve the general living conditions of the urban population ('municipal socialism'), which has attracted so much attention recently by historians of German liberalism, was not a particularly controversial issue in political terms. In practice, the real battle was about taxation, whose most significant features were the product of left-liberal policy. A peculiarly progressive system of taxation which benefited lower incomes in appearance, it benefited mainly the middle sections of Frankfurt society in practice, and it was this left-liberal

achievement which was undoubtedly a central factor in the success of left-liberalism in Frankfurt in its defence against the Mittelstand and the rise of the SPD.

The sixth chapter is concerned with the liberals' policy on education, an issue which they considered to be of central importance. In Prussia, education was not only a matter for the state, but also one in which the municipalities had considerable authority. As Frankfurt's liberals prided themselves particularly on their progressive attitudes towards education, the various initiatives on education leading up to the foundation of Germany's first civic university in 1914, which was funded entirely by the citizens of Frankfurt, are considered. This reveals how far Frankfurt liberals were prepared to pursue the liberal ideal of a Bürgergesellschaft ('society of citizens') through the ideal of education. This chapter will inevitably raise the important issue about the connection between liberalism and religion. For Frankfurt, not only can the importance of left-liberalism to Judaism be shown, but it is equally clear that the Jews played a pivotal role in determining the character of Frankfurt left-liberalism. Jews were instrumental not only in providing the finances for the two left-liberal parties: they also had virtual control over their policy. For example, the most fundamental liberal demand for a non-denominational system of education is a direct consequence of Jewish predominance, as liberal Jews argued time and again that denominational schooling was the first step back to a religiously intolerant local society.

The seventh chapter explores the liberals' approach to social policy, and how this changed over the years. In contrast to current studies of urban liberal social policy, this thesis shows that in the city of Frankfurt alone there was no one such policy, but there were, in fact, two separate and distinct liberal social policies, in addition to non-political approaches to social policy. The right-liberal approach, developed by Frankfurt's Lord Mayor Franz Adickes (1890-1912), aimed at bridging the growing gap between various social groups through innovative applications of what he saw as old, 'Germanist' solutions to creating a harmonious

society through the emphasis of 'responsibility' and 'community' which went together with notions of 'property' and individual economic progress. The sophistication of Adickes' policies, however, conceals the fact that they followed the same goal as the German government in their policies, that is the destruction of socialism. By contrast, Frankfurt left-liberals had accepted the presence of the SPD and considered its co-operation an essential requirement for the success of their social policies. The motives for these two approaches and the policies that emanated from them differed widely, but since both liberal groups depended on each other's support for their implementation, liberal social policy in Frankfurt became remarkable for its innovation and scope. It is possible to argue that these liberal approaches represented two main lines of urban liberal thought across Germany. This is shown by the general esteem with which Adickes was held by urban social reformers, and by the diligence with which various right- and left-liberal policies were translated to other cities. In this way, the chapter refines the contention that a restrictive franchise was the sine qua non for an innovative liberal social policy as the more progressive social reformers also wanted a less restricted franchise, whereas the more paternalistic and conservative reformers wanted to keep the municipal franchise restrictions.

In a final chapter this study's conclusions on the nature and development of Frankfurt liberalism will be set in the context of the central question concerning German liberalism, about its viability in modern society in the long run. Given the pace of Frankfurt's economic and social modernisation, the preparedness of Frankfurt liberals, of left-liberals but also of many liberals on the right, to confront these challenges head-on is in many ways astonishing. Despite formidable obstacles to the maintenance of liberal hegemony, there is evidence to suggest that by 1914 the Frankfurt left liberals had stemmed the SPD's advance and even increased their power in the municipal administration. It is a clear proof that German liberals could be most progressive and innovative in the one area of government where they had the

opportunity to govern, at the local level. Therefore, this thesis demonstrates a major weakness in the Sonderweg debates of the last fifteen years, in which urban liberalism played almost no role whatsoever. Yet it is at this level of government where liberals had the only opportunity to prove themselves, and the example of Frankfurt demonstrates that they could be perfectly capable to rise up to the challenge.

This thesis shows that it was not German liberalism that was the problem, but the constitutional and institutional framework within which it had to operate. Frankfurt liberals were not content just to influence the municipal sphere; to them municipal politics was not only an end in itself. Liberals in Frankfurt, but not only just there, had very clear notions of how, by turning the local arena into a bastion of true liberalism, they might make the whole state more liberal. Yet unfortunately, as far as the flexibility and the 'modernity' of German liberalism is concerned, this vision proved to be without foundation, as their social and political inventiveness could not easily be translated to liberal politics at the national and state level. Not only were urban liberal social policies tailored to solve the social problems of the city rather than the country as a whole, but, more importantly, in the different political environment which existed in the various states and at the national level liberals had different political priorities as most of their most important political constituencies had shifted to the countryside and smaller towns by 1914.

The case of Frankfurt demonstrates the crucial importance as well as the limitations which local politics presented to the liberals. The Frankfurt Democrats, for example, made the best possible use of suiting their party to the needs of the city and thus to create a political milieu independently of their colleagues in Württemberg, whose concerns were entirely different. It allowed the Frankfurt left liberals to create a particular, local milieu which was strong and flexible enough even to meet the political challenge of the SPD or the social and economic challenges of urbanisation and industrialisation. And it was local power bases such as these

which gave liberals such a strong base in national party politics. Yet unfortunately, political strongholds like these also made the co-ordination of a coherent political strategy at a state and national level so inordinately difficult, as the heterodox nature of the German People's Party illustrates so well.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with profound gratitude that I thank my supervisors, Michael F. John and H. C. G. Matthew, for their tremendous encouragement and support, far beyond the call of duty, throughout my degree. They have been model supervisors in every way, and this work has benefited enormously from their invaluable criticisms and suggestions, even though I accept full responsibility for the errors this thesis may contain.

I am grateful to the German National Scholarship Association for giving me first an undergraduate and then a graduate scholarship, as well as to the Friedrich Naumann Scholarship Association which funded this project through a grant from the German Ministry for Education, Research and Technology. The Fellows of Lincoln College gave me a much-needed morale boost through the award of a Senior Scholarship for the second part of my degree.

In Frankfurt, I should like to thank Lothar Gall for his kind support, and I am particularly grateful to Ralf Roth for sending me a copy of his article on Frankfurt liberalism eighteen months before it was published in 1995. Most of all I should like to thank Dieter Rebentisch for his encouragement, and his kind staff at the Frankfurt city archives. My thanks are also due to the extraordinarily friendly and efficient staff of the Hessian state archives in Wiesbaden.

I am most grateful to the Institute for European History in Mainz from which I conducted my research in Frankfurt for providing an ideal working environment. For their help I should like to take this opportunity to thank its fellows, Ralph Melville, Claus Scharf and especially Martin Vogt who first explained to me the distinctiveness and the 'peculiarity' of the Frankurt milieu. Most importantly, I owe a particular debt to Matthieu Arnold, Barbara Pitkin and

Brent Sockness, whose friendship and professional example provided an indispensible encouragement for my work both during my stay at the Institute and afterwards.

For their unfailing support I am extremely thankful to Helen and John Adamson, who have provided a British home for me ever since I arrived in this country to commence my undergraduate degree in 1988. Also, I am greatly indebted to Cressida Annesley for her loyal support and unique friendship during the last six years. She also proof-read this thesis stoically and ungrudgingly before its submission.

Finally, words cannot convey the sense of gratitude I feel towards my parents and my sister. They have been my greatest intellectual and personal inspiration, and without their unfailing understanding, wisdom, care, encouragement and advice, this thesis could never have been written. This thesis is but a tribute to their support, and it is to them that I dedicate this work.

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# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| AFGK | Archiv für Frankfurts Geschichte und Kunst |
| AfR | Archiv für öffentliches Recht |
| AfS | Archiv für Sozialgeschichte |
| AS | Akten der Stadtverordnetenversammlung |
| AS P | Protokolle der Stadtverordnetenversammlung |
| ASA | Acten des Statistischen Amts der Stadt Frankfurt am Main |
| BAK | Bundesarchiv Koblenz |
| BAP | Bundesarchiv Potsdam |
| CEH | Central European History |
| CSSH | Comparative Studies in History and Society |
| EHR | English Historical Review |
| FA | Finanzarchiv |
| GG | Geschichte und Gesellschaft |
| GSR | German Studies Review |
| GWU | Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht |
| HJ | Historical Journal |
| hpZ | historisch-politische Zeitschrift |
| HStAW | Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Wiesbaden |
| HZ | Historische Zeitschrift |
| IfSG | Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Frankfurt am Main |
| IRSH | International Review of Social History |
| JCH | Journal of Contemporary History |
| JGVV | Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft im Deutschen Reich |
| JHL | Jahrbuch für Hessiche Landesgeschichte |
| JLF | Jahrbuch zur Liberalismus-Forschung |
| JöR | Jahrbuch des öffentlichen Rechts |
| JSH | Journal of Social History |
| JSS | Jahrbuch für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik |
| MA | Akten des Magistrats |
| MAB | Berichte des Magistrats an die Stadtverordnetenversammlung die Verwaltung und den Stand der Gemeinde-Angelegenheiten am Schlusse des Etatsjahres...betreffend |
| MPS | Mitteilungen aus den Protokollen der Stadtverordnetenversammlung der Stadt Frankfurt am Main |
| PJbb | Preußische Jahrbücher |
| PP | Past and Present |
| SBAH | Stenographische Berichte des Preußischen Abgeordnetenhauses |
| SH | Social History |
| SPAH | Stenographische Berichte des Preußische Abgeordneten Hauses |
| TAJG | Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte |
| YLBI | Year Book of the Leo Baeck Institute |
| ZfR | Zeitschrift für Rechtsgeschichte |

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In 1971, James Sheehan pointed to the paradox that although throughout the German Empire liberals continued to draw on the cities as their most important power base, there had been virtually no research on how continued liberal strength in municipal politics affected the development of liberalism in general.[1] Even though the predominance of liberal Honoratioren was increasingly challenged by the SPD and the Centre Party, and was dependent on a restricted franchise, liberals managed to hang on to the control of municipal governments until 1918. Municipal politics was important for liberals particularly as it gave them the chance of actually governing, even if only in a very limited area. However, ultimately Sheehan considered the municipal experience to have had ambiguous results for German liberalism. Municipal government became increasingly a government by trained experts which left little room for party politics, and the fact that the liberals' hold on the municipal councils was dependent upon a restricted franchise made them even more averse to any liberalisation of the franchise laws than they might otherwise have been. More than anything else, however, the point of Sheehan's article was to show that urban liberalism was a very important phenomenon on which much more research needed to be carried out.

In fact, the realisation of the highly local/regional nature of German liberalism was nothing new. Despite the vehemence of the Historikerstreit and the debates about the German Sonderweg, perhaps the least controversial argument with respect to the development of German political parties during the Empire has been that the German national party structure remained highly regionalised throughout the period. Indeed, this was accepted by some of the most prominent advocates of the 'New Orthodoxy', even if Hans-Ulrich Wehler himself failed

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1 J. J. Sheehan, 'Liberalism and the City in Nineteenth-Century Germany', in PP, no. 51 (1971), 116-137.

to notice it in his Kaiserreich.[1] Of course, in a sense this was merely stating the obvious, as even a brief study of the German electoral map in 1867 or 1912 demonstrates.[2] Support for political parties varied strongly between the regions. In the Regierungsbezirk Münster, for example, support for the National Liberal party averaged 3.8% during the elections 1871-1898, while in neighbouring Hanover support for the National Liberal party averaged at 38.4% during the same period.[3] Nevertheless, the acknowledgement of the importance of the regions is rather surprising, coming as it did from historians who at the same time were primarily concerned with looking at German politics and society from the point of view of national social and political élites. Presumably, it was this preoccupation with ruling élites that led these historians to note the regionalism of German political culture as merely another German 'peculiarity',[4] without labouring on this point any further.

Central to the Sonderweg debate of the 1970s and early 1980s was the perceived failure of the Bürgertum and of German liberalism to lead German society to a 'fundamental democratisation',[5] of the kind which developed in other European countries and most notably in England at the time. German liberals were at the same time hopelessly opportunistic and ideologically rigid. 'But regardless of all their philosophical orthodoxies, they displayed in their practical use of tactics a high degree of cringing conformity towards the existing structures of power.'[6] In the eyes of the 'new orthodoxy', this is not a contradiction. In less than two pages, Thomas Nipperdey showed that the doctrinal stubbornness of German parties, particularly of the German left-liberals, was rooted in the German intellectual tradition from

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1 G. A. Ritter (ed.), Die deutschen Parteien vor 1918 (Köln, 1973), p.13 and, more recently, G. A. Ritter, 'The Social Bases of the German Political Parties', in Karl Rohe (ed.), Elections, Parties and Political Traditions. Social Foundations of German Parties and Party Systems, 1867-1987 (Oxford, 1990), pp. 30-31. M. Stürmer, Regierung und Reichstag im Bismarckstaat 1871-1880 (Düsseldorf, 1974). H.-U. Wehler, The German Empire 1871-1918 (Leamington Spa, 1985), p. 72 f..

2 G. A. Ritter and M. Niehuss, Wahlgeschichtliches Arbeitsbuch. Materialien zur Statistik des Kaiserreichs 1871-1918 (Munich, 1980).

3 Ibid., pp. 76-77.

4 Notably D. S. White, The Splintered Party. National Liberalism in Hessen and the Reich, 1867-1918 (Cambridge/Mass., 1976).

5 H.-U. Wehler, The German Empire, p. 71.

6 H.-U. Wehler, The German Empire, p. 72.

the days of Luther. The peculiar eminence of Wissenschaft (academic science) in German life led to a strong leadership of the bureaucratic and absolutist state. 'In the tradition of the German conception of the state, and in particular that of Hegel, pluralism of parties was perceived as particularism, and this was juxtaposed to and made possible by the integrative function of the authoritative state.'[1] As a result, German liberals were far removed from the realities of political life,[2] which is one of the principal reasons for their 'failure'. This leads to another central aspect of the Sonderweg hypothesis, the 'unpolitical German': who, to Fritz Stern, was 'both cause and effect of Germany's divergence from the West and her persistent political failure'. The German bourgeoisie especially left the business of politics to a few notables and otherwise went on with what it was best at, making money.[3]

The history and the historiography of the Sonderweg debate is well-known, and its shortcomings have been well-exposed, so that it is unnecessary to recount the debate here in greater detail.[4] With respect to the role of parties in the German Empire, the biggest contribution to this debate in the 1980s came from David Blackbourn's study of the Centre Party in Württemberg, which sketched the development of a political party from grass-roots level and thus challenged the Sonderweg historians' focus on interest groups and the politics of political élites in Berlin.[5] Towards the end of the 1980s, the old Sonderweg debate as such was over. Most social historians have abandoned Max Weber's analysis of a 'feudalised bourgeoisie' which increasingly espoused militaristic and aristocratic values, and have accepted that German civil society was as bourgeois as elsewhere, though many continue to argue that

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1 T. Nipperdey, 'Grundprobleme der deutschen Parteigeschichte im 19. Jahrhundert', in G. A. Ritter, Die deutschen Parteien, pp. 32-55. Quotation on p. 40.

2 Ibid., p. 35.

3 See the chapter entitled 'The Unpolitical German' in R. Dahrendorf, Society and Democracy in Germany (London, 1968), pp. 330-44. Stern is quoted at p. 331.

4 For one of the first essays critical of the idea of the Sonderweg, see T. Nipperdey, 'Wehler's "Kaiserreich". Eine kritische Auseinandersetzung', GG, i (1975), 539-60. Among the best surveys of this debate are R. G. Moeller, 'The Kaiserreich recast? Continuity and Change in Modern German Historiography', JSH, xvii (1984), 655-683, and D. Blackbourn, 'The German bourgeoisie: An introduction', in D. Blackbourn and R. J. Evans (eds.), The German Bourgeoisie (London, 1991), pp. 1-46. J. Retallack, 'Social History with a Vengeance? Some Reactions to H.-U. Wehler's "Das Deutsche Kaiserreich"', GSR, vii (1984), 423-50.

5 David Blackbourn, Class, Religion and Local Politics in Wilhelmine Germany (London, 1980).

there was a bourgeois 'deficit' in the political sphere.[1] For example, even Hans-Ulrich Wehler has conceded that the 'path to modernity' of England or the United States was more constitutive of a Sonderweg than that of Germany, although he remains insistent that the politics of the German bourgeoisie represented a central German peculiarity.[2] Furthermore, German political historians such as Dieter Langewiesche have argued that the German Sonderweg now lay in a democratic, universal franchise and a concurrent absence of parliamentary government.[3] The idea of a Sonderweg, therefore, which in its heyday in the 1970s sought to describe why German politics and society had acquired such deficits by the end of the Empire, has been stripped of all its negative connotations, so that it has come to denote nothing more than an inquiry into the ways in which German politics and society differed from those of other countries.[4]

With regard to the nature of German liberalism, another central concern of historians has been the changing relationship between liberalism and the Bürgertum in general, and, more specifically, about the liberals' ability and desire to represent and integrate other social groups in the course of the nineteenth century. This debate has been inspired only to a lesser extent by international comparisons with other liberal movements, notably in England, where liberalism managed to represent labour for much longer than in Germany.[5] More importantly, historians have been struck by the transition of the nature of German liberalism during the nineteenth century, from a movement with a broad popular base during the first half of the century to one which failed to articulate the concerns of large sections of the population. In

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1 This analysis was first made in D. Blackbourn and G. Eley, The Peculiarities of German History. Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany (Oxford, 1984).

2 H.-U. Wehler, 'Deutsches Bildungsbürgertum in vergleichender Perspektive - Elemente eines "Sonderwegs"?', in J. Kocka (ed.), Bildungsbürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert (Stuttgart, 1989), iv. 215-37.

3 D Langewiesche (ed.), Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert. Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich (Göttingen, 1988), p. 14.

4 See, for example, Kocka's definition in J. Kocka (ed.), Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert. Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich (Munich, 1988), i. 58. J. Kocka, 'German History before Hitler: The Debate about the German Sonderweg', JCH, xxiii (1988), 3-16.

5 See in particular J. Kocka (ed.), Arbeiter und Bürger im 19. Jahrhundert. Varianten ihres Verhältnisses im europäischen Vergleich (München, 1986).

his seminal article on this issue, Lothar Gall suggested that during the revolutions of 1848, frightened by urban riots and disorder, the liberals retreated from their previous ideal of establishing a classless society of citizens and concentrated instead on preserving the social status quo, that is the exclusivity of the bourgeoisie, in an increasingly divided and heterogenous society.[1] Despite initial criticism for this approach,[2] there is currently substantial agreement with this view that after 1848 German liberalism became overreliant on the bourgeoisie as a social base, a fact which contributed considerably to its growing vulnerability during the Empire and its inability to represent new emerging social forces such as labour from the 1860s and new emerging Mittelstand groups from the 1880s onwards.[3] Yet despite this general agreement, it remains to be shown precisely how and to what extent the nature of bourgeois political and social assumptions actually did change during the nineteenth century, and to what extent these assumptions are manifested by the bourgeoisie's social and political behaviour.

These debates which dominated the historical scholarship of German liberalism during the 1970s and 1980s have been immensely fruitful in exposing several serious gaps in German historical scholarship, and it is these gaps that historians have begun to address in recent years. Apart from an endeavour to set German history in a comparative international framework, the region has at last been given its rightful place in the study of German history, the regional make-up of the German bourgeoisie has been studied with extraordinary vigour lately. Thus,

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1 L. Gall, 'Liberalismus und "Bürgerliche Gesellschaft". Zu Charakter und Entwicklung der Liberalen Bewegung in Deutschland', HZ, ccxx (1975), 324-56. The nature of the revolutions of 1848/1849 as a watershed for German liberalism has been confirmed, for example, by H. Sedatis, Liberalismus und Handwerk in Südwestdeutschland. Wirtschafts- und Gesellschaftskonzeptionen des Liberalismus und die Krise des Handwerks im 19. Jahrhundert (Stuttgart, 1979).

2 The most important of these was W. J. Mommsen, 'Der deutsche Liberalismus zwischen "Klassenloser Bürgergesellschaft" und "Organisiertem Kapitalismus". Zu einer neuen Liberalismusinterpretation', GG, iv (1978), 77-90. For Gall's reply, see L. Gall, '"...Ich wünschte ein Bürger zu sein". Zum Selbstverständnis des Deutschen Bürgertums im 19. Jahrhundert', HZ, ccxlv (1987), 601-23.

3 By contrast, there is less agreement on Gall's view that from the 1850s onwards, liberalism had been past its prime and was subsequently doomed to inevitable decline. H. Brandt, 'Zu einigen Liberalismusdeutungen der siebziger und achtziger Jahre', GG, xvii (1991), 512-30, here 529-30. This is a good summary of the debate about the changing nature of German liberalism during the nineteenth century.

in order to investigate the evolving social assumptions of liberals throughout the nineteenth century, attention has shifted towards the city, as it was the place not only where most of the bourgeoisie lived, but it was also the place where social change occurred first and foremost.[1] The question how liberals coped with social change in a rapidly modernising economy has also led historians to investigate the importance of local and regional government to German liberalism. The liberals' dominance in the town halls and their administrative achievements have been used to contradict Ralf Dahrendorf's assertion that Germany was an inherently illiberal society.[2] In his survey of German liberalism, Langewiesche likewise acknowledged the particular importance of municipal politics to liberalism, and called for much more research in this area.[3] In his considerations on the subject, Langewiesche was particularly struck by the fact that liberals were greatly responsible for the emergence of 'municipal socialism' in urban government before 1914. Cities formed the vanguard of social reform, and as leaders of most municipal councils before 1914 liberals played an important part in this development.[4] Thus, for example, liberals became the principal providers of housing reform, unemployment agencies and general sanitation. This realisation that liberals confronted 'head on' the social realities of urbanisation and industrialisation where they first occurred - in the big urban centres - completely destroys the 'new orthodoxy's' image of the liberal parties which in their ideological rigidity were unable and unwilling to face the realities of modern life in Germany. Nevertheless, a central problem remains in any appreciation of the liberals' willingness to face

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1 The most striking example of this is Lothar Gall's research project on the Bürgertum which investigates his hypothesis about the existence of a 'classless society of citizens' for over a dozen of German cities. L. Gall, 'Stadt und Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert. Ein Problemaufriß', in: L. Gall (ed.), Stadt und Bürgertum im 19 Jahrhundert (Munich, 1990), p. 16. For first results of this project, see L. Gall (ed.), Vom alten zum neuen Bürgertum. Die mitteleuropäische Stadt im Umbruch, 1780-1820 (Munich, 1991), and L. Gall (ed.), Stadt und Bürgertum im Übergang von der traditionalen zur modernen Gesellschaft (Munich, 1993).

2 H. Pogge von Strandmann, 'The Liberal Monopolies of Power in the Cities of Imperial Germay', in L.E. Jones and J. Retallack (eds.), Elections, Mass Politics and Social Change in Modern Germany. New Perspectives (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 93-117.

3 D. Langewiesche, Liberalismus in Deutschland (Frankfurt, 1988), pp. 200-211.

4 D. Langewiesche, '"Staat" und "Kommune". Zum Wandel der Staatsaufgaben in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert', HZ, ccxlviii (1989), 621-35.

the challenges of a rapidly evolving society. For the liberals' openness to social issues fits only very uneasily with the tenacity with which they clung to a restricted municipal franchise.[1] This has led Langewiesche to speculate that 'political illiberalism was a major prerequisite for the commitment to social reform that characterised municipal liberalism in Germany'.[2] Clearly, any investigation into urban liberalism has to address this relationship between social progressiveness and political conservatism, if indeed there existed a direct relationship at all.[3] It follows that the study of urban liberalism is of crucial importance to the ongoing discussion about the relationship between liberalism and modernity.[4] Leaving aside the interesting but complex question about the ambivalent attitudes many liberals shared with other contemporaries about the desirability of 'modernity',[5] liberals in the city recognised, mostly during the 1890s, that they had to confront the emerging problems of a rapidly urbanising and industrialising society. The challenge was most keenly felt among local liberals. For since participation in state or national government was effectively closed to liberal participation, it was only at the local level that the liberals could be held responsible for their social and economic policies.

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1 D. Langewiesche, Liberalismus, pp. 206-11.

2 D. Langewiesche, 'German Liberalism in the Second Empire, 1971-1914', in K. H. Jarausch and L. E. Jones (eds.), In Search of a Liberal Germany. Studies in the History of German Liberalism from 1789 to the Present (Leamington Spa, 1991), p. 231.

3 Interestingly, it appears that urban liberals in England were no more committed to popular local democracy than their peers in Germany, which suggests that there is no reason as such why German liberals who were committed to social reform had to be committed to political reform also. For England, see P. J. Waller, Town, City and Nation. England 1850-1914 (2nd. edn., Oxford, 1991), pp. 107-14.

4 For a brief description of the evolution of the concept of modernity, see O. Brunner, W. Conze, R. Koselleck (eds.), Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland (Stuttgart, 1978), iv. 93-131. For an illustration of the ambiguities which the term 'modernity' connoted among contemporaries, see L. Gall, Europa auf dem Weg in die Moderne, 1850-1890 (Munich, 1989). It should be emphasised that throughout this study, the term 'modernisation' is not used with reference to the debates about abstract modernisation theories, but rather as a summary of the transformation of economic, social and political life in Germany up to 1914, regardless of whether and to what extent these changes were truly 'modern' or not. Such a definition can be found in D. C. Tipps, 'Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies: A Critical Perspective', CSSH, xv (1973), 199. See also I. Roxborough, 'Modernization Theory Revisited. A Review Article', CSSH, xxx (1988), 753-61.

5 The ambiguous receptions of contemporaries of modern life is surveyed by H. J. Teuteberg, 'Historische Aspekte der Urbanisierung. Forschungsstand und Probleme', in H. J. Teuteberg (ed.), Urbanisierung im 19.und 20. Jahrhundert. Historische und Geographische Aspekte (Cologne/Vienna, 1983), pp. 5-22.

The need for liberals to respond to the recent social problems of urbanisation and industrialisation had its direct and interrelated equivalent in the political sphere. It is generally accepted that the 1890s formed a watershed in German politics. In a decade that began with the dismissal of Bismarck as Chancellor, political life became characterised by the politicisation of clubs, interest groups and other aspects of social life,[1] at the expense of the old-style notable politics (Honoratiorenpolitik). From the 1890s onwards German liberals came to accept the challenges posed by a universal franchise and the consequent rise of the well-organised, popular SPD and Centre Party. This is shown in the creation of a united left-liberal party in 1910, as well as in organisational efforts such as the creation of the Hansa league. Increasingly, the liberals displayed that characteristic which, according to Max Weber, was the essence of modern politics, in that they underwent the change from being a party of notables to a 'mass' party.[2]

If the old Sonderweg debate as such is over, one last area of the Sonderweg has remained almost intact through the debates of the 1980s and early 1990s. Whilst it has become clear that the idea of the 'unpolitical German' is no longer tenable for most areas of public life as there was, in fact, a complex relationship between the cultural and economic progress of the bourgeoisie and its involvement in state and national politics,[3] the notion of local government as a bastion of the 'unpolitical German' has remained curiously unchanged. So far, the conclusions of the seminal studies of Helmut Croon, Wolfgang Hofman and Wolfgang Köllmann on the cities of Krefeld, Bochum, Barmen and Bielefeld respectively were the

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1 Langewiesche, 'German Liberalism', p. 227. See also G. Eley, 'Notable Politics, the Crisis of German Liberalism, and the Electoral Transition of the 1890s', in Jarausch and Jones (eds.), In Search of a Liberal Germany, pp. 187-216.

2 M. Weber, 'Politik als Beruf', in M. Weber, Gesammelte Politische Schriften, ed. J. Winckelmann (3rd. edn., Tübingen, 1971), pp. 530-44. For the inevitability of the decline of notable politics in the age of mass-democracy, see also M. Weber, 'Regierung im neugeordneten Deutschland', in ibid., 382-95. In general, see D. Beetham, Max Weber and the Theory of Modern Politics (2nd edn., Cambridge, 1985), pp.103-11.

3 This argument was first put forward in D. Blackbourn, 'The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie: Reappraising German History in the Nineteenth Century', in Blackbourn and Eley, The Peculiarities, pp. 238-85.

accepted norm among scholars of urban history.[1] They argued that cities and municipal councils were not run by parties, but by the local notable elites, the Honoratioren. Membership of particular clubs as well as friendship and family ties were more important than political allegiance to a particular party or its ideology. Until the turn of the century, there was a clear appreciation that politics had no place inside the town hall.[2] It was only as a result of a growing electorate and increasing SPD efforts to obtain a share in municipal power that municipal government became increasingly politicised.[3] This was, however, counterbalanced by the fact that as municipal government became increasingly complex, the city became governed by 'experts'. Whereas before the turn of the century cities were governed by the Honoratioren, after 1900, instead of party affiliation, a degree in jurisprudence and specialisation in particular branches of municipal government became prerequisites for holding office in the all-powerful Magistrat.[4] Hence it appears that political parties never attained any principal importance in municipal government, and that at a local level politics had no role as decisions were made behind closed doors.[5]

The main problem with most studies on local government is that while it is perfectly legitimate for urban and social historians to investigate the social composition of urban élites, it is quite wrong to conclude from these essentially quantitative observations the motivation of particular social groups for engaging in local government. In this way, historians have argued that local

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1 H. Croon, 'Die Stadtvertretungen in Krefeld und Bochum im 19. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Selbstverwaltung der rheinischen und westfälischen Städte', in R. Dietrich und G. Oestreich (eds.), Forschungen zu Staat und Verfassung (Berlin, 1958), pp. 289-306. W. Hofmann, Die Bielefelder Stadtverordneten. Ein Beitrag zur bürgerlichen Selbstverwaltung und sozialem Wandel (Berlin, 1964). W. Köllmann, Sozialgeschichte der Stadt Barmen (Tübingen, 1960).

2 J. Sheehan, 'Liberalism', p. 131.

3 M. Niehuss, 'Party Configurations in State and Municipal Elections in Southern Germany, 1871-1914', in K. Rohe (ed.), Elections, Parties and Political Traditions, p. 103. J. J. Sheehan, German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century (Chicago, 1978), pp. 235-8. W. Hartwig, 'Großstadt und Bürgerlichkeit in der politischen Ordnung des Kaiserreichs', in L. Gall (ed.), Stadt und Bürgertum, pp. 40-46.

4 S. Fisch, Stadtplanung im 19. Jahrhundert. Das Beispiel München bis zur Ära Theodor Fischer (Munich, 1988), p. 43.

5 It is striking that one of the few studies to challenge this interpretation has been based on Bochum, the same city Croon had used for his own conclusion about the importance of social élites in local government. By contrast, David Crew has emphasised the modernity of political and social conflict in Bochum during the Empire, and that local élites actually failed in their attempts to manipulate social groups. D. F. Crew, A Town in the Ruhr. A Social History of Bochum, 1860-1914 (New York, 1979).

political activity was dependent upon factors such as the social prestige and the civic self-understanding of entire social groups without even taking into account the possibility that political involvement might have been most crucially a factor of political motivation.[1] And yet, it is increasingly clear that politics played a considerable part in local government throughout the Empire, even if this is often only mentioned en passant.[2] For example, in a rare study of politics at city level, Norbert Schlossmacher looks exclusively at the development of party politics for state and national elections, even though he notes at one point, for example, that the first permanent election bureau was set up by the liberals in the mid-1870s for the local elections.[3] Even though Düsseldorf and all other Rhenish townships whose Roman Catholic population became politicised during the Kulturkampf at the latest may have been an 'exception',[4] an increasing number of 'exceptions' emerges after careful study. These include cities with completely different social, religious and cultural compositions such as Berlin, Mannheim, Nuremberg, Osnabrück and Breslau.[5] Historians have not even begun to

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1 H.-W. Schmuhl, 'Bürgerliche Eliten in städtischen Repräsentativorganen. Nürnberg und Braunschweig im 19. Jahrhundert', in H.-J. Puhle (ed.), Bürger in der Gesellschaft der Neuzeit (Göttingen, 1991), pp. 178-98, here p. 178. For criticism of this type of approach, see B.-C. Padtberg, Rheinischer Liberalismus in Köln während der politischen Reaktion in Preußen nach 1848/9 (Köln, 1985), pp. 12-4.

2 Schmuhl devotes only one paragraph to the formation of liberal politics in local government in Braunschweig from the middle of the nineteenth century, and unfortunately he does not follow up its implications. Schmuhl, 'Bürgerliche Eliten', p. 191.

3 N. Schlossmacher, Düsseldorf im Bismarckreich. Politik und Wahlen, Parteien und Vereine (Düsseldorf, 1985), p. 90.

4 Pogge von Strandmann, 'The Liberal Power Monopoly', p. 103. The case of the Rhenish cities indicates the limits of the usefulness of deciding which towns were 'exceptional' in their political development and which were not. For example, it could also be argued that the cities of Elberfeld and Barmen, which have been heralded as models for unpolitical city government, were themselves highly 'exceptional' as they were the only cities in the governmental district (Regierungsbezirk) of Düsseldorf most of whose population were Protestants. On the Protestant character of Barmen, see Köllmann, Sozialgeschichte, pp. 200 ff.

5 Pogge von Strandmann, 'The Liberal Monopolies', p. 103. It appears, for example, that liberalism was an important political force in the municipal council of Mannheim as early as the 1860s. L. Gall, Bürgertum in Deutschland (Berlin, 1989), pp. 365-73. P. Müller, Liberalismus in Nürnberg 1860 bis 1871: Eine Fallstudie zur Ideen- und Sozialeschichte des Liberalismus in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert (Nürnberg, 1990), esp. pp. 358-87. In Osnabrück, party friction was such during the early 1860s that local government was threatened with coming to a standstill. Political strife continued during the 1870s, though in that decade its nature changed in consequence of the Kulturkampf and of Guelph conservatism. R. Lembke, Johannes Miquel und die Stadt Osnabrück unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Jahre 1865-1869 (Osnabrück, 1962), p. 8. For Osnabruck in the context of the politicisation of the Province of Hanover, see M. John, 'Kultur, Klasse und Regionalismus in Hannover, 1848-1914', in L. Gall and D. Langewiesche (eds.), Liberalismus und Region. Zur Geschichte des deutschen Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert (Munich, 1995), 178-83. M. Hettling, 'Von der Hochburg zur Wagenburg. Liberalismus in Breslau von den 1860er Jahren bis 1918', in ibid., pp. 253-76.

investigate to what extent the image of unpolitical local government may have to be modified by taking into account, for example, the politicisation of Roman Catholics from 1848/9 and during the Kulturkampf, largely because the precise nature of that politicisation is still under debate.[1] Neither has the possibility been taken into account that in areas with a strong, early socialist challenge in national elections an emphasis on the 'unpolitical' was generated by quite a political desire to keep the SPD out of deliberations on local government.

Finally, for the traditional view of notable local politics to maintain its credibility it would have to show how the view of unpolitical local elites squares with the fact that the revolutions of 1848/9 were themselves largely an urban phenomenon (after a short burst of peasant activism in the spring of 1848) which brought about a burst of politicisation among urban élites.[2] In a pioneering study on liberal politics in the small towns of Baden during the 1830s and 40s, Paul Nolte has recently concluded that 'élite- and notable politics...was replaced by mass politics - this transition occurred half a century earlier than is generally assumed by research into social history'. The particular form of liberal 'community-politics' which Nolte describes was defeated during the 1848/9 Revolution as the traditional social and political assumptions of the political movement had become obsolete in a fast-changing world. Yet even though the liberalism which emerged during the 1860s was of an entirely new nature, many of the carriers of this new liberalism were those that had been involved in local liberal politics in the pre-1848 era.[3] Clearly, more investigations into the subject are needed to link Nolte's masterly study of

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1 At issue in this debate is whether Roman Catholicism became distinctively and decisively politicised during the Kulturkampf, or whether the development of political Catholicism occurred during the decades before, starting in 1848/49. For the former view see, for instance, M. L. Anderson, 'The Kulturkampf and the Course of German History', CEH, xix (1986), 82-115. For an example of the latter view see J. Sperber, Popular Catholicism in 19th Century Germany (Princeton, 1984). In addition, the nature of political Catholicism, if it did exist before 1870, is unclear. For opposing views on this issue, see J. Sperber, 'Competing Counterrevolutions: Prussian State and Catholic Church in Westphalia during the 1850s', CEH, xix (1986), 45-62, and S. Hyde, 'Roman Catholicism and the Prussian State in the Early 1850s', CEH, xxiv (1991), 95-121.

2 Manfred Hettling has shown for Württemberg that in the run-up to 1848, local self-government was an integral element of liberal political assumptions, and that the locality provided a crucial focus for liberal organisational life. M. Hettling, Reform ohne Revolution. Bürgertum, Bürokratie und kommunale Selbstverwaltung in Württemberg von 1800 bis 1850 (Göttingen, 1990).

3 P. Nolte, Gemeindebürgertum und Liberalismus in Baden 1800-1850 (Göttingen, 1994). The

Baden to liberal movements across Germany. Yet it is clear that his observations about liberal political activity at a local level during the 1830s and 1840s and again from the 1860s onwards cannot remain without serious implications for the view that politics did not enter the local area before the turn of the century.

In addition, it seems questionable that in an area where throughout the period highly political decisions had to be made, politics played no part, the rhetoric of the city's Honoratioren notwithstanding. Decisions over schooling or about the general provision of sanitation as the expression of an increasing acceptance of the need for the local community to provide minimum levels of welfare were inherently political questions, even if local political divides were different from those at state or national level. Thus Brian Ladd has brilliantly developed a picture of urban politics in a number of German cities drawn from the debates about the provision of sanitation and municipal housing, as well as about urban planning.[1]

Unfortunately, therefore, by 1995 Dieter Langewiesche was still forced to conclude that current levels of knowledge about liberalism at the local level are inversely proportional to its importance.[2] This thesis seeks to respond to this gap through an investigation into the role of politics in local government while acknowledging at the same time that what may be required is simply a wider definition of what constitutes politics, and even party politics, at the urban level. Politics does not just begin when there are official parties (Fraktionen) established in the town council, the Stadtverordnetenversammlung. Therefore, when looking at the municipal level, it seems necessary in the first place to investigate precisely what politics meant in urban government. How important were parties in the development of public opinion? These questions are not merely of relevance to urban history, of course. Leading on from this

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quotation is on p. 241. See also P. Nolte, 'Gemeindeliberalismus. Zur Entstehung und sozialen Verankerung der liberalen Partei in Baden 1831-1855', HZ, cclii (1991), 57-93.

1 B. Ladd, Urban Planning and Civic Order in Germany, 1860-1914 (Cambridge/Mass., 1990).

2 D. Langewiesche, 'Liberalismus und Region', in L. Gall and D. Langewiesche (eds.), Liberalismus und Region, p. 15

investigation, it is necessary to ask in which way, if any, the presence or absence of local liberal political activity affected the liberals' approaches to other levels of government.

It follows that an essential requirement for any investigation into local politics has to attempt to analyse and then explain the motives for individual voting patterns at elections, to explain why voters chose to cast their ballots in a certain way, in order to see how the local political process affected the individual voter. Thus it is possible to see whether the electorate voted for individual notables, for a particular party or for political ideologies. In Germany, the general question of the nature of political allegiance first found general attention through M. Rainer Lepsius' argument that the concept of the 'milieu' was central to an understanding of voting behaviour: Voters did not cast their ballots for one particular reason, but supported a party for a complex pattern of cultural as well as social reasons such as religion, regional traditions, and so on.[1] Some of this analysis was never quite dismissed, as it seemed the only reasonable way to explain why, for example, Roman Catholics were more likely to vote for the Centre than for the liberals in some areas rather than in others. On the other hand, it is not difficult to see why most historians of the 1970s found Lepsius' ideas rather hard to digest. After all, his ideas were in effect suggesting that all efforts at explaining the demise of liberalism by exposing the supposed failure of liberal élites were pointless in that their actions did not significantly affect voting patterns. Yet, to be fair, there were also serious flaws in Lepsius' approach which even those who were inspired by his work had to admit.[2] His model could be criticised for being artificial and thus ahistorical.[3] More objectionable particularly to English and American scholars has been that Lepsius constructed his model on the a priori assumption of the 'new orthodoxy', that the German party system during the Empire impeded

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1 M. R. Lepsius, 'Parteiensystem und Sozialstruktur. Zum Problem der Demokratisierung der deutschen Gesellschaft', in Ritter (ed.), Die deutschen Parteien (Cologne, 1973), pp. 56-80.

2 Rohe (ed.), Elections, Parties and Political Traditions, p. 1.

3 J. J. Sheehan, 'Klasse und Partei im Kaiserreich: Einige Gedanken zur Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Politik', in O. Pflanze (ed.), Innenpolitische Probleme des Bismarck-Reiches (Munich/Vienna, 1983), p. 21.

Germany's democratic development.[1] Finally, there was simply not enough empirical evidence available at the time to validate his assumptions. More detailed studies of voting behaviour based on extensive empirical analysis have emerged during the 1980s, however, which suggest that the 'Milieukonzept' merits careful attention.[2]

Developing Lepsius' ideas further, Karl Rohe argued that the decade of the foundation of the Empire saw the establishment of particular 'socio-moral' milieux which until the late 1920s supported three 'blocs' of parties: the Roman Catholic, the Social Democrat and the 'national bloc', which comprised all bourgeois parties, from conservatives to left-liberals.[3] Rohe has consciously avoided the most crucial shortcoming of Lepsius' model which assumed milieux to be static, emphasising instead that each milieu developed over time and had to adapt to social, political and cultural change. While not taking the stability of these milieux for granted, he was nevertheless able to show that, measured in terms of percentage of the voting population, these blocs remained remarkably stable throughout the Empire. Interestingly, other things being equal, cultural factors were seen as more important in determining milieux than religious ones. These cultural factors formed the nature of the public sphere (Öffentlichkeit), mentality (Mentalität) and codes of behaviour (Lebensweise),[4] which were to a large extent shaped by the traditions and peculiarities of individual regions. As a result, like any other party the liberals were seen as comprising many regional party systems, which to be successful had to adapt to and in some degree shape the pre-existing culture of that area.[5]

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1 D. Blackbourn, 'Die Zentrumspartei und die deutschen Katholiken während des Kulturkampfes und danach', in O. Pflanze (ed.), Innenpolitische Probleme, p. 75.

2 Note particularly Rohe's studies on the Ruhr district, for example K. Rohe, Vom Revier zum Ruhrgebiet (Essen, 1986). For work on electoral history at national level, see in particular S. Suval, Electoral Politics in Wilhelmine Germany (Chapel Hill, 1985). See also P. Steinbach, 'Reichstag Elections in the Kaiserreich: The Prospects for Electoral Research in the Interdisciplinary Context', in L. E. Jones and J. Retallack (eds.), Elections, Mass Politics and Social Change, pp. 119-146.

3 See the introductory essay in K. Rohe (ed.), Elections, Parties and Political Traditions, pp.1-25. For a more detailed and developed treatment, see K. Rohe, Wahlen und Wählertraditionen (Frankfurt a.M., 1992), pp. 57-121

4 K. Rohe, Wahlen, p. 18.

5 K. Rohe (ed.), Elections, Parties and Political Traditions, pp. 9-11.

Rohe's analysis is an intriguing challenge for the historian to study the politics of a region more closely. Since the key to liberal party electoral success is to be found at the regional level, particular attention must be devoted to how regional party allegiance is obtained. Rohe formulated his ideas in consideration of his own research in the Ruhr district, and his model is particularly suited to explain the early politicisation that occurred in the Ruhr district during the Kulturkampf, as well as the difficulty of the SPD to gain the vote in Roman Catholic 'working-class' areas. Even though Rohe is clearly convinced that his model is applicable to every individual region,[1] it remains to be shown to what extent his model can explain the process of politicisation in other areas, particularly in those which were relatively unaffected by the Kulturkampf, and where politicisation was not triggered by religious factors. A study of liberalism in Frankfurt can show, therefore, how useful the concept of a milieu is in explaining voting behaviour in an area where a Kulturkampf remained conspicuously absent, and where religious controversies only developed from the 1880s onwards. With reference to Rohe's argument that a milieu is dynamic and evolves over time, it remains to be shown in what way this process occurred in a place like Frankfurt, if indeed it did exist there. If it did change, what was the part played by politicians in this transformation? A still more intriguing question still is this: if a milieu existed, how did politicians perceive it to function? Or is Rohe's concept like that of his predecessors an ahistorical construct? It is clear that unless satisfactory answers to these questions can be given deriving from a number of case studies on individual regions, no satisfactory account of the development of liberalism on a national basis can be given.[2]

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[1] For instance for Frankfurt, as part of Prussia's newly annexed territories, see Rohe, Wahlen, pp. 64-69.

[2] Interestingly, despite a number of important modifications to the concept of the milieu, for example through his emphasis on the importance of political patronage and corruption for the outcome of elections, an issue which has not really featured in previous analyses of electoral behaviour, Thomas Kühne has largely confirmed the usefulness of the concept of the milieu by making it a central theme in his analysis not just of a region, but of electoral behaviour throughout the state of Prussia. T. Kühne, Dreiklassenwahlrecht und Wahlkultur in Preußen 1867-1914. Landtagswahlen zwischen korporativer Tradition und politischem Massenmarkt (Düsseldorf, 1994).

In response to the arguments presented above, it appears that what is required most urgently is a number of case studies of urban or regional types of liberalism in order to test empirically the assumptions and hypotheses which have been generated by historians from fragmentary evidence. On one level, it is perfectly legitimate to study urban liberalism in any German city as a case study to discuss some of the assumptions and theories made about liberalism in a wider context. Bearing in mind recent assumptions about different regional milieux, for example, it is clear that it no longer makes sense to talk of 'typical' and 'untypical' regions. Every region is different in its own right, and in this sense every region merits equal attention. At the same time, this has implications for the results of any such case study, because it must always be remembered that one can only generalise the findings from a particular region with extreme caution.

Nevertheless, this study has chosen to concentrate its efforts on the analysis of urban liberalism in Frankfurt am Main, 1866-1914, and there are good reasons for doing so. Despite the destruction of important archival material during the Second World War, which destroyed most personal papers (for example the personal papers of Leopold Sonnemann), there exist extensive police reports of local officials on current affairs (Zeitungsberichte) and contemporary printed material on municipal and political life in Frankfurt. In addition, even though most editions of the local SPD organ, the Volksstimme, have been lost, there is a relatively large collection of newspapers still available, most importantly the Frankfurter Zeitung, as well as the local daily newpaper, the Kleine Presse. There is an entire periodical devoted to the history of Frankfurt, and there are numerous monographs on various aspects of Frankfurt's history, including a recent study of liberalism in the city between 1866 and 1914.[1] Most of these studies are entirely concerned with Frankfurt's history in its own right without

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[1] S. Wolf, Liberalismus in Frankfurt am Main. Vom Ende der Freien Stadt bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg (1866-1914) (Frankfurt, 1987).

aspiring to contribute to broader scholarly debates. All these sources are a necessary prerequisite for and a foundation of the present study as it seeks to investigate Frankfurt liberalism not so much in its own right but as a case study in which are tested the assumptions and theories about urban and regional liberalism as outlined above.

Frankfurt offers the advantage of being both a city in which one can look at urban liberalism, and of being a distinct region in which it is possible to examine its political culture. If the definition of a region is often ambiguous,[1] this is not the case with Frankfurt. An autonomous imperial city for several centuries, it became a Free City in 1813/14 and remained so until it was annexed by Prussia in 1866.[2] As a result, Frankfurt had developed political and cultural traditions quite distinct from that of its surrounding territories.[3] Another obvious reason for conducting a case study on Frankfurt liberalism is that the city was governed by liberals throughout the period under investigation. Frankfurt liberals had a comfortable majority in the city council, as they successfully managed to fend off the challenges from various local political parties including the SPD from the 1880s. Throughout the period the conservative parties failed to break any ground in Frankfurt, so that until 1900 local elections were mainly contested between the various liberal parties themselves, the Demokratischer Verein (Democrats), the Freisinniger Verein (Progressive Associations) and the Frankfurter Wahlverein/Nationalliberaler Wahlverein (National Liberal Association).

In fact, the study of Frankfurt liberalism is particularly interesting because the city was of such importance to German liberalism in general. The city's most prominent Democrat, Leopold Sonnemann, was a founding member of German People's Party in 1867. He was the party's

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1 K. Rohe (ed.), Elections, Parties and Political Traditions, pp. 2-4.

2 For a vivid account of the city's regaining of its independence as a Free City, see H. Th. Wüst, Frankfurt am Main und die "Polytechnische" (Frankfurt, 1937), pp. 6-8. For the most recent comprehensive history of Frankfurt as a Free City, see W. Klötzer, 'Frankfurt am Main von der Französischen Revolution bis zur preußischen Okkupation 1789-1866', in Frankfurt am Main: die Geschichte der Stadt in neun Beiträgen, ed. Frankfurter Historische Kommission (Sigmaringen, 1991), pp. 303-48.

3 Between 1815-1866, Frankfurt was surrounded by the Duchy of Nassau, by the Landgrafschaft Hesse-Homburg, the Grand Duchy of Hesse and the Electorate of Hessen.

only member in the Reichstag from 1871-1874, and in the following parliament he was the unofficial leader of the small group of Democratic members.[1] Even after the Frankfurt Democrats lost to the SPD in the Reichstag elections from 1884 onwards, they continued to have a disproportionate influence over the national party, and not only because it was the People's Party's best organised and largest local branch. Frankfurt Democrats formed the People's Party's executive committee from 1873 to1890 and again from 1898 to 1906. Yet most of their influence came from the fact that Leopold Sonnemann's newspaper, the Frankfurter Zeitung, was the largest and most important left-liberal newspaper south of the Main.[2] Furthermore, it is from Frankfurt that Germany's most prominent 'social liberal', Friedrich Naumann, launched his attempt to rejuvenate German liberalism through the creation of the National Social Association in 1896.[3] Finally, Frankfurt was an important city for National Liberalism, too, as its First Mayor from 1880 to 1890, Johannes von Miquel, was perhaps the party's most gifted politician, a fact which he proved by being not only an outstandingly successful Prussian minister of finance, but also by being one of the select few members of any liberal party ever to serve in a Prussian or Imperial government. Frankfurt is therefore ideal for an investigation into how liberals of different and often opposing political views on a national political level reacted to each other on the smaller and more intimate local level.

Finally, the city of Frankfurt is well suited for a case study of urban liberalism because Frankfurt liberals were extremely progressive. As chapters two and three will demonstrate, the left-liberals in particular emphasised their 'progressiveness' in virtually every municipal election campaign during the Empire. Moreover, Frankfurt was at the vanguard of social reform during the Empire, and indeed during the Weimar Republic. After Hamburg, Frankfurt

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1 BAK', NL 20 n. 1a fo. 27. Friedrich Payer, 'Mein Lebenslauf'.

2 J. C. Hunt, The People's Party in Württemberg and Southern Germany, 1890-1914. The Possibilities of Democratic Politics (Stuttgart, 1975).

3 P. Theiner, Sozialer Liberalismus und deutsche Weltpolitik. Friedrich Naumann im Wilhelminischen Deutschland, 1860-1919 (Baden-Baden, 1983).

was the second city in Germany to build a drainage system from the 1860s onwards, after intense lobbying of one of the leading German physicians at the time, Georg Varrentrapp. In the early 1880s, Miquel was one of the first liberal politicians to become involved with the Verein für Sozialpolitik's pioneering investigations into the urban housing problem.[1] His successor, Franz Adickes, was regarded until the early 1900s as perhaps the leading expert on the housing question in Germany.[2] From the mid-1880s onwards, Frankfurt was at the forefront of municipal efforts to ease the tensions in the labour market brought about by rapid industrialisation and early politicisation of the labour force. Under Karl Flesch, the Stadtrat responsible for municipal social policy from 1884 to 1915, the city established a labour tribunal in 1887, and it pioneered the idea of a municipal labour exchange, established in 1895.[3] Finally, Frankfurt liberals were regarded as extremely progressive relative to the national parties they belonged to. This is not so much true for the National Liberals, but it is appropriate for the Progressives from the mid-1890s onwards, and it is certainly true for the largest liberal party in Frankfurt, the Democrats, throughout the period. Leopold Sonnemann had been co-founder of the Lassallean Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein in 1863,[4] and broke with the socialists only at their party congress in Eisenach in 1869. Thereafter, he constantly tried to push the People's Party to take more radical and unambivalent positions on social issues, very much to the irritation of the Württemberg majority within the party as a whole.[5]

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1 Ladd, Urban Planning, pp. 141, 145-6. N. Bullock and J. Read, The Movement for Housing Reform in Germany and France, 1840-1914 (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 64-5.

2 Perhaps Adickes' reputation peaked in 1903, when he outlined his views in a speech which is often seen as a portrayal of moderate liberals' principles of municipal social reform. F. Adickes and G. Beutler, Die sozialen Aufgaben der deutschen Städte. Zwei Vorträge, gehalten auf dem ersten deutschen Städtetage zu Dresden am 2. September 1903 (Leipzig, 1903). In his speech, Beutler described Adickes as the greatest expert on social policy around ('der beste Kenner der ganzen Materie in geschichtlicher und praktischer Beziehung'), p. 93.

3 See in particular H. K. Weitensteiner, 'Karl Flesch - Kommunale Sozialpolitik in Frankfurt am Main' (Frankfurt Univ. PH.D. thesis 1976).

4 Bericht über die Verhandlungen des ersten Vereinstages der deutschen Arbeitervereine abgehalten zu Frankfurt a.M. am 7. und 8. Juni 1863, ed. Ausschuss des Vereinstages (Frankfurt a.M., 1863).

5 Hunt, The People's Party, pp. 111-26.

As a result, Frankfurt's progressive liberals were responsible for turning the city into a model of 'municipal socialism', of Kommunale Daseinsfürsorge, during the Empire. Thus, based on his investigations from 1912-1914, a foreign observer wrote about the city's government that:

> Its achievements place the city very high in the ranks of well administered municipalities. This is widely recognized, so widely that Frankfort stands upon a hill, as it were, among the municipalities of Europe. Its clean, well paved streets, swift, well-regulated and "blessedly noiseless" street car lines, excellent lighting, water and sewerage facilities and beautiful parks are all far-famed as the earmarks of good city government.[1]

Frankfurt is thus particularly suitable for a closer investigation into the liberals' motives and assumptions in urban government. A study of Frankfurt liberalism may reveal how far some of the most progressive liberals in the cities were prepared or able to go in order to meet the social challenges of urbanisation (housing, sanitation, etc.), unemployment and poverty, as well as the parallel political challenges of the rise of interest groups, a labour movement and the advent of 'mass politics'. By showing the limitations of the liberals' responses, this study will contribute to the continuing debate as to whether liberalism was, by the beginning of the twentieth century, a spent force, or whether it had at least the potential of reforming itself to address the needs of a rapidly modernising Germany.

In order to understand the evolution of Frankfurt liberalism during the Empire, it is necessary to consider, however briefly, the historical developments that led to the annexation of the Free City by Prussia in 1866 and the subsequent settlements through which Frankfurt was integrated into the Kingdom.[2] Central to an understanding of Frankfurt history throughout the nineteenth century and beyond was its position as a geographical, political and economic link between northern and southern Germany. The former imperial city, which had been the place where the Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire were crowned for centuries, became the

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1 M. H. Dodge, The Government of the City of Frankfort-on-the-Main (New York, 1920), p. 103.

2 For a comprehensive study of the development of Frankfurt society up until 1866, see R. Koch, Grundlagen bürgerlicher Herrschaft. Verfassungs- und sozialgeschichtliche Studien zur bürgerlichen Gesellschaft in Frankfurt am Main, 1612-1866 (Wiesbaden, 1983).

diplomatic centre of the German Confederation after 1815. The choice of Frankfurt was not coincidental, as it was an independent city on the edge of the Prussian sphere of influence roughly north of the Main, and of the Austrian sphere of influence to the south. Frankfurt's potential as a political centre of Germany was further highlighted by the national assembly, the Nationalversammlung, which met in the city in 1848/49.[1] Frankfurt's political position between northern and southern Germany found its equivalent in the economic sphere. Although particularly since the Bavarian war of succession (1778/79) a financial centre with strong links to the south,[2] Frankfurt's entry into the Zollverein on 2 January 1836 signalled a recognition that at least its economic future was intertwined with that of Prussia and the more liberal trading principles it represented.[3] As a result of its income from the Bundesversammlung, as well as its economic and financial links with northern and southern Germany, the maintenance of the status quo was in Frankfurt's long-term interest.

On the surface, there appears to be no evidence to suggest that until the 1850s Frankfurt's political development differed significantly from that of any other city.[4] Yet the last years of the Free City were marked by rapid and dramatic political modernisation.[5] After the moderate liberals took over the citizens' representative council, the Bürgerrepräsentation, in 1851, and particularly after the more radical democrats were in a majority from 1857 onwards, a number of drastic reforms were enacted in response to the social and economic developments of the previous decades. Following the social integration of the Jews in Frankfurt's bourgeois clubs

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1 In general, see V. Valentin, Frankfurt am Main und die Revolution von 1848/49 (Stuttgart/Berlin, 1908).

2 R. Roth, '"...der blühende Handel macht uns alle glücklich". Frankfurt am Main in der Umbuchszeit 1780-1825', in Lothar Gall (ed.), Vom alten zum neuen Bürgertum, p. 363.

3 D. Stage, Frankfurt am Main im Zollverein. Die Handelspolitik und die öffentliche Meinung der Freien Stadt Frankfurt in den Jahren 1836-1866 (Frankfurt, 1971).

4 Otto Kanngießer, a virulent critic of Prussia, admitted that 'In den leitenden oberen Kreisen trat mehr und mehr eine politische Verknöcherung, eine Neigung zu jener Selbstgenügsamkeit ein, welche stark an Hochmut und Überschätzung grenzt.' O. Kanngießer, Frankfurts Gegenwart und nächste Zukunft. Eine Denkschrift (Frankfurt, 1892), pp. 4-5. On the history of Frankfurt before 1866, see in general R. Schwemer, Geschichte der Stadt Frankfurt am Main 1814-1866, 3 vols. (Frankfurt a.M., 1910-18).

5 For an opposing point of view, see Wolf, Liberalismus, p.16, which is based on the assessment of H. Böhme, Frankfurt und Hamburg. Des deutschen Reiches Silber- und Goldloch und Allerenglischste Stadt des Kontinents (Frankfurt a.M., 1968), p. 236.

and societies, and thus their admittance to the city's social élite, they were at last fully emancipated in 1864.[1] Restrictions on trade were lifted in 1864, and in June 1866 a new, largely democratic franchise was introduced. Therefore, whereas the period before the mid-1840s was more notable for the political lethargy of the citizens of Frankfurt, in the years after the revolution the Free City became characterised by lively political debate.[2]

Added to the discussion about the internal political and economic modernisation of the city state was the debate about the German question from 1859 onwards. Not surprisingly, Frankfurt, the former imperial city in which the Emperors were crowned in the Holy Roman Empire, seat of the National Assembly and link between northern and southern Germany, became the focus of the supporters of the <u>großdeutsch</u> solution based on the reform of the current <u>status quo</u>.[3] This was manifested not only by the foundation of the German <u>Reformverein</u> there, but also by the national festivals held in Frankfurt to promote the <u>großdeutsch</u> cause, such as the German <u>Schützenfest</u> in 1862.[4] It is important to note that even after German reunification such rallies continued to be of great importance to Frankfurt Democrats. Therefore, during the last years of its existence the Free City of Frankfurt witnessed a lively political debate, both on domestic reform and on the German question. Nevertheless, the relatively intense political debates before 1866 were a recent phenomenon, which explains why after the Prussian annexation of Frankfurt the city seemed to fall back into political apathy for several years.[5]

After it had been occupied from 16 July, Frankfurt, along with Hanover, Hesse-Cassel and Nassau, was annexed by Prussia on 8 October 1866. Although of these territories Frankfurt

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1 The argument that the political emancipation of the Jews completed their emancipation in Frankfurt society has been convincingly made by R. Roth, 'Liberalismus in Frankfurt am Main 1814 -1914. Probleme seiner Strukturgeschichte', in L. Gall and D. Langewiesche (eds.), <u>Liberalismus und Region</u> (Mumich, 1995), pp. 73-4

2 D. Stage, <u>Zollverein</u>, pp. 46ff.. F. Lerner, <u>Bürgersinn und Bürgertat. Geschichte der Polytechnischen Gesellschaft 1816-1966</u> (Frankfurt, 1966), p. 226.

3 N. M. Hope, <u>The Alternative to German Unification. The Anti-Prussian Party. Frankfurt, Nassau, and the Two Hessen 1859-1867</u> (Wiesbaden, 1973), pp. 20ff..

4 <u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 29ff..

5 For a fuller treatment of the subject, see chapter 2.

was the only one never to have been in a state of war with Prussia, the city had to pay reparations of 6 million Guilders and was required to pay a further 25 million. On 24 July the First Mayor, Fellner, chose to commit suicide rather than to be seen to collaborate with the occupying forces. Also, it seemed to be the only territory occupied by Prussian troops in 1866 where the local population was significantly harassed by the occupying forces. To make matters worse, it soon became clear that the former imperial city, the link between north and south, was to be relegated to a mere provincial city without any administrative significance in the district (Regierungsbezirk) of Wiesbaden - a thorn in the flesh of the people of Frankfurt throughout the period of the Empire. In brief, Frankfurt undoubtedly suffered much more under Prussian occupation than any other of the annexed or occupied territories.[1]

The years 1866 to 1869 were marked by the reorganisation of municipal affairs under Prussian rule.[2] On 25 March 1867 Frankfurt received its new constitution.[3] This was very similar to the Prussian city ordinance, the Städteordnung.[4] Municipal government was to be composed of an elected city council, the Stadtverordnetenversammlung, and the Magistrat. The former was composed of voluntary members who, in conjunction with the latter, were responsible for municipal policy. Its most important functions were the control over the municipal budget and its right to elect the First and Second Mayors and the other members of the Magistrat. The Magistrat, half of whose members were paid officials, was responsible for executing the policy

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1 See Harkort's speech in the Prussian Chamber of Deputies, 7 September 1866 ('Frankfurt scheint mir ein Rostflecken auf dem preußischen Ehrenschilde...'), quoted in O. Kanngießer, Geschichte der Eroberung der Freien Stadt Frankfurt durch Preußen im Jahre 1866 (Frankfurt a.M., 1877), p. 387.

2 For the best analysis of the history of Frankfurt following its annexation see W.-A. Kropat, Frankfurt zwischen Provinzialismus und Nationalismus. Die Eingliederung der 'Freien Stadt' in den preußischen Staat (1866-1871) (Frankfurt, 1971).

3 Reprinted in the Bürgerbuch (Sammlung von Verordnungen) der Stadtgemeinde Frankfurt am Main. Amtliche Ausgabe 1912 (Frankfurt, 1912), i. 1-12. For further introductions to the subject, see W. Forstmann, 'Frankfurt am Main in Wilhelminischer Zeit', in Frankfurt am Main: die Geschichte der Stadt in neun Beiträgen, ed. Frankfurter Historische Kommission (Sigmaringen, 1991), pp. 368-71, and W. Klötzer, Vom Senat zum Magistrat. Eine Säkularbetrachtung zur Frankfurter Stadtverfassung (Sonderdruck des Presse- und Informationsamtes der Stadt Frankfurt am Main, 1968).

4 For a brief introductory survey of the various forms of municipal self-government in Germany, see G.-C. von Unruh, 'Die normative Verfassung der kommunalen Selbstverwaltung', in K.G.A. Jeserich, Deutsche Verwaltungsgeschichte (Stuttgart, 1984), iii. 560-78.

decisions of both chambers and was charged with the day-to-day administration of the city. In practice, as in other cities, it was this role, as well as its small size which made it much easier to arrive at agreement, which gave the Frankfurt Magistrat a much greater weight than the city council in the administration of municipal affairs.

Apart from the mode of election for the Magistrat, of which the two mayors were direct appointees of the King,[1] but whose other members could be elected without any outside influence, the main distinctiveness of Frankfurt's municipal constitution concerned its franchise laws. Instead of the common Prussian three-class franchise, Frankfurt elected its council by equal, free and secret elections. However, the Prussian authorities did not accede to this out of respect to Frankfurt's democratic traditions. Only those who had been resident in Frankfurt for at least a year, who had paid the Bürgerschaftsgeld to become recognised citizens of Frankfurt, and who had Prussian citizenship were allowed to vote. Finally, voters had to have an annual income of over 700 Guilders (1,200 Marks), or they had to carry out a trade, employing at least two assistants. These unusually severe restrictions were undoubtedly designed to keep the 'democratic' elements out of the city council on the assumption that it would be particularly the poorer elements of society that were prone to vote for them. And, indeed, the immediate result of the new franchise was to reduce the number of people eligible to vote in municipal elections. However, the left-liberals in particular were right to welcome the franchise nonetheless, because even in the 1870s the franchise favoured them more than any other group. A comparison with the results of the elections to the Prussian Chamber of Deputies, which under a three-class franchise was more often than not won by the National Liberals, shows that the two left-liberal parties did particularly well under the Frankfurt municipal franchise. Not surprisingly, they defended this law tooth and nail against any threats to introduce the three-class franchise in Frankfurt. Towards the turn of the century, as more

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1 In practice, the King respected the city's first choice for First Mayor on every occasion.

and more workers derived a taxable income of more than the census threshold of 1,200 Marks, and after massive SPD campaigns for workers to register as Prussian citizens, the franchise naturally became increasingly democratic as the gap narrowed between those enfranchised for the national and for the municipal elections.

The dominant issue during the years 1866 to 1869 was not so much the changes to the city's administrative structure, which were not all that controversial. Rather, the major bone of contention was the so-called Rezeß, the settlement that regulated the financial relations between the city and its new superior authority, the Prussian state. Since Frankfurt became part of Prussia, it was out of the question for the city to pay the required 25 million Guilders originally demanded. Furthermore, Frankfurt public opinion demanded back the six million Guilders originally paid, a request which Prussia refused. Finally, it was necessary to divide up those debts and assets of the state of Frankfurt which would go over to Prussia, and those of the city which would remain there. This matter was complicated by the fact that, unlike the city states of Hamburg or Bremen, there existed no separate accounts for the city and the state before 1866. After agonising discussions and protestations, a settlement was finally reached on 26 February 1869. Not so much as a repayment of the original reparations contribution but rather as a compensation for the assets taken over by the state of Prussia, Frankfurt finally received a contribution of 2 million Guilders from the state, and a further one million from the private fortune of the King.[1]

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1 Forstmann, 'Frankfurt', p. 360.

# CHAPTER TWO: THE EMERGENCE OF POPULAR PARTY POLITICS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

## 2.1. The Establishment of Popular Politics in Frankfurt a.M.

Frankfurt's political debates until about 1845 were not marked by a particularly strong current of liberalism or radicalism. This is not particularly surprising, as even those who advocated liberal reform appreciated that the survival of the city's independence, and thus of their relative political freedom, remained in their best interests. In contrast to Prussia, for example, there was no state which could simply impose its reforms from above, by administrative fiat. In Frankfurt all reforms had to be wrestled from the different social groups that had some share in the Free City's politics. This ensured the importance of the conservative elements of society which were at least until the mid-1840s strong enough to block any significant measures of reform. Indeed, despite the 'great upsurge' of the liberal movement in the mid-1840s,[1] the conservatives won the 1847 elections to the Frankfurt city diet amidst fears that Jewish emancipation and the liberalisation of trade were imminent.[2] As the drawn-out battle for the emancipation of the Jews shows, this conservatism was not just shared by the artisans and small tradesmen, but also by a significant part of the city's élite.[3]

This analysis is borne out by the events of the revolution of 1848/49. Far from being one of the 'hotbeds' of the revolution, such as the democratic centres of neighbouring Mainz and Gießen, Frankfurt liberals and democrats were more noted for their moderation.[4] It is only in

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1 Roth, 'Liberalismus', p. 73.

2 M. Wettengel, Die Revolution von 1848/1849 im Rhein-Main Raum. Politische Vereine und Revolutionsalltag im Großherzogtum Hessen, Herzogtum Nassau und in der Freien Stadt Frankfurt (Wiesbaden, 1989), p. 59. Note also Rainer Koch's general point that increased political participation also increased reactionary tendencies against Jews. R. Koch, Grundlagen bürgerlicher Herrschaft, pp. 180-81.

3 D. Preissler, Frühantisemitismus in der Freien Stadt Frankfurt und im Großherzogtum Hessen, 1810-1860 (Heidelberg, 1989), pp. 61-144, 256-60.

4 M. Wettengel, Revolution, pp. 195-212. This view is opposed to the one put forward by Ralf Roth, who is concerned to show Frankfurt's central position among 'democratic liberals' both after 1853 *and* before.

the period after 1849 that Frankfurt became a centre for liberal opposition, because out of all the states in the area, it was in the Free City that liberals had the greatest freedom for manoevre.[1] In this period, first a more moderate and then a democratic liberal group became the major parties in the citizens' assembly. These parties were not just divided over the pace and the nature of reform in the internal affairs of the city, but their differences were most marked on the German question. Whereas the moderate liberals, the Gothaer, accepted the need for Prussian leadership in the process of unification, the more radical democrats shared the hopes of the conservative élites that the city could maintain its central position in a united Germany, free from Prussian or Austrian tutelage.[2] Clearly, those taking the latter view were in the majority in Frankfurt, so that, aided by the conservative Senate, Frankfurt became a focus of democratic, Großdeutsch groups in south-western Germany in the late 1850s.[3]

From the polarisation of Frankfurt liberal politics that appears to have occurred in the years before Frankfurt's incorporation into Prussia, a central question emerges as to how much the formation of the three liberal parties in Frankfurt in the early 1870s owes to political developments before 1866. Ralf Roth stresses the continuities of liberal politics by emphasizing the role of bourgeois societies and clubs as the main carriers of liberal reform both before and after 1866, throughout the Wilhelmine period.[4] By contrast, Michael Wettengel sees the failure of the revolutions of 1848/49 as a decisive turning-point in the history of liberalism in the area. Echoing Gall's analysis about the liberal movment's transition in 1848/49 from aspiring to a 'classless society of citizens' to the defence of the social status

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(...'Frankfurt entwickelte sich rasch wieder zu einem Zentrum des demokratischen Liberalismus.') Roth, 'Liberalismus', p. 60. According to Roth, the strength of democratic liberalism in the 1850s is the climax of a continuous development throughout the early 19th century, rather than the result of outside factors after 1849.

1 Wettengel, Revolution, p. 506.

2 For a fuller treatment of the democrats' views on unification, see Hope, Alternative, pp. 24ff.. Here, see pp. 30-31.

3 Ibid., p. 25.

4 Roth, 'Liberalismus', passim..

quo, Wettengel has argued for the region around Frankfurt that in the 1850s, the liberals denied their idealism of the revolutionary era and became pragmatic and realistic. Thus, even though the Revolution created the necessary conditions for the formation of modern German parties, it was the period of reaction, in which the parties reconstituted themselves, which was crucial to the establishment of modern political parties.[1]

In his assessment on the basis of his research on the 'Rhine-Main area', Wettengel slightly modified Langewiesche's argument, which dated the beginning of modern political parties to the revolutions of 1848/49. With regard to both parliamentary life in the National Assembly and the relationship of the individual parliamentary groups (Fraktionen) with their constituencies he recognised the beginnings of a 'modern' type of politics. Also, at the grass roots it was from this time that the four main types of political milieux originated: the workers', the democratic bourgeois, the liberal (which contained conservative elements) and finally the Roman Catholic milieux.[2] Despite locating the emergence of modern liberal politics in 1848/1849, however, Langewiesche did admit in his research on Wurttemberg liberalism that the liberals in that state underwent a fundamental political transformation with the foundation of the Empire.[3] By contrast, Karl Rohe finds that for the political system of the Kaiserreich, the decade of the foundation of the Empire was decisive for the establishment of modern politics, because during this time the political framework for conservatism, liberalism and political Catholicism changed radically.[4]

As a result, an investigation into the establishment of Frankfurt's political system seems a sensible starting point for discovering the impact the new political framework of the annexed

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1 Wettengel, Revolution, p. 504.

2 D. Langewiesche, 'Die Anfänge der deutschen Parteien. Partei, Fraktion und Verein in der Revolution von 1848/49', GG, iv (1978), 324-61. Nevertheless, Wettengel and Langewiesche would probably agree that the liberals' social and political conceptions during 1848/49 were more traditional rather than modern.

3 D. Langewiesche, Liberalismus und Demokratie in Württemberg zwischen Revolution und Reichsgründung (Düsseldorf, 1974).

4 Rohe, Wahlen, pp. 30ff..

city had upon the creation of the liberal parties in the early 1870s. This will show whether the model of political continuity in Frankfurt developed by Roth, the creation of modern politics in the 1850s, as argued by Wettengel, or the importance of the political changes after 1866 as advocated by Rohe is borne out by the example of Frankfurt in this case study.

The most striking characteristic of the years immediately following the Prussian annexation of the city in 1866 was the extreme hostility of the population to their new Prussian rulers, in marked contrast to neighbouring Nassau, which had also been annexed. At the official ceremony marking the annexation of the city, Frankfurters of all political persuasions - with one exception - refused to join in the toast to their new king.[1] In April 1868, the Polizeipräsident in Wiesbaden still complained that Frankfurt's high society persisted in its 'grumbling' against the Prussian administration. The Prussians living in the city were isolated socially, and the bourgeois clubs, free from police supervision, became principal centres of opposition to Prussian rule. This attitude was not just limited to the upper echelons of Frankfurt society, but extended to the popular level, as expressed by numerous, almost childish ('fast kindischen') anti-Prussian demonstrations whenever the opportunity arose.[2] On the anniversary of Robert Blum's death the Prussians woke up to discover a large black flag waving from the top of the Pfarrkirche in the centre of the town, which the Prussian military struggled for several hours to remove.[3]

Initially, the strength of Frankfurt resentment against Prussian rule was not reflected in the city's political life. Indeed, political opposition seemed remarkably muted during the first eighteen months of Prussian rule. Political life was not only relatively slow to take off, but

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1 W.-A. Kropat, Frankfurt, p. 23.

2 HStAW 405 n. 40 fos. 47-52. Zeitungsberichte, January to March 1868. This is but one example of the police president's appreciation of the general aversion felt by the citizens to Prussian rule. In fact, it was the main theme of virtually all his quarterly reports until 1869. See, for example, the following reports of that year, HStAW 405 n. 40 fos. 75-77 and fos. 112-4. Zeitungsberichte, 18.5.1868 and 28.11.1868. On this subject, see also Kropat, Frankfurt, pp. 46-9.

3 Frankfurter Zeitung, 10.11.1868 (1.Blatt). Frankfurter Journal, 9.11.1868.

initially the candidates operating on the basis of the new status quo were remarkably successful.[1] Thus, on 12 February 1867 the conservative Carl Meyer von Rothschild was elected the city's representative to the diet of the North German Confederation with over 90% of the votes, although participation was only around 35%.[2] The city council elections in July 1867 proceeded along similar lines. Even before the votes were cast the Frankfurter Journal lamented the spread of:

> Indifferentismus in Bezug auf öffentliche Angelegenheiten,...- jene stumpfe Gleichgültigkeit des Geschehen- und Geschehenlassens, die unbekümmert ist um die Erfolge.[3]

It complained of a sheer insurmountable apathy in large circles of the population, which seemed to be borne out by the turnout during the main elections on 18 July.[4] Barely 30% of eligible voters turned up[5] to elect a city council in which left-liberals in particular were notably absent.[6]

It would be extremely difficult to attach any political label to the first city council. Indeed, even an astute political observer like the Frankfurter Zeitung found it impossible to judge the political allegiances of the candidates. Thus it wrote that:

> ...die Standpunkte der verschiedenen liberalen Parteischattirungen sind in Folge der vorjährigen Ereignisse so sehr verrückt worden, daß es nahezu unmöglich ist, die Leute nach ihrer früheren Parteistellung zu klassificiren.[7]

The newspaper felt able to comment on the outcome of the recent elections only after the new council had met several times and political groups had begun to emerge. And even then the

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1 Kropat, Frankfurt, pp. 35-9, 43-53. For an account of the first council elections, see also K. Maly, Die Macht der Honoratioren. Geschichte der Stadtverordnetenversammlung 1867-1914 (Frankfurt, 1992), pp. 22-4.

2 Kropat, Frankfurt, pp. 38-9. 7,368 votes were cast, out of about 20,000 eligible voters - the latter figure is an estimate made on the assumption that the number of people eligible for the vote would be roughly proportional to the total population, which remained static from 1867-1871. In 1871, 20,151 were eligible to vote. Wolf, Liberalismus, p. 175.

3 'Indifference with regard to public affairs...- this apathy about any events and actions, which is unmoved by success.' Frankfurter Journal, 30.6.1867.

4 It appears that such language used to mobilise the electorate was quite common at the time, as it is strikingly similar to that used by the liberal Kölnische Zeitung to rally liberal voters in municipal elections in Cologne during the 1850s. Padtberg, Rheinischer Liberalismus, p. 109.

5 Wolf, Liberalismus, p. 129.

6 Kropat, Frankfurt, pp. 44-5.

7 '...as a result of last year's events, the various liberal parties have changed so much in character that it is virtually impossible to classify people [i.e. councillors] according to their previous party label.' Frankfurter Zeitung, 18.6.1867 (2.Blatt).

paper remained extremely vague. It found an uncoordinated majority of between 28 and 30 councillors opposed to a better organised minority of betweem 16 and 18, with the members of this minority forming quite a disparate group, too. And, rather uncharacteristically, the paper was unable to say anything about the poltjtics of either group.[1] What is particularly striking about this first city council, therefore, was the relative lack of political continuity with the former Gesetzgebenden Versammlung, the elected body of the Free City, in which the more radical liberals had enjoyed a majority against the previously dominant moderate liberals and other more conservative groups from 1857 onwards. Naturally, many former civic leaders became city councillors. However, these included not only members of the liberal assembly, but also, for example, seven members of the old conservative Senate.[2] As a result, even though its social composition remained relatively unchanged, the overall political composition of the new Stadtverordnetenversammlung was quite unlike that of the old legislative assembly. This shows very clearly that, at least during the first eighteen months under Prussian rule, the politics of the old order had broken down with the changed political circumstances from July 1866.

To succeed in politics, Frankfurt's left-liberals[3] had to find a way of tapping the resentment which initially had been expressed mainly in non-political terms, and of harnessing it to further their own political ends. This they managed to do with extraordinary success. First of all, there were a number of important newspapers at the left-liberals' disposal. Of these, the Frankfurter Beobachter had a predominantly local daily circulation of perhaps 3,000 to 4,000 copies.[4] The Frankfurter Journal sold about 2,000 of a total circulation of over 7,000 copies

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 29.9.1867 (1. Blatt).

2 For a detailed analysis of the continuities between the old assembly and the new city council, see the forthcoming D. Phil dissertation of Ursula Bartelsheim, at Frankfurt University.

3 In this section the term 'left-liberal' denotes both Progressive and Democratic liberals, because until 1870 there was no clear distinction between the two camps, and even then they continued to be represented in the same political associations until 1873/1874, as described below.

4 The only figures found for the Beobachter ('des verbissendsten Oppositionsblattes') indicate a steady

in the city, whereas the Frankfurter Zeitung sold less than 2,000 copies out of a total circulation of around 6,000 copies in Frankfurt itself.[1] It would be too crude to attempt to quantify the direct influence which these newspapers may have had on their readership. In his important work on the provincial press in England, the late A. J. Lee has argued convincingly that 'at best, people select their channel of communication, and the specific content they expose themselves to, mainly to support views which they already hold'.[2] As an expression of political views, the considerable daily circulation of left-liberal newspapers in Frankfurt, whose readership would have been much greater than that number, is therefore a good indicator in itself about the degree of political interest, particularly in left-liberal politics, in the city.

Even leaving aside the extent to which newspapers actually did influence (rather than reflect) the political views of their readers, what is perhaps more important is that they were perceived to be a great influence upon public opinion by contemporaries. The Prussian authorities kept a close eye on the left-liberal press, not just as an expression of public opinion,[3] but as a main element of opposition against the Prussian authorities. Indeed, sometimes the left-liberal press was held almost solely responsible for the persistence of Frankfurters in their hostility towards Prussia.[4] This view of the role of the press was shared by the newspapers themselves. After the elections to the first Magistrat, the Frankfurter Zeitung confirmed that now that left-liberals were effectively in a minority in both chambers of local government, it would continue to feel obliged to subject them to public scrutiny.[5] It is in this capacity, for example,

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downward trend 1871-1872 from 3,229 copies in the first quarter of 1871 to 2,669 copies a year later. HStAW 405 n. 1066 fo. 382. Zeitungsbericht, 18.5.1872.

1 HStAW 405 n. 1065 fo. 62. Zeitungsbericht, 19.5.1869. HStAW 405 n. 1066 fos. 197, 382. Zeitungsbericht 18.11.1871, 18.5.1872. Note that the only available figures for newspaper circulation have been from about 1869-1872. Only in one instance has a breakdown of sales within and outside Frankfurt been found, that for Febuary to April 1872. The newspaper distribution in Frankfurt itself has been estimated from the ratio between town and country distribution mentioned in 1872.

2 A. J. Lee, The Origins of the Popular Press in England 1855-1914 (London, 1976), p.18.

3 See, for example, HStAW 405 n. 40 fo. 51. Zeitungsbericht January to March 1868.

4 HStAW 405 n. 1065 fo. 14. Zeitungsbericht, 28.2.1869.

5 'Wir haben vor den Wahlen unsere Schuldigkeit gethan, wir werden jetzt, nachdem der neue Magistrat bestellt ist, die uns obliedgende publicistische Controle über die Thätigkeit der beiden städtischen Corporationen ernst und nachdrücklich üben.' ('We have done our duty before the elections, and, now that the new Magistrat has been chosen, we will exercise our due journalistic control on both councils firmly and

that before the second elections to the city council, the newspaper published a detailed list showing how many times each member had been absent in the previous 42 sessions lest the most notorious absentees be re-elected.[1] And it is no accident that in the first months after Frankfurt's annexation, the left-liberal press led the calls for the organisation of political parties,[2] and became the driving force behind the foundation of the most successful liberal organisation, the Demokratischer Wahlverein.

The Demokratischer Wahlverein was founded in Febuary 1868[3] in order to promote democratic development in local and national affairs. Interestingly, however, new members had to be accepted by the committee, and the membership fee was relatively high, set at 2 Guilders per year.[4] There were only 28 founding members, and attendance at its weekly meetings remained quite low.[5] At the same time, it developed a considerable popular appeal, largely because it managed to take over the so-called Bezirksversammlungen, the wards' assemblies, for its purposes.

Already before the first city council elections, the Frankfurter Zeitung pointed out that the new franchise laws had at least the one advantage that the secret ballot would take away the power of the old 'cliques' which could no longer influence local elections. To ensure that these 'cliques' would not continue to dominate local politics by controlling which nominees were to be put on the electoral lists, it urged the formation of an assembly of all electors, one in each electoral district, in which the candidates would be nominated 'from below'.[6] In a conscious break with past political traditions, the Frankfurter Zeitung hoped that whereas before 1866 the actions of the legislative assembly were de facto closed to public scrutiny, these ward

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rigorously.'). Frankfurter Zeitung, 21.1.1868.

1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 31.10.1868. In principle, the Frankfurter Journal agreed. Frankfurter Journal, 19.11.1868 (1. Beilage).

2 See, for example, Frankfurter Journal, 7.11.1867.

3 There is quite a good introduction to the Demokratischer Wahlverein in Wolf, Liberalismus, pp. 21-5.

4 Frankfurter Journal, 5.2.1868.

5 HStAW 405 n. 1065 fo. 62. Zeitungsbericht, 19.5.1869.

6 Frankfurter Zeitung, 18.6.1867 (2.Blatt). See also Frankfurter Zeitung, 30.6.1867 (1. Blatt).

meetings would be permanent institutions which would meet on a regular basis to provide public control over the entire local administration. Furthermore, the ward assemblies would serve as a school for municipal government in the same way that municipal government was a school for state politics.[1]

In many ways, the establishment of the Bezirksvereine was a failure, because despite a few notable exceptions the meetings were rather poorly attended, and their organisation turned out to be much more cumbersome than expected.[2] Mainly, however, they failed in that many of the more conservative local notables were unprepared to subject themselves to public scrutiny. Nevertheless, the Bezirksvereine continued to exist, and received a new, and altered, lease of life from the city's left-liberals. For despite its aim to promote Democratic politics in local government, the Wahlverein agreed with Sonnemann that the Democrats should not nominate their own candidates for local elections. Instead, this task should be left to the nominally unpolitical Bezirksvereine. Only if nominees could not be found would the Democrats step in and suggest some.[3] Less than one year later, in 1869, the committee agreed to Sonnemann's proposal that in future local elections the Wahlverein select a list of candidates which would then be approved by the Bezirksvereine. The Democrats had succeeded, therefore, in appropriating the wards' assemblies for their own ends. Henceforth, the assemblies were politicised as they changed in character from theoretically unpolitical citizens' assemblies to meetings in which Democratic nominees were discussed. In turn, the development gave the Democrats' popular base a considerable impetus.

The influence of Frankfurt's left-liberal newspapers, of which the Frankfurter Zeitung was the most important,[4] as well as the Democratic party organisation with regular meetings and

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 8.7.1867 (1. Blatt).
2 Frankfurter Zeitung, 18.11.1867 (1.Blatt).
3 Frankfurter Zeitung, 14.11.1868.
4 On the Frankfurter Zeitung, see Wolf, Liberalismus, pp. 51-9.

decisions endorsed by public wards' assemblies (the Bezirksvereinsverammlungen, soon to be called demokratische Bezirksversammlungen) became the institutional underpinning for the left-liberals until 1873 and for the Democrats until 1914. It is important to emphasize that these developments were inextricably linked. The initiative to create an organisational structure came clearly from the three main liberal newspapers, so that in November 1869 the police president correctly identified almost all of their editors and sub-editors as the leaders of the Frankfurt Democratic movement ('demokratische Wortführer').[1] The extent of the influence of these organisations can be seen by the fact that in 1871 Sonnemann was nominated by the city's Democrats as their candidate for the Reichstag - despite the fact that Sonnemann was a relative newcomer to the city (he had moved to Frankfurt in 1849),[2] and that as recently as 1867 he had failed to be nominated even as a city councillor.

The creation of an innovative institutional back-up for the Democrats was only one side of the coin. For all these efforts at organisation would have been ineffective without successful policies, or, in the absence of political power, of successful rhetoric, which would have enticed so many citizens to go to the public meetings organised by the Democrats, or to vote for them. Indeed, rhetoric played a crucial part in the left-liberals' success in fuelling and even exploiting popular resentment against the Prussian state.

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1 HStAW 405, n. 1065 fo. 125. Zeitungsbericht, 18.11.1869. The speakers at the weekly meetings were almost exclusively employed by the newspapers. See HStAW 405 n. 1065 fo. 62. Zeitungsbericht, 19.5.1869.

2 K. Gerteis, Leopold Sonnemann. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des demokratischen Nationalstaatsgedankens in Deutschland (Frankfurt, 1970), p. 11.

Heiliger Wilhelm, der Du bist in Berlin,
Vertilgt werde Dein Namen auf Erden.
Dein Reich werde eine Republik
Dein Wille geschehe Nimmer mehr
Unser täglich Brod gibst Du uns doch nicht
Bezahle unsere Schulden wie wir die Deinigen bezahlen mußten
Führ uns nicht in die Bismarcksche Politik
Sondern erlöse uns von dem Übel Deiner Herrlichkeit.
Denn Du hast weder Kraft noch Saft noch Herrlichkeit
Fort mit Dir in Ewigkeit.

Amen[1]

This anti-Prussian satirical version of the Lord's Prayer which must have circulated in Frankfurt during the years 1866 to 1870 was written down by the Democrat Eduard Fay, who, presumably during this time, also wrote:

> Was auf der Welt wird es werden, daß ein Schleswig Holsteiner ein Hanovraner ein Kurhesse ein Nassauer ein Frankfurter der sich frei fühlt von preußischen Beamten etwas anderers ersuchen und erstreben könne als die Befreiung die Erlösung seiner Heimath von dem zugleich heuchlerischen und brutalen Joches des Preußenthums, daß er etwas anderes ersuchen und erstreben könne als die Beschlagung und Auflösung dieses Hohenzollerstaates, des Fluchs für seine Heimat. Des Fluchs für das gesammte deutsche Vaterland![2]

These two examples, one ironic and one bitter, illustrate nicely the main themes of the anti-Prussian rhetoric current in Frankfurt in the years after 1866. Frankfurters resented the annexation in principle as it broke international law (the city had never been at war with Prussia), and they resented in practice the enormous contributions Frankfurt was required to pay under the Prussians. Frankfurt's 'brutal yoke' was its uniquely rough treatment by the Prussian occupying forces and then its degradation to a mere Prussian Kreisstadt in an administrative district (Regierungsbezirk) whose capital became the neighbouring spa resort, Wiesbaden. Finally, there was a very strong sense of opposition to the values and

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[1] 'Our William, who art in Berlin/ Perished be Thy Name/ Thy kingdom become a Republic/ Thy will never be done/ Thou willst not give us this day our daily bread, anyway/ Pay what thou owest us as we had to pay what we owed thee/ And lead us not into Bismarckian Politics/ But deliver us from the evil of Thy magnificence/ For Thine is neither the Power nor the Spirit nor the Glory/ Away with Thee for ever and ever/ Amen' IfSG, S1/11.4. This is only one of several versions of this satire which have survived. IfSG S3/A4769.

[2] 'What is the world coming to, that a person from Schleswig-Holstein, Hanover, the Electorate of Hesse, Nassau or Frankfurt, who feels free from Prussian civil servants could desire and strive for anything but the liberation, the redemption of his native land from the hypocritical and brutal yoke of Prussiandom, that he could desire and strive for anything but the dissolution of this Hohenzollern state, the curse for his native land. The curse for the entire German fatherland.' IfSG, S1/11.

characteristics associated with Prussian institutions, particularly the military, the monarchy and the bureaucracy.

Despite the strength of this resentment, a large part of Frankfurt's articulate left-liberal opinion was surprisingly realistic in its appreciation of the new political situation. On 25 November 1866, only nine days after it had been allowed to print its first issue since the Prussian takeover, the Frankfurter Zeitung discussed some of the necessary changes implie ed by Frankfurt's loss of sovereignty. It looked forward to the advantages of becoming part of the Prussian legal system, as the Frankfurt legal system had been, according to the paper, in urgent need of reform for some time. Furthermore, it welcomed the political change as far as local adminstration was concerned. Rather predictably, it hoped that the conservative senate, which consisted of lifelong members, would be abolished and replaced by an elected body.[1] On the whole, the newspaper agreed with perhaps a majority of the city's citizens in welcoming the introduction of the Prussian Städteordnung, though with the important exception of the three-class franchise.[2] At the same time, the Frankfurter Zeitung was curiously reluctant to welcome some of the economic benefits of the annexation. It insisted that the city owed its prosperity to its own internal democratic reforms prior to 1866, achieved from within.[3] And because freedom of movement and the removal of the guild system were consistent articles of faith for Frankfurt Democrats throughout, the Frankfurter Zeitung refrained from hostility against Prussia on economic grounds, even though it took the newspaper several decades until it openly acknowledged Prussia's positive economic influence, for example through the introduction of the freedom of movement throughout the North German Confederation in 1867.[4]

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 25.11.1866 (1. Blatt).

2 Frankfurter Zeitung, 3.12.1866 (1. Blatt), 29.12.1866 (2. Blatt).

3 Geschichte der Frankfurter Zeitung 1856-1906 (Frankfurt, 1906), p. 154. The newspaper was not alone in opposing the National Liberal contention, particularly after 1870, that Frankfurt owed its economic success to the Prussians. The emphasis on the developing internal forces of reform is taken up by Roth, 'Liberalismus', pp. 66-7.

4 Geschichte der Frankfurter Zeitung, p. 242.

It follows that even one of the leading voices of Frankfurt left-liberal opinion was not blind to the benefits of Prussian annexation and was, for a newspaper well-known for its großdeutsch tendencies, surprisingly willing in principle to give credit to Prussia where credit was due. Even though only a few instances of applause for Prussian institutions or policies can be found during those years, the Frankfurter Zeitung was not inherently anti-Prussian, opposing Prussia for its own sake. Indeed, as the primary financial newspaper of the time it was naturally predisposed to agree with Prussian policies in the economic sphere. Nevertheless, the newspaper went on to express and even strengthen the current anti-Prussian sentiment wherever it could get past the Prussian censors.

In 1867, the Frankfurter Zeitung published an article in which it defended the honour of Frankfurt against attacks from Prussian newspapers by contrasting the virtues of Frankfurt to the vices of Prussia. Whereas in Prussia the state was the ultimate end for which each individual had to be pruned and mutilated in order to fit in, in Goethe's home town the individual citizen was central and allowed to flourish. In Frankfurt, the state had granted the individual virtually everything that a modern state can and ought to grant. The article went on:

> Sollen wir erwähnen, daß wir unabhängige Gerichte, eine freie Advokatur und freigewählte Geschworenen, ein vortreffliches Schulwesen ohne kirchliche und staatliche Beeinflußung gehabt, daß bei uns vollständige Gewerbefreiheit und gewerbliche Freizügigkeit geherrscht, ...., daß unsere Presse sich innerhalb der gesetzlicher [sic.!] Schranken frei bewegte....?[1]

A satirical letter printed just before the 1870 municipal council elections confirmed that before the annexation Frankfurt had been 'eine so viele Jahrhunderte mit Freiheit, Glück und Wohlstand gesegnet gewesene Stadt'.[2] As has already been shown, this picture of Frankfurt is to a large extent untrue. Frankfurt did not have a tradition of freedom and tolerance for all its

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[1] 'Shall we mention that we had independent courts, independent lawyers and a freely elected jury, an excellent school system without interference from the church and the state, that we had complete freedom of trade and movement, ...that we had freedom of the press within the confines of the law...?' Frankfurter Zeitung, 16.7.1867 (1. Blatt).

[2] 'a city blessed for so many centuries with freedom, happiness and prosperity.' Frankfurter Zeitung, 23.11.1870.

inhabitants. A few notable exceptions apart, its schools had been of quite poor quality, the absence of state influence resulting from a refusal of the state to accept any responsibility for its schools rather from any higher principle of non-interference. Furthermore, the Frankfurter Zeitung must have known that it was, in effect, helping in the creation of a myth, because its praise of the Free City's judicial system and of the state itself directly contradicted its earlier criticism of the Free City's judiciary and its archaic political institutions.

In the years after the annexation, the Frankfurt left-liberals, and especially the Democrats, made particularly good use of this rhetoric of Frankfurt's ostensibly liberal tradition. One way the rhetoric found its way into the political language of the Democrats was through the democratic festivals, where in countless speeches and poems the participants would commemorate their vision of a democratic Germany against a stereotypically tyrannical Prussia. To quote an interesting passage from the report in the Frankfurter Zeitung of the anniversary of R. Blum's death, commemorated in the Demokratischer Wahlverein:

> Der Vortrag schloß mit einem Hinblicke aus der trüben Gegenwart in eine ferne bessere Zukunft. Den Glauben an diese bekannte der Redner in dem Zitate des Dichterwortes:
> Denn eine Grenze hat Tyrannenmacht,
> Wenn der Gedrückte nirgends Recht kann finden,
> Wenn unerträglich wirkt die Last- greift er
> Hinauf getrosten Muthes in den Himmel....[1]

These almost pathetic lines lines apply to the situation in Frankfurt - reminiscent as they are of the language used by Eduard Fay quoted earlier - as they do to the political situation in Germany in general. In both cases, Prussia is the tyrant who puts an end to the aspirations of Germany, which are identical with the aspirations of Frankfurt. Thus, Frankfurt's history is equated with that of democratic Germany; Robert Blum died a martyr for democratic Germany as for democratic Frankfurt. Again, the result is clear: Frankfurt became the hive of democracy which it had never been before the late 1850s.

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[1] 'The speech closed with a glimpse from the dreary present into a distant, better future. The speaker affirmed his faith in the latter with a citation from the words of the poet: For the power of tyrants has limits/ When the oppressed cannot find justice anywhere/ When the burden is unbearable, he reaches/ up with confidence to the sky....'. Frankfurter Zeitung, 13.11.1868 (2. Blatt).

Another way in which this rhetoric of Frankfurt 'right' as opposed to Prussian 'wrong' filtered through into Democratic political discourse was the extent to which Frankfurt left-liberals made political capital out of the issue of the Teilungsrezeß. Discontent and outrage at the manner in which Frankfurt property had been appropriated by the Prussians was universal. The Prussian police president for one realised that even after all administrative decisions about the city's new status had been made, the negative attitude of the population would not fade away until the issue of the Rezeß had been resolved.[1] It is important to point out that this was inherently not a political issue that divided the parties. Frankfurt political opinion was united in its assessment that the city had been treated harshly and unjustly by the Prussian government, and in its concern that this grievance would have to be corrected by the Rezeß. Whilst the more conservative writings of the time clothed their demands in typically courteous forms[2] and the more radical liberal opposition tended to be much more abrasive,[3] all had the same aim: repayment of the six million Guilders already paid to the Prussian government in reparations, and a fair settlement on the assets which were to be passed on from the former state of Frankfurt to the state of Prussia.[4]

More than any other issue, however, the Teilungsrezeß came to signify Prussian 'repression' of the city, and it thus became the focus of Frankfurt left-liberal resentment against Prussia.[5] This was an issue about 'right', and nothing less than a repayment of the full six million Guilders

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1 HStAW 405 n. 40 fos. 75-7. Zeitungsbericht, 18.5.1868.

2 'Vertrauensvoll und offen mag also Sr. Marestät bekannt werden, was dennoch das Herz der Frankfurter bedrückt...' ('So in a spirit of trust and openness His Majesty may know what nevertheless weighs heavily on the hearts of the people of Frankfurt'). E. F. Souchay, Was mag Frankfurt übrig bleiben? Nach den Mittheilungen der ständigen Bürgerrepräsentation vom 18. März 1867 beurtheilt (Frankfurt, 1867), p. 3.

3 '....Es ist unser Eigenthum; es ist das Erzeugniß der freien bürgerlichen Arbeit auf unblutige Weise errungen und nicht in den feurigen Ofen des allverzehrenden Militärstaates wollen wir es geworfen sehen!' ('It is our property; it is the product of free citizens' labour, achieved without bloodshed, and we do not want to see it thrown into the fiery furnace of the all-consuming Prussian military state!'). Die projectirte Theilung zwischen dem angeblichen Staatsvermögen und dem städtischen Vermögen von Frankfurt a. Main. Ein Beitrag zur Zeitgeschichte (Stuttgart, 1867), p. 76-7.

4 See also the demands made by the Frankfurter Zeitung in late 1866, in Kropat, Frankfurt, p. 31.

5 Forstmann, 'Frankfurt', pp. 358-9.

would do: 'man habe nur am Recht festzuhalten'.[1] In Febuary 1869 the issue was finally resolved. W.-A. Kropat has pointed out that the settlement was, under the circumstances, the best the Frankfurters could possibly have bargained for, as this was the very final offer the Prussians were prepared to make before unilaterally imposing a settlement.[2] And yet, the Demokratischer Wahlverein battled on relentlessly. Commenting on the decision by the city council, the Frankfurter Journal characteristically rejected the compromise because it involved a denial of what was right, 'ein Aufgeben des allein correcten Rechtsstandpunctes'.[3] In heated debates during two overcrowded meetings, the Demokratischer Wahlverein only just managed to avoid a split on the issue, but in the end accepted Sonnemann's motion of censure for the council.[4]

The dispute over the Rezeß above all else established the Democrats as the ones who would stand up for Frankfurt's rights, and the only ones who were prepared to take on the Prussians. They fought for Frankfurt's interests, their opponents did not. This image was confirmed by the declaration of loyalty given to the Prussian king after the decisive German victories in France. The declaration, sponsored by the Magistrat, lay out openly for members of the public to sign, and several hundred Frankfurters took the opportunity to do so. Predictably, the left-liberals turned this into a matter of principle and refused their support.[5] The address to the king, signed by the most prominent National Liberals of Frankfurt, made it therefore easy for the left-liberals to contrast their own principled righteousness in the defence of Frankfurt with the acquiescence of those to their right who, in their softness, had sold Frankfurt 'on the cheap' in the Rezeß.

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1 'One only had to insist upon one's right'. Frankfurter Zeitung, 14.11.1868 (2. Blatt).

2 Under the terms of the final settlement, Frankfurt was left 8 million Guilders better off than the Prussians had been willing to grant back in Febuary 1867. Kropat, 'Frankfurt', pp. 77ff..

3 Frankfurter Journal, 18.2.1869.

4 Frankfurter Journal, 14.2.1869 (1. Beilage), and 19.2.1869.

5 Kropat, Frankfurt, pp. 178-80.

By 1870, therefore, a rhetoric had emerged which formed the basis of the political language of local Frankfurt politics during the following decades. Before the 1870 elections to the Prussian chamber of deputies, the Frankfurter Zeitung insisted that the declaration of loyalty formed the bridge over which the National Liberals had crossed into the camp of the government.[1] Voting for the non-Democratic candidates was to strengthen the reactionary forces, whereas the Democratic candidates would not move one iota from principles of freedom and right.[2]

In the light of the assumptions of traditional historical scholarship, it would appear that the left-liberals in Frankfurt displayed the German left-liberals' archetypal unworldliness, the characteristic doctrinaire rigidity which made them unable to cope with changes in the political landscape. These Democrats were quite unlike those moderate democrats of 1848 of the 'Rhine-Main area' who became increasingly pragmatic and went on to find themselves supporters of the Progressive party, willing to accept the inevitable.[3] And yet, perhaps paradoxically, it is this very Weltfremdheit which ensured the Democrats' success in Frankfurt. Through the rhetoric of principled resistance to Prussia, they were able in only a very short period of time to exploit Frankfurt grievances and the predominant discontent for their own ends. Indeed, the success of the Demokratischer Wahlverein is impressive. The gatherings in February 1869 against the Rezeß may have been an act of resistance against the inevitable, but this was not the point: each of these meetings drew an audience of more than 1,000 people. The Wahlverein thus used every opportunity to 'stir up' the citizens of Frankfurt during anti-Prussian demonstrations such as these and through open election meetings, which could rally as many as several hundred people. More importantly, this strategy paid off in the

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 8.11.1870 (1. Blatt).

2 'Wer aber nicht will, daß die Vertreter Frankfurts um ein Haar breit von der Sache der Freiheit und des Rechts abweichen, der gebe den Wahlmännern des Commitees für freisinnige Wahlen seine Stimme'. Frankfurter Zeitung, 9.11.1870 (1. Blatt).

3 Wettengel, Revolution, pp. 518 ff..

elections. After successfully contesting the 1868 local elections, after which the Demokratischer Wahlverein provided twelve out of 54 town council members, the Democrats went from strength to strength until in 1876 the re-named Democratischer Verein possessed an overall majority. What is really most surprising is that the Democratic rhetoric survived the wave of patriotism that swept through Frankfurt like any other city during the war of 1870/71, and that it continued to be successful after that.

In a report of a Democratic rally for the 1874 local elections in front of 600 people, the Frankfurter Zeitung quoted the president of the meeting, Maximilian Reinganum, as saying:

> Die demokratische Partei sei diejenige, welche dem, was früher gewesen, ein pietätvolles Andenken bewahrt habe.... Zu seinem Bedauern habe die Fortschrittspartei sich der Nationalliberalen angeschlossen, welch letztern es am allerliebsten wäre, wenn die Altfrankfurter mit Eleganz das Mir und Mich verwechseln lernten. (Beifall.) Was früher schön an Frankfurt gewesen, sei das Bischen Partikularismus...; es schade nichts, wenn man ein Bischen Eigenheit behalte. Der Frankfurter sei... immer ein Mann, der ein unabhängiges, freisinniges Wesen in sich getragen. Das sei nun vorüber, dieser Zeit soll man aber ein Andenken bewahren und sich gegen den Anprall stemmen, der Stück für Stück diese Eigenthümlichkeiten hinwegzuschwemmen drohe.[1]

Democrat rhetoric had thus changed slightly in form, though not in essence. The characteristics of an old Frankfurter were his natural independence and liberalism. Being democrat was one of the good old Frankfurt traditions, which made all the difference. Reinganum was not alone in his proclaiming this message. The popular and widely-respected local poet, Adolf Stoltze, devoted the last decades of his life to buttressing this link between local culture and politics through his local version of the Simplicissimus, the Frankfurter Latern.[2] In it, for example, Stoltze reprinted for the 1872 council elections a poem originally

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[1] 'The Democratic party was the one which had conserved a pious memorial to the past... To his regret, the Progressive Party had formed a coalition with the National Liberals, who would prefer it more than anything else if the old citizens of Frankfurt would learn to use the words Mir and Mich grammatically. (Applause.) What used to be nice about Frankfurt charm was the little bit of particularism that existed...; It would not hurt to preserve a little individuality. The 'Frankfurter' was... always independent and liberal-minded. These days are gone, but they should be commemorated and we should resist any attacks which threaten to take away these peculiarities one by one.' Frankfurter Zeitung, 24.11.1874 (Abendblatt).

[2] Interestingly, the ailing weekly Latern was supported throughout the period of its existence through regular financial contributions by Leopold Sonnemann. Apart from the apparent friendship between Sonnemann and Stoltze, this is an important indication that the former recognised the importance of this link which the latter provided, between local culture and politics. C. Funck, Lebenserinnerungen. Mit einer Einführung von Ludwig Heilbronn (Frankfurt, 1921), pp. 53-4.

written for the first council elections in 1867. Significantly in local dialect, the committed Democrat wrote about the requirements of a good councillor:

> Männer, Männer thun uns Noth!
> Männer ächt von Korn un Schrot
> Fest wie Stahl und ääch so spred
> Wann derr sich's um Frankfort dreht;
> "Stark im Recht" und stolz und fest!
> Frankfort is kää Lumpenest.[1]

Again, in these lines there is the appeal for men of principle, men who are in the right. The demand for 'Männer von echtem Schroth und Korn' is one that can be found in this form in countless election speeches and even manifestos, it is one for men of genuine character and honesty - in fact, it was the description that was universally recognised as one befitting only an old Frankfurter. The stanza closes with another important theme, an appeal to Frankfurt's history, in effect to the citizens' local pride.

Therefore, after the foundation of the Empire in 1871, the excesses of anti-Prussian rhetoric were gone, even though the Rezeß still featured prominently in other speeches during the meeting. The essence of Democratic rhetoric remained, however, and could not be expressed more clearly than in the two examples given above. Those who loved their city, its liberal traditions, its peculiarities in language and character, were Democrats (or left-liberal on the occasions when the Progressives and the Democrats co-operated). The elections were to prove that Frankfurt was a 'democratic city'.[2] To vote Democrat, therefore, became a demonstration of local patriotism and an act of civic pride.

By the early 1870s, therefore, Frankfurt local politics had become clearly politicised in a way that it had not been before 1866. Of course, there were important and crucial continuities. The carrier of early liberalism in Frankfurt, the bourgeois clubs (Vereine), did not disappear

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1 'Men, we need men!/ Men of true character and blood/ Hard as iron and also stubborn/ Whenever Frankfurt is concerned/ 'Strong in its Right' and proud and solid/ Frankfurt is not a hive for rogues'.' Frankfurter Latern, 23.11.1872.

2 Frankfurter Zeitung, 20.11.1874 (Abendblatt).

overnight, as Roth shows, and they continued to be the most important social focal points.[1] Also, the style of left-liberal politics, for example the popular festivals, had already been developed before the revolutions of 1848/1949.[2] Last but not least, the Democrats had become the majority party of opposition in 1857, and there was a remarkable continuity between the left-liberal notables before and after the annexation. However, Frankfurt had become a notable stronghold of liberalism compared with the surrounding area only during the 1850s, and as the period after the annexation showed, this created a political potential which nevertheless had to be brought out into the open. This was achieved through the skilful use of rhetoric, which was facilitated by the Democrat control over the press, and through the establishment of a popular party organisation. As a result of the Democrats' success in tapping the general anti-Prussian resentment, the importance of the city's left-liberals was transformed, from one of the city's parties in opposition, as before 1866, to the one party which alone stood for the interests of Frankfurt. The importance of the bourgeois clubs shifted to their social functions, and increasingly political organisations took over the city's public sphere. Significantly, in early 1868 the police president still identified the clubs as the main centres of opposition,[3] whereas once it had been established, the president found that, of all organisations, it was the Demokratischer Wahlverein which had become the centre of opposition to the Prussian government.[4]

Furthermore, the weight had shifted within the left-liberal movement from the more doctrinaire 'Altdemokraten' such as Hadermann and Fay to the 'Neudemokraten', that is those who were prepared to follow Sonnemann's and the other editors' lead in trying to move towards a more popular base. Despite the cloak of an intransigent, stubborn rhetoric, Sonnemann's organisational drive shows that these Democrats were extremely pragmatic, and

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1 Roth, 'Liberalismus', pp. 65-6.
2 Ibid., p. 60-61.
3 HStAW 405 n. 40 f. 50. Zeitungsbericht, January to March 1868.
4 HStAW 405 n. 1065 f. 15. Zeitungsbericht, 28.2.1869.

an examination of their policies will show that far from looking back, they were more than willing to tackle the problems of their day and of the future. As a result, these Democrats carried the day, and, overshadowed by the success of the Demokratischer Wahlverein, the other Democratic splinter groups came into its fold in 1873, when the Demokratischer Verein was founded. Moerover, the Demokratischer Wahlverein's success forced its political opponents to act and give up some of their notions of notable politics (Honoratiorenpolitik), at least in appearance. Thus, in 1873 the National Liberal Frankfurter Wahlverein was founded, and in 1874 the Verein der Fortschrittspartei followed. Both organisations were designed to hold popular meetings for the selection of candidates before local, state or national elections, while the latter tried to follow the Democrats in holding regular public meetings even though in this it remained relatively unsuccessful. Consequently, it is the Frankfurt left-liberals' rhetorical and organisational response to the changes of 1866 which transformed Frankfurt's political life, and created by 1874 the political framework of three liberal parties contending for political power, in the absence of any conservative opposition. This framework was to be in place throughout the rest of the century.

## 2.2. The Politicisation of Local Government in Frankfurt am Main.

Having described the establishment of the three liberal parties which dominated Frankfurt's bourgeois politics until 1918 and beyond, it is now necessary to consider the extent and the nature of their political influence on municipal politics in particular, rather than on the general political climate as a whole. It is important to realise that the very presence of liberal parties and even of liberals in the municipal adminstration does not necessarily mean that local government was conducted on a party-political basis. In Germany, liberals became involved in

local politics well before 1848, and those liberals involved in local government became the main carriers of the revolutions of 1848/49.[1] Yet, they continued to insist on the non-political nature of municipal government throughout the rest of the century.[2] At some point, municipal government underwent the transition from government by Honoratioren, that is local notables elected because of their social standing with party affiliation a secondary consideration, to government by political parties, where participation was based primarily on a common political creed. As was noted above, most historians have followed the arguments of Helmuth Croon and Wolfgang Hofmann that this transition occurred around the turn of the century in response to the emergence of the well-organised SPD in local politics.[3] This view has, however, been challenged by Brian Ladd, who has emphasized the politicising effects of other political forces, notably the Centre Party in some areas from the 1870s onwards, as well as the Mittelstand during the 1880s and 1890s. Indeed, he observed that 'continuing allegiance to an ideal of apolitical local government prevented neither engagement in municipal affairs nor behavior that we can unhesitatingly call political'.[4] Unfortunately, since it is not in his main line of enquiry Ladd does not analyse this 'political behavior' and its implications, nor does he give any qualitative account of municipal politics. This is precisely what this section aims to do in an attempt to take issue on the prevalent notion that until about 1900, city government was characterised more by the politics of notables than the politics of parties. To do so, it is necessary to look at the rhetoric of the day to see what image the leading protagonists wanted to convey. Then, it shall be investigated how much politics actually did matter, during

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1 In general, see H. Heffter, Die Deutsche Selbstverwaltung im 19. Jahrhundert. Geschichte der Ideen und Institutionen (Stuttgart, 1950), p. 220. also: J. Knudsen, 'Liberal Politics in Berlin', in Jarausch and Jones (eds.), In Search of a Liberal Germany, pp. 111-31. Nolte, 'Gemeindeliberalismus, pp. 57-93.

2 H. Croon, 'Das Vordringen der politischen Parteien im Bereich der kommunalen Selbstverwaltung', in H. Croon, W. Hofmann and G.-Chr. von Unruh (eds.), Kommunale Selbstverwaltung im Zeitalter der Industrialisierung (Stuttgart, 1971), pp. 15-58. Pogge von Strandmann, 'Monopolies', pp. 102 ff..

3 W. Hofmann, Stadtverordneten, passim.. H. Croon, 'Die Stadtvertretungen in Krefeld und Bochum', pp. 289-306. Essentially, the argument has remained unchanged. '...bis zum Vordringen von Zentrum und Sozialdemokratie und vielfach auch noch danach wurden die Stadtverordneten mehr als Honoratioren denn als Vertreter einer Partei gewählt'. Wolfgang Hartwig, 'Großstadt', pp. 46-7.

4 Ladd, Urban Planning, p. 26.

elections and in the town council itself. Political behaviour is only partly revealed by 'parliamentary' actions. The section will therefore conclude by looking at the relationship between the groups inside the council and their constituents.

It has already been indicated that the Frankfurt Democrats contested the municipal elections with considerable success. This was by no means easy, because to do this, they had to convince the citizens of Frankfurt that, in contrast to the notion that politics had no place inside the town hall - the prevailing view in Frankfurt as elsewhere - politics had an important part to play in local administration. From the very beginning, the Frankfurter Zeitung tried to ensure that candidates with genuine left-liberal credentials be elected. Thus, in 1868 it suggested as criteria for testing the viability of candidates that they should advocate an extension of the local franchise and the abolition of the tax on animal slaughter and flour-grinding (Schlacht- und Mahlsteuer) - both were blatantly left-liberal demands.

In 1874, the Democrat Maximilian Reinganum declared, according to the Frankfurter Zeitung:

> Wenn die Gegner auch ausrufen: Keine Politik, so werde doch jeder unbefangene Beurtheiler zugeben, daß selbst bis in die kleinsten Gemeinden hinein die großen Parteien wirken und walten. Wer behaupte, daß die Stadtverordneten-Versammlung ohne Politik und politische Parteistellung ihre Aufgabe durchführen könne, glaube das selbst im Ernste nicht.[1]

Reinganum's frequently quoted speech shows not only the vehemence with which the Democrats could at times insist on the centrality of party allegiance to the conduct of local government, but it also suggests that there was a sizeable opposition to the very concept itself. To be fair, the Democrats, too, shared that opposition at times. Indeed like their opponents, they oscillated quite considerably in their assertions on the political character of the city council. For example, only two years after Reinganum made his speech quoted above, the Democrats introduced their list of candidates, 'Parteirücksichten den Interessen des

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[1] 'Even if the opposition proclaims: "No politics", every independent judge has to admit that the big parties operate even in the smallest communities. Those who insist that the local council could . politics and political party convictions cannot be serious.'. Frankfurter Zeitung, 20.11.1874 (Abendblatt).

Gemeinwesens unterordnend, unbefangen und ohne Ausschließlichkeit'.[1] During the elections, the Frankfurter Zeitung complained bitterly that the alliance of Progressive and National Liberals had drawn up its list of candidates purely out of party-political considerations, irrespective of the good of the city.[2] This ambiguity, which was shared by the other parties, deserves closer attention because it was one of the main features of liberal rhetoric until 1900, and because it can shed some light on the general debate to what extent - and for what reasons - local government was politicised.

There are several general reasons why Frankfurt liberals emphasized the political nature of the local elections to varying degrees, depending on the circumstances of the elections. First, one would expect any oppositional body with a group identity based on personal connections and shared beliefs to oppose the prevailing notions advocated by the majority, simply to stake a claim as to why the body as a whole ought to be preferred. In other words, it is natural that the Democrats, as long as they were in a minority, would emphasize the political nature of local elections to show why their candidates ought to be elected, rather than the current majority which claimed to be composed of talent without regard to party. Likewise, as soon as they considered themselves on the defensive, as in 1876, they would emphasize the non-political character of their list of candidates. Conversely, against continued Democratic strength the best other political groups could do was to emphasize the non-political nature of their own lists of candidates. Hence, the protestations of the National Liberals and, later, of representatives of the Bürgervereine and the Mittelstand, that politics should be kept out of the town hall, was a political act in itself.[3] A further reason why it was the Democrats who

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1 'subordinating party political considerations to the interest of the common good, without prejudice and exclusiveness'. Frankfurter Zeitung, 23.11.1876 (Mittagsblatt).

2 Frankfurter Zeitung, 22.11.1876 (Abendblatt).

3 John Rolling notes a similar behaviour for the emergence of the SPD from 1900, against which all liberal parties emphasize the non-political character of municipal government. J. D. Rolling, 'Das Problem der "Politisierung" der kommunalen Selbstverwaltung in Frankfurt am Main 1900-1918', AFGK, lvii (1980), 185. Rolling echoes here Sheehan's correct observations about the motives of insisting on the 'unpolitical' with respect of the SPD. Sheehan, 'Liberals', pp. 135-7. However, the crucial difference is that in Frankfurt this argument was used first in the 1870s against liberals themselves, and that this had nothing inherently to do with keeping the SPD and all it represented out of the town council.

emphasised the political nature of local government was that, as has been shown above, despite their roots which went back to the Revolution of 1848, the Democrats as a 'populist' organisation led by the circle around Sonnemann were a new phenomenon. As such, the emphasis on politics as well as the drawing up of firm party principles helped to cement the new party identity of the Democrats after the Annexation.

Finally, for the parties which made a point out of the unpolitical nature of municipal politics, this was often dictated by sheer political necessity. In a closed meeting to discuss the Progressives' tactics for the coming local elections in 1882, the chairman was asked why the party did not proceed to nominate its own candidates, rather than include members of other parties on its list of nominees. He responded with the revealing comment that, firstly, this would be too expensive for the party, and, secondly, the party was too weak to go alone and thus was forced to co-operate with other parties.[1] Similarly, no matter how political the Democrats chose to call the different local elections, their list of nominations always included a considerable number from the political opposition. That this was not done out of any theoretical commitment to a non-political ideal can be assumed from the fact that the National Liberals who found their names on Democratic nomination lists were usually nominated in areas (such as the fourth electoral district) where the Democrats did not have a chance of winning, anyway.[2]

Finally, a good demonstration that National Liberals had, despite their rhetoric, accepted the political nature of local affairs can be taken from the general meeting of the Frankfurter Wahlverein in April 1877, four years after its foundation. One of the motions discussed was a suggestion to alter article two of its constitution, in which it merely claimed to be an

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1 HStAW 407 n. 150[1] fo. 126. Progressive Association meeting, 20.11.1882. For the same reasons, the Progressives nominated Wahlmänner for the state elections only in areas where they saw chances of success. HStAW 407 n. 150[1] fos. 215-6. Progressive Association meeting, 21.10.1885.

2 See also the public meeting of 1874 in which Dr. May challenged the Democrats to admit that they merely did not possess the strength to nominate their own supporters in all the wards. Frankfurter Zeitung, 24.11.1874 (Abendblatt).

organisation of men of all parties committed to the new Empire, in order to make clearer its affiliation to the National Liberal party. Another suggestion was to change the name of the Frankfurter Wahlverein simply to Nationalliberaler Wahlverein. In the end, both motions were rejected as there was general agreement that the political views of the Wahlverein were unmistakeable already.[1] Their frequent unpolitical rhetoric notwithstanding, even during the 1870s all three liberal organisations in Frankfurt competed in the local elections on a distinctly political basis.

Another aspect of the politicisation of municipal politics was the development of party manifestos, and, as so often, here the Democrats were pioneers. In fact, National Liberal election manifestos did not appear for more than a decade, which was only logical given the party's customary public insistence on the 'unpolitical'. The Progressives, allied to one liberal party or the other, followed the latters' lead and did not produce a manifesto of their own. However, even if for a long time the Democrats were the only ones to state their policy in an election manifesto signed by the party committee and followed by a list of candidates, it is assumed that the policies mentioned were at least partly contested by the other parties - otherwise there would have been no need to mention them in the first place.

As already mentioned, the Frankfurter Zeitung proceeded in 1867, despite the absence of any liberal organisation, to demand that candidates seek a liberalisation of the municipal franchise and the abolition of the Schlacht- und Mahlsteuer. The latter was effectively a tax on meat and flour which, to make matters worse in the eyes of the Democrats, had been imposed by the Prussians without any consultation with local representatives.[2] After all that has been established in this study about the link between Leopold Sonnemann, the newspaper's

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[1] HStAW 407 n. 160 fo. 73. National Liberal meeting of 9.4.1877. The report is taken from a newpaper cutting, which shows that the 'unpolitical' Wahlverein was quite happy for its party affiliation to go public.

[2] Maly, 'Macht', pp. 35-7.

proprietor, and the Demokratischer Wahlverein, it is not surprising that in 1868 the latter turned these demands into its own. In its first election manifesto, drawn up specifically for the municipal elections, the Verein went on to demand a more independent and rigorous line against Prussia (with particular reference to the negotiations concerning the Rezeß), the establishment exclusively of non-denominational schools, and the institution of municipal gas works.[1]

During the municipal elections throughout the period under investigation, these five demands, for electoral reform, for a socially acceptable burden of taxation through the introduction of direct, progressive taxes, for the maintenance of Frankfurt's self-government against Prussia, for the principle of non-denominational schooling, and for the municipal ownership of public utilities, became the essence of Democrat policies. This programme was repeated in full for the municipal elections of 1872, adapted to demands which were more specific but which all descended from these five points.[2] Subsequent progammes for municipal elections until the mid-1880s were much more modest as they articulated only perhaps one of these demands.[3] (Democrats felt in the defensive from 1874 onwards and were thus less keen to emphasize the partisan character of the elections.) Nevertheless, what is important is that each of these demands could be traced back to the points mentioned in 1868 and 1872, and that during the election speeches throughout each campaign, these demands were mentioned time and again. These were, then, the areas in which political affiliation and conviction were perceived to be of importance in local government. Naturally, this means that the narrower questions of municipal administration, such as how many streets were going to be repaired, how to ensure an adequate water supply or in which area to build the next school, were left out of of the fold

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1 Wolf, Liberalismus, p. 133.

2 Frankfurter Zeitung, 23.11.1872 (2. Blatt).

3 For example, after hints that the Prussian government might consider the introduction of the new Städteordnung for Frankfurt, the 1876 manifesto was exclusively concerned with the preservation of Frankfurt Selbstverwaltung. Maly, 'Macht', pp. 112-3, Frankfurter Zeitung, 23.11.1876 (Mittagsblatt). The main theme of the 1878 manifesto was fair taxation. Frankfurter Zeitung, 18.11.1878. A lacklustre 1880 manifesto merely rallied against 'reactionary' tendencies in local administration. Frankfurter Zeitung, 22.11.1880 (Abendblatt).

of municipal party politics.[1] In this sense, a large part of municipal administration was, indeed, 'unpolitical' until the turn of the century and even beyond. Nevertheless, the array of subjects which were deemed 'political' remains impressive and covered virtually every area of importance in municipal government: fiscal policy, social policy, economic policy, education policy and all matters concerning the city's relationship with the state.

Committing its candidates to a common programme before the elections was one thing - getting the individual councillors to keep their common pledges once elected was quite another. On the whole, the decisions of the city council, and of the administration as a whole, appear to suggest that there was very little group loyalty inside the city council, as few of the biggest party's demands were actually enacted. From the Democrats' point of view, the most important failure was their inability to achieve any significant municipal initiative to enlarge the franchise, but there were also other ones. For example, despite several attempts the gasworks never did get municipalised.

A study of the printed and unprinted minutes of the Stadtverordnetenversammlung certainly does suggest an absence of politics from the discussions, as individuals seemed to speak for themselves rather than for a group. However, a note of caution is appropriate here, as a comparison with newspaper reports of meetings (where available) shows that many of the most heated discussions were not reproduced in full in the minutes. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that virtually all contentious matters were initially referred to the relevant committee composed of members of all parties which would try to achieve some consensus.[2] This represents not so much the 'reign of the unpolitical', but simply the most realistic way of

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[1] In 1882, for example, Heinrich Rößler emphasised the importance of politics on the issues of non-denominational schooling, the franchise and Selbstverwaltung, and that in consideration of the importance of these matters it would be petty and ridiculous ('lächerlich') to apply politics, for example, to the paving of streets. Frankfurter Zeitung, 14.11.1882 (Abendblatt).

[2] See the admission of councillor Paul Zirndorfer that the real work of city government lay in the commissions. Frankfurter Zeitung, 1.11.1902 (3. Morgenblatt).

conducting politics under the conditions of the Prussian city ordinance. Under the Frankfurt constitution, the Magistrat was the executive body for the policies arrived at by the city council, but in the majority of cases both chambers had to agree to these policies, lest the Prussian authorities in Wiesbaden be called in as an arbiter.[1] Seeking to avoid at all costs Prussian interference in breach of the principle of Selbstverwaltung, the Democrats therefore had an interest in looking for compromise with the Magistrat. Furthermore, since the Magistrat was de facto the stronger of the two bodies,[2] it was only really possible to stand up to the Magistrat if the city council itself was united. Therefore, it was in the Democrats' best interests to seek political compromise, even if this meant that their policies got 'watered down' in the process.

Indeed, there is considerable evidence from contemporaries that the Stadtverordnetenversammlung did play according to political ground-rules. In his memoirs, councillor Funck noted of his first years in the council in the early 1880s that, on the whole, the different parties inside the chamber had a good relationship with each other.[3] It is interesting that Funck talks of the council as a body composed of different parties, rather than of unpolitical Honoratioren. Funck went on to say that although the Progressives had often co-operated with the National Liberals during the municipal elections, once in the council they more often than not voted with the Democrats 'on political matters'. A decade later, the rules had been reversed. For the 1892 elections, the Democrats declared that they were willing yet again to set up a common list of candidates with the Progressive Party, but only on the condition that the Progressives end their alliance ('gemeinsame Fraktion') with the National Liberals inside the city council.[4]

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1 On the relationship between the two bodies in Frankfurt, see Wolf, 'Liberalismus', pp. 109-17.

2 W. Hofmann, 'Aufgaben und Struktur der kommunalen Selbstverwaltung im Zeitalter der Industrialisierung', in K. G. A. Jeserich, H. Pohl, G.-C. von Unruh (eds.), Deutsche Verwaltungsgeschichte (Stuttgart, 1984), iii. 616.

3 Funck, Lebenserinnerungen, p. 144.

4 Frankfurter Zeitung, 15.11.1892 (2. Morgenblatt). Wolf, Liberalismus, p. 145.

Another obvious sign of the degree of politicisation of the city council is the list of appointments to the various committees and the prestigious council offices, whose members were elected during the first council sessions of each year.[1] It is extremely difficult to come to any conclusion about the importance of party affiliation with respect to the composition of the various committees.[2] If one breaks these down by party, what is most striking is their constancy in their relative party composition. The finance committee was made up of seven members in 1875, of whom four were Democrats, one was National Liberal and two were Progressives. In 1897, it had nine members, of whom five were Democrats, and two were members of each of the other liberal parties. The years in-between showed only slight alterations in relative strength. The Organisationskomitee had four Democrats, two National Liberals and one Progressive as members in 1875. In 1887, this had changed to three Democrats, three National Liberals and one Progressive. A decade later, this composition was still unchanged. Most committees throughout the last quarter of the century contained at least one member of each liberal party. On the whole, the party composition of the committees changed only very slightly. All this strongly suggests that party composition did matter in the council - if it had not mattered, it would have been random from year to year.

Over time, the ratio of the parties in the various committees changed as the number of committees grew. In 1875, of all the committee members, 28 were Democrats, 9 National Liberals and 11 Progressives. In 1887, 29 members were Democrats, 9 were National Liberals and 10 were Progressives. By 1897, however, a large increase in the number of

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[1] For the members of the city council, its officers and the Magistrat, see Haupt-Register aus den Mittheilungen zu den Protokollen der Stadtverordneten- Versammlung der Stadt Frankfurt a.M. für die Jahrgänge 1867 bis incl. 1900, nebst einem Verzeichniß der Mitglieder des Magistrats und der Stadtverordneten-Versammlung seit dem Jahre 1867, ed. G. Dannenberg, (Frankfurt, 1902). As a supplementary source, see Patricia Tratnik, 'Mitglieder der Frankfurter Stadtverordnetenversammlung 1867-1914' (Frankfurt, 1984), typescript in IfSG. Party affiliations for the council members have been worked out from fragmentary membership lists, appearances of candidates in political meetings and signatures on political pamphlets.

[2] The following facts have been compiled from the official minutes of the city council. IfSG, MPS, 1875 (§§1-7), 1888 (§§1-22), 1889 (§§1-12), 1892 (§§1-11), 1893 (§§1-8), 1894 (§§2- 3), 1897 (§§1-5).

committee posts meant that 47 of these went to Democrats, 31 to National Liberals and 26 to the Progressives. All three parties had taken a share in the increase, but as a reflection of their relative loss of seats in the council itself, the Democrats had lost ground relative to the other two parties. Even when committee membership was relatively more balanced, the National Liberals still displayed a tendency to sit on those committees which required less involvement. In 1896, both Progressive and Democrat committee members went to an average of about 15 committee meetings, while their National Liberal peers went to an average of about 11.[1] Left-liberals predominated on the demanding building and planning committees, whilst the National Liberals were traditionally strong, for example, in the legal committee, which in 1896 met but twice. This difference would have been more pronounced in 1875, when of the nine posts taken by the National Liberals, three of them alone were in the five-man strong justice committee. An analysis of party compostition of the council committees over time shows, therefore, the relevance of party affiliation even inside the Town Hall. Of course, if political affiliation was something like a sine qua non for working in the committees, it was by no means the only criterion. Having spare time and enthusiasm were very important, too, particularly as the administrative burden of municipal government increased through the years. Committee work could be very time-consuming and unrewarding. Finally, qualification was an important consideration. This mattered particularly for the more specialised committees. In 1897, all five members of the legal committee were lawyers themselves.

A similar picture of the importance of party affiliation can be gained from a brief look at the distribution of the more prestigious council offices. During the 1870s, the president of the city council consistently came from the strongest party in the council, the Democrats. His deputy was a Democrat from 1871 to 1877, the post filled thereafter by a representative of a party

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[1] These figures are estimates derived from the committee members elected for 1897 and the actual times the committees met in 1896. MPS, 1897 (§§ 3-5). The figure for the National Liberals is significantly boosted by the hyperactive Adolf von Harnier, who ran as an independent but whom contemporaries counted as a National Liberal. If one did not include him in the National Liberal figure, their average would fall to nine meetings for each committee member.

which was not connected to the president. In 1880, the presidency went over to G. A. Humser. Admittedly, as a National Liberal he was not elected out of party considerations, but because he was a widely respected figure, even among Democrats. But under these circumstances it was a matter of course that his deputy would be a Democrat. This was indeed the case, except for one year, 1893, when the Progressives, for personal reasons, refused to elect the Democratic candidate for the post, Leopold Sonnemann. Instead, they and the National Liberals elected another Democrat, Heinrich Rößler. Out of party loyalty, Rößler refused to accept his election, so that the Progressives and National Liberals proceeded to elect a Progressive, Theodor Stern.[1] For the office of the secretary and his deputy, the same applies: until 1900, both were from opposing parties. Party politics in the council, therefore, was not strict in the sense that the majority party or the majority coalition would monopolise all offices which, in theory, it could have done. Yet municipal offices were not distributed to affiliates of either party completely at random, either. There seemed to be a genuine perception reflected in the elections to municipal offices that these prestigious and influential posts ought to reflect the relative strengths of the different parties.

Having established the important role party politics played in the Frankfurt city council, there was nevertheless a distinct lack of party unity as far as voting behaviour was concerned. At a public election rally of the Democratic party in 1874 attended by about 600 people, the Progressive Dr. Ebner complained that in too many political decisions, Democrats had voted against their own programme and against their own professed principles.[2] It was, in fact, the same charge pounded mercilessly by the SPD against the Democrats, from the late 1890s onwards.[3] However, the lack of party discipline before 1900, and even afterwards, should not

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1 Maly, Macht, p. 310.

2 Frankfurter Zeitung, 24.11.1874 (Abendblatt). On the liberals' undisciplined voting behaviour even as late as the 1890s, see Rolling, 'Problem', p. 173.

3 This was particularly, though by no means exclusively, pronounced on the liberals' inconsistencies concerning the extension of the franchise. See, for example, J. D. Rolling, 'Liberals, Socialists, and City

necessarily be taken as a sign of weakness. After all, party unity within elected representative bodies was never a liberal forte, neither in Germany nor, indeed, in England.

And yet, there was a tremendous amount of informal discussion before council meetings took place, even in the absence of formal Fraktionen. From the very beginning, councillors met privately with a group of like-minded peers to discuss strategic matters for forthcoming council meetings.[1] Indeed, there even survives a Geschäfts-Ordnung for the 'demokratische Fraktion'.[2] Unfortunately, this is not dated, but its very existence in Fay's private papers points to its formulation in that decade (Fay died in 1878). The Geschäfts-Ordnung gives the very distinct impression of the existence of a Fraktionszwang, but this should be taken with a pinch of salt.[3] There was no party whip, and there was no means of enforcement: it was extremely rare that someone would be excluded from re-nomination because of his voting behaviour. What the Geschäfts-Ordnung does confirm, however, is that informal discussions by council members affiliated to one party did take place on a regular basis. This provides further evidence for the existence of a common identity among councillors which was based primarily on common political convictions, rather than on common ties formed by membership of the same club or profession. This common identity was initially only shared by the city's Democrats. Yet by their very exclusion from this circle, whether they liked it or not, it also became the main element of Progressive and National Liberal behaviour.

By the late 1870s, municipal life had become not only distinctly political as far as elections were concerned, it had also become astonishingly 'modern'. Not only did municipal councillors get elected on a party 'slate', but once inside the chamber they displayed clearly recogniseable political behaviour as part of a political group. Of course, politics was not the

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Government in Imperial Germany: The Case of Frankfurt am Main, 1900-1918' (Wisconsin Univ. Madison PH.D. thesis 1979), 189 ff..

1 IfSG, NL Fay, S1/11.6. Sauerländer to Fay, 23.9.1867.

2 IfSG, NL Fay, S1/11.3.

3 Something Wolf, unfortuntely, fails to do. Wolf, Liberalismus, p. 41.

only influence upon councillors. Because the local council was responsible for local policy as well as the supervision of municipal administration, the very nature of the administrative decisions faced by the councillors precluded any political action on a large number of issues. It is perfectly obvious, therefore, that any state parliament which did not have to control its bureaucracy would seem to be much more political than local government.

Nevertheless, of all the characteristics that influenced decision-making and the relationships in the town council, such as profession or social standing, politics was by far the most important. In 1872, Georg Varrentrapp was nominated for re-election by a large number of 'independent citizens', in effect National Liberals. Varrentrapp, of old Frankfurt stock whose father had been the most prominent physician of his day in the city, had distinguished himself as the driving force behind Frankfurt's drainage system, the second in Germany. And yet, his enormous social prestige and his unique achievements for his native city were not good enough for Frankfurt's Democrats. On the grounds that to support Varrentrapp would amount to a 'slap in the face of the [Democrat] programme', his nomination was almost unanimously rejected by the popular gathering.[1] Social standing was important, but politics was paramount.

Local politics in Frankfurt was 'modern' not only as far as life inside the council was concerned. More importantly, at least according to Langewiesche,[2] it was modern in the sense that it was popular. It has already been mentioned that some of the pre-election rallies could draw substantial crowds of several hundred people. But municipal politics was not only popular during election time: it was subjected virtually all year round to public debate by the three liberal parties.

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 26.11.1872 (2. Blatt).
2 Langewiesche, 'Anfänge', p. 335.

Of these, the most active was, of course, the Democratic party, which held public meetings at regular one- to three-weekly intervals from early autumn to late spring.[1] Unfortunately, the first police reports of the meetings which have survived date from 1879, so that it is impossible to give any precise attendance figures for the early meetings of the Demokratischer Verein. In 1879, attendances could range from 50 to 150 people, except when a Democratic member of the Reichstag or Prussian Chamber of Deputies gave his report to his constituents: During the early 1880s, these would draw between 200 and 300 people.[2] Most meetings were held in public. At each meeting, there were one or two speakers on various local, state or national subjects. These public meetings encouraged the individual to commit himself to political debate and to participate in local politics, even by his presence alone. More importantly, in the field of muncipal politics there was a widespread perception that Democratic council members were accountable to these meetings and should take their attendants' views into consideration. In a discussion of the municipal budget on 17 March 1879, according to the Prussian official present, one member suggested a strong censure of the Democrat 'Sprößlinge' (i.e. the councillors):

> weil sie sich für zu gut hielten, noch an den Zusammenkünften deren [sic!] teil zu nehmen, die sie zu dem gemacht hätten, was sie wären; auch die besonders an sie für heut ergangenen Einladungen hätten nichts genutzt.[3]

Although in practice Democrat councillors took infrequent notice of these meetings, there was nevertheless the view that they ought to take note of their constituents' wishes not just at election times, but that they be accountable to frequent party scrutiny throughout the year. As a result, the meeting concluded with the resolution that the members of the Democratic party admonish their peers in the council to restrict municipal spending.

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[1] Wolf, Liberalismus, pp. 48-51. Wolf's number of 43 'gatherings' in 1878, taken from a report in the Frankfurter Zeitung, is slightly misleading, in that it is not clear what form these gatherings took. Many of these may have been just private committee meetings. The police reports from 1879 suggest that there were 23 principal gatherings that year.

[2] See, for example, HStAW 407 n. 138² fos. 55, 58-60. Democratic Association meetings in September and October 1882.

[3] ...'because they considered themselves above participating in the meetings of those who had made them what they were; even the invitations sent specially to them for today had no effect'.

The Verein der Fortschrittspartei tried to hold monthly meetings,[1] but again there is no evidence to suggest that meetings were actually held at these intervals. The main reason for the relative infrequency of meetings may not have been so much reluctance on part of the organisers, but the persistent problem of low attendance. With a usual attendance of between 20 and 40 people, these meetings could in no way claim to be popular. But the party had a much more pressing problem in that it was not affiliated to a local newspaper, which was seen as essential to make its views known to the public.[2] Thus, it relied on the National Liberal Frankfurter Presse or, increasingly, on the Frankfurter Zeitung for publicity. If the Progressive party organisation was, therefore, by no means as successful as that of the Democrats, its leaders remained nevertheless keenly aware of the importance of public opinion not just during the elections.

This was also true for the National Liberal Wahlverein. In its general meeting of 1878, it decided that in future it, too, would have speaker meetings and discussions and that it would use this opportunity to develop the rhetorical skills of its members. Furthermore, it established a 'Preßcomite', whose function was to promote newspaper reports favourable to the party and to defend it quickly and efficiently against any printed attacks.[3] As a result, Frankfurt liberals (and this includes the archetypal party of notables, the National Liberals) were in various ways and to various degrees keenly aware of the public eye, and they were willing to subject their own actions to public scrutiny. In 1879, the Verein der Fortschrittspartei had managed to organise about 259 members, the Demokratischer Verein had 399 members in 1880, and, loose though the affiliation may have been, 563 inhabitants (it can be safely assumed that virtually all of these would have been citizens) chose to pay the annual subscription fee of the Wahlverein in 1880.[4]

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1 Wolf, Liberalismus, p. 61.

2 This issue of the necessity of a party newspaper was constantly outlined as one of its most pressing problems. See, for example, HStAW 407 n. 150[1] fos. 244-6. Progressive Association meeting, 21.3.1887.

3 HStAW 407 n. 160 fo. 99. National Liberal Association meeting, October 1878.

4 HStAW 407 n. 160 fo. 112. National Liberal Association meeting, September 1879. See also HStAW

Municipal policy was, of course, the immediate concern of the municipal council. Yet in 1880, for example, the councillors' nominations and their subsequent actions were subject to the control of the political parties whose membership was equal to 10% of the total local electorate and 25% of those who went to the polls for the 1880 municipal elections.[1] Ultimately, the liberals' actions were open to general public scrutiny, because every inhabitant could take part in most of the parties' discussions, and because everyone could contribute to municipal political discussion through the newspapers, which devoted increasing space to local affairs.

After the town council, any analysis of the political content of local administration would not be complete without a brief discussion of the relevance of politics to the Magistrat. In the historiography on municipal government, few claims are more common and less contested than the one that more or less throughout the Empire, the Magistrat remained free from political considerations. Particularly as the century drew to a close, the Magistrat became increasingly 'professionalised' as local administration became more specialised and increasingly cumbersome. The local notables, who had been elected by the councillors particularly as voluntary members of the Magistrat (Stadträte), increasingly gave way to professional administrators who were virtually all trained lawyers and came from outside. Politics had no place in the selection of Stadträte.[2] This development was epitomised by the election and conduct of the president of the Magistrat, the mayor. The only political criterion for chosing

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407 n. 160 fos. 122-5. Membership list of the National Liberal Association, 1880. HStAW 407 n. 138[2] fo. 131. Memberhip statistics for the Democratic Association. By 1882, that figure had grown to 495 members according the the figures given by the Democratic Association, or 527 according to the figures of the Prussian authorities. HStAW 407 n. 150[1] fo. 5. Progressive Association meeting, 7.1.1879.

[1] Wolf, Liberalismus, p. 130. These are astonishing figures, by any standards. In comparison to England: 'Even in places where the political pulse has beaten strongly, and where the Caucus has been a decided success, as at Birmingham, the proportion of those affiliated to the party Organizations does not exceed eight or ten per cent of the total number of electors.' M. Ostrogorski, Democracy and the Organisation of Political Parties (London, 1902), i. 332.

[2] This view is nicely summarised in T. Nipperdey, Deutsche Geschichte 1866-1914. Vol. ii: Machtstaat vor der Demokratie (Munich, 1992), pp. 158-9. Hofmann, 'Aufgaben', 613-6. Fisch, Stadtplanung, pp. 49-50.

these was that of the king's right of confirmation, which had a purely negative effect in ensuring that in Prussia no Social Democrat and very few left-liberals ever became mayor.[1] This view has generally been accepted in full with respect to Frankfurt.[2] Indeed, the city appears to be a highly characteristic model in this respect, because its left-liberal council twice elected a mayor of right liberal, even conservative, leanings, both of whom appeared to epitomise the 'unpolitical' ethic whilst in office, to contemporaries and historians alike.[3] This verdict is also borne out by the fact that throughout the period, a majority of Stadträte sympathised with the National Liberals. Only during the first decade of the century did political considerations become an important criterion for election into the Magistrat.[4]

This view of the unpolitical nature of the Frankfurt Magistrat contains a number of inaccuracies and needs to be modified. In 1868, before the first elections to the Magistrat, the Frankfurter Zeitung tried to convince its readers and the members of the city council that these elections were essentially political in nature. The experience of other cities such as Königsberg, Berlin, Cologne and Breslau in their dealings with the Prussian government pointed to the importance of the steadfastness of 'freisinnige' (liberal) members of the Magistrat. In these cities, the newspaper concluded, there was in consequence a general awareness that the candidates' political convictions ('Gesinnungstüchtigkeit') were of paramount importance,[5] hence it was time for the citizens of Frankfurt to acknowledge that these elections were about politics. What would happen to the reputation of the democratically-minded city of Frankfurt, the newspaper asked, if mostly conservatives were elected?[6] The ensuing elections were perhaps the only ones where politics did, indeed, not play a major part. Much to the horror of the Frankfurter Zeitung, four of the six paid posts

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1 Hofmann, Zwischen Rathaus und Reichskanzlei. Die Oberbürgermeister in der Kommunal- und Staatspolitik des Deutschen Reiches von 1890-1933 (Berlin/Stuttgart/Köln/Mainz, 1974), pp. 38ff..

2 Dodge, Government, pp. 41-7.

3 Sheehan, German Liberalism, p. 235. Sheehan, 'Liberalism', p. 126.

4 Rolling, 'Problem', p. 180.

5 Frankfurter Zeitung, 19.1.1868 (1. Blatt).

6 Frankfurter Zeitung, 21.1.1868 (2. Blatt).

were filled by members of the former conservative Senate,[1] presumably out of respect for their social prestige. In the following years, the Democrats continued to attack the Magistrat relentlessly, for its general administrative incompetence[2] and, more importantly, for its servility to the state,[3] in flagrant breach of the Democrats' ideal of self-government.

These comments on the first Magistrat elections are revealing not only by their insistence upon the elections as a political act, but also by their definition of the way in which politics was important. In this instance, relationships between the city and the state were a political matter, and the problem with the Magistrat was not so much its political inclination as such, but the fact that, judging by the previous record of the senators in their dealings with the state, they would have a high propensity to 'go soft' in future confrontations. In the ambiguous position which the Magistrat held, as a link between the local community and state administration, it was the Democrats' main concern that the Stadträte would stand firmly on the side of the city council in all matters of dispute with the state. This was an implementation of two of the Democrats' five political demands which have been outlined above. After all, a Magistrat which did not run to Wiesbaden at the slightest hint of trouble with the council, but which would unite with the council in opposition to Prussian interference in municipal affairs would be necessary for retaining as much self-government as possible, as well as for securing the maximum degree of local independence in the administration of education. Hence, it did not matter much if the first Stadtrat with a portfolio for education, Grimm, was a National Liberal, because he was well-known to be firmly committed to the city's non-denominational schools, against the state. This is why the Democrats supported Grimm throughout his period of office despite the fact that throughout his time as Stadtrat for education Grimm refused to appoint a

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 24.1.1868 (1. Blatt).

2 HStAW 407 n. 138[1] fo. 113. Leopold Sonnemann in a meeting of the Democratic Association, 17.11.1879.

3 This charge is most cuttingly found in repeated issues of the Frankfurter Latern, 1872-1874. See, for example, Frankfurter Latern, 21.11.1874.

single left-liberal to the office of headmaster at any municipal primary or secondary school.[1] Similarly, on another matter of political interest to the city's Democrats, social policy, the Democrats managed to get their own party member, Karl Flesch, elected for the post of Stadtrat for social affairs.

Seen in this light, it is indeed true that most elections to the Magistrat were unpolitical, in that the city's left-liberals were prepared to accept a majority of National Liberal Stadträte. Most of these posts were, in theory as in practice, administrative ones, and the Democrats cared very little whether the Stadtrat responsible for municipal building projects or the sewage system was a National Liberal or not. Prospective Stadträte did, however, have to fulfill certain minimum political requirements, which were quite consistent with the political programmes developed by the Democrats for the city council elections. In the enforcement of this, the Democrats were very successful. Throughout the terms of office of Miquel and the more conservative Adickes, both chambers presented a common front against the Prussian state. As a result, politics did have a role to play in the Frankfurt Magistrat, even if that role was much more subdued than in the municipal council.

Another, more important qualification to the traditional notion that politics played no part in the selection of candidates for the Magistrat concerns more specifically the elections of the two National Liberal mayors whilst the Democrats were in a majority in the council. It must not be overlooked that in voting for Johannes Miquel, the Democrat councillors were not voting for the National Liberal leader who, while he was mayor of Frankfurt, would be one of the driving forces behind the National Liberal swing to the right in 1884. Rather, they were voting for Miquel in his capacity as perhaps liberalism's most important advocate of local self-government!

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1 BAK NL 44 n. 9 fo. 7. Hermann Luppe, 'Mein Leben', part ii. Luppe's statement is confirmed by the impressive number of headmasters and head teachers which filled the ranks of the local National Liberal Association. HStAW 407 n. 160 fos. 415-26. Membership list of the National Liberal Association, 1893.

Miquel had been an active proponent of the importance of self-government throughout his political life. In theoretical discourse, during his time as mayor of Osnabruck and in frequent parliamentary debates as a National Liberal representative in the Reichstag, Miquel continuously helped to reiterate the liberal view that an autonomous, self-governing local government would be essential to a strong German state.[1] To Frankfurt left-liberals, Miquel's credentials were further boosted by his insistence on the separation between church and state in education, and by his decided support of a locally, rather than state, administered system of education.[2] No one knew better about Miquel's views than Leopold Sonnemann, who had experienced him at first hand in parliament. Furthermore, Sonnemann, who had a pivotal role in the choice of both Miquel and Adickes, was aware that if he was to succeed in ousting the conservative Mumm as First Mayor, only a candidate with the first-class administrative skills of Miquel would do.[3]

The political character of these elections is even more clear in Sonnemann's own words to a local Democrat meeting. In his justification for the decision to replace Mumm with Miquel, he emphasised the latter's far superior administrative talents. Furthermore, he pointed out Miquel's acceptability to the King, which would prevent the appointment of some Pomeranian Landrat or other. Sonnemann then went on to emphasize that in his capacity as mayor of Osnabrück since 1865 Miquel was, after all, a fellow sufferer from Prussian annexation. As such, he had rendered great services to the maintenance of provincial and municipal autonomy in Hanover. Had Frankfurt had a mayor of similar calibre, the city would have fared much better in the Rezeß. With regard to his party political inclinations, it was true that Miquel was

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1 See, for example, J. Miquel, 'Verfassung und Verwaltung der Provinzen und Gemeinden des Königreichs der Niederlande', PJbb, xxiv (1869), 312-40, esp. 339-40. See also his speech on 18 March 1876 on the proposed city ordinance, in Johannes von Miquel's Reden, ed. W. Schultze and F. Thimme (Halle, 1911), ii. 302-17.

2 Ibid., pp. 61ff. (Speech on Church and Education of 3 Febuary 1871), and Ibid., pp. 244-6 (Speech of 11 March 1875 on 'the State and Local Secondary Schools'.).

3 Sonnemann appreciated very clearly that Miquel was the only alternative to Mumm who was likely to be elected. Frankfurter Beobachter, 19.11.1879.

a National Liberal, but then his views were still much more to the left than those of his predecessor.[1]

Miquel's appointment was therefore not strictly party-political. Indeed, the last assurance from Sonnemann's speech, that Miquel had already promised to abstain from any party-political involvement in the city, smacks of a deal between the two when Miquel's coming to Frankfurt was originally discussed, that Miquel would leave the Democrats alone if they gave him the support that they refused to give his predecessor. Yet Miquel's election was not an unpolitical act - such an act would have secured the re-election of Mumm, in his capacity as a local notable of the highest social standing. Rather, the election of Miquel fitted the general political goals of the Democrats. Given the combination of unpolitical and political criteria which a new First Mayor had to fit, that he had to be universally acceptable as a replacement of Mumm, that he had to be acceptable to the king, that he had to ensure the maintenance of self-government for Frankfurt in education and other areas, and that he had to have administrative experience to cope with the current financial problems of the city, Miquel was the perfect choice.

Miquel's time in Frankfurt was an unmitigated success, and he exceeded virtually all expectations. The relationship between the Magistrat and the city council was smooth as never before or after, and upon his departure Miquel could look back on an impressive list of municipal improvements while leaving behind a balanced budget. Unfortunately, there is less evidence on the motives behind Adickes' election in 1890, but in the light of the success of Miquel's selection it would seem likely that those involved, and Sonnemann in particular, applied similar criteria. According to Miquel, Adickes had his experience as the mayor of another trading city, Altona, to commend him, as well as an extremely congenial manner. This was essential in a city like Frankfurt, where a mayor had to treat the different parties with

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1 HStAW 407 n. 138[1] fos. 114-5. Democratic Association meeting, 17.11.1879.

respect and tact.[1] With Adickes, the Democrats made sure that not only an expert mayor was elected, but one who was a visionary in social reform. Against what has already been said about Miquel's election, it is also extremely likely that the Democrats made sure from the start that in disputes between the state and the city, the mayor would always take a common stand with the Magistrat and the city council, like his predecessor.

Therefore, Adickes' election, too, was not strictly party political, in that the Democrats again were instrumental in his selection. But in a broader sense, the election was clearly a political event. Indeed, so great were the internal political cleavages that no acceptable internal candidate who would be supported across party lines could be found.[2] In the selection of Adickes the Democrats made sure some of their important political criteria for local government were met, and in this sense, Adickes, like Miquel, was the best choice the Democrats could have made.

This is not to refute entirely the prevalent notion that party politics played no part in the selection of the Magistrat and their presidents, the First Mayors, for such a notion would have been unreasonable. In a city where the king could appoint the mayor at his own pleasure, cross-party agreement on the list of nominees presented to the king was paramount. In a broader sense, however, the Democrats made sure that of all possible candidates, those were elected whose objectives were most congruent with their own aims. There were, of course, important political differences which remained. All three mayors until 1912 were opposed to the important Democrat demand for the municipalisation of services. On the other hand, from 1880 onwards the Democrats were completely happy with the composition of the Magistrat as

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1 Funck, Lebenserinnerungen, p. 15.

2 Again, see Miquel's assessment in ibid., p. 15. Another example of this is the National Liberals' and most Progressive Liberals' reaction to Sonnemann's nomination as third candidate for the mayoralty to be presented to the king. In third place, and with Sonnemann's 'red' credentials, the nomination was a mere formality in honour of the man who had brought two excellent mayors to Frankfurt. Nevertheless, the majority of the liberal parties in opposition to the Democrats could not bring themselves to vote for the nomination of Sonnemann, the Progressive Liberal Geiger proclaiming that this amounted to an insult to the Emperor. Maly, Honoratioren, pp. 279-80.

a whole, so much so that it was increasingly the Democrats, and not the National Liberals, who felt they had to defend themselves against the charge of being too servile to the Magistrat.[1] As a result, it is true that in Frankfurt, politics had no part to play in the sense of party-political wrangling over the nominal distribution of municipal offices before 1900. Much more important to the Democrats was that the Magistrat would pursue the broad political line which they advocated. These political criteria were the sine qua non for the Democrats' support. Beyond that, they were happy to support the candidates of any party, depending on their professional qualifications.

In his book significantly titled Die Macht der Honoratioren ('The Power of Notables'), Karl Maly writes that up until the formation of Fraktionen, of official party groups, in the council after 1900, party political considerations were of minor importance in the city council.[2] In his study of Frankfurt city government from 1900 to 1918, John Rolling agrees. Whereas the liberals considered municipal administration to be a non-political affair characterised by co-operation rather than party strife, this ideal was, according to Rolling, destroyed only by the advent of the SPD in municipal politics.[3] According to these studies, Frankfurt would appear to be a perfect example to prove the general contention that the emergence of 'mass politics' was significantly retarded by the persistence of the dominance of the local élite in local government, and that local government became politicised only with the appearance of the SPD in the town council.[4]

The analysis presented in this chapter has shown that, in fact, municipal government in Frankfurt was politicised by the late 1870s. Indeed, the very insistence by National Liberals on the principle of the 'unpolitical' in municipal government (when all their actions pointed to

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 11.11.1902 (3. Morgenblatt).
2 Maly, Honoratioren, p. 14.
3 Rolling, 'Liberals', p. 208.
4 W. Hofmann, 'Aufgaben', pp. 610-13.

the opposite) was a political act. Naturally, politics was by no means the only principle which counted. Professional expertise and an informal network of clubs[1] continued to be significant, as far as the composition of committees as well as the decisions themselves were concerned. Yet none of these influences was as crucial as that of party politics. Although party lists were not exclusive, it soon became virtually impossible to be elected to the council without at least this nominal support of either party. In the council itself, committee posts were distributed always with one eye to party allegiance. There are strong indications that frequent discussions of policy matters took place, not among members of a particular social or professional group, but among the councillors affiliated to the Democratic party. In the absence of an official party whip or of effective sanctions that could be imposed on the individual,[2] votes on 'policy' matters were frequently cast across party lines. Furthermore, Democrats often shied away from rigid insistence on their ideology in the realistic assessment that they could not on their own take on both the other councillors and the Magistrat.[3] Finally, all political groups in the council clearly understood the necessity of a close rapport with their considerable party organisations and the wider electorate. Party political divisions were less apparent in the Magistrat, but even there politics had an important role to play. Whereas the National Liberals had, of course, no objections to the choice of National Liberal candidates, the Democrats chose these candidates with the concern that they would best meet their own most important local political objectives.

Of course, the analysis of Frankfurt municipal politics is merely a case study and this cannot itself disprove the theories advanced by Croon, Hofmann and others. Frankfurt may simply be

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1 Roth, 'Liberalismus', passim..

2 An important proportion of those few independents who did make it to the council on their own, such as the councillor Marx or Trommershausen, consisted of disgruntled former members of the Democratic and National Liberal parties respectively.

3 This happened on several occasions, for example, with respect to the raising of school fees and the Magistrat's refusal to municipalise gas.

unique in the importance of politics in municipal government. Yet it is worth pointing out that in their defence Frankfurt Democrats tried to show that Frankfurt municipal politics was far from unique, and that the politicisation of municipal government occurred elsewhere.[1] Even though the case of Frankfurt contradicts established ideas about the role of politics in municipal government, it confirms others, namely the continued importance of Honoratiorenpolitik until 1900, and among the liberals even until the First World War. If one considers the social rather than political composition of the city council, there is a striking degree of continuity between the pre- and post-annexation local government bodies.[2] The free professions and merchants were over-represented,[3] and apart from the newspaper circles it is these groups which were the most influential in municipal government. Of the twenty-eight councillors who held the posts of president, secretary (Schriftführer) and their respective deputies, sixteen were lawyers, five were owners or chairmen of large businesses, one was a banker, one a medical doctor, and only two were smaller craftsmen - though the latter held the relatively minor office of deputy secretary only for a total of three years. The influential councillors were part of the network of clubs and societies which continued to play an important role in municipal affairs,[4] even though their influence was declining: in 1871 a Democrat leaflet tried to rally 'Alles, was seine Information nicht im Casino oder im alten Bürgerverein holt'.[5] As a result, in Frankfurt, politics by party did not replace politics by notables. Rather, they complemented one another.

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1 For a comparison with Berlin, see Frankfurter Zeitung, 22.11.1872 (1. Blatt). For a comparison with Leipzig, see Frankfurter Zeitung, 19.11.1878 (Morgenblatt). Although H. Pogge von Strandmann agrees with the prevalent view that politics did not play an important role in local government until about 1900, he includes a significant number of exceptions: Berlin, Mannheim and the Rhenish cities (although he omits Frankfurt). Pogge von Strandmann, 'Monopolies', pp. 102-3.

2 Roth, 'Liberalismus', p. 17. See in particular the forthcoming PH.D. thesis by R. Roth on the 'Stadt und Bürgertum in Frankfurt am Main, 1780-1914' (Frankfurt University)

3 Wolf, Liberalismus, p. 132.

4 Roth, 'Liberalismus', pp. 18-25.

5 'All those who did not receive their information from the [two most prominent bourgeois clubs, the] Casino or the old Bürgerverein'. IfSG, MA R 1130.i, fo. 136.

In his analysis of the growth of modern party organisations based on the example of England and the United States but ultimately applicable to every democracy,[1] Michael Ostrogorsky showed that the establishment of 'democratic', popular party organisations does not necessarily lead to a decline of the 'wire pullers', of the politics of the few. Rather, the establishment of a wide popular party base increases the power of the few occupying the key positions in the party, as it is these who really control the nominations of candidates and the resolution of policies.[2] In the case of the popular Liberal Associations, the popular ward central meetings generally followed the lead of their managers, and only very rarely did they rebel against the course suggested by their leaders.[3]

The example of the English liberal caucus in the 1870s and 1880s is applicable to Frankfurt only with limitations. Most important of these is the difference of size: A town like Birmingham, for example, had 421,000 inhabitants, of whom 74,167 burgesses had the vote.[4] As a result, it is only natural that the liberal party organisation in a city like Birmingham would have to be much more rigidly organised and could allow the individual foot soldier very little effective room for voicing his opinion. In Frankfurt, most meetings were attended by less than 100 people, and in this more intimate atmosphere 'court rebellions' occured with slightly greater frequency. In 1890, the controversial Progressive leader Berthold Geiger was booted out of the committee in a couple of stormy meetings,[5] and in 1893 several members of the Democratic party complained bitterly against the 'tyranny' of the committee and the autocratic way in which it made its decisions.[6] Yet the fact that these members did complain is

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1 M. Ostrogorsky, Democracy, i. liii- liv.

2 'In the large towns the concentration of power in the hands of a few reaches its extreme limit, in spite of the autonomist doctrine of the Caucus, and exhibits in the most striking way its tendency towards oligarchic government.' Ibid., p. 338. More generally, see pp. 329-70, 580ff..

3 H. J. Hanham, Elections and Party Management (London, 1959), pp. 128 ff.. For a description of the NLF's democratic presumptions, see D.A. Hamer, Liberal Politics in the Age of Gladstone and Roseberry (Oxford, 1972), pp. 46-52. For a critical summary of these first claims to democratic representation, see Waller, Town, pp. 107-14.

4 J. T. Bunce, History of the Corporation of Birmingham (Birmingham, 1885), ii. xxx.

5 HStAW 407 n. 150[1] fos. 343-51. Progressive Liberal meeting, 4.10.1890. For an example of a National Liberal 'rebellion', see HStAW 407 n. 160 fos. 126-7. Annual General Meeting of the National Liberal Association, 19.3.1880.

significant, as it reveals that matters were not conducted as openly by the party committee as members may have wished. The fact that these 'rebellions' were relatively infrequent, however, shows that, on the whole, the committees were in good control of their respective parties.

It is interesting that of all the Democrat and Progressive Liberal meetings throughout the year, the annual general meetings, at which party matters were discussed and a new committee elected, were among the least frequented, with only about 20 to 30 members turning up at the annual general meetings of the Progressives, and around 50 at those of the Democrats.[2] For the annual general meetings of the Democrats, the committee normally prepared a list of 11 candidates for 11 posts, which was usually accepted.[3] However, this procedure was increasingly contentious, until in 1893 several members demanded to have time to nominate their own list.[4] Yet even after the proceedings had been opened up in 1895, Democratic committee elections were more an exercise of acclamation than of selection, as members still voted on a printed list of nominations which the outgoing committee had prepared, except that this time the committee was obliged to nominate 22 candidates for 11 posts, and to send out the list to all the members of the party at least eight days in advance.[5] The committee also worked out the nominees for the municipal, state and national elections, who were usually accepted at the meetings.

Therefore, far from threatening the positions of notables in the town council the popular liberal party organisations in Frankfurt buttressed their power. This is in contrast to the generally held view, perhaps first formulated in Germany by Max Weber, that popular party

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1 HStAW 407 n. 161[1] fos. 356-60. Annual General Meeting of the Democratic Association, December 1893.

2 For example, the Progressive Liberal meeting which discussed the party's nominees for the 1882 council elections was attended by a mere 18 men. HStAW 407, n. 150[1] fo. 125-6. Progressive Association meeting, 20.11.1882.

3 See, for example, the list of nominees for 1893/94 in HStAW 407 n. 161[1] f. 358.

4 HStAW 407 n. 161[1] fos. 356-60. Annual General Meeting of the Democratic Association, December 1893.

5 See the new Wahlordnung für den Vorstand des Demokratischen Vereins of 1895 in HStAW 407, n. 161[2] f. 18-9. Kleine Presse, 9.1.1895 (1. Blatt).

politics would inevitably overcome Honoratiorenpolitik,[1] and that in local politics this process began in the late nineteenth century. This view is overwhelmingly based on studies which concentrate on the social composition of the town council and the interactions between the liberal notables and local 'high society'. With such an approach, Frankfurt municipal government would give almost the same picture, as it would show that until 1900, the municipal council was still in the hands of the social élite, and that it was then that government by politics, signalled by the advent of official party whips in the council, began. However, a closer look at party politics in its various forms suggests a close relationship between the two 'forms' of municipal government, and that they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Indeed, politics by notables and the popularisation of politics could be two sides of the same coin, as is suggested by the example of Frankfurt.

## 2.3. Conclusion

The decade before Frankfurt's annexation by Prussia marked an important step in the politicisation of the electorate, but it is only during the following decade that this potential was fully realised by the city's liberal parties. In a conscious effort, through the fabrication of historical myths, the celebration of national holidays in unique Frankfurt style,[2] as well as through caricature, leaflets and poems, the Frankfurt Democrats exploited the popular resentment of the Prussians and presented themselves as the 'indigenous' party. In response, the National Liberals became the party of the new status quo. They became the party to which the Prussian administration gave their support throughout the Empire, for want of anything better. As in the annexed province of Hanover, it became the loyalist, 'regierungstreue' party.

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1 Beetham, Max Weber, pp. 102-9.

2 Frankfurt Democrats were instrumental in ensuring the success of the unique annual celebration of the Peace of Frankfurt to end the Franco-German war, against the Prussian authorities' endeavours that in Frankfurt, like anywhere else, the anniversary of the battle of Sedan be celebrated.

Thus, it managed to rally all those to the right of the Democrats or Progressive Liberals and ensured that, in contrast to the days of the Free City, there was no effective independent conservative opposition.[1] As other spheres of politics, local politics became sucked into this process of political differentiation. By the 1870s politics was, beyond any doubt, the main factor in the conduct of virtually all aspects of local affairs.

Another way of summarising the developments in the years after Frankfurt's annexation is that these years saw the creation of the city's own particular 'political milieu'. In this context, Rohe's model is a useful tool for analysing the creation of a milieu as described in this chapter.[2] As discussed above, cultural factors are to Rohe by far the most important ones in explaining the political behaviour of individuals. Ultimately central to the existence of a milieu is a particular way of life which is common to, and felt to be important by, those embedded in it.[3] In Frankfurt, the socio-moral milieu was thus defined by the Frankfurt notion of peculiarity, a common dialect, a common mentality[4] and common traditions.

The success of a party depends on how well it is able to adapt to the concerns of its voters, that is how well its aims and interests are tuned to the region's particular milieu.[5] In Frankfurt, the Democrats were the first to realise the potential of the prevalent local milieu, and through, for example, their exuberant anti-Prussian rhetoric in seeming defiance of any political reason they managed to become the political expression of this milieu within a decade. However, a party is not necessarily forced to adapt in full to a particular milieu, but it can also help to create it.[6] Again, Frankfurt seems a model example, where it has been shown that the Democrats served their purpose well in infusing into this local culture a sense that it was

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1 For the best existing summary of Hanoverian politics, see M. John, 'Liberalism and Society in Germany, 1850-1880: The Case of Hanover', EHR, 102 (1987), 579-98. Of parallel importance to Frankfurt is also his emphasis on the importance of the local political milieu for the success of liberalism in the province. In Hanover, a similar cleavage developed, between the 'pro-government' camp centered around the National Liberals on the one hand, and the anti-Prussian, particularist Guelphs on the other.

2 For a brief discussion of Rohe's general theory, see chapter one of this study.

3 Rohe, Wahlen, p. 19.

4 This is nicely illustrated in M. J. Bonn, Wandering Scholar (London, 1949), esp. pp. 6-9, 28-9.

5 Rohe, Wahlen, pp. 26-7.

6 Ibid., p. 28.

inherently and traditionally liberal, 'freiheitlich'. Finally, the foregoing analysis demonstrates the importance of the party's ability to communicate with those who identified with the local, socio-moral milieu.[1] Control of a potent newspaper press ensured not only the success of the Democrats in becoming part of this milieu, it was also instrumental in shaping it by giving it its 'traditional' liberal connotations. Most importantly, the real and perceived influence of the newspapers gave rise to a particular form of popular politics in the same way that it gave rise to those who advocated it.

It is in the characterisation of the roles of other parties that Rohe's model loses its usefulness for the case of Frankfurt. Summarising the various parties that existed in the German Empire into three major blocs which were part of distinct milieux may be a useful analytical tool in areas where they co-existed, and where traditional explanations of voting patterns such as class or confession are inadequate. For example, through showing how voting was an act of group identification,[2] it is possible to explain why in certain working 'class-areas' of the Ruhr district with a strong Catholic culture the SPD found it so much more difficult to make inroads against the Centre party than in others where a Catholic milieu was weaker.[3] By contrast, in a city like Frankfurt, Rohe's concept of milieu as such loses its usefulness in explaining the actual differences between the various parties, because for two decades the principal political conflicts all took place within the one, 'bourgeois', milieu. Nonetheless, the idea of a milieu is very helpful in explaining the particular constellation of Frankfurt's political life after 1866. In Frankfurt, political success was not so much a product of contesting milieux, but of the varying abilities of the parties to create and respond to the dominant political culture which emerged after the city's annexation.

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1 Ibid., p. 26.

2 Rohe, Elections, pp. 12-4. Suval made the valuable point that since no party actually had any governmental power on state and national level, voting cannot have been simply an expression of political and economic self interest, but that voting was an affirmation of belonging to a particular social context. Suval, Electoral Politics, esp. pp. 5-6.

3 Rohe, Vom Revier, pp. 44

The Democrats' success was to a large extent the result of their ability to adapt to and help create the distinct political culture of the city. Despite their fundamental opposition to much of this dominant culture, the other liberal parties at the very least had to acknowledge the existence of this milieu and to operate with reference to it. As shown above, for example, the National Liberals were forced to respond to the Democrats' politicisation of local government by creating an electoral organisation of their own, and by strengthening their links with the press. On the one hand, therefore, it was impossible for the National and Progressive Liberal parties to cast off the local milieu which dominated Frankfurt life. On the other hand, these two parties could never hope to pose effectively as a party serving Frankfurt's particular interests as long as the Democrats occupied the particularist high ground, which became, after all, the raison d'être of the Democratic Party in Frankfurt after 1866. This was the central dilemma of the Democrats' liberal opponents. Thus, it is not true that in Frankfurt there existed a 'liberal milieu' which rendered political parties unnecessary.[1] The left-liberals were part and parcel of this milieu, they had adapted to it and then changed it from within, both processes being interdependent.

Seen in this light, the fact that politics played such a large part in municipal affairs in Frankfurt becomes all the more plausible, even though it may contradict so much of recent scholarship on urban history. National, state and local elections were all contested by the same groups with the same organisations within the context of the same local milieu. Any distinction between 'political' state and national election contests on the one hand, and local, 'unpolitical' contests on the other, would inevitably be very difficult to make in practice.[2]

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1 For a contrasting view, see Roth, 'Liberalismus', p. 30.

2 A similar point, though without particular reference to urban history or its assumptions, about the interconnectedness between local, state and national politics at grassroots level has been made by A. P. Thompson, 'Left Liberals in German State and Society 1907-1918' (Birkbeck College (London Univ.) PH.D. thesis 1989), 10-15. More recently, Thomas Kühne has emphasised the importance of local conditions to liberal success at Prussian state elections. T. Kühne, 'Die Liberalen bei den preußischen Landtagswahlen im Kaiserreich', in Gall and Langewiesche (eds.), Liberalismus und Region, pp. 277-305, esp. 279-94.

# CHAPTER THREE:

# THE DIVERSIFICATION OF LOCAL POLITICS

## 3.1. Introduction

Having outlined the emergence of a political culture and the concurrent establishment of liberal party politics during the 1870s, it is now necessary to analyse how the local political milieu and the established liberal party system fared until the outbreak of the First World War. This question is of particular importance, because most studies agree that during this period liberalism was fundamentally weakened by the 'fragmentation of the middle strata'[1] from which liberals derived their greatest support. In response to Germany's industrial progress, and particularly during the 1890s, the German bourgeoisie became more fragmented and amorphous than it had ever been. At the same time, this fragmentation led to the formation of particular, 'proto-political' interest groups based on a large membership which made increasing demands on the liberals and other parties in return for their endorsement. The fate of German liberalism before the First World War was crucially dependent on its ability to respond to this emergence of new, more popular forms of agitation through an adequate reform of its stifling, old-fashioned party organisations which were still essentially based on notable politics.[2] While there is no doubt about the severity of the problem liberals were faced with, most modern studies agree that liberals in Germany displayed a much greater adaptability to social and political change than has previously been assumed.[3] However, given the considerable dearth

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1 Thus the title of chapter 16 in Sheehan, Liberalism, pp. 239-57.

2 Ibid.. Sheehan, 'Deutscher Liberalismus im postliberalen Zeitalter, 1890-1914', GG, iv (1978), 29-48. Nipperdey, Die Organisation der deutschen Parteien (Düsseldorf, 1961), esp. pp. 393-6. D. Langewiesche, 'Liberalismus und Bürgertum in Europa', in J. Kocka, Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert., iii. 384. For a brief summary of the growth of extra-parliamentary interest groups, see V. R. Berghahn, Imperial Germany, 1891-1914. Economy, Society, Culture and Politics (Providence/Oxford, 1994), pp. 221-40.

3 For a positive reappraisal of liberal efforts at organisational modernisation, see Eley, 'Notable

of detailed analyses of liberal organisations and the conduct of liberal politics at the grass roots, the precise extent of the transformation of liberal politics is still unclear. So far, the crucial role that liberals involved in local government must have had in modernising the party, for example through their unique experience in government and the inventiveness of their ideas, has only been hinted at.[1] This chapter will show for the case of Frankfurt how the local political milieu and the liberal party system which had been established by the 1870s reacted to the rising diversification of politics, through the fragmentation of middle strata politics, which was then followed by the rise of labour.

As Appendix 1 indicates, the composition of the Frankfurt town council shows a remarkable level of stability throughout the 1880s. A major change that did occur was the shift in the alliance of the Progressive Liberal party in 1880. As a result of a row with the National Liberals during the 1879 state elections, the Progressives decided to continue their co-operation with the Democrats for the 1880 local elections. From now on, the two left-liberal parties usually co-operated during the local elections, with the notable exceptions of 1886 and 1892.[2] Throughout the 1880s, the composition of the city council was stable. In 1880, the Democrats lost a number of councillors to their new coalition partners, but on the whole the two left-liberal parties managed to keep their representation in the council roughly constant, as did the National Liberals.

This stability within the town council masks, however, a fundamental shift which occurred outside it. For the 1880s saw a significant change in the way local elections for the town

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Politics', pp. 187-216.

[1] Nipperdey, Deutsche Geschichte 1866-1914, ii. 535-6. Langewiesche, Liberalismus, pp. 200-201. Langewiesche, 'German Liberalism', 227-33.

[2] It should be pointed out that this 'partnership' was extremely fragile during the 1880s and the early 1890s, largely as a result of their respective leaders, Sonnemann and Berthold Geiger. To the Progressives, Sonnemann epitomised the socialist tendencies among the Democrats, whilst Geiger seemed to many the archetypal 'Manchester liberal'. In addition, the two men shared an intense dislike for each other, as numerous personal battles show. The alliance grew more stable only in the course of the 1890s, when the more conciliatory Democrat Heinrich Rößler and Progressive Karl Funck took over from the 'old guard'. As a result, the two parties were very much distinct from the 1870s until the 1890s, and it is a gross oversimplification to 'lump' the two parties together, as Frankfurt's historians generally tend to do. See, for example, Klötzer, 'Frankfurt', p. 164 (table on the city council). Roth, 'Liberalismus', p. 63-4.

council were contested. At the beginning of the decade, Bezirksvereine began to form which were founded as clubs of citizens who met to discuss the particular concerns of their district. Although some of them had been founded earlier as mainly sociable Bürgervereine,[1] these associations increasingly met to discuss strictly local issues (as opposed to the greater issues of politics which were the responsibility of the parties), so that it was not long before they invariably became involved in local politics. At the same time, it is during this decade that other parties such as the conservatives and the Centre Party tried their luck in municipal elections, albeit without much success. Where there had been two party slates in 1880,[2] in 1882 there were ten. In 1894, this had not changed significantly: for 19 vacancies, there were 50 nominees suggested by 12 different slates. This diversification of local politics posed a tremendous challenge to the three established political parties. No longer did they merely fight against each other, but in their coalitions they had to take a number of other diverse groups into account. More significantly, this diversification signalled the emergence of 'parish pump politics', which had nothing to do with the 'political' concerns of the established political parties, but which was purely concerned with more 'sectarian' interests of different parts of the local community.

The emergence of the political Mittelstand during the 1890s marked a further step in the diversification of municipal politics, because for the first time a conservative political group challenged the liberals' political hegemony inside the town council. The political and social phenomenon of the Mittelstand has only been subject to relatively recent debate. Studies have concentrated on an analysis of the disparate elements that made up its various constituent groups, and there is general consent that the Mittelstand's social heterogeneity made it

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1 Bürgerverein Sachsenhausen, 1848-1929. Festschrift zum 80-jährigen Jubiläum am 29.9.1929 (Frankfurt, 1929).

2 One list of nominees was suggested by the left-liberals, and one by the National Liberals and and the 'Bürgerkolleg', a collection of disgruntled Democrats who refused to join the new Demokratischer Wahlverein in 1873. On the Bürgerkolleg, see (in the absence of any secondary material) Frankfurter Beobachter, 18.11.1880.

impossible for it to organise itself into a unitary political party with coherent objectives.[1] Unfortunately, most studies fail to take account of the importance of local politics in the development of the Mittelstand, and of that group's impact on local politics. This is rather curious, since it would appear reasonable to assume that there would be much less difficulty in organising a party of the Mittelstand at grass-roots level. At the local level, petty-bourgeois groups were not quite as heterogeneous, simply because there were fewer of them than at the national level. Furthermore, at the local level it would seem to be much easier for a well-known local figure to unite the various fractions of the Mittelstand and to create a potent political force. Most importantly, the fair and equal distribution of public contracts to local artisans (the Submissionswesen), as well as the termination of municipal and state ownership of competing businesses were of central concern to virtually all the various fractions of the Mittelstand.[2] As these were predominantly local political issues, it is likely that these concerns were most relevant to the movement where they mattered most, at the local level.[3]

The rise of the SPD has been much better charted territory than either the phenomenon of the Bezirksvereine or the Mittelstand. There has been little argument with the contention that one of the most crucial failures of liberalism was its inability to cope with the rise of labour, either by way of integration or by transforming itself as an effective alternative to the SPD.[4] By contrast, this chapter will show for the case of Frankfurt that the liberals' dominance in municipal politics was challenged by the advent of popular politics which gave rise to new

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1 See in particular D. Blackbourn, 'The Mittelstand in German Society and Politics, 1871-1914', SH, iv (1977), 409-33. G. Crossick and H.-G. Haupt (eds.), Shopkeepers and Master Artisans in Nineteenth-Century Europe (London, 1984). On the various attempts to form a coherent interest group for small shopkeepers, see R. Gellately, The Politics of Economic Despair, 1890-1914 (London, 1974).

2 H. A. Winkler, Zwischen Marx und Monopolen. Der deutsche Mittelstand vom Kaiserreich zur Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Frankfurt, 1991), p. 29.

3 For one of the few studies on local politics and society which considers the importance of the Mittelstand, see Crew, A Town in the Ruhr, pp. 112-45.

4 In general, see J. Breuilly, Labour and Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe. Essays in Comparative History (Manchester, 1992). Langewiesche, Liberalismus, pp. 187-93. See also the debate between Mommsen and Gall on the relationship between liberalism and labour: Gall, 'Liberalismus und "Bürgerliche Gesellschaft"', pp. 324-56. Mommsen, 'Der deutsche Liberalismus', pp. 77-90. Gall, '"...Ich wünschte ein Bürger zu sein"', pp. 601-23.

political groups already from the 1880s onwards, long before the SPD appeared on the local political scene. During the 1880s and 1890s, the left-liberals in particular learned to cope with this new phenomenon flexibly and pragmatically. This experience was crucial to the liberals' ultimately successful response to the rise of labour in municipal politics after 1900, which marked not so much a new beginning, but a final stage in the politicisation of local government.

## 3.2. The Fragmentation of Middle Strata Politics

Of the political parties contesting for power, one of the more surprising features is the extremely modest success of the Centre party. Even though 30% of Frankfurt's population was Roman Catholic,[1] the Centre party managed to send only a small number of its party members to the town council, and this only with the help of the other groups (see Appendix 1). Nor was it much more successful in the national elections, where almost all adult males had the vote since there were no restrictions to the franchise. In 1907, for example, its candidate Matthias Erzberger managed to attract just over 7% of the vote.[2]

The most important underlying reason for this is that, as far as this can be measured, Roman Catholicism was very weak in Frankfurt. A study of mixed marriages, which the local Catholic paper described as the root cause for the weakening of the faith,[3] shows that in 1864, there were 1,331 'purely' Roman Catholic to 2,171 mixed Catholic marriages.[4] The weakness

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1 On 1 December 1900, 60.9% were Protestant (Lutherans and Calvinists), 30.6% Roman Catholics, 7.6% Jews, and 0.9% Non-conformists and others. F. Adler, 'Soziale Gliederung der Bevölkerung, Verfassung und Verwaltung der Stadt Frankfurt am Main', in Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik, Verfassung und Verwaltungsorganisation der Städte. Preußen, vol. ii, cxvii (Leipzig, 1906), 85-148.

2 Volksstimme, 26.1.1907 (1. Beilage).

3 Katholisches Sonntagsblatt für die christliche Familie, 23.9.1900, Nr. 38, pp. 300-1.

4 Clearly, mixed marriages are an extremely crude indicator of religious observance, and in the case of Frankfurt it is obvious that a higher proportion of Catholics married a relatively lower proportion of Protestants, simply because there were more Protestants than Catholics in Frankfurt. Roman Catholic intermarriage, therefore, is not necessarily an indicator of the weakness of Roman Catholic observance, but it

of an endogenous Roman Catholic culture is further demonstrated by the fact that a disproportionate number of mixed marriages were concluded by couples who came from native, rather than immigrant, backgrounds. And of native Roman Catholic and Protestant couples, more than 55% of the children were baptised as Protestants.[1] As a result of immigration, by 1880 there were now more purely Roman Catholic marriages, but nonetheless over 40% of marriages involving a Roman Catholic were mixed.[2]

Throughout the period, Roman Catholic associational life was relatively muted. The first Roman Catholic associations to develop in 1848 were in the surrounding countryside, for example in the small towns of Limburg and Rüdesheim.[3] There is little evidence of Roman Catholic associational activity available. Yet even though there were notable attempts by some individuals at creating a Roman Catholic milieu, for example in the painstaking efforts to keep a Roman Catholic newspaper going, it appears that a self-conscious Roman Catholic milieu developed only during the years immediately before the Great War.[4] For example, Roman Catholic trade unions, whose foundations dated back to 1899, accounted for less than 4% of total trade union membership by 1911.[5]

The reason for the absence (or at least late development) of a Roman Catholic milieu is precisely the fact that, in contrast to the view adopted in many of the Roman Catholic histories of the period, a Roman Catholic 'ghetto mentality' did not develop in Frankfurt.[6] Given the

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may lead to the speculation that Roman Catholic observance was not particularly strong. By contrast, for example, there was virtually no intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles throughout the period.

1 Beiträge zur Statistik der Stadt Frankfurt am Main, ed. Frankfurter Verein für Geographie und Statistik, ii (Frankfurt, 1864-1875), 45-65.

2 Beiträge zur Statistik der Stadt Frankfurt am Main, ed. Frankfurter Verein für Geographie und Statistik, iv (Frankfurt, 1882-1885), 19-40, esp. 27.

3 K. Schatz, Geschichte des Bistums Limburg (Mainz, 1983), p. 216.

4 H. Blankenberg, Politischer Katholizismus in Frankfurt am Main, 1918-1933 (Mainz, 1981), pp. 7-12. Schatz, Geschichte, p. 245.

5 Statistische Jahresübersichten der Stadt Frankfurt am Main 1911/12, ed. Statistisches Amt (Frankfurt, 1912), pp. 82-3.

6 K. Greef (ed.), Das Katholische Frankfurt - Einst und Jetzt (Frankfurt, 1989), pp. 63-4. Schatz, Geschichte, p. 216. Schatz appears to contradict himself, however, by noting the absence of a Catholic spirit of unity at all cost, while mentioning the existence of a Catholic ghetto mentality ('Ghetto-Geist') in the same paragraph. Ibid., p. 245.

strength of left-liberal opposition in Frankfurt, Prussian authorities had been extremely reluctant to enforce the Kulturkampf in the city. Indeed, while endorsing the principle of separation between church and state, the Frankfurter Zeitung became one of the most important and influential liberal organs to defend Roman Catholics from the excesses of Bismarck's repressive legislation.[1] Therefore during the 1870s, instead of forming a separate Roman Catholic milieu, Roman Catholics were happy to remain within the dominant Democratic milieu.[2] Hence, a permanent Catholic political organisation was only founded in the city in response to the Democrats' uncompromising promotion of non-denominational schooling, which became increasingly contested by Roman Catholic leaders in the city during the debates about denominational schooling in Prussia.[3]

This is shown in a report of the constituent meeting of the Frankfurt Centre Association in 1892, which, particularly given the dearth of sources on political and social Catholicism before the Weimar Republic, is the most important source of information on the limits of political Catholicism in Frankfurt before the War. The president of the meeting urged his audience that, even though there were many among the 50,000 Catholics in Frankfurt who were Catholic only in name ('Taufscheinkatholiken'), the local Catholic vote should not always go to the Democrats, particularly after the recent debates about denominational schooling in Prussia. Yet it was already clear at this meeting that the Centre Association would be plagued by serious shortcomings. The predominantly young audience of 100 or so consisted mainly of artisans and petty bourgeois members, and it was clearly perceived that the Association could hope for little success if it had failed to attract some of the Catholic 'Hautevolée' to its cause. As a result, the party suffered from lack of social breadth and prestige, and, more importantly, from lack of money. Finally, a revealing discussion ensued following the suggestion to back

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1 Adolf Kullmann, 'Die Stellungnahme der Frankfurter Zeitung zum Kulturkampf' (Würzburg Univ. D.PHIL. thesis 1922).

2 For a similar, 'atypical' development in Württemberg, see D. Blackbourn, Class, Religion, and Local Politics, esp. pp. 74-6.

3 For the Frankfurt debate on denominational schooling, see chapter six.

the new political Association with the foundation of a branch of the recently established Catholic Volksverein as a social underpinning.[1] Whereas some members were certain that there was a delegate of the Volksverein organisation in Frankfurt, nobody knew who he was, which is highly suggestive of how far Frankfurt Catholics were from developing a specific Roman Catholic consciousness, let alone a developed milieu.[2] This is further underlined by the difficulties involved in establishing a Roman Catholic newspaper. After a number of bankruptcies during the 1870s and 1880s due to the lack of subscribers, it was not until 1892 that a financially viable Roman Catholic newspaper began to emerge gradually.[3] In conclusion, political Roman Catholicism never developed into a potent local political force, because Roman Catholic members of the social élite were well-integrated into local bourgeois society,[4] so that when specifically Roman Catholic associations began to form, they lacked the resources and the prestige to compete for Roman Catholic participation in bourgeois associations or parties.

If there was a group with a self-conscious siege mentality in Frankfurt, it was surely the conservatives. In the early 1880s, the Conservative Association for Frankfurt and its environs had a quite respectable membership of about 200 members or so who were mostly public employees (teachers, civil servants) and artisans.[5] Its meetings were usually attended by around 50 people, though attendances could be as high as 300, and one meeting was even attended by as many as 550 people.[6] Nonetheless, Frankfurt's conservatives generally resigned

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1 On the Volksverein in general, see H. Heitzer, Der Volksverein für das katholische Deutschland im Kaiserreich 1890-1918 (Mainz, 1918).

2 Kleine Presse, 9.4.1892. Volksstimme, 10.4.1892. Both are in HStAW 407 n. 187 fo. 422.

3 H. Heil, Zur Entwickelung der katholischen Presse in Frankfurt am Main. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der 'Frankfurter Volkszeitung' anläßlich ihres 50jährigen Jubliläums am 1. Oktober 1921 (Frankfurt, 1921). This book can be found in IfSG, MA T 63.i.

4 Roth, 'Liberalismus', pp. 74-8.

5 See the membership lists in HStAW 407 n. 159[1] fos. 10-12, 54, 112-4. By 1887, membership went down to 175, and on 1 December 1893 the Conservative Association counted 98 Members. HStAW 407 n. 159[1] fos. 121-4, 149-50.

6 It is questionable, however, whether these figures as recorded by the Prussian police observer present are reliable, as he would be likely to report on the meeting in a particularly favourable way. At the meeting on

themselves to political impotence. When in 1895 a meeting discussed sending a motion to party headquarters in Berlin to defend the Frankfurt Lutheran pastor Friedrich Naumann against recent conservative attacks, the leader of the Frankfurt conservative association, Diehl, argued that this was pointless. To Conservative leaders in Berlin, Frankfurt was a 'Social Democratic, a Democratic, a Sonnemannistic' city so that they would continue to ignore them whatever they did.[1] Discussing their tactics for the forthcoming local elections of 1882, the meeting decided to endorse four candidates in connection with the National Liberal Association as well as some ultramontane groups. Yet, curiously, it decided to keep this endorsement as secret as possible, away from the public eye. And henceforth, all election meetings would no longer be announced in public.[2] Clearly, the Conservative Association feared that as soon as its name would be connected to any candidate, that candidate no longer stood a chance of winning.

In 1882, one of the leading Conservatives, von Seydewitz, admitted that in the current political climate the Association led a rather moderate existence. He suggested three areas for improvement. The Association needed more members, and it needed more money, at the very least enough to pay for existing debts. But what was also wanted was courage, the courage to speak out openly to spread the Association's message.[3] The advice went largely unheeded, and for years the Association's aim was the cultivation of the convictions of its own members, rather than spreading the Conservative message to the public.[4]

Influenced by the number of artisans as well as the number of pastors, who often occupied leading positions in the party, the Association had strong sympathies with the plight of the

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'Socialism, Social Democracy and Social Policy', which was ostensibly attended by an audience of 550, the police inspector also noted that, in contrast to some Democratic listeners, the Social Democratic leaders present at the meetings seemed to be favourably impressed by the content of the lecture. HStAW 407 n. 159[1] fos. 65-6. Conservative Association meeting, 31.12.1883.

1 HStAW 407 n. 159[1] fo. 166. Conservative Association meeting, 27.11.1895.

2 HStAW 407 n. 159[1] fos. 28-9. Conservative Association meeting, 29.9.1882.

3 HStAW 407 n. 159[1] fo. 33. Conservative Association meeting, 1882.

4 Wiesbadener Presse, 2.12.1895. The article is also in HStAW 407 n. 159[1] fo. 161.

Mittelstand and for the underprivileged, calling upon the state to protect both.[1] But the Conservative Association was also anti-Semitic.[2] This was one of the main issues which caused a split in the party around 1896/97, as those with stronger views on the social question and who rebelled against the Conservatives' anti-Semitism followed Friedrich Naumann into the 'younger branch' of the Christian Social Association which soon became the National Social Association.[3]

The development of the National Social Association in Frankfurt as well as Friedrich Naumann's political work in Frankfurt has already been illustrated by Siegbert Wolf in his study of Frankfurt liberalism, so that there is no need to describe the details here.[4] Frankfurt occupied an important place in the history of the National Social Party, not just because it hosted one of its largest local branches. More importantly, it was the financial support of several rich liberal philanthropists (and Charles Hallgarten in particular), whom Naumann had met during his time in Frankfurt, which made possible Naumann's career in national politics in the first place.[5]

Yet despite Naumann's tireless efforts, the National Social Association faced the same problems in Frankfurt as elsewhere, namely, that despite its aim to bridge the working and the middle classes, it failed to overcome suspicions on both sides, and particularly on the side of the workers. As elsewhere, no matter how much Naumann tried to penetrate the working classes, his efforts remained sponsored by a relatively small group of the middle and upper classes in Frankfurt. Politically, the Association remained insignificant. In local politics where nationalism was of little concern to its members, the Association was too weak, and its views

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1 HStAW 407 n. 159[1] fo. 37. Conservative Association meeting, 1882

2 HStAW 407 n. 159[1] fos. 141-2. Conservative Association meeting, 1.12.1891.

3 HStAW 407 n. 159[1] fos. 161-3. Meetings of the National Social Association, November and December 1895. For the first membership list of the 'Verein Christlich-Sozialer älterer Richtung für Frankfurt a. Main und Umgegend', as well as reports of its meetings, see HStAW 407 n. 159[1] fos. 184-200. For the first membership list of the 'younger' Frankfurt National Social association, see HStAW 407 n. 159[1] fos. 212.

4 Wolf, Liberalismus, pp. 73-81. On Naumann's social and pastoral work in Frankfurt, see M. Benad (ed.), Gott in Frankfurt? Theologische Spuren in einer Metropole (Frankfurt, 1987), pp. 95-106.

5 See Naumann's correspondence with Hallgarten, BAP 90 Na 3 n. 147 fos. 13-6, 20-1, 30. Naumann to Hallgarten, 1902-1907.

were too similar to those of Frankfurt left-liberals, to warrant an independent party slate at the local elections. The best it could do was to endorse those candidates whose programmes it could agree with most.[1] Therefore, National Social candidates usually had no option but to endorse the left-liberal candidates while trying to influence them as much as possible through their support. In Reichstag elections, the National Social Association put forward a candidate of its own only once (Friedrich Naumann in 1898), but since he received only 3,295 votes on that occasion the Association never tried again.[2]

In the absence of any serious challenges from other parties which competed with the liberals for votes at a state and national level, it was really the Bezirksvereine and their encroachment into municipal politics which became a major concern for the liberals. These associations organised social events, days out for their members and their families, as well as discussion evenings, when a speaker would talk about a particular concern of the district. In the city centre (Altstadt), for example, these would be issues such as the relocation of businesses from the district westwards towards the station, or how to protect the inner city from the frequent floods of the river Main.[3] At the annual general meeting of the Nordendverein, the president pointed out that the committee had successfully lobbied for an increase in the number of letter-boxes in the district.[4]

This was, of course, precisely the kind of parochialism that the liberals, and the Democrats in particular, had tried so hard to avoid during the 1870s. Their party programmes had always emphasized the general political issues, which were presumably of much greater interest to their leaders. Councillors should be elected for their political competence, and the more

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1 HStAW 407 n. 159² fo. 270. National Social Association meeting, 22.11.1901.
2 Wolf, Liberalismus, p. 80.
3 See, for example, Frankfurter Nachrichten, 24.11.1888 (p. 5430), and 2.12.1888 (pp. 5549-51).
4 Frankfurter Zeitung 13.11.1890 (2. Morgenblatt).

administrative matters would be dealt with efficiently almost as an encore. Nevertheless, the liberals had to take note of the associations, which displayed an extraordinary success in mobilising the citizens to their cause. Membership figures are scarce (as voluntary associations they did not have to record their membership or their meetings with the police), but a lecture and discussion on the cleaning and widening of streets organised by the Bezirksverein Alt-Frankfurt (inner city district) drew a crowd of 300 people.[1] The association, which was undoubtedly one of the most active and well-organised, increased its membership in 1890 from 382 to 400.[2] This represents 14% of the total electorate of the area it claimed to represent (the third and fourth electoral districts), and 37% of those who actually went to the polls in the 1890 local elections![3] In other words, these were really quite formidable rival organisations to the liberals' own party organisations, particularly when they discovered that participation in the municipal elections and the nomination of candidates was extremely popular among their members. In the year of its first nomination of candidates in 1902 the 'west- und nordwestlicher Bezirksverein' saw an increase in membership from 270 to 378 members. At the general meeting in which the nomination took place, Fritz Meyer declared that in all his years as president he had never experienced such an exceptionally crowded meeting; the reason for this was surely the nomination of candidates.[4]

The nominees of the Bezirksvereine were usually also nominated by at least one other party. Only on very few occasions did they manage to get a candidate elected on their own, but it was clear that many of these associations could very easily swing the balance in the elections. There is also some evidence that the associations did manage to lobby the council on a number of occasions. In 1894, Sonnemann admitted that at times the council had been too keen to

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 9.11.1888 (1. Morgenblatt).

2 Frankfurter Nachrichten, 23.11.1890.

3 The numbers for the electorate and electoral participation have been taken from Wolf, Liberalismus, pp. 130-1.

4 Frankfurter Zeitung, 8.11.1902.

proceed with street clearances, but he put the blame for the councillors' eagerness to approve these measures squarely on the influence of the associations.[1]

There was some sense of uncertainty amongst the liberals as to how to respond to the challenge of the Bürgervereine. In a Progressive Liberal meeting in 1880, it was argued that the new associations were imports from Berlin and hence completely unsuited to the local conditions of Frankfurt. Against this, however, the traditional argument was used that it was only fair that these associations meddled in local affairs, since the Progressive Liberals had always held that municipal elections were not about politics.[2] Nevertheless, the liberals' immediate response to the emerging Bezirksvereine shows that they did take them extremely seriously. There were two ways in which the liberals could respond to the challenge. They could change their rhetoric, or they could try to influence the associations and use them for their own ends. In the end, they chose to do both.

On 30 June 1867, the Frankfurter Zeitung wrote that the candidates in the new electoral districts ought not to be required to reside in these districts, since the candidates, once elected, would be the representatives not of that particular district but of all citizens.[3] This 'principle', which the Democrats adhered to during the following years, made it much easier for them to shuffle their candidates between the various districts and to place them in the most strategic way. For the first time, this ideal was modified in 1880. During a Democratic-Progressive election rally in 1880, Victor Cnyrim again protested against the growing tendency towards a 'Rapunzelgäßchenpolitik', where particular interests took precedence over the whole. It would be completely ridiculous if the associations nominated candidates themselves for their own trifling concerns. But he also conceded that it was the responsibility of the councillors to

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1 HStAW 407 n. 161[2] fo. 13. Democratic Association meeting, 22.11.1894.
2 HStAW 407 n. 150[1] fo. 42-3. Progressive Association meeting, 21.3.1880.
3 Frankfurter Zeitung 30.6.1867 (1. Blatt).

inform the administration of the respective concerns of their districts.[1] In 1882, Jean Drill confirmed against the claims of the district associations that of course any councillor would, unless it negatively affected the community as a whole, represent the interests of his electoral district.[2]

Even more significant was the shift in rhetoric as a whole. A trend that began in 1880 established itself in 1882, when even the smallest details of municipal administration were included in the political speeches held at Democratic and Progressive Liberal rallies. In 1882 Drill commended the candidates of his party for dealing with issues such as new roads, street widenings (hopefully including the Oederweg...), and street lighting. The National Liberals, by contrast, had all voted against such measures.[3] The 'Kirchturmspolitik', against which the Democrats had rallied time and again and which in theory they still opposed,[4] had become politicised by the Democrats themselves. From 1886 onwards, these concerns became an integral part of the Democrat election manifesto.

At the same time, the associations, whose very essence had been their unpolitical nature as opposed to the political parties, soon became politicised themselves. Already in 1886, Sonnemann accused the Ostendverein of being mere electoral agents for his opponents, the Progressive and National Liberals.[5] At a meeting of the Nordendverein, the nominations had become a straight contest between the National Liberal and the left-liberal candidates by the 1890s.[6] The most interesting association in this respect is the Bezirksverein Alt-Frankfurt, which claimed to represent the third and fourth electoral districts - the former being the Democrats' stronghold, the latter that of the National Liberals. For most of the time, the Democrats managed to control it, as one of the most prominent Democrats, Jean Drill, was its

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 22.11.1880 (Morgenblatt).
2 Frankfurter Zeitung, 21.11.1882 (Abendblatt).
3 Frankfurter Zeitung, 27.11.1882 (2. Morgenblatt).
4 Frankfurter Zeitung, 14.11.1882 (Abendblatt). HStAW 407 n. 138² fo. 76. Democratic Association meeting, 16.11.1882. Frankfurter Zeitung, 26.11.1888 (Abendblatt).
5 Frankfurter Zeitung, 25.11. 1886 (2. Morgenblatt).
6 Frankfurter Zeitung, 17.11.1894 (Abendblatt). Frankfurter Zeitung, 15.11.1898 (Abenblatt).

active president. At times, however, the Democrats could be caught out. In 1898, for example, the National Liberals and the artisans had rallied their members to the annual general meeting, at which they succeeded in having their own candidates nominated, rather than the Democrat ones.[1]

The Bezirksvereine were not just a necessary evil that had to be dealt with, though. Indeed, some liberals were not blind to the opportunities these associations presented. The Progressive Liberals, for example, had tried for some time to create a better organisation, akin to the SPD or even the Democrats. At one stage it was planned to divide the city into 48 districts, for each of which one Progressive Liberal party member would take responsibility.[2] Ultimately this and other schemes failed, because not enough people could be found to operate the changes. As a consequence, it was suggested in 1895 that Progressive Liberal Bezirksvereine should be founded, but Fritz Meyer pointed out that although this was a good idea in theory, the Progressives were too weak and the existing district associations too strong. Hence it would be best if one sought to influence the associations from within, in the absence of an effective party organisation.[3] As shown above, seven years later, Meyer had succeeded. As president of the West- und Nordwestlicher Bezirksverein he had successfully pushed his association to nominate candidates for the first time in its history. Thus, through the nominations he was able to give his ally, the Democrat Heinrich Rößler, an added boost when the latter was under strong attack from the National Liberals during the election campaign.[4]

During the 1880s, therefore, the liberals reacted to the diversification of local politics, and particularly the challenge of the emerging district associations, with suitable flexibility by

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 12.11.1898 (Abendblatt).

2 HStAW 407 n. 150[1] fos. 392-93. Progressive Association meeting, 26.10.1891.

3 HStAW 407 n. 150[2] fos. 16-9. Annual General Meeting of the Progressive Association, 27.2.1895.

4 Frankfurter Zeitung, 8.11.1902. In March 1901 Simon Rosenthal asked his fellow party members to become involved in the Bornheimer Bezirksverein, so that they might eventually gain some influence in its nominations. HStAW 407 n. 150[2] fo. 206. Progressive Association meeting, 13.3.1901.

appropriating the language of the associations and politicising them, as well as their concerns. Even though politics inside the council carried on very much as before, it had changed dramatically outside as councillors were now increasingly responsible to these associations and their constituents. In fact, this was only the start of a change in the style of politics which culminated with the rise of the SPD in municipal politics after 1906. Councillors were for the first time not only challenged for their political opinions, as had already happened before, but now they were increasingly scrutinised for every vote they took in the council. Liberal Honoratioren ceased to be amongst themselves, 'unter sich',[1] as even the tiniest details of local government slowly but perceptibly ceased to be left to the good judgement of the individual notable who became more and more accountable to increasingly diverse interest groups.

During the 1890s, disparate groups which can loosely be described as the Mittelstand became more powerful and influential. These groups had little more in common than a dislike of the municipal regime. In 1880, several hundred artisans had formed a Verein zum Schutze der Handwerke (Association for the Protection of Crafts) to protect their interests.[2] From 1882, they participated as a separate group in the council elections, but during the 1880s their success was relatively modest. The Democrats tried to accommodate this emerging group, but ultimately the differences were too great, since the Democrats were in principle opposed to the artisans' and craftsmen's main demands for the re-introduction of guilds (Innungen) and restrictive trading laws.[3] During the 1890s, another, more formidable group emerged as a distinct political entity, that of the Hausbesitzer.

According to the Prussian city ordinance, at least half of all city councillors were required to be house-owners, which was designed as another safeguard to ensure that property would dominate local government. Not only was this an added barrier to parties such as the SPD,

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1 Sheehan, 'Liberalism', p. 129.
2 HStAW 405 n. 1072 fo. 65. Zeitungsbericht, 10.3.1881.
3 HStAW 407 n. 138³ fo. 126. Democratic Association meeting, 13.10.1884.

which had tremendous difficulties in having enough house-owners among their candidates for the city council. It also meant that the house-owners were by far the most powerful interest group in local politics.[1] This acquired particular importance throughout Prussia and beyond from the 1890s, when the increasing priority given to the provision of adequate housing conditions precipitated direct local government interference in the housing market.[2]

In 1905, one quarter of Frankfurt councillors lived in their own houses, while another half of them rented out accommodation. Even though many of them remained faithful to their party in their support for Adickes' far-reaching Bodenpolitik, which was supported in the main by the three liberal parties,[3] the influence of house-owners as an independent interest group was far from negligible.[4] During the discussions about new tax increases in 1894, for example, the house-owners managed to transform a levy for connection to the drainage system (Kanalsteuer) from 1% of the rent levied on the owners to 2% levied on the occupiers.[5] Finally, in 1894 the Steuerwehr appeared which a year later developed into the Kommunalverein and which in part drew its strength from house-owners' support[6]. Opposed to any increase in local taxation, it sought to exploit the resentment against the new tax increases of the 1890s particularly among the Mittelstand.

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1 House-owners were particularly vociferous because many of them lived off their tenants' rents, which made them particularly vulnerable to potential levies or taxes imposed by the town council.

2 Hofman, 'Aufgaben', p. 597. The potential power of the Hausbesitzer and their Vereine have been strikingly described by R. J. Evans, Death in Hamburg: Society and Politics in the Cholera Years, 1830-1910 (Harmondsworth, 1987).

3 See chapter seven for a more detailed examination of Adickes' plans.

4 Adler, 'Gliederung', p. 115. Adler's point that a particular Hausbesitzer interest was negligible in the Frankfurt city council is particularly odd considering that this was written at a time when the representation of the Verein für kommunale Wahlen peaked to make it the second largest party in the council.

5 'Das Streben... unter allen Umständen die Hausbesitzer zu schonen, lag ersichtlich den Beschlüssen der Mehrheit der Stadtverordneten-Versammlung zu Grunde, die sich diesmal als ein Parlament der Hausbesitzer im wahren Sinne des Wortes zeigte.' ('The endeavour to protect the house-owners under any circumstance was clearly the basis of the majority's decision in the city council, which on this occasion has shown itself to be truly a parliament of house-owners.') Kleine Presse, 18.12.1894 (2. Blatt). See also Kleine Presse, 19.12.1894 (2. Blatt).

6 In opposition to the Kommunalverein, the Mietherverein had been founded. HStAW 407 n. 150² fo. 19. Annual General Meeting of the Progressive Association, 27.2.1895.

In a decade that saw substantial shifts in the nature of local taxation as a result of Miquel's tax reform of 1893 and the first significant increases in its levels, fiscal questions naturally went to the top of the political agenda. This put the liberals as the parties responsible for over two decades of city government in considerable difficulty. In the absence of any sizeable conservative or Centre party, which elsewhere in Germany were the main political allies of the emerging Mittelstand,[1] the National Liberals managed to make the most of the situation, as Appendix 1 shows. During the 1890s, they managed to increase their total number of seats considerably and thus took full advantage of the enlargement of the council, whereas the strength of the other two liberal parties remained roughly static. To the great irritation of the two left-liberal parties, the National Liberals placed themselves as the minority party against the left-liberal coalition in the council, and hence as the party not responsible for the tax increases and other policies of the city government.[2] They underlined this with their willingness to form coalitions with any or all of the Mittelstand groups particularly in the run-off elections, and these coalitions were the main factor which ensured the success of the National Liberal candidates against their left-liberal opponents. Thus, National Liberal strength became inflated during the 1890s until, in 1898, for the first time the National Liberals were level with the Democrats inside the city council with 23 seats each, a far cry from the relative strength of the two parties a couple of decades earlier.

The National Liberals, however, could only benefit from Mittelstand support for as long as they managed to impose their own candidates on the much weaker and more fragmented Mittelstand groups. From 1900 until the end of 1904, the Mittelstand parties managed to benefit from the ever-increasing discontent with the existing municipal regime themselves. Mittelstand strength was gained almost entirely at the expense of the National Liberals, who quickly tumbled to their pre-1890 level of representation in the enlarged city council, which

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1 F. Lenger, Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Handwerker seit 1800 (Frankfurt, 1988), p. 156.

2 Kleine Presse, 15.11.1896 (1. Blatt).

supports the argument that up to 1904 both appealed to the same pool of electors. Two issues were at the root of this development.[1] The local authorities appeared to take too little notice of Hausbesitzer and other Mittelstand concerns. Rather, under Adickes they were stepping up their regulation of the housing market, but despite these efforts rents increased dramatically so that many on both sides, property owners and tenants, were disappointed.[2] Added to these concerns was the liberals' intransigence over the principle of non-denominational education; and even though National Liberals liked to play down their commitment to the issue, they, too, were firmly committed to the ideal. The dispute between Roman Catholic and Protestant supporters of religious primary schools (Konfessionsschulen) and the liberal city government had escalated since the Prussian school reforms of the mid-1890s, and culminated in 1904/05 when the Prussian diet tried to intervene against the Frankfurt liberals' education policies.[3] As a result, the issue of denominational schooling mobilised strong support for the Mittelstand through the allied Protestant Freie evangelische Volksvereinigung and the Roman Catholic Wahlkomitee Frankfurter Katholiken, and the 1904 elections were fought almost as a plebiscite on the issue.[4] After taking advantage of the Mittelstand in the 1890s, therefore, the National Liberals were rapidly marginalised after 1898 as a result of an increasing polarisation of Frankfurt local politics as the Mittelstand proceeded to become the second biggest group in the municipal council between 1904 and 1906.

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1 This was recognised, for example, by the Progressive Liberal F. Meyer. Frankfurter Zeitung, 23.11.1896 (3. Morgenblatt).

2 On the problems in the housing market, see, for example, MAB 1899, xii-xxiv. This gives also a good indication of the importance the Magistrat attached to the problem, as it devoted more than half of its general introductory report to the issue.

3 For a brief introduction on the issue, see K. Schäfer, Schulen und Schulpolitik in Frankfurt am Main 1900-1945 (Frankfurt, 1994), pp. 76-83. The subject will be dealt with in more detail in chapter four of this study.

4 Although as usual many other issues were involved, the issue of denominational schooling was time and again singled out as the central issue of the campaign. See, for example, the left-liberal manifesto in Frankfurter Zeitung, 27.11.1904 (3. Morgenblatt), and Wedel's opening speech at a left-liberal election rally in Frankfurter Zeitung, 28.11.1904. See also, for example, Frankfurter Zeitung, 29.11.1904 (3. Morgenblatt).

Meanwhile, the growth of the Mittelstand during the 1890s presented the left-liberals with problems of their own. The Mittelstand groups brought with them an unprecedented hostility and negativity to the current political debate, which the left-liberal parties never quite managed to counter. As the parties perceived to be in power, they had to defend themselves against charges such as the squandering of public funds, the occasional embezzlement of considerable sums by local-government employees, and even the misconduct of individual councillors.[1] The most contentious of these issues was the debate about the Submissionswesen, about how local government ought to invite tenders for its public contracts, whether these ought to go to big or small businesses and whether or not they ought to be restricted to Frankfurt firms. Entangled with this central question for the Frankfurt Mittelstand was the issue of whether councillors should be allowed to compete for municipal contracts, and accusations that councillors had used their position of influence to further their own private businesses in the past.

In reaction to these charges about their conduct and their record in municipal affairs, and to the 'negative' opposition from the various Mittelstand groups in alliance with the National Liberals, the Democrat and Progressive Liberal parties changed tactic. This is already apparent in the common left-liberal election manifesto. In 1888, for example, this did include some aims of municipal policy, but these were still altogether vague. The issue of the municipalisation of the tramway was to be resolved in a socially acceptable way, and the desires of individual districts were to be taken account of. Otherwise, the appeal was mostly concerned with the 'Ansturm auf unsere erprobte Stadtverfassung, auf bürgerliche Rechte und Freiheiten'.[2] In 1896, by contrast, the manifesto included specific demands for the

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1 For example, on the 'Affäre Fischer', see Frankfurter Zeitung, 13.11.1894 (2. Morgenblatt). This was the most spectacular of all cases, as Stadtkassierer Fischer had embezzled 850,000 Marks over a period of more than ten years. He committed suicide in 1894 in the fear that he would be discovered. MAB 1894/95, x.
The Drill case is briefly mentioned in Frankfurter Zeitung, 25.11.1894 (2. Morgenblatt).

2 'Assault on our proven municipal constitution, on our civil rights and liberties.' Frankfurter Zeitung, 28.11.1888 (2. Morgenblatt).

municipalisation of tramways, the development of the municipal electrical power station, the building of cheap flats, public reading rooms (Lesehallen), and further public lectures (to continue a very successful series of lectures organised by liberals and Social Democrats in co-operation).[1]

Furthermore, the precise language and demands such as the one for a Submissionswesen[2] more favourable to local interests or the insistence on fair and open competition for offices in local government were clearly a concession to the Mittelstand and the National Liberal opponents. By contrast, the social demands listed above were partly due to the fact that since Carl Funck had taken over from Berthold Geiger as the Progressive 'leader', the party had moved more closely towards the Democrats' social policies.[3] Since the two parties agreed more, the Democracts' programme could therefore be much more specific than before.

But of course, the fact that they could be more specific on social matters does not explain why they chose to be so in practice. Clearly, the left-liberals were out to attract the small but growing number of SPD voters, at least for the run-off elections. This was put succinctly in a leader of the Kleine Presse. In it, the newspaper lamented the complete lack of principle ('Rückgrad- und Prinzipienlosigkeit') of the National Liberals which had been revealed by their alliance with the 'fanatics' of the Mittelstand ('Kommunalvereinler') and even the anti-Semites. It reiterated an earlier comment by the SPD newspaper that the party would prefer a Democrat as the least of all evils and concluded:

> Das wird wohl, so denken wir, auch heute noch gelten, namentlich deshalb, weil die Demokraten für Erweiterung des Gemeindewahlrechts sind, während von den Rechtsparteien in dieser Beziehung keine Besserung zu erwarten ist.[4]

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 10.11.1896 (2. Morgenblatt). In later election campaigns, the manifestos' demands were very similar in kind, only progressively more detailed. See, for example, Frankfurter Zeitung, 15.11.1898 (2. Morgenblatt).

2 Liberals were extremely lukewarm about the contentious issue and were in no doubt that the only reason why they had to advocate change was that otherwise they would lose votes. Frankfurter Zeitung, 30.11.1894 (2. Morgenblatt).

3 In an extremely illuminating public speech Funck denied that the Progressives were hostile to social policy, and expressed the hope that his party would develop particularly in its social policy ideals in a way that would bring them more into line with the Democrats. HStAW 407 n. 150[1] fo. 500 (newspaper report from 18.11.1893).

4 'We should have thought that this would still be the case today, precisely because the Democrats are in

Henceforth, a distinction was made between the 'left' and the 'right', 'Fortschritt' and 'Rückschritt'.[1]

As a result of this juxtaposition, the Democrat party rhetoric, which the Progressives appeared happy to adopt, gained an interesting twist. Rather than identifying the act of voting Democrat as an act of local patriotism, there was a reinforced message that Frankfurt was a progressive, 'fortschrittlich' city - a term that could include the SPD. At a rally in 1902 Rudolf Oeser, in contrasting freisinnige (liberal) tendencies with the 'Mischmasch zünftlerisch-reaktionärer Observanz' appealed that:

> Unser Bürgertum, ..., ist freigesinnt... sorgen Sie dafür, daß am 12. November [polling day] kein freigesinnter Mann zu Hause bleibt, auch [sic!] das Frankfurt bleibt, was es stets gewesen ist: Der Städte Zierde und des Reiches Stolz![2]

The National Liberals in their support for particular interests such as those of the artisans, of religious groups or of the Mittelstand groups in general now became decried as 'particularists', in contrast to their behaviour in national politics.[3] By contrast, voting for the left, and for the left-liberals in particular, became a patriotic act, against the particularism of all the parties on the right.[4] The left-liberals had managed, therefore, to turn their particularist image of the 1860s and 1870s into one of true patriotism, whereas the National Liberals, once the party of unification, were now the party of true particularism.

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favour of the extension of the local franchise, whereas the parties on the right have nothing to offer on this issue.'. Kleine Presse, 15.11.1896 (1. Blatt).

It should be emphasised that the Democrats' perception that they had in some ways more in common with the SPD than with the National Liberals was not mere rhetoric. It was underlined by the Democrats' official endorsement of the SPD candidate in the 1893 Reichstag run-off elections, which prevented the National Liberal candidate from winning the seat.

[1] In the words of Heinrich Rößler, 'Man wird also die Sachlage dahin zusammenfassen können, daß bei uns alle vorwärtsstrebenden Richtungen sind, im gegnerischen Lager aber alle rückläufigen.' ('In summary, all progressive elements are in our camp, whereas the opposition unites those that are backward-looking.) Frankfurter Zeitung, 11.11.1898 (Abendblatt).

[2] 'Our bourgeoisie is... liberal...take care that on 12 November no liberal-minded person stays at home, so that Frankfurt may remain what it always has been: an ornament to the cities, the pride of the Empire!' Frankfurter Zeitung, 1.11.1902.

[3] Kleine Presse, 15.11.1900 (2. Blatt).

[4] Frankfurter Zeitung, 11.11.1902 (Abendblatt). Voting against the particularists became an act of 'patriotischer Pflicherfüllung', National Liberal behaviour simply being 'unpatriotisch'.

The growth of the parties of the Mittelstand, therefore, represents a further qualitative change in the local political climate of the city of Frankfurt. For the first time, representatives of occupational groups or of other particular interests successfully sought to gain access to the council in protest against the general policies pursued by the established parties.[1] The essentially negative language employed by these groups in opposition to everything that inversely affected them put the Democrats and their Progressive allies in a difficult position in their positive commitment to the welfare of the community. As a result, they were unable to respond to the particularist demands of the Mittelstand groups either in substance or in the language they used, preferring instead to re-emphasize their support for the costly municipal improvements and social policies they had embarked on in support of the Magistrat. The National Liberals, by contrast, were initially much more able to use the new political current for their own benefit. Even though most Stadträte were National Liberals, they joined the opposition at least at election times by convincing the Mittelstand that the Democrats and the Progressives had become, in fact, the new 'Magistratspartei'. Only after the turn of the century did the National Liberals become increasingly 'sandwiched' between the aggressive, negative and 'particularist' Mittelstand on the one hand, and a consciously constructive, 'patriotic' left-liberalism on the other.

This transformation in the way Frankfurt left-liberals portrayed themselves is also apparent in their participation in and contribution to national festivals. Throughout the 1870s, for example, the Democrats had stubbornly refused to take part in any activity that would signal an acceptance of the current Prussian king. Despite the 'jubilant' ('glanzvoll') welcome given to the emperor by the city in 1877, the majority of councillors were conspicious by their absence at the official reception.[2] Even in 1883, Leopold Sonnemann refused, to the great

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1 See the revealing manifesto of the 'Communaler Verein', in Kleine Presse, 14.11.1900.

2 Frankfurter Beobachter, 20.10.1877.

irritation of the Prussian police president, to decorate or even light his house to greet the emperor as he passed by his house which lay en route for his procession through the city.[1] As shown earlier, these manifestations of Frankfurt 'particularism' were less a stubborn refusal to accept the inevitable and more part and parcel of the creation of a distinctive Democratic liberal rhetoric. Even though William I has been depicted as considering himself a Prussian king to the end who did not care much for the German Empire as such,[2] it must be said that to his credit he did display genuine tact in his dealings with Frankfurt. In his visits, and through actions such as his personal contribution to the reconstruction of the cathedral (Kaiserdom) in which so many German emperors had been crowned, the Kaiser appealed to the Kaiserstadt, the Imperial City. Not so much as a Prussian king, therefore, but as the German emperor, the Kaiser was increasingly welcomed in 'his' city.[3]

The Democrats responded by emphasising more their own patriotism. After the emperor's visit to the successful 1891 electrotechnical exhibition through which he was led by the organiser, Leopold Sonnemann, there followed an extraordinary battle between the Kreuzzeitung on the one hand, and the Kleine Presse and Frankfurter Zeitung on the other. The former refused to accept reports by the latter newspapers that the emperor would even have come close to the Democrat. The Frankfurter Zeitung, owned by the same person who eight years earlier had refused to decorate his house to acknowledge the emperor's visit, replied by proudly insisting that Sonnemann had shaken the Kaiser's hand not just once, but twice, and that he had been graciously thanked by His Highness for the tour.[4] Clearly, the

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1 HStAW 405 n. 1199 fo. 66. Zeitungsbericht, 11.12.1883. Nevertheless, Sonnemann was the only one reported to act in such a way, which shows that support for these 'particularist' manifestations was ebbing away.

2 N. Sombart, 'The Kaiser in his epoch: some reflexions on Wilhelmine society, sexuality and culture', in J. C. G. Röhl and N. Sombart (eds.), Kaiser Wilhelm II. New Interpretations (Cambridge, 1982), p. 296.

3 Interestingly, Renate Hauschild-Thiessen has noted the same phenomenon for Hamburg, that the Hanseatic City slowly came to accept the monarch not as the Prussian king, to whom they remained bitterly opposed, but as the German emperor. R. Hauschild-Thiessen, Bürgerstolz und Kaisertreue. Hamburg und das Deutsche Reich von 1871 (Hamburg, 1979).

4 The initial reports of the Kaiser's visit by the Kleine Presse, the General-Anzeiger and the Frankfurter Zeitung of the 10/11 October 1891 are in HStAW 407 n. 99[1] fo. 257. For the Frankfurter Zeitung's refutation of the Kreuzzeitung of the 15 October, see HStAW 407 n. 99[1] fo. 253. See also 'Eine neue Zeit...!' Die

Frankfurter Zeitung was having none of the Kreuzzeitung's insults about Sonnemann's lack of patriotism.

Moreover, in addition to continuing their own democratic festivals, the Democrats started to contribute increasingly to national celebrations, though in their own inimitable style. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of German unification in January 1896, the pacifist guest speaker Ludwig Quidde confirmed to an audience of 500 that the days of particularism were over. Concluding his speech, he demanded 'daß die Politik der Vergewaltigung ersetzt werde durch die Politik der Verständigung'.[1] The Democrats then chose to make another celebration, on 19 March 1896, out of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening of the Reichstag. In a room whose only special decoration consisted of a large black, red and golden banner, the Democrats could not resist comparing the imperial parliament with the first German parliament of 1848.[2]

Consequently, rather than styling themselves as being outrightly opposed to the unified state, Frankfurt Democrats increasingly emphasised their allegiance to the new German state in an attempt to portray themselves as the 'genuine' patriots. This tied in very nicely, indeed, with the parallel shift in the rhetoric in municipal affairs noted earlier, in which Democrats now insisted that they were the true patriots, in contrast to the 'particularists' to the right.

As early as the first municipal elections contested by the SPD in 1882, the Democrats had to consider their tactics against the new party. In an effort to appeal to his 'working-class' constituents, on whose support he depended for his seat in the Reichstag, Sonnemann tried in

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Internationale Elektrotechnische Ausstellung 1891, ed. Historisches Museum Frankfurt am Main (Frankfurt, 1991), pp. 40-1.

[1] ...'that the politics of rape be replaced by the politics of understanding.' HStAW 407 n. 161² fos. 82-7. Democrat commemorative meeting on the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the German Empire, 18.1.1896.

[2] HStAW 407 n. 161² fo. 102. Democrat commemorative meeting on the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Reichstag, 19.3.1896. This is also in Frankfurter Zeitung, 20.3.1896 (4. Morgenblatt).

vain to convince his Democrat colleagues to nominate a socialist candidate.[1] Four years later, however, he had convinced the Democrats to nominate a socialist candidate for the first time as Democrats calmed the nerves of their supporters by insisting that the candidate would at least serve as a 'safety valve' to socialist interests.[2]

Despite early attempts at some form of co-operation between the SPD and the left-liberals, the frictions between the parties anything but ceased throughout the 1890s, when the question of the extent to which the left-liberal parties should co-operate with the SPD recurred at every local election. At the root of the tension was essentially the same charge made by the SPD about the left-liberals' lack of principles and of genuine commitment to their ideals. At the heart of the SPD's complaints against the left-liberals was, of course, the franchise issue, which appeared to epitomise left-liberal ambiguity about their own ideals. For despite minor improvements in the franchise which Heinrich Rößler managed to wrestle from the council and the Magistrat in 1895,[3] the franchise law remained essentially unchanged until the end of the Empire. The Progressive Liberals remained uneasy about changing the franchise throughout the period, and even some Democrats were quite unsupportive about the issue as it became increasingly apparent that the SPD would be the net beneficiaries of the change.[4] But the Democrats, too, found it difficult to cope with the SPD's aggressive and negative language on many issues, which was extremely similar in style to that employed by the Mittelstand[5] - after

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 21.11.1882 (Abendblatt).

2 Frankfurter Zeitung, 19.11.1886 (2. Morgenblatt). Frankfurter Zeitung, 23.11.1886.

3 At long last, the Bürgerrechtsgeld was abolished and people were enfranchised who paid taxes for an income of over 1,200 Marks, but who were pushed below the tax barrier by the receipt of other benefits (e.g. for their children). Frankfurter Zeitung, 25.9.1896 (3. Morgenblatt). Wolf states that as a result of this, 2,600 men were enfranchised, but he omits to point out that most of this increase would have been the result of a natural increase which occurred at every election. The net effect of the change in regulations alone would be more likely to be around 1,000 new voters, out of a total of 17,500 electors. Wolf, Liberalismus, p. 148.

4 The importance of a restrictive franchise to the fortunes of Frankfurt's liberal parties in city government has been emphasised recently in C. Rohr, 'Kommunaler Liberalismus und bürgerliche Herrschaft in den Städten Frankfurt am Main und Leipzig 1900-1924', JFL, vi (1994), 167-77. See also the forthcoming PH.D. thesis by C. Rohr, 'Kommunaler Liberalismus zwischen Kaiserreich und Weimarer Republik. Frankfurt am Main und Leipzig' (Univ. of Frankfurt, D.PHIL. thesis., forthcoming). The debates about the extension of the municipal franchise have been often discussed, and there is no need to go through the minute steps of the debate here. See Rolling, 'Liberals', pp. 189-208. Wolf, Liberalismus, pp. 98-109.

5 The SPD had as much to complain about municipal charges and the 'inefficiency' of the council as the Mittelstand. See, for example, Quarck in Frankfurter Zeitung, 16.11.1894 (3. Morgenblatt).

all, the SPD was, like various groups on the right, another party representing a particular interest. The narrow class interests of the SPD, as the Democrats saw it, were revealed, for example, whenever the SPD chose not to support them in the run-off elections. Just because in theory the two parties were closest to each other, SPD support could not be taken for granted, and for tactical reasons the SPD on one occasion even chose to support a candidate of the Mittelstand.[1]

Nevertheless, the left-liberals continued to woo the SPD vote throughout the 1890s. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of left-liberal political speeches and manifestoes of the time is the surprisingly muted tone of the criticism of the SPD.[2] An important reason is that the SPD was clearly not perceived as a threat during this decade. This is revealed by the naive and patronising attitudes many left-liberals continued to have towards the socialists. Some were prepared to welcome two or three Social Democrat councillors so that they would, in the words of B. Geiger, stop 'whingeing' all the time and 'shut up and realise some of the real issues involved', while others were convinced that once the first SPD member became a councillor, somehow many more would follow.[3] There were also many echoes of the 'safety valve' argument employed with respect to SPD representation in 1886. In the end, it was only the most progressive Democrats who appreciated that the SPD would add to the quality of the council and that their input to social matters, for example, would be most valuable.[4]

More importantly, the Democrats needed all the support they could muster against the Mittelstand, whilst the SPD, still in need of a bourgeois ally to get into the council, was most likely to find support from the Democrats, given their traditional involvement in workers' issues. Moreover, there was a clear perception in the SPD that of all the parties, the

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 30.11.1902 (5. Morgenblatt). Frankfurter Zeitung, 8.11.1904 (Abendblatt).

2 This includes even the National Liberals! Before the 1896 election run-off elections, for example, the Kleine Presse positively contrasted the 'principled' SPD to a National Liberal party characterised by lack of substance. Kleine Presse, 15.11.1896 (1. Blatt).

3 HStAW 407 n. 150² fos. 146-7. Progressive Association meeting, 10.11.1898.

4 Frankfurter Zeitung, 15.11.1898 (3. Morgeblatt).

left-liberals and particularly the Democrats had the greatest ideological affinity to the SPD. In many ways, the SPD had even more reason than the Democrats to be opposed to the property-owners' and guild interests of the Mittelstand.

From the turn of the century, it became increasingly apparent that the progressively large SPD gains in the share of the municipal vote were the direct result of the natural increase in the franchise, as an increasing number of skilled workers moved above the tax threshold.[1] In this situation, in which the SPD looked increasingly certain to be a main contender in municipal politics in the long run, one might have expected the left-liberals' commitment to the 'progressive bloc' to have been severely tested. Still, the Democrat and the Progressive Liberals left no doubt that they preferred the participation of the SPD to the reactionary 'mishmash'. From 1901, when the first SPD member, Max Quarck, entered the city council the left-liberal councillors assured their own party members and their constituencies that Quarck was, despite his disagreeable personality and his offensive behaviour in the council, much more preferable than any member of the Mittelstand. Once elected, the latter did not do any work inside the council, whereas Quarck at least had convictions and worked hard.[2] Even during the 1906 elections, when as a result of the potential strength of the SPD in some districts the liberals fought a genuine two-front battle against the SPD on the left and the Mittelstand on the right, the liberals agreed with the SPD for mutual support in the run-off elections against the Mittelstand. Whereas before the left-liberals had had enormous trouble in rallying their electors in support of the SPD, the Socialists for the first time acknowledged that left-liberal help had been decisive in securing the election of two of their candidates.[3]

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1 See, for example, the post-election analysis in Frankfurter Zeitung, 13.11.1902 (3. Morgenblatt).

2 HStAW 407 n. 161[4] fos. 55-6. Democratic Association meeting, 25.11.1901. HStAW 407 n. 150[2] fos. 231-2. Progressive Association meeting, 26.3.1902. Frankfurter Zeitung, 1.11.1902 (3. Morgenblatt). Councillor Zirndorfer at a joint Democratic/Progressive election rally, 31.10.1902.

3 Volksstimme, 13.12.1906 (1. Beilage).

This section has outlined that almost as soon as it was established, the dominant left-liberal milieu came under threat. The Democrats had to be increasingly careful that a growing German patriotism did not become a threat to Frankfurt particularism (or at least a specific Frankfurt identity). Moreover, the 1880s and 1890s witnessed the growth of the Mittelstand, of artisans and craftsmen, as an independent political force. Threatened by economic marginalisation, and not pleased by high municipal spending leading to inevitable tax increases, this group threatened more and more to turn sour against the left-liberal culture and vote for the National Liberals or smaller interest groups.

The spread of local political discussion to the new district associations undoubtedly helped to politicise further the local electorate, but it also introduced the politics of the 'parish pump'. In full appreciation of the possibilities and the dangers this development posed to their own hegemony, the various liberal parties soon responded by making their own the associations' demands for individual district concerns, and by attempting to take over the district associations themselves, to complement their own party organisations. Liberals could appropriate this new style of 'petty' politics because the articulation of various district grievances usually did not collide with their central political concerns such as education or municipalisation.

It is for this reason that the emergence of the Mittelstand posed new problems, for the Mittelstand's central demand touched the raw nerve of municipal politics: taxation. In response, the National Liberals, who drew their support from all sections which were outside the dominant left-liberal culture, tried to style themselves as the party in opposition to the city establishment. Thus they were able to benefit from the rise of the Mittelstand at first, as long as the Mittelstand was too weak to advance into the run-off ballots on its own. However, since both groups appealed for support among the same groups, eventually the National Liberals suffered from this tactic as the Mittelstand, galvanised by denominational support in

its opposition to the council, increased in strength to become the second largest party in the town council in 1904.

The left-liberals responded to these developments by moving closer together, and by appealing against the Mittelstand even to the SPD as the lesser evil. In defence against constant Mittelstand attacks, left-liberal politics became much more aggressive in style and content. What is most interesting is how the Democratic rhetoric changed. Once the party of Frankfurt particularism, it now became the party of Frankfurt patriotism. Thus, there was no longer a necessary contradiction between being a committed citizen of Frankfurt and of Germany at the same time. This ensured that the left-liberal milieu in Frankfurt continued to remain viable during decades that witnessed a general acceptance of the current German state.[1] Thus the Frankfurt Democrats responded successfully to the general phenomenon of the 'normalisation' of liberal politics, where throughout Germany the issue of unification as such ceased to be a defining issue for the liberals' success,[2] except that in Frankfurt the Democrats' success had rested on their opposition to, rather than the support of, Bismarck's unification. Moreover, the shift in emphasis made it much easier for the Democrats to form alliances with other groups, particularly (but not exclusively) with the Progressive Liberals. Finally, increasing commitment to social reform enabled the formation of a tacit 'grand coalition' with the SPD for the purpose of defeating the Mittelstand. Therefore, in the 1880s and 1890s Frankfurt liberals learned how to adapt to increasingly complex political challenges through the adaptation of rhetoric, party organisation and policies.

The alliance with the Social Democrats was only broken after 1906, when the SPD replaced the defeated Mittelstand as the main challenger to liberal hegemony in the town council. Seen in this light, the SPD was just one further element in a series of increasingly popular political

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1 See, for example, J. Breuilly, 'The national idea in modern German history', in J. Breuilly (ed.), The State of Germany. The national idea in the making, unmaking and remaking of a modern nation-state (London, 1992), pp. 13-5, 25.

2 Langewiesche, Liberalismus, pp. 135-6.

challenges. It is this further assault on liberal political hegemony, and how the liberals coped with it, that the following section seeks to analyse.

## 3.3. The Rise of the SPD

In fact, the 1906 local elections formed a watershed in Frankfurt politics. In concerted action all the liberal parties and the SPD decisively defeated the candidates of the Mittelstand which did not get a single candidate elected. In consequence, it lost 7 councillors, almost half of its total strength in the council. The Mittelstand never recovered from this. In 1908 it split on the issue of the anti-Semitism among some of its more radical members, so that in the municipal elections of that year it only salvaged three seats, helped by the SPD supporting it against the liberals. In subsequent years, its representation in the council dwindled into insignificance. Furthermore, the National Liberals had learnt from their previous election defeat that they badly needed a change of tactics if they were to survive against the Mittelstand. Henceforward, until the outbreak of the First World War they formed a coalition inside the council and during the elections with the Progressive Liberals and the Democrats, as well as the National Social party. Therefore, in 1906 there occurred yet another shift in Frankfurt municipal politics, as politics became polarised between the combined forces of the liberals on the one hand, and the SPD on the other.

The liberals were in no doubt about the potency of the socialist challenge.[1] First, the SPD was likely to profit from the 'natural' increase in those entitled to vote in municipal elections. Particularly thanks to a rapidly expanding party organisation which managed to mobilise this new pool of voters much more effectively than the liberals could, the number of SPD votes

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[1] In this context, see an extremely illuminating article in 1904 which proves that contemporaries were very aware of the seriousness of the SPD challenge. It was appreciated that the growth of the municipal electorate as a result of endogenous and exogenous increases in voters benefited chiefly the SPD. Frankfurter Zeitung, 10.11.1904 (3. Morgenblatt).

increased from 2,500 in 1902 to just under 4,500 in 1904, and to 6,500 in 1906.[1] By contrast, the total vote for the left-liberals increased from 1902 to 1904 by a mere 3,000 votes to 17,067![2] The natural increase of the franchise by itself became particularly problematic for the liberals from 1906. Previously, the voting restrictions which enfranchised only those with taxable incomes above 1,200 M. had excluded about two-thirds of those entitled to vote in the Reichstag elections under universal male suffrage. As a result of inflation and the relatively high wages paid in the Frankfurt area, this census restriction ceased to be effective in excluding skilled and semi-skilled workers from the vote. From about 1910, more than two thirds of Reichstag electorate were included in the equal local franchise, and most of this increase was the result of rising incomes just beyond the required threshold of 1200 M., which the SPD regarded as their natural constituency.[3]

Second, the SPD stood to gain from an imminent re-allocation of council seats which became inevitable as a result of the increasing size of the outer, densely populated districts at the expense of the inner city areas, the traditional liberal strongholds. In 1906, for example, 997 electors in the third district (Altstadt) were represented by six councillors, whereas in Sachsenhausen, 5,266 voters were represented by eight councillors. The new electoral districts of 1910 resulted in a much fairer ratio of councillors to electors. Despite the efforts of the Magistrat to redraw the boundaries of the wards in the interests of the Bürgertum as far as this was feasible,[4] this was bad news for the liberals as the more populated industrial areas became better represented.[5]

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1 Volksstimme, 23.11.1906 (1. Beilage).

2 In these crude estimates it is only possible to reproduce the total vote by party slate. As a result, it is not possible to calculate a figure for the exact increase of left-liberal votes in 1906, as in that year they shared the party slate with the National Liberals, whereas before they had a choice between a National Liberal and a left-liberal list. The votes from 1902 and 1904 have been compiled from Frankfurter Zeitung, 13.11.1902, and Frankfurter Zeitung, 10.11.1904 (3. Morgenblatt).

3 The figures for the size of the local and national franchise, 1871-1918, are in Wolf, Liberalismus, p. 175.

4 At least in two instances the Magistrat's efforts were rewarded by liberal victories in areas previously represented by a socialist candidate. Rolling, 'Liberals', p. 206.

5 Frankfurter Zeitung, 15.11.1912 (3. Morgenblatt).

Last but not least, the SPD stood out to gain from Adickes' incorporation programme. Industrial Bockenheim, incorporated in 1895, was the electoral home of Frankfurt's first socialist councillor elected in 1900. And even in 1906 it would have been clear to those involved in municipal government that the incorporation of the rest of the Frankfurter Landkreis was not far off in conclusion to Adickes' plans and as a logical inference of the Magistrat's steady acquisition of land in these areas.[1] When the remaining areas of the Landkreis were finally incorporated in 1910, the SPD gained five seats and the left-liberals the remaining two, one of these with a margin of only one vote.[2] The benefit which the SPD was bound to derive from the demographic and social changes of Frankfurt's population and the resulting increase in the municipal franchise was multiplied by the formidable socialist party organisation, which was the envy of every liberal party.[3] The Democrats realised that the SPD could make good use of its voter potential thanks to a permanent, efficient, and reckless party organisation.[4] The remainder of this chapter will analyse liberal attempts to meet this compounded challenge such as the changing demographic conditions and the impact of a well-organised political labour movement, which brought popular politics to a new level.

Since only those with incomes over 1,200 M. per annum had the vote in municipal elections, the SPD aimed to appeal to workers as well as the 'small man', a term that included the petty-bourgeoisie (lower-paid state officials and white collar workers) and large sections of the Mittelstand.[5] In support of this claim, from 1906 the SPD could point to the electoral pacts between left-liberals and National Liberals as proof that the left-liberals had now shifted to the right and no longer represented the interests of the 'small man'. Frankfurt left-liberals

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1 D. Rebentisch, 'Industrialisierung, Bevölkerungswachstum und Eingemeindungen. Das Beispiel Frankfurt a.M. 1870-1914, in Jürgen Reulecke (ed.), Die deutsche Stadt im Industriezeitalter (Wuppertal, 1978), pp. 108-10.

2 Wolf, Liberalismus, pp. 163-4. Rolling, 'Liberals', pp. 132-3.

3 For praise from the Progressives, see HStAW 407 n. 150[1] fo. 346. Progressive Association meeting, 4.10.1890.

4 Frankfurter Zeitung, 10.11.1904 (3. Morgenblatt).

5 Volksstimme, 17.11.1906.

had now aligned themselves with the millionaires from the National Liberal party, and were thus increasingly out of touch with the concerns of most electors.[1] Interestingly, the SPD adopted part of the Democrat rhetoric to appeal to precisely the same groups which the left-liberals vied for. Thus, in their drift to the right to accommodate the National Liberals the left-liberals increasingly betrayed the principles which they had advocated during their 'golden age' in the past. Now the SPD promoted itself as the true bearer of the Democratic values and traditions.[2] In the same way, an SPD promotion for its candidate, Max Quarck, in the 1907 Imperial elections stated, in a phrase that could have been borrowed directly from the Democrats:

> Wer für freie Meinungsäußerung, für Toleranz auf allen Gebieten und für die demokratische Ausgestaltung unserer ganzen Verfassung ist, der stimme für unseren Kandidaten.[3]

The SPD, of course, had a point, in that their municipal programme very much resembled that of the left-liberals, except that it was more radical. Thus, the SPD duly exploited the left-liberal ambiguity about their traditional demand, electoral reform.[4] In Frankfurt as anywhere else, as SPD strength increased, the left-liberals' commitment to universal malehood suffrage became increasingly hollow.[5] Like the left-liberals, the SPD was staunchly in favour of the municipalisation of services, but it could contrast its principled, coherent stance with that of the weak, wavering left-liberals. In particular, the SPD mounted a large propaganda effort after many left-liberals once again submitted to the First Mayor's opposition to the

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1 O. Zielowski, Die Millionärswirtschaft auf dem Frankfurter Rathause. Ein Rückblick für die Stadtverordnetenwahlen auf die städtische Verwaltung in den Jahren 1900 bis 1904 (Frankfurt, 1904). Volksstimme, 17.11.1906.

2 Sozialdemokratie und Stadtverwaltung in Frankfurt a.M.. Zugleich Rechenschaftsbericht der sozialdemokratischen Stadtverordneten-Fraktion zu den Stadtverordnetenwahlen 1906, ed. Sozialdemokratischer Verein (Frankfurt, 1906), pp. 79-80, 83. Also, see, for example, Volksstimme, 4.11.1908.

3 'Whoever is for freedom of speech, for tolerance in every sphere of life and for the democratic development of our entire constitution should vote for our candidate.' Volksstimme, 4.2.1907.

4 On liberal attitudes towards the franchise in general, see W. Gagel, Die Wahlrechtsfrage in der Geschichte der deutschen liberalen Parteien, 1848-1914 (Düsseldorf, 1958).

5 Sozialdemokratie und Stadtverwaltung (1906), pp. 11-14. Rolling, 'Liberals', pp. 201-2.

municipalisation of the gas works in 1909.[1] Finally, the SPD could outmanoeuvre the liberals on virtually every aspect of social policy, since the SPD had little to lose by demanding ever-greater municipal expenditure on social services. Whereas the SPD could continue to ask for better and safer working conditions to be introduced for all municipal contractors, liberals were not particularly keen on the issue since their ranks included many of those employers who would be affected. A similarly thorny question for the liberals concerned the pay and conditions of municipal employees. The SPD took up the issue as often as it possibly could, partly because of the city's duty to be a 'model employer' whose employment conditions would influence those in the private employment sector. But in addition, through styling themselves as the representatives of municipal employees of the lower and middle ranks, SPD councillors were clearly aiming for the vote of this work-force, most of whom had incomes above 1,200 M..[2] Liberals, on the other hand, had to balance their policy towards municipal employees with their overall responsibility for municipal spending, and with many liberal councillors' private positions as employees in their own right. The SPD was quite aware of these liberal problems and contradictions, and did its best to exploit them.[3]

Finally, in its rhetoric the SPD could and did exploit the weaker party discipline of the liberals. For every left-liberal who had voted for sweeping social or political reform, the SPD could always point out another who had opposed it. For example, the party was fond of quoting the statement of the Democrat councillor May in 1904, that it was not too much work which

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1 Sozialdemokratie und Stadtverwaltung in Frankfurt am Main. Ein Rückblick auf 10jährige Tätigkeit; zugleich Rechenschafts-Bericht der sozialdemokratischen Stadtverordnetenfraktion für die Jahre 1909/10 zu den Stadtverordnetenwahlen 1910, ed. Sozialdemokratischer Verein (Frankfurt, 1910), pp. 37-61. Volksstimme, 26.2.1909, 3.3.1909. Both articles are in HStAW 407 n. 43[5] fos. 78-80.

2 Beiträge zur Statistik der Stadt Frankfurt am Main. Untersuchung über den Stand der Lohn und Arbeitsverhältnisse der Arbeiter und Unterangestellten der Stadt Frankfurt a.M. im Juli 1907, ed. Statistisches Amt (Frankfurt, 1909), esp. pp. 17-20. In 1906, for example, the city had 10,359 employees. Statistische Jahresübersichten der Stadt Frankfurt am Main 1906/07, ed. Statistisches Amt (Frankfurt, 1908), i. 123. Paul Mombert states the number of municipal employees for 1906 as 10,430. P. Mombert, 'Die Gemeindebetriebe in Deutschland', in Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik, Gemeindebetriebe, vol. i. Neuere Versuche und Erfahrungen über die Ausdehnung der kommunalen Tätigkeit in Deutschland und im Ausland, cxxviii (Leipzig, 1908), p. 6.

3 Sozialdemokratie und Stadtverwaltung (1906), pp. 79-82.

ruined workers, but their slovenliness, their uncontrolled drinking habits, and their presumptuousness.[1] In 1903, one of the Democratic leaders, councillor Rößler, severely reprimanded some of his colleagues for not voting for an extension of the local franchise. When challenged by the Social Democrat present, Max Quarck, about what sanctions the Democratic leadership proposed to impose upon the rebellious councillors, Rößler was forced to defend his colleagues in the interests of the party.[2] Although from 1901 there were now distinct, official party groups inside the council, there was still no way for the liberals to enforce the official party line, in contrast to the Social Democrats whose votes were virtually always unanimous inside the council. Despite the presence of the SPD, there seems to have been little change in the way local liberal politics was conducted. The main forum for discussion among liberal councillors was the bar, when, after each council meeting, Democrats went to one bar, and National Liberals and Progressives as well as members of the Magistrat went to another.[3]

Nevertheless, the rise of the SPD led to a change in liberal tactics. The strength of the SPD combined with the electoral system meant that in most districts the left-liberals could no longer win on their own, and they now needed the support of as many other political groups as possible. This became especially important in run-off elections, which involved the two highest-polling candidates when neither had won an absolute majority in the first ballot. As a result, the National Liberals became marginalised in local politics and, from 1906, usually formed a coalition with the left-liberals, though clearly as a junior partner.[4] Now that the power of the Mittelstand had been broken, the SPD joined the left-liberals in courting the support of this important marginal group. The left-liberals were also happy to accept the

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1 Volksstimme, 11.11.1908.

2 Volksstimme, 17.2.1903. The article is in HStAW 407 n. 161[4] fo. 122. Democratic Association meeting of 16.2.1903.

3 H. Luppe, Mein Leben (Nürnberg, 1977), p. 21.

4 An exception to this were the municipal elections held in the newly incorporated suburbs in summer 1910.

support of the Conservatives in the 1910 run-off elections, and of the growing Centre party in 1912.[1] Frankfurt left-liberals had to find a language which at least did not alienate all these different groups. Continuing emphasis on their 'progressiveness' would have been both offensive to them, and futile in the face of SPD opposition. But having previously undergone the transformation from the party of Frankfurt particularism to one of patriotism, it was but a small step for Frankfurt left-liberals to see themselves as the party of the Frankfurt citizenry (Bürgerschaft). Appealing to their audience's sense of civic pride, left-liberals noted that to vote SPD would be to desire a break with the city's organic development, as all that Frankfurt was and stood for was the result of its sense of civic pride and independence, its freier Bürgersinn.[2] The city's liberal development was juxtaposed with the possibility of narrow SPD class rule.[3] To go to the polls and to vote liberal thus became a citizen's duty, and those who did not vote were not 'good citizens'.[4] As the official liberal election appeal of 1906 put it:

> Die Liebe zu unserer schönen Stadt und die Freude an ihrem Gedeihen kann sich nicht besser betätigen, als in der Sorge für einen guten Ausfall der Wahl.[5]

During the 1900s, an integral part of liberal rhetoric was social reform. But whereas the SPD could outbid the left-liberals on virtually any aspect of social reform, the left-liberals could emphasise their dedication to social reform in conjunction with a commitment to keeping taxation to a minimum in order to justify not going as far as the SPD.[6] Central to the liberals' message of social reform was the Mittelstand, white-collar employees and lower civil servants, so that the aim of liberal social reform was slightly different than that of the SPD. For alongside measures for the improvement of municipal and other workers, the liberal

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1 Rolling, 'Liberals', pp. 136, 139.

2 Councillor Rumpf in Sachsenhausen, Frankfurter Zeitung, 11.10.1910 (3. Morgenblatt).

3 For example, see the speeches at the main liberal electoral rally in Frankfurter Zeitung, 10.11.1910 (3. Morgenblatt).

4 'Vor den Stichwahlen'. Kleine Presse, 28.11.1910.

5 'Love for our beautiful city and joy at its prospering cannot be better expressed than in caring about a good result in the election.' Frankfurter Zeitung, 19.11.1906 (Morgenblatt).

6 Kleine Presse, 26.11.1910 (4. Blatt), p. 17. Frankfurter Intelligenz-Blatt (Frankfurter Journal), 8.11.1908, pp. 35-6.

programme of 1908 promised, for example, an old people's home, efforts to promote the city's trade and the facilitation of cheap credit.[1]

The liberals emphasised their appeal to those groups which did not consider themselves part of the working classes, but rather as part of the city's bourgeoisie, by their emphasis on sound financial management. Despite previous increases in the tax burden they were able to point to the SPD as the party of high taxation and financial irresponsibility, which the party had demonstrated, for example, in their campaign for the municipalisation of the gas works in 1909 which would have led to higher taxation. And, in their rejection of the 1910 budget, they not only showed that they were unfit to govern, but they also, through their actions, invited the intervention of the state government which would have stepped in had the budget not been carried by liberal votes. This would have been a blatant rejection of the cherished principle of self-government, striking at its very nerve, the city's financial autonomy.[2]

The advent of the SPD as the main political challenger for the left-liberals did not just cause a shift in liberal rhetoric: it also brought about a change in the way elections were fought. Even though the liberals realised that they could never reach the organisational perfection of the SPD,[3] they did their best to try. The first all-out effort of the liberals against the SPD, after the SPD-liberal coalition in the 1906 run-offs, were the Reichstag elections little more than a month later, in early 1907. For the first time since 1880, the left-liberals managed to send their candidate into the Reichstag. The outcome in Frankfurt was, of course, nothing unusual given that during these emotionally charged 'Hottentot' elections, the SPD had lost almost half of its seats nationwide, even though in Frankfurt as elsewhere, the SPD had actually managed to increase its support in absolute numbers.[4] Nonetheless, the elections had an important impact

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1 Ibid., Frankfurter Zeitung, 8.11.1910 (3. Morgenblatt).

2 Councillor Gehrke in Frankfurter Zeitung, 10.11.1910 (3. Morgenblatt).

3 Commentary in Frankfurter Zeitung, 15.11.1912 (3. Morgenblatt).

4 For the election results nationwide, see Ritter and Niehuss, Wahlgeschichtliches Arbeitsbuch, p. 41. In preparation for the 'Bülow Bloc', Chancellor Bülow had managed to persuade a coalition ranging from the left-liberals to the conservatives to rally together behind the government against the SPD and the Centre. Active government intervention, which castigated the two latter parties as being opposed to the national

on Frankfurt left-liberalism. This was not so much because of the outcome of the run-off elections, in which the left liberals' candidate was supported by virtually all other non-Socialist parties, but because of their extraordinary success in the first round of the elections, which they fought unsupported by any electoral agreements. In that round, the left-liberals secured 17,687 votes against opposition from the SPD, the National Liberals and the Centre Party, more than 10,000 more than in the previous election. Indeed, this was a greater increase than even the Social Democrats managed.[1] This was achieved through unprecedented electoral organisation which caught even the masters of the game, the SPD, completely by surprise. According to the SPD newspaper, the Democrats worked as though their life depended on the outcome of the elections. From the first to the last, well-organised groups of liberal helpers went out to guide potential voters to the polls. New pamphlets were distributed hourly and liberal agents commuted between electoral districts to ensure the smooth running of the liberal electoral machine. Its efficiency was greatly enhanced by the use of the motor car.[2] The effect of the 1907 elections on Frankfurt's left-liberals was that it proved that if only they could mobilise their voters enough, they could even beat the SPD. This impression was confirmed by the 1908 local elections which, from the liberals' point of view had been rather lacklustre, and in which the SPD made major gains.[3] The left-liberal loss of 9 seats and a corresponding gain by the SPD was a luxury that the left-liberals could henceforward no longer afford.

In response to these experiences, aided by the new possibilities of electioneering and party organisation afforded by the new associational law of 1908,[4] and not least as a result of the

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interest, produced an unprecedented turnout at the elections. Of the liberals, the left-liberals did particularly well out of this arrangement, as they increased their strength from 36 to 49 seats. Nipperdey, Deutsche Geschichte 1866-1914, ii. 729-31.

1 F. Specht and P. Schwabe, Die Reichstagswahlen von 1867-1907 (Berlin, 1908), p. 157, Appendix p. 45.

2 Volksstimme, 26.1.1907.

3 In particular, the liberals lost heavily in the run-off elections to the SPD and the Mittelstand candidates, at an average voting participation of 65%. By contrast, the left-liberals emerged victorious from the industrial suburb Bockenheim, where voter participation had been around 90%. Wolf, Liberalismus, pp. 162-3. Frankfurter Zeitung, 1.12.1908 (3. Morgenblatt).

4 E. L. Turk, 'German Liberals and the Genesis of the German Association Law of 1908', in Jarausch and Jones, In Search of a Liberal Germany, pp. 257-60.

increase in energy which resulted from the left-liberal unification in 1910 the last two municipal elections before the war were fought with considerable tenacity on the part of the liberals.[1] In addition to the methods of electioneering applied in the 1907 elections, liberals became increasingly appreciative of the importance of women as helpers to the liberal cause,[2] as well as of liberal youth organisations.[3] Following the example of the SPD there were now liberal campaigns to register new voters,[4] and the liberals held an increasing amount of simultaneous electoral meetings in different voting districts. The brunt of liberal propaganda was no longer carried by the Frankfurter Zeitung, but by its sister paper, the Kleine Presse, which acted as a low-brow, popular alternative.[5] Finally, great efforts were made to make the party more appealing to workers. This was a relatively new development, since before 1906 it seemed as though in their constant appeals to the Mittelstand vote the liberals were quite resigned to leave the workers to the SPD. In the admittedly rather unsuccessful left-liberal attempt to promote the link between liberalism and workers through the Reichsverein der liberalen Arbeiter und Angestellten, Frankfurt could nevertheless boast the largest local membership of this liberal workers' association with 208 members (out of a total of 4,307) by May 1914.[6] In 1910, Frankfurt liberals could announce that their candidates truly represented all sections of Frankfurt society, including a worker - the secretary of the local Hirsch-Duncker trade union, who was duly elected in the run-off elections.[7] The liberals contrasted this to the exclusivity of the SPD list of candidates, which included virtually no

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1 In fact, the dynamism during these elections came almost exclusively from the left-liberals, but all their efforts were supported by the National Liberals with whom they formed an alliance during the main elections of 1910 and 1912.

2 Councillor Bruck at a liberal assembly in Bockenheim, Frankfurter Zeitung, 11.11.1908.

3 Councillor Gehrke in Frankfurter Zeitung, 14.11.1910 (Morgenblatt).

4 Rolling, 'Liberalism', p. 153.

5 This is shown not only by the increase in space devoted to the council elections in the Kleine Presse, but also by contemporaries' statements identifying the liberal campaigns with the Kleine Presse. Councillor Gehrke in Frankfurter Zeitung, 4.12.1912 (3. Morgenblatt). Prinz in an SPD rally at the trade union building, Volksstimme, 4.11.1908 (1. Beilage).

6 BAP 60 Vo 3 n. 52 fo. 198. Membership list of the Reichsverein der liberalen Arbeiter und Angestellten, 11.5.1914.

7 See the meeting of the local Liberal Workers' Association in Frankfurter Zeitung, 11.11.1910 (3. Morgenblatt).

'real' workers, anyway, as the vast majority on the list were either paid party officials or employees of the party newspaper.[1] In addition, the liberals also became quite keen on presenting representatives of various trades or professions as well as workers to underline this image that the liberal parties were there for everyone, including the workers. At one electoral rally, for example, the post office clerk Bechstedt emphasised the allegiance of public official and teachers to the liberal regime in Frankfurt, and tramway worker Göbel spoke for his fellow employees to the same effect.[2] In this new spirit, one liberal councillor even went so far as to claim that it was the liberals who were the representatives of the working classes, not the Social Democrats.[3] The consequence of this increased liberal effort was a remarkable increase in electoral participation to over 70% in both 1910 and 1912. Indeed, those two elections became public festivals in their own right. On the news that the fourteenth district had been carried by the liberals, for example, there were reports of happy crowds in the streets. In a triumphant procession, the victorious candidate was carried through the streets by his supporters, who were not content until he had addressed them four times.[4] Descriptions of public excitement at these elections were rivalled only by those of the Reichstag election of 1907.

The overall effectiveness of this liberal response to the rise of the SPD is extremely hard to judge. It cannot be judged through an analysis of the growth and the composition of party membership, because in Frankfurt as elsewhere in Germany liberals continued to rely mostly on informal social links and a network of clubs and associations.[5] Moreover, an analysis of liberal electoral strength by 1912 bears conflicting messages. One interpretation is that the liberals did surprisingly well given the changes in the nature of the electorate and the nature of

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 7.11.1910 (Abendblatt).
2 Electoral assembly in the north and northeastern district, in Frankfurter Zeitung, 12.11.1910 (3. Morgenblatt).
3 Councillor Lönholdt in Bockenheim, in ibid..
4 Frankfurter Zeitung, 15.11.1912 (3. Morgenblatt).
5 Rolling, 'Liberalism', p. 154. See in general Thompson, 'Left Liberals', esp. pp. 352-6 on the example of Schleswig-Holstein.

the political challenges they faced. From 1902 to 1910, the numbers of voters trebled, but even though liberals could not possibly hope for their share of the vote to keep constant under those circumstances, votes cast for their candidates increased by a respectable 200%.[1] Even though the left-liberals had lost their overall majority in the council in 1910, together with the National Liberals they still had a comfortable majority in 1912. With a net increase in the number of council seats of only one, it appeared as though the SPD advance in the council was brought under control by 1912.

Conversely, it was equally true that, in terms of the total number of votes cast, the SPD had become the most popular local party in Frankfurt, and that the liberals had come to rely on their predominance in the council on other groups in the run-off elections, notably the Mittelstand and the increasingly important Centre Party, which in 1912 managed to attract over 10% of the votes. In a way, left-liberal dependence on electoral pacts should not be overemphasised, as in this period, in virtually any election at any level, success in run-off elections became the bread-and-butter of liberal representation throughout Germany.[2] And in Frankfurt, the ability of left-liberals to appeal to potential SPD voters while also appealing to the National Liberals without alienating the Centre and the Mittelstand was also a sign of political skill and maturity. Nonetheless, left-liberal support became increasingly volatile as soon as any one of these groups endorsed the SPD for the run-off elections, as happened in 1908, when the liberal alliance only managed to win three out of eleven seats.

And yet, it is worth pointing out that the political optimism which many left-liberals felt as a result of left-liberal unification in 1910 throughout Germany was also noticeable in Frankfurt.[3] In Frankfurt, it is unclear how much this was the result of the completion of liberal unification. Rather, it seemed to stem from the growing appreciation that the liberals were not powerless

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1 Rolling, 'Liberalism', p. 178.

2 Thompson, 'Left Liberals', p. 17.

3 This optimism is a central theme in S. T. Robson, 'Left-wing Liberalism in Germany, 1900-1919' (Oxford Univ. D.PHIL. thesis 1966). See also Thompson, 'Left Liberals', chs. 3, 6.

to stop the rise of the SPD. For despite the accelerating strength of the latter, there were at least signs that not all workers were permanently lost to the SPD. In 1908, the liberals managed to win the seats in Bockenheim, the industrial suburb which was the first district to return a Social Democrat councillor, Max Quarck, in 1901. According to the SPD newspaper, against the trend in the 1908 elections even many workers had voted for the liberal candidate there, as this true Bockenheimer had campaigned tirelessly for a whole year through speeches and appearances at public festivals to secure the votes of the electorate.[1] Two years later, the SPD won the two seats vacant for the suburb, but Frankfurt's bourgeoisie was jubilant when the liberals, supported by all other 'bourgeois' groups including the Centre Party, managed to reclaim the district in 1912, beating the Social Democratic leader, Quarck himself, into second place. Here, it was particularly gratifying for the liberals that this success had been made possible through the active support of the largest group of municipal employees, the tramway workers,[2] whose interest the liberals had keenly promoted in the city council.[3] At the liberal election party where the day's election results were announced and celebrated, the choir of the tramway workers appeared and surprised the gathering with a serenade of Frankfurt, the 'queen of German cities'.[4] Furthermore, in the first round of the 1912 elections the liberals managed to capture the council seat for Niederrad, whose electoral sociology was among the most unfavourable of all voting districts for a liberal victory.[5]

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1 Volksstimme, 1.12.1908 (1. Beilage).

2 Frankfurter Zeitung, 15.11.1912 (3. Morgenblatt).

3 Sozialdemokratie und Stadtverwaltung in Frankfurt am Main. Zugleich Rechenschaftsbericht der sozialdemokratischen Stadtverordneten-Fraktion für 1907/08 zu den Stadtverordnetenwahlen 1908, ed. Sozialdemokratischer Verein (Frankfurt, 1908), pp. 31-3.

4 Frankfurter Zeitung, 15.11.1912 (3. Morgenblatt).

5 According to the occupational classifications of voters established for each voting district by J. Rolling, only 1.5% were tradesmen or merchants, 2.9% were free professionals or directors in industry and commerce, and 17.7% were white-collar employees, technicians, etc.. By contrast, 29.4% were unskilled manual workers, messengers, porters and street peddlars, while 48.5% were skilled manual workers, lowest public officials, office-helpers, police-patrolmen and clerks with a minor office. Rolling, 'Liberals', Tables iii.6a, iii.6b, pp. 183-4. For the result of the Oberrad (14th district) elections, see Frankfurter Zeitung, 15.11.1912 (3. Morgenblatt).

From the results of the 1912 elections, liberals drew the conclusion that they had weathered the storm. So significant had their organisational advances been in the previous years, and so successful had they been in bringing their vote out, that they had managed to take the battle to the SPD, managing to beat the socialists even in their own electoral heartlands. Thus encouraged, they were determined to strengthen further their organisation, to improve their campaigns and to mount effective challenges to the SPD even in the most industrial areas of Frankfurt,[1] though the liberals' endeavours were rudely interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War some 20 months later.

In many ways, the relationship between liberals and Social Democrats inside the town council was no less ambiguous, as Rolling has shown. In the same year that the liberal Magistrat redrew the boundaries of the electoral districts in the liberals' favour, it also agreed to the Socialist demand of holding the council elections on a Sunday,[2] the first time that any election in Prussia was conducted on that day. Rolling is correct in concluding that, beneath the image of hostility between liberals and SPD, by 1914 liberals had increasingly come to accept the SPD as a party in their own right, whereas the SPD was becoming a responsible carrier of municipal policies.[3]

Nevertheless, the image of the SPD carrying politics into the council from 1901, and of the party strife that began in the council as a result, have been exaggerated by Rolling and others. There is no doubt that the tone inside the town council changed from 1901 and that the council became 'more' politicised, but the difference in the council's conduct was more one of degree than of kind. There was never a solid liberal hostility against Quarck and his colleagues inside the council, and Quarck often found allies for his petitions, either from

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 4.12.1912 (3. Morgenblatt).
2 Rolling, 'Liberals', pp. 205-8.
3 Rolling, 'Liberals', ch. 4, esp. pp. 239-40.

representatives of the Mittelstand or from liberal councillors Quarck's abrasive and provocative manner was never much liked by his liberal colleagues. It was this personality, rather than disagreements on policy principles, which led to the animosity between Quarck and the leading left-liberal reformer, Karl Flesch.[1] Liberals found such behaviour very hard to cope with, but they did not object to this only when it came from a Social Democrat. For example, the veteran Progressive leader, Berthold Geiger, had similar personal attributes, and until Quarck's arrival there is no doubt that he was the least liked person in the council. In 1892, Geiger's insults had so offended the Democrats that they could not bring themselves to support his candidacy for the council, which destroyed the prospects of an electoral agreement with the Progressives in that year.[2] In this context, it is also important to remember that the liberals, and the left-liberals in particular, were not a monolithic block, particularly in their approach to the SPD inside the council. As noted above, even before the advent of SPD there were liberals who were sympathetic to many of the SPD's grievances. Likewise, despite their hostile rhetoric, many leading representatives of the SPD maintained their links with liberals inside and outside the council. For all his personal enemies, for example, Quarck remained in close contact with the philanthropist Wilhelm Merton and the Democrat leader Heinrich Rößler over the issue of social reform. When Merton founded his journal for social reform, the Blätter für Soziale Praxis, Quarck became one of its two editors.[3] But there were other Social Democrats with whom many liberals were happy to and did co-operate. Even though he was never a member of the city council, Ludwig Opificius, a Social Democrat employee of Heinrich Rößler, was central in all the major liberal social reform initiatives undertaken by the liberals such as the industrial tribunals, the hugely popular 'people's lectures', and the social

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1 Luppe, Mein Leben, p. 18.

2 See in particular a letter signed 'Veritas' in Kleine Presse, 19.11.1892, p. 4.

3 K. Gniffke, 'Max Quarck (1860-1930): Eine sozialdemokratische Karriere im Deutschen Kaiserreich. Zum Aufstieg eines bürgerlichen Akademikers in der Arbeiterbewegung im Spannungsfeld von revolutionärer Theorie und reformistischer Praxis' (Frankfurt Univ. D.PHIL. thesis 1992), 126-34, 269.

congress.[1] And among councillors, liberals got on well with Heinrich Hüttmann, although to their regret there were few other SPD councillors like him.[2]

Rolling has described how more and more liberals learned to work constructively with the SPD inside the town council as well as outside. Left-liberals and the SPD led protestations against the Prussian state franchise inside and outside the council, culminating in a public demonstration of 30,000 people in the streets of Frankfurt on 27 February 1910.[3] Together with their liberal colleagues, SPD councillors worked to enact practical social reform such as of housing policy and tramway fares.[4] By 1914 it was increasingly the case that to be successful, most social reform initiatives from the liberals as well as from the SPD needed mutual support if they were to succeed.[5] Finally, in the last days before the beginning of the First World War liberals and socialists established local unemployment insurance which had been discussed and promoted by left-liberal circles since the mid-1890s, but which had had no chance of being passed by the Magistrat under the leadership of Adickes. Discussions in private between liberal and socialist council members were not nearly as hostile in private as they were in public. As one liberal remarked in the heat of the 1912 elections, under the exclusion of the public eye some SPD councillors were quite affable: after all, the decisions of the city council committee on social policy, in which there were several SPD councillors, were usually unanimous.[6] If logic dictated that the main battle for the voters should be between the two biggest local parties, SPD and left-liberals, then, given that the two parties were in total agreement on the ideal of self-government and on many aspects of social policy as well as

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1 V. Eichler, Sozialistische Arbeiterbewegung in Frankfurt am Main, 1878-1895 (Frankfurt, 1983), pp. 421-2.

2 Frankfurter Zeitung, 28.11.1908, 3. Morgenblatt.

3 Rolling, 'Liberals', pp. 202-4.

4 Rolling, 'Liberals', ch. 5.

5 The relationship between the various liberal parties and the SPD on the issue of social reform will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 7.

6 Karl Funck in Frankfurter Zeitung, 12.11.1912 (Drittes Morgenblatt).

education, logic dictated that the two parties should increasingly co-operate inside the town council.

Therefore, the years 1912 to 1914 brought to a climax the fundamental political realignment that had started in 1901. This was triggered by three interdependent factors. The first was, as described above, the advent of the SPD in local politics and the liberal need to react to it. The second was that the influence and the enormous prestige of Franz Adickes, Frankfurt's First Mayor, began to decline. This was partly the result of his outright hostility to the SPD. Indeed, the First Mayor was the only political element in Frankfurt that actually was politicised by the advent of the SPD, for despite his frequent protestations that local politics ought to be unpolitical, his actions after 1901 were steeped in hostility towards socialists. Yet Adickes' grip on local politics was also weakened by the realisation that his extravagant and highly interventionist Bodenpolitik through municipal purchases of land and the zoning of the city had failed to reduce house prices.[1] This, together with his highly autocratic style of government, brought him an increasing number of critics amongst the ranks of the left-liberals. Thirdly, the Magistrat became less subservient to Adickes, largely as a result of rising hostility among the paid members and their appreciation that, in the long run, Adickes' policies were becoming untenable.[2]

An important signal that Adickes' halcyon days were over was the election of Hermann Luppe to a position in the Magistrat. Luppe was a left-liberal with strong convictions who since his arrival in Frankfurt had worked closely with Karl Flesch. During that time, he had gained not only the respect of the left-liberals but also that of the Social Democrats, and it was the latter who became his strongest backers for his promotion to the Magistrat. In 1905, Adickes had helped in his defeat by spreading the rumour that he had embezzled 150 M..[3] A year later,

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1 Adickes' Bodenpolitik, which was the most central issue upon which his reputation was based, will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 7.

2 BAK, NL 44 n. 8 fos. 199, 208. Hermann Luppe, 'Mein Leben'.

3 BAK, NL 44 n. 8 fos. 137-9. Hermann Luppe, 'Mein Leben'.

support for Luppe had grown so much that Adickes could only prevent Luppe's candidacy for a vacancy through threatening to resign if Luppe were elected. But in 1909, left-liberals could not be intimidated or outmanoeuvred by Adickes, and together with staunch SPD support, Luppe was duly elected into the Magistrat. [1]

In 1912, Adickes resigned, mainly for health reasons, but presumably also because he realised he was losing his battle against the Social Democrats as increasingly they, and not he, received the support of the left-liberals in the municipal council. As his successor, the left-liberals and Social Democrats elected the left-liberal Georg Voigt, a remarkable choice given Frankfurt's previous selection of mayors. The most remarkable conclusion of the relationship between liberals and the SPD before the war, however, was the election in 1914 of Prussia's first SPD Stadtrat, with left-liberal support.

This chapter has not tried to disprove the undoubted fact that SPD councillors mounted an opposition that was both more united and more effective than any opposition the council had witnessed before. The advent of the SPD in the town council marked an important step in its politicisation, but it did not initiate it, as this and the previous chapter have shown. The SPD provided a new challenge to the liberal regime just as the Mittelstand had done a few years earlier. Whereas the Mittelstand had challenged the liberals in their marked disunity and negativism, the SPD was threatening because of its very unity and efficiency, inside and outside the council. If it really had been the case that Frankfurt's municipal affairs had been politicised from 1901, then such a quick and effective response first to the Mittelstand and then to the SPD in only one decade would have been almost inconceivable. If those sitting in the municipal council had been merely notables, it would have taken them years to adapt to the

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1 Hermann Luppe, Mein Leben, pp. 19-22.

idea of politics inside the town council, and their response particularly to the rise of the SPD would have been slow and cumbersome.

Instead, the rise of the SPD was but part of a process of politicisation which had been continuously developing since the annexation of the city, and in particular of the process of the diversification of local politics that set in about 1880. Hence, in their battle against the SPD the liberals could build on their experience in two ways. They could build upon the support of groups they now had brought into their fold. This was particularly true for the Bezirksvereine,[1] but it was also valid for the Mittelstand. Having perceived the latter as their biggest threat until 1906, once they had relegated it to the political sidelines the left-liberals were happy to enjoy its endorsement in the local elections of 1910 and 1912.

The steady rise of the politicisation of local government in Frankfurt can also be seen in the steady growth of newspaper coverage. If this growth was accelerated during the last decade before the Great War, this was not just the result of the rise of the SPD, but it was also because the Mittelstand loomed large and the Centre Party had finally managed to organise itself. Liberals tried very hard to keep abreast of the technological changes in electioneering, too, because they correctly realised that this was essential for bringing their vote out on polling day. In fact, the press is another element of continuity in left-liberal politics in Frankfurt am Main, because as elsewhere in Germany support by the press was vital to left-liberal success. The efficacy of the Kleine Presse can be gauged from the irritation and abuse it attracted from Social Democrats. The influence of its publisher, the Societätsdruckerei, continued to be enormous. Throughout the period, the editors of the Kleine Presse and particularly of the Frankfurter Zeitung were the most frequent speakers at Democratic Association meetings, and a majority of the Democratic deputies to the Prussian state parliament as well as all the Democratic Reichstag members were closely linked to the

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1 Rolling, 'Liberals', 155-6.

Frankfurter Zeitung.[1] And the most prominent left-liberal in the city, Heinrich Rößler, became chairman of the newspaper's board of governors after Sonnemann's death in 1909.[2]

Most important was the experience the left-liberals had accumulated in local politics which became invaluable in their fight against the SPD. Their responsiveness to the various changes in the political landscape from the 1880s is best portrayed in their changing rhetoric. Left-liberals had converted the hostile, particularist, anti-Prussian rhetoric, which was still very much in evidence in 1880, into a positive language of local patriotism as well as of a specific national patriotism for a 'democratic' Germany by the late 1890s. The National Liberals had thus been forced in the opposite direction, from the party of German unification to a party that stood for particular interests such as the Mittelstand. The left-liberals were thus able to style themselves, after 1906, as the party of the Bürgertum, whose values and efforts had made Frankfurt the pride of German cities. It was a rhetoric that National Liberals could happily join in with, and which could even be supported by other political groups. The crucial legacy of the decades of politicisation before the advent of the SPD, therefore, was a remarkable degree of political flexibility and professionalism, marked by a considerable absence of ideological rigidity. This was why in Frankfurt the left-liberals were ultimately so much more successful than National Liberals who increasingly could not function without left-liberal support. But it was also the central reason why the left-liberals, supported by other parties

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[1] Of the five Democratic deputies to the Prussian Abgeordnetenhaus, two (Karl Sänger and Karl Flesch) had no connection to the Frankfurter Zeitung. Guido Weiß, elected in 1869, was a journalist from Berlin and a close political friend of Sonnemann, and worked as an editor at the Zeitung from 1872 to 1873. Both Josef Stern and the Democrats' longest serving deputy in Berlin, Rudolf Oeser (elected in 1901, 1903 and 1913), were editors of the newspaper. For the Frankfurt deputies to the Abgeordnetenhaus, see T. Kühne, Handbuch der Wahlen zum Preussischen Abgeordnetenhaus 1867-1918. Wahlergebnisse, Wahlbündnisse und Wahlkandidaten (Düsseldorf, 1994), pp. 672-5.

The newspaper's proprietor, Leopold Sonnemann, was a member of the Reichstag from 1871 to 1876, and from 1879 to 1884. Karl Holthoff, Democrat member of the Reichstag from 1876 to 1869, had been an editor of the Frankfurter Zeitung from 1864 to 1871. Finally, from 1907-1912 the Democrat member of the Reichstag was the editor Rudolf Oeser. For a more detailed description of the relationship between the various editors and the Frankfurter Zeitung, see Geschichte, passim., esp. pp. 139-40, 393, 574.

[2] Heinrich Roessler, 1845-1924. Ein halbes Jahrhundert DEGUSSA-Geschichte, ed. DEGUSSA AG (Frankfurt, 1984), p. 63

and groups, had managed to bring the SPD advance in the municipal council to a virtual standstill.

In the light of this analysis the almost paradoxical conclusion comes as no surprise that during the last few years before the First World War, at a time when local political diversity and thus the challenge to the city's liberal hegemony was greatest, Frankfurt left-liberalism had reached its zenith, and the left-liberals were stronger than ever before. Democrats had always defined their raison d'être vis-à-vis the Progressive Liberals by the importance of social policy, and the rise of municipal socialism vindicated them at last. The rise of the SPD was a serious challenge to left-liberalism, but at least the left-liberals were the only ones who were strong enough to lead an independent defence against the rise of socialism. This new strength gave them increasing self-confidence and political cunning, so that they were more and more willing to co-operate with the SPD depending on the issues involved, regardless of whether this might offend the First Mayor or their National Liberal colleagues. By 1914, with Voigt as First Mayor and Luppe as his deputy, the left-liberals were finally fully in control of municipal policy, and they were able to co-operate with either the SPD or the National Liberals whenever it suited them to translate their policies into practice. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the First World War precludes any knowledge of whether the left-liberals' new control of municipal politics would have translated into victory at the polls.

From the analysis presented in this chapter, two important conclusions emerge. Firstly, in Frankfurt, the liberal milieu which had been established by the 1870s survived intact until 1914 and beyond. The experience of Frankfurt confirms Rohe's contention that, to be viable, a milieu constantly has to be changed and adapted to suit its evolving social and cultural environment. Thus, through a change in rhetoric, through the continued control of the newspaper press and through the redefinition of popular festivals, the left-liberals in particular

could overcome the 'fragmentation of the middle strata'. This was an important precondition for the left-liberals' fight against the SPD, which they could thus lead with the various liberal parties united and with the majority of the middle strata rallied behind them.

Secondly, Frankfurt liberals could point to a considerable organisational sophistication which was another precondition for their success. Having established popular party organisations in the 1870s, Frankfurt liberals managed more or less to incorporate the Bezirksvereine into their organisational network. Liberals made sure that the choice of their candidates matched their rhetoric, so that during the 1890s, their party slate included a considerable number of candidates from the Mittelstand, and during the last decade before the First World War they steadily increased the representation of workers at the large party gatherings. The election of one liberal working-class candidate to local government was not much, but it was considerably better than liberal efforts towards working-class representation at state or national level. For Frankfurt, it is not possible to pin-point a particular decade or event as being decisive for liberal political modernisation. By 1912, liberals considered themselves successful at having successfully halted the SPD advance in local politics. But liberal efforts after 1906 were built upon the experience and the strengths which the liberals had accumulated during the previous four decades.

For Frankfurt, the sombre conclusions of scholars led by Thomas Nipperdey, that liberalism ultimately had not managed to change itself to more modern forms of politics and society, do not appear to be correct, because of the liberals' continued organisational efforts there as well as the prevalence of an adapting liberal milieu.[1] And yet, these verdicts have been made largely, if not exclusively, with state or national politics in mind. When Nipperdey concludes, therefore, that German political parties reflected the social and political realities of the Second Empire,[2] then this is also true for liberals in Frankfurt am Main, for through their organisation

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[1] Nipperdey, Organisation, pp. 395-6. Sheehan, Liberalism, p. 271. Nipperdey, Deutsche Geschichte 1866-1914, ii. 535.

[2] Nipperdey, Organisation, p. 395.

and their rhetoric they managed to react appropriately and dynamically to the evolving social and political conditions in which they operated. Evidently, it is impossible to generalise from the experience of Frankfurt, as too little is known, for example, about the organisational efforts of liberals in other cities. However, in some cities, particularly in the Rhineland, liberals had to cope with even greater political challenges to their political hegemony than in Frankfurt, because of the strength of the Centre Party even before 1900. Also, Frankfurt was not the only city with a proud civic tradition that could be invoked by a liberal milieu, and it is unlikely that by 1914, Frankfurt was particularly unique in appealing to the 'Bürgersinn', the sense of civic responsibility, to protect the proud Vaterstadt against the assault of a narrow section of society represented by the SPD. The case of Frankfurt leads to the assumption, therefore, that it was at the level of local government that German liberals made the most concerted and thorough efforts at political renewal, precisely because it was here that social change was at its most dramatic, and it was only at this level that liberals, rather uniquely, were in positions of government which enabled them to respond to the social fragmentation of the middle strata and the rise of labour.

Having investigated the transformation of liberal organisation and rhetoric in some detail, it is now necessary to look at the key policies which Frankfurt liberals developed in response to social change and the evolution of local government. The following two chapters will look at the linchpin of any government activity, that of public finance. To put into context Frankfurt liberal policies of municipal finance, which will be discussed in chapter five, it is important in the next chapter to establish the general development of liberal attitudes towards municipal finance during the second half of the nineteenth century. Particular emphasis will be placed on the aims and assumptions which lay behind one of the most important reforms enacted in Prussia during the Second Empire, the finance reforms of the former First Mayor of Frankfurt, Johannes von Miquel, in 1891 and 1893.

# CHAPTER FOUR: LIBERAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS MUNICIPAL FINANCE

## 4.1. Introduction

Perhaps the subject most indicative of liberal assumptions about politics in general, and about the nature and role of the state in particular, is public finance. For the British Liberal party, for example, it has been shown how for the second half of the century the budget epitomised British liberal ideals about the social, political and economic role of the state.[1] In Prussia and Germany, too, the deliberations on the annual budgets, when the Prussian Chamber of Deputies and the Reichstag wielded the most power vis-à-vis the government, were the catalysts which forced the liberals time and again to define their policies and their relationship with the state. In fact, the centrality of the question of finance to German political life was even more pronounced than in Britain precisely because of the parliaments' weakness in other political matters.[2] The most glittering examples of this are the Prussian constitutional crisis of 1862 to 1866, and the liberal split, ostensibly over the issue of tariffs, in 1880. But in the absence of clear principles of state finance as they had emerged in England, ultimately every budget, and particularly those concerned with military spending, was about liberal visions of the relationship between state and parliament, about liberal ideals of politics and social welfare, and about liberal concepts of the federal nature of the German state.[3]

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1 H. C. G. Matthew, 'Disraeli, Gladstone, and the Politics of Mid-Victorian Budgets', HJ, xxii (1979), 615-43.

2 H. Preuß, Reichs- und Landesfinanzen (Berlin, 1894), pp. 15-8.

3 Preuß pointed out the paradox that it was precisely the lack of any principled policy of finance which led to constant arguments about principle among German parties. Ibid., p. 18. The best account of the implication of the constitutional crisis and the tariff issue for liberalism is in Langewiesche, Liberalismus, pp. 93-104, 170-80. See also the implications, for example, of the 1874 budget, pp. 167-70.

A discussion of liberal attitudes towards public finance in the German Empire or the Prussian state would be clearly beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, just as Prussian or German liberalism cannot be properly evaluated without an understanding of its ideas on financial policy, so urban liberalism cannot be understood without an appreciation of liberal views on municipal finance. This is particularly the case since liberals had much greater influence over the budget at local than at state or national level. In the latter cases, the liberals were but one part of a parliament which could amend, reject or accept the budget. In the cities, liberals were more often than not able to draw up budgets themselves, and they were mostly in control of the municipal councils which had to deliberate on those budgets.

Control over municipal budgets not only forced the liberals to make up their minds about their policies, but was also a crucial factor determining their attitude to the state. It was the financial constraints put upon them by the state governments that set the limits to their freedom of manoeuvre in city government. In other words, the size and nature of municipal budgets determined the extent of local self-government.

Another important reason for studying liberal attitudes towards municipal finance is the importance of local government finance relative to state and national finance. As Table 1

Table 1: Relative public expenditure of local, state and national government in Prussia/Germany, 1881-1913[1]

Share of Government Expenditure:

| | local government | state government | national government | total govt. share of GDP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | in % | in % | in % | in % |
| 1881 | 26.30 | 44.40 | 29.30 | 10.00 |
| 1891 | 25.40 | 40.70 | 33.90 | 13.20 |
| 1901 | 29.50 | 36.10 | 34.40 | 14.90 |
| 1907 | 32.90 | 32.30 | 35.20 | 16.50 |
| 1913 | 32.90 | 31.80 | 35.30 | 17.70 |

illustrates, local government expenditure increased during the last decades of the Kaiserreich relative to state and national public expenditure until they were roughly of the same size. The

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[1] T. Köster, Die Entwicklung kommunaler Finanzsysteme am Beispiel Großbritanniens, Frankreichs und Deutschlands 1790-1980 (Berlin, 1984), p. 171. On the growth of government expenditure in general, see S. Andrich and J. Veverka, 'The Growth of Government Expenditure in Germany since the Unification', FA, Neue Folge xxiii (1963/4), 169-278.

relative growth of the importance of municipal budgets is even more impressive when it is borne in mind that it concurred with a general increase in public expenditure, whose share of the GDP rose by 77% in the years 1881 to 1913. Furthermore, the average relative growth of local government expenditure conceals the extraordinary growth of the most vibrant cities in Prussia. For example, in the period 1875 to 1908, municipal expenditure in Berlin increased by 478%, in Cologne by 1,071%, in Düsseldorf by 2,020% and in Charlottenburg by 9,616%.[1] This extraordinary increase in the importance of municipal finance is a good indicator of the growing importance of municipal government in German public life. Hence the phenomenon of the evolution of municipal finance, and the assumptions of the liberals in the cities who guided it, are important points of investigation in themselves.

There is a third reason why an investigation into municipal finance is crucial for an understanding of urban liberalism. As will be shown later in this chapter, the main reasons for the increase in municipal spending resulted largely from a growing imperative to provide better schooling, infrastructure and municipal services, all of which bore some relation to a better provision of public welfare. Liberal municipal budgets are the supreme test of the liberal commitment to social welfare, and, in fact, to all the policies they openly advocated, because in the budget hard decisions had to be made about priorities, and how policies were to be paid for. This point was made by the national economist Adolph Wagner at a controversial address to the Verein für Sozialpolitik in 1877. Speaking on local taxation, he pointed out that in no other area of policy was it more feasible to meet the demands of socialism. Social reform through taxation was, therefore, not so much a question of practicality or feasibility, as a question of political will.[2] Thus, urban liberalism cannot be properly understood without an

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1 H. Silbergleit, Preussens Städte. Denkschrift zum 100jährigen Jubiläum der Städteordnung vom 19. November 1908 (Berlin, 1908), pp. 480-1. The actual figures given by Silbergleit should be treated with care, as it was not possible to see how he compiled the figures that he gives for Frankfurt municipal expenditure, for example. However, this does not invalidate the general pattern of the growth of local government expenditure for individual cities which is evident from his analysis.

2 A. Wagner, Die Communalsteuerfrage. Ausarbeitung eines Referats im Verein für Sozialpolitik (Leipzig/Heidelberg, 1878), p. 44.

examination of liberal policies towards the budget, because the municipal budget represents the point of transition between liberal theory and liberal practice.

In its consideration of liberal attitudes and policies towards municipal finance, this chapter seeks to shed some light on liberal ideals about local self-government and the relationship between the locality, the state and the Empire. It addresses the question of why liberals allowed municipal public expenditure, and, correspondingly, municipal taxation, to increase dramatically in the decades before 1914. The first section of this chapter will focus on the general liberal debate about the role of municipal finance in the Prussian state, while the second section will investigate to what extent liberal views on local government finance influenced, and were in turn influenced by, Miquel's tax reforms of 1891 and 1893.

## 4.2. The Evolution of a Liberal Theory of Municipal Finance

Liberal views on municipal finance were inevitably closely intertwined with their attitudes towards municipal self-government. Evidently, local self-government could only function if the localities had sufficient means to carry out their policies. The extent to which the locality was allowed to determine the amount and the nature of its income and expenditure was directly proportional to its independence. For example, when Stein aimed to strengthen local self-government through his city ordinance of 1808, he was careful to restore some of the cities' independence with regard to taxation, thus reversing the trend of Prussian absolutism in which the city's autonomy had been gradually curtailed by making it financially dependent on the state.[1] After all, the state's need for extra revenue prompted self-government in the first place, since it was realised that the best way of inducing Prussian citizens to pay more taxes was by persuading them to tax themselves.[2] When in the revised city ordinance of 1831 the

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1 R. v. Kaufmann, Die Kommunalfinanzen. Großbritannien, Frankreich, Preußen (Leipzig, 1906), ii. 287-9, 292-3.

2 H. Preuß, Die Entwicklung des deutschen Städtewesens. 1. Band: Entwicklungsgeschichte der

Prussian government set out to limit some of the freedoms which the cities had enjoyed since 1808, this also affected municipal finances, as from now on all municipal taxes other than the supplements to state taxes would be subject to government approval.[1]

German debate about the principle of self-government began with its inception in Stein's Städteordnung in 1808.[2] Stein's aim had been to strengthen the efficiency of local administration at the expense of Prussia's stifling bureaucracy, in order to further the identification of the cities' social élites with the *existing* Prussian state.[3] Significantly, the Bürger in Prussia were thus only given a share in the lower levels of administration. In addition, self-government through unpaid citizens was cheaper than bureaucratic government.[4] Stein's ordinance itself was, therefore, by no means as progressive as many liberals claimed.[5] More importantly, there remained considerable confusion about the political significance of the city ordinance as it continued to inspire conservatives, liberals and radicals alike. To the conservative Friedrich Karl von Savigny, for example, local self-government was a way of satisfying the political aspirations of the Bürgertum, instead of allowing it political participation in the state.[6] By contrast, liberals such as Robert von Mohl and Karl von Rotteck wished to create a political sphere for the bürgerliche Gesellschaft free from the interference of the state.[7]

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Deutschen Städteverfassung (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 323-4.

[1] A. Wagner, Finanzwissenschaft, 4. Teil. Specielle Steuerlehre (Praxis der Besteuerung). Die deutsche Besteuerung des 19. Jahrhunderts (Leipzig, 1899), p. 70.

[2] Dr. A. Krebsbach (ed.), Die Preußische Städteordnung von 1808 (1808, reprint, Stuttgart, 1957).

[3] Heffter, Selbstverwaltung, p. 91-2. R. Koselleck, Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution (Stuttgart, 1967), pp. 166-78. H. Obenhaus, Anfänge des Parlamentarismus in Preußen bis 1848 (Düsseldorf, 1984), pp. 46-51.

[4] R. Koselleck, Preußen, p. 147.

[5] H. Preuß, for example, considered his own democratic views to be in the intellectual tradition of the principles behind the Städteordnung: 'Noch unmittelbarer als bei der allgemeinen Wehrpflicht lag der Einführung städtischer Selbstverwaltung der Gedanke zugrunde, den alten Obrigkeitsstaat in den körperschaftlichen Volksstaat überzuführen; sie sollte der Grundstein einer von unten nach oben aufsteigenden politischen Organisation des bürgerlichen Gemeinwesens sein'. H. Preuß, Das Deutsche Volk und die Politik (Jena, 1915), p. 72.

[6] K. F. v. Savigny, 'Die Preußische Städteordnung', hpZ, i (1832), 389-414. Heffter, Selbstverwaltung, p. 216.

[7] Heffter, Selbstverwaltung, p. 181. E. Ramin, 'Die Geschichte der Selbstverwaltungsidee seit dem Freiherrn vom Stein' (Münster Univ. JUR.DISS. 1972), p. 79. E.-W. Böckenförde, Die deutsche verfassungsgeschichtliche Forschung im 19. Jahrhundert (Berlin, 1961), pp. 176-80.

One of the reasons for the political ambiguity of the concept of self-government was that it could by used by conservatives and liberals alike in their fight against their common enemy (albeit on different grounds), the state bureaucracy. To liberals during the mid-nineteenth century, bureaucracy was perhaps the main enemy[1] as the tool of governments largely unconstrained by laws or constitutions. By contrast, to reformers with more conservative aims like the Hanoverian politician, Carl Bertram Stüve, self-goverment was a way of reducing bureaucratic power which was already too progressive, in order to restrict as far as possible freedom of movement and trade in the interests of local guilds.[2] Hence, many conservative reformers like Stüve increasingly found themselves forced into an uneasy liberal alliance, as by the 1840s local self-government had developed as the main forum for political participation open to the liberal Bürgertum, since it had remained 'isolated and alien within the structure of the absolutist bureaucrats' state'.[3] The right to Selbstverwaltung was explicitly recognised by the Frankfurt constitution of 1849[4] in which local government was given an important role in the administration of the state, including the administration of the local police.

Thus far, local self-government had formed an important and often indispensible part of liberal and even conservative visions central to which was the overcoming of the gap between state and society which reformers saw opening up around them.[5] It was only from the late 1850s onwards that this was developed into a comprehensive theory of local self-government by Rudolf Gneist. Gneist had become convinced through his research into the English constitution that local self-government was the bedrock of English political and social life, and that this was why England had not been plagued by revolutions since 1789. Even though the

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1 G. A. Pope, 'The Political Ideas of Lorenz Stein and their Influence on Rudolf Gneist and Gustav Schmoller' (Oxford Univ. D.PHIL. 1985), 177.

2 M. L. Anderson, Windthorst. Zentrumspolitiker und Gegenspieler Bismarcks (Düsseldorf, 1988), pp. 44-7, Heffter, Selbstverwaltung, pp. 197-9.

3 Heffter, Selbstverwaltung, p. 220.

4 Frankfurter Reichsverfassung, §184.

5 Böckenförde, Die deutsche verfassungsgeschichtliche Forschung, pp. 96-7. Ramin, 'Selbstverwaltungsidee', p. 66.

quality of Gneist's work was extremely variable, there is no doubt that he became simply the authority on self-government during the second half of the nineteenth century. There are a number of reasons for his undoubted influence. His constant appeal to the Rechtsstandpunkt, through his insistence that his principles were consistent with what was right before the law, appealed to the growing body of scholars concerned with legal positivism.[1] During the 1870s he was perhaps the leading Prussian liberal authority on the reform of administrative justice, as his ideas for administrative courts to be held by voluntary judges as part of his system of self-government (akin to the English Justices of the Peace) became increasingly accepted.[2] Local self-government thus became both an important legal reform as well as a political one.[3] The main reason for his influence, however, is that he summed up mainstream organic liberal thought[4] on the value of self-government in a way that was acceptable to many conservatives. Thus, his enthusiasm for local government in general, his insistence on the simplification and codification of the jumble of Prussian local government laws, and his perception of the inevitable link between local self-government reform and the reform of local administrative justice were all thoroughly liberal demands. Gneist was opposed to Prussian Junkers too, and yet he borrowed heavily from Stüve and other conservative reformers in looking up to a reformed, enlightened aristocracy modelled on perceptions of the English gentry which would become the true linchpin of local self-government.[5] Furthermore, Gneist's view that local self-government was the essential bulwark of the Prussian monarchy was acceptable to liberals and conservatives alike.

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1 For the links between legal positivism and liberalism, see M. F. John, Politics and the Law in Late Nineteenth-Century Germany. The Origins of the Civil Code (Oxford, 1989), pp. 84-92.

2 The foundation of Gneist's conception of the state were self-goverment and administrative legal reform, which were inextricably linked. K. Luig, 'Soziale Monarchie oder soziale Demokratie - Beobachtungen zur Staatslehre von Rudolf von Gneist (1816-1895)', ZfR, cxi (1994), 466.

3 Heffter, Selbstverwaltung, pp. 521-5.

4 For a description of organic liberalism, see Böckenförde, Die deutsche verfassungsgeschichtliche Forschung, pp. 93-9.

5 Heffter, Selbstverwaltung, p. 199.

That many of Gneist's views on local government had become generally accepted among most liberals is demonstrated by Johannes von Miquel who, albeit for different reasons, became the chief National Liberal spokesman on all matters concerning local self-government. Miquel, whose political career before 1866 had been firmly rooted in local government, was concerned that Prussian levels of bureaucratisation stifled any independent initiative on part of the citizens, and that this passivity lead to alienation from the state and ultimately to revolution. What was most crucial, therefore, was to encourage voluntary participation in local administration.[1] Speaking to the Prussian Chamber, he insisted that:

> man ohne Bedenken für die kommunale Verwaltung und für die Interessen des Staates den Deutschen Städten weitgehende kommunale Rechte und Freiheiten einräumen kann,... das freundliche Verhältnis der städtischen Behörden zu den Staatsbehörden um so größer ist, ja [sic!] weniger unnütz die Staatsbehörden in die städtische Verwaltung hineinzugreifen [sic!].[2]

It is also noteworthy that this was one of the issues on which left and right liberals could agree. Miquel's speech was described by Hugo Preuß, who from the late 1880s emerged as the leading academic liberal exponent of local self-government, as 'das Beste, was wohl je in einem deutschen Parlament über die Prinzipien städtischer Selbstverwaltung gesagt worden ist'.[3] And in his reply to Miquel's speech, Eugen Richter acknowledged that he was substantially in agreement with Miquel, except for issues which were not inherently connected with the principle of self-government, such as his rigorous opposition to the three-class franchise.[4] Therefore, like Gneist, Miquel saw in local self-government the remedy for social upheaval. He agreed particularly with Gneist that voluntary participation in self-government was crucial, and agreed that strengthening local self-government would not weaken, but strengthen the state.

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1 Miquel, 'Verfassung und Verwaltung', pp. 312-40, esp. pp. 339-40.

2 'extensive local rights and liberties for local administration can be granted, without any misgivings, to German cities in the interests of the state... the amicable relationship between local and state authorities is all the stronger the less the state interferes needlessly into local administration.' Johannes Miquel, SBAH, 30. Sitzung (18.3.1876), 777.

3 '....perhaps the best that has ever been said in a German parliament about the principles of local self-government.' H. Preuß, Entwicklung, p. 359. See also Siegfried Grassmann, Hugo Preuß und die deutsche Selbstverwaltung (Lübeck/Hamburg, 1965), pp. 53-5

4 E. Richter, SBAH, 30. Sitzung (18.3.1876), 778-83.

During the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century, Prussian municipal taxation had evolved slowly but steadily towards a system that was overwhelmingly based on local supplements to the state income tax, instead of direct taxation on property or indirect taxation on goods.[1] Among the main reasons for the preference of direct over indirect local taxation was the fact that since every city had to levy different rates of taxation according to its needs, it is logical that the state should have pushed the cities towards direct rather than indirect taxation to promote freedom of movement of goods and services. Also, indirect taxes were anathema to the principle of ability to pay, the principle of Leistungsfähigkeit which was a guiding principle of Prussian finance legislation since the 1820s.[2] Yet the principal reason for the effective preference for income tax supplements over property taxation was that Stein's city ordinance of 1808 had determined that at least 50% of municipal councillors be house-owners, the very group of people for whom these new taxes were designed. As a result, in any city it was most likely that the majority of house-owners would vote down proposals to raise local supplements on the state taxes on property, and raise local taxation through supplements on state taxation on income instead.

As a result, by 1869 84.4% of all direct taxes were levied as personal income taxation, and only 15.5% as taxation on property. The relationship between these two forms of taxation remained roughly similar until Miquel's local tax reforms came into effect in 1895.[3] As Table 2 shows, in 1869 65% of local taxation in Prussian cities was direct, and the remaining 35% were raised through indirect taxation.

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[1] On the development of, and the principles behind, income taxation, see F. J. Neumann, Die Progressive Einkommensteuer in Staats- und Gemeindehaushalt. Gutachten über Personalbesteuerung auf Veranlassung des Vereins für Sozialpolitik (Leipzig, 1874, reprint 1904).

[2] It should be noted that at this stage the principle of ability to pay was not introduced out of any social desire for income redistribution, but it simply reflected the view that a citizen ought to accept the rights as well as the burdens of local self-government in proportion to his means.

[3] 1883/84 the relationship between taxation on property and personal taxation was 16.4% to 83.6%, in 1894/95 16.3% to 83.7%. Kaufmann, Kommunalfinanzen, ii. 351.

Table 2: Local taxation in Prussia, 1869 and 1883/1884, in Marks.[1]

| | 1869 | 1883/84 |
|---|---|---|
| property taxation: | | |
| land tax | | 1,993,381 |
| building tax | 2,437,086[2] | 7,217,597 |
| business tax | 210,462 | 1,307,769 |
| other | 2,169,507 | 6,313,005 |
| total | 4,844,055 | 16,831,752 |
| | | |
| personal taxation | | |
| income tax[3] | 20,984,094 | 73,642,521 |
| other | 5,239,032 | 12,112,227 |
| total | 26,223,126 | 85,754,748 |
| | | |
| total direct taxation | 31,067,181 | 102,586,500 |
| | | |
| indirect taxation | 16,812,171 | 5,512,465 |
| | | |
| total local taxation | 47,879,352 | 108,098,965 |

After the tax laws of 25 May 1873 improved the efficiency of the income tax, extending it to those with incomes below 3,000 M., and abolished the indirect state tax on meat and flour, the trend towards local supplements on direct taxation was accelerated, so that by 1883/84, 95% of all local taxes in Prussian cities were raised in the form of direct taxation.[4] In that year, therefore, about 79% of all local taxes were paid through direct personal taxation, whereas the figure for 1869 had been a still considerable 55%. The rapid increase in personal direct taxation as the main form of local government income is all the more impressive if one considers that at the same time total taxation almost doubled, from 6.47 M. per head in 1869 to 11.42 M. per head in 1883/84.[5] Numerically, the decline of local indirect taxation was directly offset by the absolute increase in property taxation.[6] This means that virtually the

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1 Ibid., 352-62.

2 This figure is for building and land tax combined.

3 Note also that in 1869, most of the personal taxes were still raised by separate local taxation, whereas by 1883/1884, 67% of personal taxation was raised through supplements on state taxes.

4 W. Klose, 'Die Finanzpolitik der preußischen Großstädte' (Halle Univ. D.PHIL. thesis 1907), 35. Despite the improvements of the 1873 laws, the system of local and state taxation remained cumbersome and slow. To name but two important examples, the assessment of the so important income tax remained deeply flawed until 1891, and in a fast-changing world the assessment rates for taxation on property were estimated only every 15 years. For contemporary criticism of the Prussian system of taxation, see Gustav Cohn, 'Die Fortführung der preußischen Steuerreform', JGVV, xvi (1892), 271.

5 The figures given in this paragraph have been summarised from Kaufmann, Kommunalfinanzen, ii. 358.

6 Note, however, that, despite the numerical relationship, it is almost impossible to prove conclusively that one tax was purposefully used to offset the other.

entire increase in municipal spending was raised through direct personal taxation. The increase in the sheer volume of local taxation, as well as the shift towards one particular form of local taxation was bound to generate attention. For in the years 1869 to 1876, municipal expenditure rose from 100 million M. to 178 million M., and during the depression years until 1883/84 it rose still further to 213 million M.. To many, therefore, the local system of taxation seemed in crisis, because it was unlikely that a municipal tax system that was so overwhelmingly based on just one particular form of taxation would be able to cope with the increasing demand on the municipal budgets. As a result, it was not long before liberals and political economists alike began to consider the role of the municipality in the system of state finance, and the nature of the taxes that should be allocated to each.

Whereas Rudolf Gneist is generally credited with having been a decisive influence on the liberal discussion about self-government, his contribution towards the development of liberal ideals on the nature of municipal taxation appears to have been ignored by historians, though not by contemporaries. Gneist's ideas on local taxation followed directly from his ideas about self-government, so that as with local and state government, municipal finance was at the heart of state finance. Again, Gneist derived his ideas from small villages in the countryside and applied these to larger communities. Originally, he desired a straightforward direct local property tax - which he perceived to be equivalent to the English rate system - as the only tax to which local communities should be subject, whereas personal taxation remained for the state to levy. These direct taxes were the manifestation of the duty that property owed to self-government in the community.[1] Several years later, Gneist elaborated his views in a book in which he incorporated recently-available data on municipal taxation for 1876.[2] From his strictly legalist point of view, Gneist repeated that the local community ought to tax objects,

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[1] R. Gneist, Das Englische Grundsteuersystem (Berlin, 1859), pp. 59-64. R. Gneist, Selfgovernment. Communalverfassung und Verwaltungsgerichte in England (Berlin, 3rd edn., 1871), pp. 961 ff..

[2] R. Gneist, Die Preußische Finanzreform durch Regulirung der Gemeindesteuern (Berlin, 1881). This is a more detailed version of his 1877 speech in the Prussian Chamber of Deputies, published a year later: R. Gneist, Zur Steuerreform in Preußen (Berlin, 1878).

while the state taxed people. In the countryside the tax should be based on the estimated rental value of land, whereas in the cities it should be based on the rental values of buildings, with business income accruing from the buildings taken into account. Gneist's ideas were heavily criticised by economists as being completely unrealistic. As Gustav Schmoller pointed out, at a time when agrarian interests cried out for relief from direct taxation on their land in favour of indirect taxation, Gneist's suggestion for an additional local land tax was totally anachronistic.[1] Nonetheless, Gneist's simple formula, that (direct) taxes on objects should be for local, personal taxes for state, and taxes on consumption and duties for national government,[2] struck a chord with contemporaries.[3] This strict separation was, of course, extremely impractical, but from now on it was accepted that direct property taxation (Realsteuern) ought inherently to be a local tax.[4]

If direct taxation on property was increasingly recognised as a natural source of local income, so were the profits accruing from the municipal ownership of services. For the cities, this mainly became an issue during the 1860s, for it was during this decade that the first gas works were municipalised and that some cities such as Frankfurt and Cologne became convinced of the need for municipal water works and a municipal drainage system.[5] It was not that municipalities had never interfered in the private market before. The more prosperous cities in particular had amassed considerable property over the centuries and derived a large part of their income from it. However, the municipalisation of gas and water was different. These were relatively new industries and carried a high risk. They required a large capital input

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1 G. Schmoller, 'Theorie und Praxis der deutschen Steuerreform in Reich, Staat und Gemeinde', JGVV, v (1881), 421-45, here 430. The article is itself an excellent summary and critique of Gneist's views.

2 Gneist, Zur Steuerreform, p. 25.

3 Gneist's influence on Miquel's tax reforms is, for example, acknowledged in H. Herzfeld, Johannes von Miquel. Sein Anteil am Ausbau des Deutschen Reiches bis zur Jahrhundertwende (Detmold, 1938), ii. 223.

4 Thus Delbrück wrote 'Das größte Verdienst um die Durcharbeitung und Einprägung des Gedankens von dem Zusammenhang der Kommune und der Realsteuern hat Herr von Gneist.' ('The greatest merit in the working-out and the establishment of the idea of the connection between local government and direct property taxes belongs to Mr. von Gneist.'). H. Delbrück, 'Politische Correspondenz', PJbb., lxx (1892), 505.

5 H.-D. Bunckhorst, Kommunalisierung im 19. Jahrhundert dargestellt am Beispiel der Gaswirtschaft in Deutschland (Munich, 1978), pp. 222-5. Ladd, Urban Planning, pp. 48-50.

which meant that cities would almost inevitably have to take up debts. Finally, in these early years there was no compelling reason why they should be municipalised. As a result, until the 1860s most gasworks were privately run, very often with foreign (particularly English) expertise and capital.

Attitudes towards municipalisation changed for a number of reasons. With respect to water, public health organisations sprang up which could point to the larger cities' traditional commitment to the common weal.[1] Health concerns could not be used as an argument for the municipalisation of gas. Yet by the 1860s gas works could no longer be called a risky business after pioneering municipal gas works in Leipzig, Dresden and Berlin had been successful. Moreover, city governments were galled by the extraordinary profits of private gas companies usually in return for poor service. Also, it seems to have been not uncommon for contemporaries to point to the example of England, home of orthodox, laissez-faire liberalism, yet also a pioneer of the municipalisation of gas, water and transport.[2] Finally, Prussian state ownership of railways since 1847 set an important precedent for the cities.[3]

Perhaps the most comprehensive, influential and constructive work on the nature of local and state taxation which summarised and developed the ideas on local government taxation described above, and worked out a practical system of local and state government taxation,

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[1] Ladd, Urban Planning, pp. 36-76. It is also interesting to note that frequently the municipalisation of 'hygiene' such as water and sewage shifted the responsibility from house-owner to municipality, which was an important inducement for the majority of house-owners in city councils to vote for the muncipalisation of these services. House-owners were also the main beneficiaries of the municipalisation of gas. Bunckhorst, Kommunalisierung , pp. 218-9.

[2] Manchester had municipal gas works since 1817. D. Knoop, 'The Trading enterprises of Manchester', in H. Berthélemy and D. Knoop, Gemeindebetriebe in Frankrreich und England (Leipzig, 1910), Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik, cxxx (Leipzig, 1910), p. 28. The reference to the English example has been used later on, for example, in a similar context in Frankfurt, in the debate about the municipalisation of the city's tramways. Kleine Presse, 14.6.1890 (1.Blatt).

[3] For the case of Frankfurt, Sonnemann named three causes for the change of heart of many Frankfurt liberals with regard to municipalisation: the nationalisation of state transport, progress of the science of social policy, and a new awareness of the workers' movement. HStAW 407 n. 161² fo. 160. Democratic Association meeting, 20.10.1897. This is also in Frankfurter Zeitung, 21.10.1897 (3. Morgenblatt).

When the issue of municipalisations was discussed, for example, the rather conservative mayor of Lichtenberg (Berlin) likened the importance of the municipal gas and electricity works to that of the state railways, as they formed the backbone of the financial administration of the respective bodies. Verhandlungen des Vierten Deutschen Städtetages am 15. und 16. Juni 1914 zu Cöln (Berlin, 1914), p. 66.

was that of Adolph Wagner. As a sometime active political follower of Stoecker's social conservative movement after 1878, he was not exactly a model liberal. Indeed, in many respects his work was quite unacceptable in liberal eyes, for example in his social demands for high rates of progression in taxation, in his view that society was inevitably becoming more communist in nature,[1] or in his later view that local public ownership of property and buildings was preferable to the existence of a private market.[2] Yet the fact that even Wagner took local self-government so seriously, as well as the fact that he himself influenced and supported other liberals' ideals on the issue, demonstrates the sheer pervasiveness of the ideal of local self-government across the liberal/conservative divide. Thus, the work of the conservative Wagner became the theoretical underpinning for one of the most important liberal reforms of all, Miquel's tax reforms of 1891/1893.

In the early 1870s, Wagner developed his ideas on municipal and state finance in conjunction with the Association for Social Policy, which had become concerned about the state of municipal finance in 1873.[3] However, the Association's influence on the matter remained modest as it was unable to reach any detailed agreement from its members, and so the initiative remained with Wagner who broke with the Association in 1877.[4] Central to Wagner's ideas was his theory about the inevitable growth of the state, proportional to its wealth and industrial development. As unregulated industries and markets grew, they were increasingly prone to malfunction until the state stepped in to regulate. Also, there was an increase in cultural and educational needs among developing countries which only the state, or other 'legal communities' such as local government, could satisfy. It followed that the corollary of this law of increasing state activity was that of increasing public financial

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1 Wagner, Communalsteuerfrage, pp. 14-15.

2 A. Wagner, Finanzwissenschaft. 2. Teil. Volkswirtschaft und Recht, besonders Vermögensrecht. 1-3. Buch (Leipzig, 3rd edn., 1894), pp. 490-506.

3 See in particular Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik, Die Communalsteuerfrage. Zehn Gutachten und Berichte, xii (Leipzig, 1877).

4 Wagner, Communalsteuerfrage, pp. 54-66. Wagner's main reasons for leaving the Association were its indecision, and its refusal to show any real commitment to engage in a dialogue with socialism..

requirements, both of the state and of self-governing bodies.[1] It is remarkable how closely Wagner followed Gneist in his appreciation of the value of local self-government. Central to his concerns was obviously the state with its primary duty to exercise its monopoly of legal justice and power (Rechts- und Machtzweck).[2] It was also the duty of the state to ensure a minimal amount of uniformity between the various regions in areas such as education or social policy. It is not entirely clear whether Wagner expected the growth of public expenditure to lead to centralisation or decentralisation, for it is possible to find statements for either view in his work.[3] Quite possibly, he was inclined to favour centralisation, but was held back by the then available evidence that it was local city government which was the fastest growing area of public spending already. This problem should not be overemphasised, however, because on the whole Wagner's work was based on Gneist's ideal that there was no conflict of interest between state and local government, and that effective local self-government was in the interest of the state.[4] State and local tax reforms were complementary, and certainly reform in the latter arena could not happen without reform in the former.[5]

In contrast to Gneist who was primarily concerned with the countryside, it was self-government in the cities, and of the large municipalities in particular, that received most of Wagner's attention.[6] Influenced by Lorenz von Stein, Wagner was deeply aware that taxation could be an important tool in social policy. For Wagner, ability to pay became the overriding principle of taxation in state and local government. If the state's concerns lay in the spheres of power and legal justice, the natural sphere of local government lay in culture and education.[7] Furthermore, like the state, local government was destined to interfere increasingly in the

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1 A. Wagner, Finanzwissenschaft. 1. Teil: Einleitung, Ordnung der Finanzwissenschaft, Finanzbedarf, Privaterwerb (Leipzig/Heidelberg, 1877), p. 68.

2 Ibid., p. 95.

3 J. Bolenz, 'Wachstum und Strukturwandlungen der kommunalen Ausgaben in Deutschland 1849-1913' (Freiburg Univ. JUR.DISS. 1965), 206-7.

4 For a differing view, see T. Köster, Die Entwicklung kommunaler Finanzsysteme, pp.14-24, in which the author argues that Wagner was ultimately concerned with the growth of the state.

5 Wagner, Communalsteuerfrage, p. 1.

6 Ibid., p. 10.

7 Wagner, Finanzwissenschaft (1877), p. 95.

private market to avoid distortions and protect the consumer.[1] Taxation (and expenditure) was to be regulated so that local government could best fulfil these roles. General expenditure on culture and education which benefited the whole community should be raised through general taxation, primarily through indirect taxation on consumer goods, and also through taxation on income and wealth. For certain services which the community carried out in the interests of the state, a state subsidy could also be given.[2] Expenditure which did not benefit the entire community should not be borne by general taxation, either. Thus, expenditure on culture and secondary education which did not benefit everyone should be covered as much as possible by fees, and only then through general taxation. Finally, all those expenditures which improved a town's economic position (sewage and water systems, street-lighting, etc.) should be raised through charges and fees.[3] This took account of the growing number of municipalisations that were already taking place, and of their increasing financial benefit to the city coffers. In the second instance, they should be raised through taxation on property, since it was the owners of property who benefited most from these improvements.[4]

In general, Wagner recommended a much stronger use of property taxation (Realsteuern), since as the value of property varied so greatly it was by nature most suitable as a local tax which could best take account of these variations. Not only was he in favour of income taxation, but he favoured a tax on wealth as a complement. This tax would discriminate between unearned (fundiert) and earned (unfundiert) income, the former being taxed more highly according to the principle of ability to pay. Finally, Wagner advocated a much more rigorous application of taxation. He demanded, for example, an abolition of municipal tax exemption for state buildings and enterprises. Furthermore, since business corporations and

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1 Wagner, Communalsteuerfrage, pp. 12-14.

2 Ibid., pp. 30-31.

3 Gebühren and Beiträge, the difference being that the former was consistently levied on all whenever they used a particular service, whereas the latter was a lump sum levied on all, even if they did not take advantage of the service. Klose, 'Finanzpolitik', p. 51.

4 Ibid., pp. 2-3, 31-3.

societies ('non-physical' persons) and owners of property who were living elsewhere derived the same benefit from the efforts of local government as everybody else, they should pay taxes like everybody else.[1] And, in a similar vein, he also demanded that individuals declare their own income for taxation with the threat of heavy penalties for evasion, to replace the current unsatisfactory system of income estimation by the state.[2]

By the early 1880s, therefore, a generally accepted theory of local taxation had been established which remained fundamentally unchanged until it formed the basis of the Prussian tax reforms of 1891/93.[3] This theory was not developed in a context which clearly distinguished liberal and conservative components. Wagner, for example, was quick to point out that his ideas on tax reforms were purely based on scientific rationale, not on politics or any higher vision about the role of self-government.[4] Indeed, there is nothing inherently liberal in his suggestion that, for example, property taxation ought to be primarily a local, rather than state, tax. And yet, even Wagner based his ideas on the clearly political assumption that taxation was a function of social policy.[5] Also, it is questionable to what extent Wagner's 'law' about the inevitable growth of the state as an economic and social arbiter was founded upon economic rationale, rather than political desirability. Moreover, it is difficult to see on what economic grounds Wagner's delineation of the boundaries between state and local government finance was based.

In fact, the theory of municipal finance was the practical underpinning of liberal ideals of local self-government. It was based on precisely the same ideals as local self-government, and it had the same aim. It was recognised that local government finance was a strong pillar of state finance, and, in an ideal world, both systems were in harmony. Local government taxation had

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1 Ibid., p. 35-37.
2 Ibid., p. 42.
3 Herzfeld, Miquel, ii. 210.
4 Wagner, Comunalsteuerfrage, pp. 8-9.
5 Ibid., p. 8.

to be subject to state control while it was recognised that some degree of local autonomy was essential so that each community could make the best use of its financial resources. The preference for direct property taxation as well as for fees and charges instead of supplements to state income tax still emphasised the role of local government as an economic enterprise (which Gneist had ridiculed with respect to England,[1] but accepted in the case of Berlin[2]) in which property-owners had the lion's share of rights and duties. Finally, local taxation was recognised as an important tool of social policy, even if most liberals may not have gone as far as Adolph Wagner. Through liberal ideals of municipal finance, therefore, the liberal ideal of self-government was given a new, practical impetus. It became the means through which the self-government ideal could be realised while strengthening the Prussian state at the same time. And social considerations in municipal taxation became one of the ways in which local government could contribute as an arbiter between state and society. Finally, the fact that they were based to some extent on the tenets common to liberals and conservatives alike is the fundamental reason why the tax reforms of the most acknowledged liberal spokesmen on local self-government could be approved by one of the most conservative and reactionary parliaments in Germany.[3]

## 4.3. Johannes von Miquel's Municipal Tax Reforms of 1893

All theory notwithstanding, no state or municipal tax reform had been enacted by 1890. During the 1880s there had been a number of stop-gap measures such as the aptly titled

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1 R. Gneist, Geschichte und heutige Gestalt der englischen Communalverfassung oder des Selfgovernment (Berlin, 1863), pp. 1276, 1310.

2 Gneist, Die Preußische Finanzreform, pp. 63-4. Schmoller, 'Theorie', 426.

3 Interestingly, this consensus on the ideal of local government not only included conservatives, but also the reformist wing of the SPD from the turn of the century, because to the SPD local self-government offered a sphere of relative freedom from the authoritarian Prussian state and German Empire. See, for example, H. Lindemann (C. Hugo), Steuern und Gebühren (Berlin, 1906), p. 4. For the example of Frankfurt, see Sozialdemokratie und Stadtverwaltung (1906), p. 77.

Kommunalsteuernotgesetz (Emergency Local Tax Act) of 1885 to alleviate some of the financial difficulties that many cities found themselves in.[1] Nevertheless, it was clear that no thorough reform of municipal or state taxation could be enacted while Bismarck remained Prussian Minister President, since he was vehemently opposed to the introduction of a modern, progressive income tax and was solely interested in the reduction of land taxation for property and the lowering of school fees to help the lower classes.[2]

Meanwhile, the crisis of municipal finance deepened. As Table 3 indicates, in 1883/84 local direct taxation was a greater financial burden than direct state taxation.

Table 3: State and local direct taxation in 1883/1884 in 1,000 Marks.[3]

| | State taxation | Local taxation[4] |
|---|---|---|
| city communities | 74,787 | 116,936 |
| village communities | 55,421 | 91,839 |
| total | 130,208 | 208,775 |

This imbalance was greatly increased if one bears in mind that, as we have seen, in the municipalities the lion's share of this direct tax burden was raised through supplements to the state income tax, whereas only 42% of direct state taxation was levied through the income tax itself.[5] In other words, even though direct personal taxation was in essence a state tax, it had in practice, through the sheer volume of local financial requirements, become primarily a local tax.

Matters did not improve until the end of the decade. In 1892/93, local supplements to direct personal taxation in all cities above 10,000 inhabitants averaged 190%, or 164% on income tax supplements alone.[6] In particular, of the 205 cities in question, 58 raised a supplement on income tax between 200 and 300%, and in 13 cities the supplement was even higher.[7] Cities

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1 The 1885 act made 'non-physical persons' such as share companies and non-resident owners of property liable to local taxation, after they had already been made subject to state taxation in 1873. For a summary of Prussian financial policies from 1873-1890, see Klose, 'Finanzpolitik', pp. 35-6, 46-9.

2 Herzfeld, Miquel, ii. 146-151, Kramer, 'Entwicklung', pp. 112-3.

3 A. Wagner, Finanzwissenschaft (1899), pp. 88-9, Table 13.

4 This figure includes taxation raised by all local government bodies, the province, the Kreis, churches and schools. Taxation by these bodies was negligible in the cities, but it was all the more important in the countryside.

5 A. Wagner, Finanzwissenschaft (1899), pp. 88-9, Table 13.

6 Ibid., p. 91, Table 16. Direct personal taxation included a tax on income as well as a tax on rent.

7 R. Kaufmann, Kommunalfinanzen, ii. 299.

had become exceedingly reliant on the single source of personal direct taxation, which in 1891/92 accounted for 81.4% of local tax returns, while only 13.1% were raised through taxation of property. Other forms of taxation had become almost meaningless, accounting for a mere 5.5% of local taxation.[1]

As had been recognised in the 1870s, local government finance was in desperate need of reform, now with greater urgency than ever. And yet it is doubtful whether this crisis would have been addressed without the general change in the political climate as a result of Bismarck's departure and the beginning of Caprivi's 'New Course'. For the centre piece of this new policy was to 'rule with conciliation and good will', 'to gather together all the elements that support the state', in order 'step by step to satisfy the justifiable demands of the working classes and in that way even to co-operate with them',[2] as Miquel summarised and influenced the essence of the 'New Course'.[3] As a former mayor of Frankfurt, where local taxation was already used as an instrument of social policy, and, as a student of Adolph Wagner's work who must have been well-aware of the theoretical potential of taxation as an instrument of social justice, it was only a small step for Miquel to realise that the ideal of the 'New Course' could be best implemented by a thorough tax reform. Miquel's career, however, had not only alerted him to the plight of the working classes, but as one of the principal authors of the southern National Liberals' Heidelberg Declaration of 1884 he had shown himself sensitive to the needs of (at least southern) agriculture and its recurrent demands for lower taxes.[4] Miquel's tax reform offered the opportunity to kill two birds with one stone, both to appease the working classes and to relieve agriculture.[5]

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1 Ibid., p. 297.

2 Miquel to General von Waldersee, 6th March 1890, quoted from the translation in J.A. Nichols, Germany after Bismarck. The Caprivi Era 1890-1894 (Cambridge/Mass., 1958), p. 87.

3 Nipperdey, Deutsche Geschichte, ii. 699.

4 White, Splintered Party, pp. 100-105.

5 For an impressive case study of the burden of the pre-1891/93 system of taxation on agriculture and its central demands, see W. Pyta, Landwirtschaftliche Interessenpolitik im deutschen Kaiserrich. Der Einfluß agrarischer Interessen auf die Neuordnung der Finanz- und Wirtschaftspolitik am Ende der 1870er Jahre am Beispiel von Rheinland und Westfalen (Stuttgart, 1991), esp. pp. 39-44.

The two phases of the tax reforms had distinct but connected aims. The first reform of 1891 was aimed at making the tax system more efficient by simplifying the state's tax structure. In an attempt to reverse the previous trend whereby the income tax had increasingly been hijacked by local government, a reformed personal income tax now became the core of the state tax system. Incomes over 100,000 M. per annum were to be taxed at a top rate of 4%, for incomes below that the rate would be progressively reduced:[1] incomes above 9,500 M. per annum would be taxed at 3%, down to less than 1% for incomes in the lowest taxable group, 900 to 1,050 M. per annum.[2] Interestingly, for incomes below 3,000 M. per annum, taxable income was to be reduced by 50 M. for every dependent member of the family. Perhaps the most important innovation introduced was that of self-declaration of income. Many conservatives still felt that this was immoral and tempting for the individual to break the law,[3] but on the whole it was accepted that this was necessary for improving the efficiency of the income tax.[4]

It is certainly correct to point out that the reforms of 1891 contained little that was new, and that Miquel's major contribution had been to steer the measure through the two chambers of parliament.[5] However, from the outset Miquel regarded the 1891 reforms as part of a general reform of state and local taxation which, for pragmatic reasons, had to be carried out

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1 Note that contemporaries were extremely touchy about whether an income tax rate should be progressively reduced (Degression) or progressively increased (Progression). Miquel chose the less controversial former method, because this put an upper limit on the rate of taxation. Many feared that progressive taxation offered no safeguards against further increases in the rate of taxation for higher incomes.

2 Nichols, Germany, p. 91. As explained in the previous footnote, however, Nichols is technically wrong to describe the income tax as progressive. See also Herzfled, Miquel, ii. 231 ff.. It is interesting that the tax rates were not just subject to fiscal and social considerations. Miquel had originally fixed the top rate at 3%, but since wealth was shifting already away from agriculture towards industrial wealth, the conservatives pushed through the higher rate of 4% so that the balance of taxation would shift a little more towards industry. Nichols, Germany, p. 92.

3 H. Delbrück, 'Politische Correspondenz', PJbb, lxvi (1890), 637-40.

4 For a summary of the development of Prussian state taxation since 1815, as well as Miquel's reform of 1891-3, see D. E. Schremmer, 'Taxation and Public Finance: Britain, France and Germany', in Peter Mathias and Sidney Pollard (eds.), The Cambridge Economic History of Europe, viii. The Industrial Economies: The Development of Economic and Social Policies (Cambridge, 1989), 315-494, esp. 418-53.

5 Nichols, Germany, p. 91.

separately.[1] It was this second part of Miquel's tax reform, the reform of local taxation, which was truly innovative for a Prussian finance minister.[2]

Miquel's local tax reforms had two aims. Firstly, he wanted to create clear distinctions between state and local taxation, and, secondly, he intended to set up clear principles and guidelines for local government taxation which were to be applied, for the first time, throughout the state. As a result, general expenditure, particularly when it was fulfilling a duty imposed upon it by the state, was to be met by a universal tax (e.g. primary schools, poor relief). Expenditure which increased the quality of life (e.g. technical schools, lunatic asylums (!)), thus attracting more business and increasing the value of property, should be met by owners of property. Finally, expenditure on streets, pavements, parks, secondary schools, etc. primarily benefited property and should thus be borne, in the first instance, by property-owners and businesses.[3] While keeping faithful to Wagner's dictum that no one method or principle of taxation ought to be applied exclusively, the application of these principles marked an important shift in the practice of taxation in Prussia. For whereas since 1891 the state system had been firmly rooted in the principle of ability to pay, local taxation was subsequently based on the benefit derived from local government activities, as a return for actual services received (Leistung und Gegenleistung). For the first time during the nineteenth century, the Prussian state explicitly acknowledged that local government was not just an arm of state government, but that it had a separate sphere, with different functions and objectives.

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1 Ultimately, Miquel sought to complement his efforts on tax reforms with a thorough reform of imperial taxation, but without success. W. Gerloff, Die Finanz- und Zollpolitik des Deutschen Reiches nebst ihren Beziehungen zu Landes- und Gemeindefinanzen vor der Gründung des Norddeutschen Bundes bis zur Gegenwart (Jena, 1913), ch. 29.

2 The reforms have been described as 'The only modern and pioneering model tax reform during the imperial period'. Volker Hentschel, 'German Economic and Social policy, 1815-1939', in Mathias and Pollard (eds.), Cambridge Economic History, viii. 752-813, here 778.

3 Denkschrift of 2.11.1892, in Drucksachen des Abgeordnetenhauses 1892/93, Nr. 8. The above principles are also summarised in Kaufmann, Kommunalfinanzen, ii. 304. See also the ministerial directive in E. Scholz, 'Das heutige Gemeindebesteuerungssystem in Preußen. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Westens der Monarchie', in: Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik, Gemeindefinanzen, vol. i, cxxvi (Leipzig, 1908), pp. 286-7.

Paragraph two of the Local Taxation Act (Kommunalabgabengesetz) of 14 July 1893 stipulated that the primary source of taxation was to be the city's income from its own assets. This could be levied through charges (Gebühren), which were a regular charge levied for a particular service (such as drainage), or through fees (Beiträge), which were raised on a one-off basis, whenever a particular benefit could not be evaluated (such as connection to the sewage system, road building, etc.). The latter could only be applied to property-owners and businesses.[1] Once the local community had exhausted the income derived from its assets, the next preferred income was that of indirect taxation. Save for a number of indirect taxes which were raised by the Empire, local communities were free to raise any kind of indirect tax, subject to state approval. Only once these two sources of income had been exhausted was it possible for local government to raise direct taxation. As the programme for the tax reform made clear, taxation of property (Realsteuern) was given a much more prominent role than before. At the heart of Miquel's reform was that, now that indirect personal taxation had been made the main source of state taxation, it was appropriate for the state to hand over productive direct taxation to the localities so that they could reach their full potential there. As shown above, productive taxation was now expected to apply to all those who directly benefited from local expenditures, i.e. men of property and business. Local communities had considerable freedom in raising productive taxation on property and business according to a number of criteria, whichever suited them best. By contrast, local personal taxation was effectively limited to surcharges on the state income tax.[2] As the former first mayor of Frankfurt was only too aware of the difficulties in inducing city councils to vote for taxes on property,[3] Miquel added a final safeguard to ensure that the full potential of the productive taxes was realised. The ratio of direct personal taxation to direct productive taxation was to be calculated on a range from 1:1 to 1:1.5. In other words, if the amount of taxation raised

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1 Scholz, 'Gemeindebesteuerungssystem', p. 283-4.
2 Ibid., p. 284-5.
3 Herzfeld, Miquel, i. 517-9.

through productive taxes was below the equivalent of a 100% local supplement on the state income tax, then that local supplement would have to be reduced until the amounts raised through local productive and income taxation were equivalent again. At the same time, there was a limit to how much property could be taxed. Once the amount of productive taxation reached the equivalent of a 150% local supplement on the state income tax, for every 1% extra revenue through productive taxes relative to state income tax supplements the local community could raise its supplement on the state income tax by 2%. To safeguard this complicated system, every time the local rate of supplements on the state income tax exceeded 100% it was subject to state approval.[1]

The act of 1893 was certainly not without its faults. As the left-liberals were quick to point out, the handing-over of the property tax by the state to the localities was not just done for the good of local government, but it was also a considerable sweetener for the Prussian conservatives. For it effectively meant that many Junkers, who were in charge of their own local districts, were now in the position to tax themselves, on their own property.[2] Hence, left-liberal opposition was perhaps strongest with respect to the new property tax, which was also considered to be regressive as it was feared that the new system of property taxation would not be efficient enough. Furthermore, the promotion of indirect taxes was resented.[3] Finally, Miquel had yielded to agrarian interests in handing over responsibility for tax collection to the Landrat, who was at least in part responsible to the agrarian community, rather than to officials of the Prussian Ministry of Finance.[4] Nonetheless, it is interesting to

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1 Kaufmann, Kommunalfinanzen, ii. 349-50.

2 Herzfeld, Miquel, ii. 258-9, 269.

3 See, for example, the speeches of Rickert, SBAH, 3. Sitzung (18.11.1892), pp. 38-40. Richter, SBAH, 4. Sitzung (19.11.1892), pp. 68-80, esp. pp. 69, 73, 77.

4 P.-C. Witt, 'The Prussian Landrat as Tax Official, 1891-1918. Some Observations on the Political and Social Function of the German Civil Service during the Wilhelmine Empire', in G. Iggers (ed.), The Social History of Politics. Critical Perspectives in West German Historical Writing since 1945 (Leamington Spa, 1985), pp. 137-54.

note that the left-liberals disagreed more with the details of the law than with the principles that lay behind it.

For the conservatives, the main obstacle was the introduction of the supplementary tax (Ergänzungssteuer), which was synonymous with a wealth tax to supplement the income tax. This was introduced to compensate for the abortive inheritance tax two years previously. However, conservatives soon became aware that, even though the new tax was an invasion of privacy, this was bearable given that it would weigh more heavily on mobile (industrial and commercial) than immobile (agricultural) capital.[1] Welcoming the additional sweetener of the property tax for the Junkers, and considering that for voting purposes they were still classed as though they payed that property tax which maintained their voting influence under the three-class franchise, the conservatives gave their necessary agreement to the reform.[2]

It is interesting to note that one of the more constant charges which the Progressive leader, Eugen Richter, made against Miquel was that he had devised his reform like a 'textbook of financial theory',[3] and that in the interest of theoretical purity Miquel had lost any touch with what was really needed, or with what the real consequences of his laws would be.[4] Richter was certainly right in that, a number of important but necessary political concessions to the conservatives apart,[5] the 1893 reform reads almost as a model application of Adolph Wagner's theories. Local government finance had been given a distinct basis while state income was maintained. Ability to pay was still a most important criterion in local government taxation, but alongside this return on services (Leistung und Gegenleistung) had become another

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1 See Delbrück's initial hostility, and then his 'conversion', in H. Delbrück, 'Politische Correspondenz', PJbb, lxix (1892), 711, and PJbb, lxx (1892), 506-7.

2 Richter, SBAH, 4. Sitzung (19.11.1892), pp. 68. Herzfeld, Miquel, ii. 270-71.

3 Richter, SBAH, 4. Sitzung (19.11.1892), p. 69.

4 Ibid., p. 74.

5 Most important of these was the controversial concession to the conservatives whereby the landtax was transferred to the discretion of the local community, which meant in practice that a large number of owners of East-Elbian estates which formed independent local communities could tax themselves. Herzfeld, Miquel, ii. 269-71

important principle. Finally, the relationship between personal and property taxation had been carefully worked out.[1]

Miquel's local tax reforms were, therefore, a child of liberal ideals of local finance, and, ultimately, of liberal attitudes over local self-government. As has been shown above, these attitudes rested on visions of a careful interplay between state supervision on the one hand, and local government initiative on the other. Hence emerges the apparent paradox that while local government was given wider scope to raise its own taxation, state supervision was also increased. As long as state interference was muted enough to allow local initiative to prosper, the increase of state supervision was not a problem. Even though the extent of state supervision was often resented,[2] it also helped local taxation to achieve its full potential, as will be shown in the case of the introduction of property taxes.

One of the most significant charges against the tax reform is that it was a state-wide law, that it consequently failed to take any account of the substantial local variations between the cities. Of course, this had been one of Miquel's guiding principles - that this should be a national reform rather than one applying to certain regions only. Yet the reforms of the former mayor of pre-industrial Osnabrück and of that wealthiest of Prussian cities, Frankfurt, turned out to be rather better-suited for prosperous cities such as Berlin, Kassel and Wiesbaden than for the new industrial centres of Solingen, Königshütte or Viersen. For in the spirit of the reforms, the former cities could afford to reduce their income tax supplements to below 100% because of their high yield in property taxation, whereas the industrial cities had so little resident wealth that their income tax supplements, even in the year of the reform's introduction, were above 200%.[3] This was, however, not just an important failure on Miquel's part, but it was equally a serious flaw inherent in the very concept of self-government. For if the point of

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1 See also Wagner's appreciation in Herzfeld, Miquel, ii. 280.

2 E. Scholz, 'Gemeindebesteuerungssystem', pp. 289-91.

3 H. Lücker, Die Entwicklung und die Probleme des Gemeindeabgabenwesens in den Städten und großen Landgemeinden der preußischen Industriebezirke, Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik, Gemeindefinanzen, vol. ii, 3. Teil, cxxvii (Leipzig, 1910).

self-government was to stimulate local endeavour, partly through letting the locality decide on its own budgets, then it would have to be accepted that local differences would create relative winners and losers. This became increasingly unacceptable, though, as economic change speeded up the process of differentiation, but this was only properly taken account of in 1920, with the introduction of Matthias Erzberger's finance reforms.[1]

Therefore, given the liberal nature of Miquel's finance reforms, it is difficult to see how this problem could have been avoided while honouring the principle of self-government at the same time. The fact remains that the 1893 local tax reform was the most important practical acknowledgement by the Prussian state that local self-government had a distinct role to play in the interest of efficient and innovative government in general, and of state government in particular. As a result, local government in the two decades or so after the reforms came into effect in 1895 was closer than ever before or after to the liberal ideal of self-government, with its distinct sphere of activity financed through its own, distinct sources of revenue.

The theoretical implications of Miquel's tax reforms are, of course, only one side of the coin, because for their complete evaluation it is necessary to consider briefly their actual effect on municipal income and expenditure. This is necessary as it is doubtful whether these theoretical concerns would have been realised, had it not been the case that they were extremely practical. To name the most obvious example, the complicated system of personal and property local taxation, and the amount of state supervision introduced to monitor its application, were not the result of an obsession with religiously following Wagner's ideas. Rather, it was an obvious attempt to keep local-property owners in check. Just as before 1893 property taxation had failed because the house-owners' majorities in the city councils had refused to tax themselves,

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[1] For a brief introduction, see W. R. Krabbe, Die Deutsche Stadt im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert (Göttingen, 1989), pp. 165-8.

so it had to be ensured that, now that all property taxation had been handed over to the local communities, these majorities had to accept a minimum level of property taxation.

It is difficult to imagine that even Miquel could have believed that property taxation would be able to overtake personal income taxation as the local community's main source of income from direct taxation. After all, the local income tax was supposed to cover those items of expenditure on which the community was spending in the interest of the state, in particular primary schools and poor relief. These also happened to be some of the biggest spending items in any local budget.[1] Nevertheless, as Table 4 shows, the 1893 reforms did result in a significant switch from personal to property taxation.[2]

Table 4: Proportion of property and of personal (income) taxation in % of total local direct taxation, 1869-1900[3]

| | property taxation | personal taxation |
|---|---|---|
| 1869 | 15.6 | 84.4 |
| 1883/84 | 16.4 | 83.6 |
| 1894/95 | 16.3 | 83.7 |
| 1895/96 | 44.0 | 56.0 |
| 1899/1900 | 41.6 | 58.4 |

Even though soon after the switch in 1895 personal taxes began to grow faster than property taxes again, this relative growth was only slight, and the ratio stayed at about 60:40 until 1911.[4] Hence, it is clear that Miquel's safeguards were sufficient to ensure that house-owners and businesses could not avoid the local tax in the way they had been able to before.

The preferred indirect taxes had a less happy fate. As Table 5 shows, indirect taxation doubled when the local tax reform came into effect in the financial year 1895/1896, but it

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1 Bolenz, 'Wachstum', pp. 165, 168.

2 Unfortunately, it is difficult to say whether the total property tax burden increased as a result of the changes, because there seems to be no available statistic which shows state property tax payments just for Gemeinden (local communities, cities) before 1895, which could then be compared to the available data on local property tax payments after the introduction of the reform.

3 Kaufmann, Kommunalfinanzen, ii. 351.

4 Krabbe, Die Deutsche Stadt, p. 160. According to Krabbe's data, the ratio between property and persoual local taxation was 42.6:57.4 (1895/96), 40.0:60.0 (1900), 39.9:60.1 (1911).

Table 5: Local taxation in Prussian Cities (over 10.000 inhabitants), in Marks per head[1]

| | 1876/77 | 1883/84 | 1891/92 | 1894/95 | 1895/96 | 1899/1900 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indirect taxes | 0.95 | 0.81 | 0.88 | 1.05 | 2.09 | 2.57 |
| Income taxes | 10.19 | 11.51 | 12.53 | 12.67 | 9.56 | 12.04 |
| Property taxes | 1.83 | 2.03 | 2.02 | 2.30 | 7.35 | 8.39 |
| Charges and Fees | | | | 2.32 | 2.64 | 3.43 |
| Total | 12.97[2] | 14.35 | 15.42 | 18.35 | 21.63 | 26.43 |

still amounted to less than 10% of total taxation, and during the next few years the proportion remained relatively constant. This is presumably because this new emphasis on indirect taxes in the mid-1890s came at a time when the SPD, whose constitutents were hardest hit by the tax, was waiting in the wings to challenge bourgeois domination of the city councils in most areas. As a result, this regressive form of taxation could not be introduced quite as freely as in previous decades. In any case, local indirect taxation was made all but redundant by the imperial law of 1902, to take effect on 1 April 1910, which turned all the major indirect taxes into imperial ones and explicitly rejected local supplements to these.[3] As a result, from 1902 local indirect taxation dwindled into insignificance, though none of this could, of course, have been foreseen by Miquel at the time. In the immediate aftermath of the reform, however, the increase in local property taxation more than compensated for the decrease in personal taxation, and, together with a doubling of indirect taxation, from one year to the next local tax revenues increased by 17.3%.

Finally, Table 5 shows a slow, but steady rise in municipal income through charges and fees. Contemporaries and historians alike have argued frequently that the tax reform's changed emphasis on charges and fees, not all of which were subject to state sanction, produced a large incentive for cities to increase their spending on municipal services in order to increase their

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1 Kaufmann, Kommunalfinanzen, ii. 365.

2 Note that there is a small margin of error in the total figures for 1867-1892, as the totals in Kaufmann's table do not quite add up. Nonetheless, the deviations are minimal and do not affect the relative figures or their trend.

3 For an excellent account of the introduction of the 1902 taxes, their implication for local self-government, and the cities' reaction, see H. Beckstein, Städtische Interessenpolitik. Organisation und Politik der Städtetage in Bayern, Preußen und im Deutschen Reich 1896-1923 (Düsseldorf, 1991), pp. 147-153. Gerloff, Finanz- und Zollpolitik, pp. 385-8. A. Gunther, 'Die Belastung kleinerer und mittlerer Einkommen durch Verbrauchsabgaben seit Geltung des Zolltarifs vom 25. Dezember 1902', in Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik, ed. Heinrich Herkner, clvi (Munich/Leipzig, 1918), ii. 189-268.

non-taxed income.[1] Very often, this assessment was based on the extraordinarily high growth-rates for municipal income at that time without discounting the fact that the vast majority of the income went to servicing the debt which had to be incurred to municipalise services in the first place, so that the actual net income from muncipal assets was relatively small (as Table 5 shows).[2] It is highly doubtful whether it was the prospect of fees and charges that spurred urban governments into action to increase their revenue. As Table 5 shows, the extent to which fees and charges contributed to municipal income was still relatively modest. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that Miquel's prioritisation of income from municipal assets was nothing new, as the 1808 city ordinance had already introduced taxation only for local expenditure that went over and above the city's non-taxed income. The one change introduced by the 1893 reform was that charges could now be levied in such a way as not only to cover all the costs, but also as to make a profit, the extent of which was not specified.[3] As a result, it was natural that fees and charges went up, but it is questionable whether they were responsible for a sea change in municipal finance which led to a large increase in municipal assets.[4]

The question about the importance of the cities' own income touches on the remaining important issue to be considered in an evaluation of the effect of Miquel's tax laws. Having considered their effect on local taxation, it is now necessary to turn to their role in affecting local government expenditure.

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1 Bolenz, 'Wachstum', p. 189.
2 Scholz, 'Gemeindebesteuerungssystem', pp. 281-318, esp. p. 298.
3 Klose, 'Finanzpolitik', p. 53.
4 O. Landsberg, 'Die Entwicklung des Gemeindeabgabenwesens in den preußischen Städten unter der Herrschaft des Kommunalabgabengesetzes mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der östlichen Provinzen', in Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik, Gemeindefinanzen, vol. ii, 1. Teil, (Leipzig 1910), pp. 3-5.

Table 6: Expenditure of Prussian Cities, 1869-1913, Absolute and per head[1]

| | Expenditure, in M. | Expenditure per head, in M. | % Increase per head | Average annual increase (on base year), per head |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1869 | 100.50 | 13.00 | | |
| 1876 | 176.80 | 20.10 | 54.62 | 7.80 |
| 1883/1884 | 212.70 | 21.93 | 9.10 | 1.30 |
| 1891/1892 | 314.90 | 26.27 | 19.79 | 2.47 |
| 1895/1896 | 394.80 | 30.47 | 15.99 | 4.00 |
| 1899/1900 | 553.00 | 38.22 | 25.43 | 6.36 |
| 1907 | 907.70 | 51.26 | 34.12 | 4.26 |
| 1913 | 1328.10 | 65.67 | 28.11 | 4.69 |

Table 6 shows the increase in overall spending of all Prussian cities between 1869 and 1913. It shows that the boom years until the mid-1870s were followed by a period of fiscal consolidation. Not only was the average spending increase minimal, but a comparison with Table 5 shows also that during this period, income from taxation grew marginally faster than expenditure. As for Prussia's large municipal cities with a population over 100,000, Table 7 shows even a reduction in total spending over the period up until 1883.[2] According to Table 6, municipal expenditure then started to increase on average per head, and it is, indeed, true that the largest boom in municipal spending took place in the interval immediately following the establishment of Miquel's local finance reforms between the years 1895 and 1900. Hence, Miquel's laws did have an effect on local public spending, even though the increase in those years was quite exceptional, and after 1900 the increase in local spending was less, though still more than 4% per annum.

In order to locate the precise effect of Miquel's reforms on local spending, however, it is useful to look at the detailed breakdown of local public spending in Table 7 and the corresponding Diagram 1. It shows municipal spending by area, as since the early writings of Wagner it has been generally recognised that it was in the big cities where financial problems were the worst, and thus any effect of Miquel's reforms would be most visible here. Indeed, it is evident that in many cities public spending per head was at times more than double than the national average as shown in Table 6. It is unfortunate that there are no data for the interval

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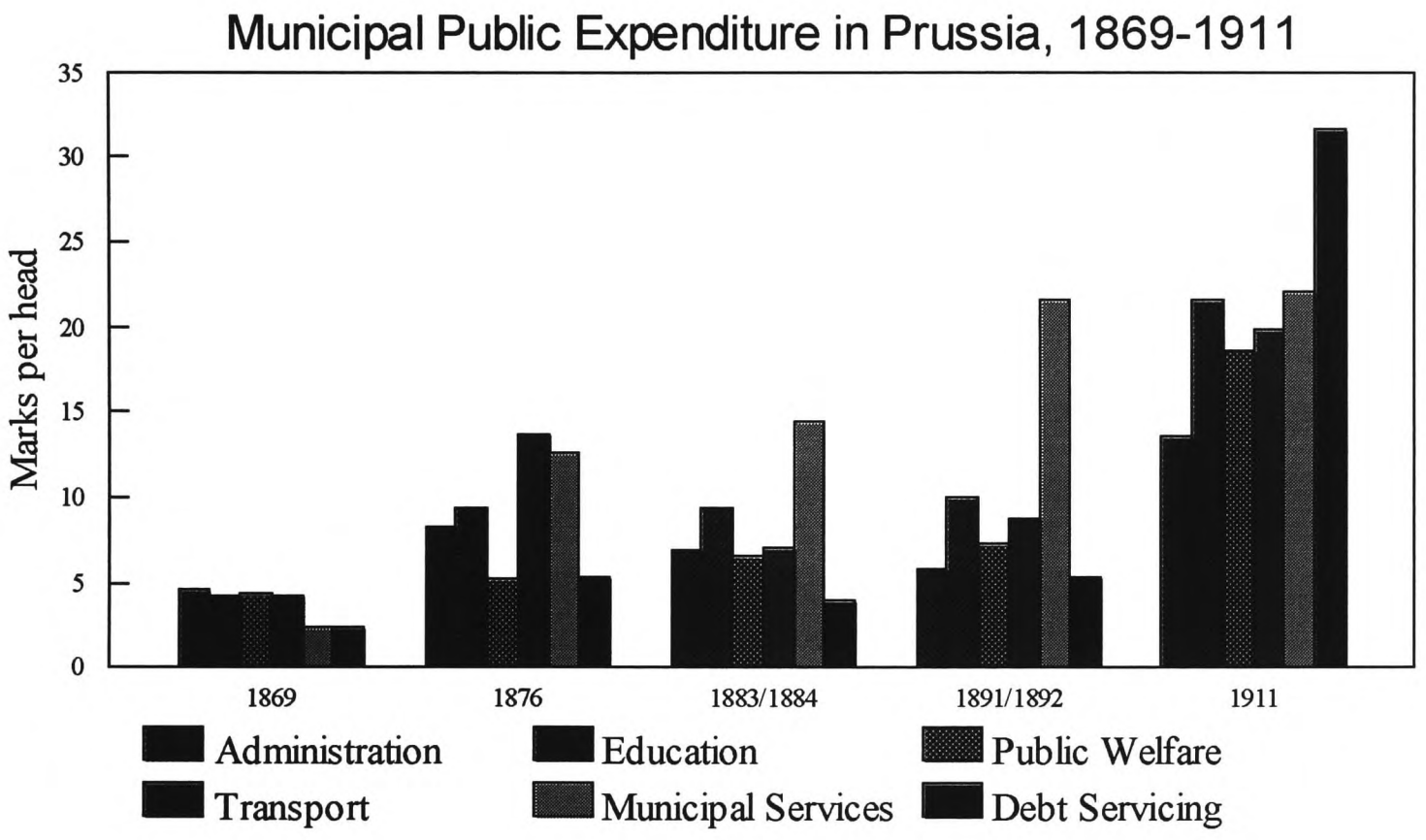
1 Bolenz, 'Wachstum', p. 55.

2 Table 7 has been taken from Köster, Entwicklung, p. 185.

Table 7: Municipal expenditure in cities with a population of over 100,000, by item of expenditure (in Marks per head) in Prussia, 1869-1911

| no. of cities | year | Administration | Education | Public Welfare | Transport | mun. enterprise | debt servicing | total spending |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 1869 | 4.62 | 4.18 | 4.36 | 4.27 | 2.35 | 2.35 | 22.13 |
| 6 | 1876 | 8.30 | 9.32 | 5.14 | 13.68 | 12.54 | 5.32 | 54.30 |
| 7 | 1883/1884 | 6.88 | 9.37 | 6.54 | 7.08 | 14.45 | 4.00 | 48.32 |
| 16 | 1891/1892 | 5.83 | 10.02 | 7.23 | 8.74 | 21.50 | 5.25 | 58.57 |
| 13 | 1911 | 13.51 | 21.52 | 18.65 | 19.82 | 22.08 | 31.66 | 127.24 |

Diagram 1:




1891/1892-1911, but following the general trend evident from Table 6 it is safe to assume that a disproportionate increase in municipal spending took place after the coming into effect of the local tax reform in 1895.

Two important facts emerge from this analysis. First, per capita spending on municipal services increased most during the affluent years of the period of the foundation of the Empire,

the Gründerzeit. It increased only slightly during the next two decades as the large cities were anxious to reduce the burden of their debt. This was followed by another substantial increase in spending on municipal services until 1891/92. However, even though in the following period spending on this item remained high, there was virtually no increase in expenditure for the next twenty years. Taking into account the enormous increase in municipal spending during the period from 1891 to 1911, the share of municipal spending on the cities' own assets halved from 36.7% in 1891 to 17.4% in 1911. This is not to diminish in any way the significance of municipal enterprises for local government,[1] which has attracted the attention of contemporaries and historians alike. It is merely to point out that this wave of municipalisations started in the mid-1880s, before Miquel's reforms.[2]

It is, therefore, not the case that Miquel's tax reforms led to an increase in municipal business through the ability to raise more charges and fees, because of the two items of expenditure which were affected by these revenues, expenditure on municipal services remained more or less stagnant, and the share of spending on transport showed only a 1% increase in the twenty years before 1911.

The second striking feature of Table 7 and its corresponding Diagram is the extraordinary rise of municipal public debt in the two decades before 1911. Having been held more or less constant in the years 1869 to 1891, and remaining less than 9% of total spending in the years 1883 to 1891, municipal expenditure on debt servicing rose by 600% over the next 20 years, to become the single biggest item of municipal expenditure at 24.9% of the total. This change can be explained by the fact that before 1891, most of the spending on municipal services could be financed through current income. During the last decades before the Great War,

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1 It is quite possible that this is simply the result of separate budgets being introduced for municipal enterprises around the turn of the century, and that, as will be described below, the city of Frankfurt may not have been the only city where most of the spending on municipal enterprises was no longer accounted for by general budget expenditure.

2 Thus, for the municipalisation of gas, the last 15 years of municipalisation have been described as the 'second phase of municipalisation'. Bunckhorst, Kommunalisierung, pp. 222-5.

however, municipal expenditure on other areas increased so much that all of current income was used up to finance these, so that most of the spending on municipal businesses was now financed through debt. This was encouraged by the reluctance of the state to approve of any municipal debt that was taken to finance recurrent, 'ordinary' (ordentlich) expenditures, such as on schools or roads, and by the ease with which debts for 'extraordinary' (außerordentlich) projects such as municipalisation or particular municipal building projects were approved.[1]

As a result, municipal debt increased to almost unimaginable proportions. In 1913, 50 Prussian cities with a population over 50,000 inhabitants were faced with a total debt of 3,066 billion M..[2] In 1905, debts of over 300M. per head were not uncommon in large Prussian municipalities.[3] Yet this debt should not be overdramatised, neither in theory nor in practice, because it was perfectly reasonable to have improvements in municipal services or items such as school buildings paid for not just by current taxpayers, but by future generations which would also benefit from these institutions.[4] And in practice, Prussian adminstrators were not too worried about municipal debt as long as the municipalities were backed up by sufficient assets.[5]

Yet, it is also possible to say that, since spending on municipal services remained more or less constant over the period, this means that the large increase in debt-servicing, and the correspondingly large increase in municipal debt, were effectively necessary to pay for the increases in the other areas of municipal spending. Put more poignantly, while providing some badly-needed income for local governments immediately after its introduction, the 1893 local

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1 Krabbe, Die deutsche Stadt, pp. 163-4. Whereas in England, for example, it took an Act of Parliament for a municipality to take up debts, in Prussia taking up debt was merely subject to approval by the next higher level of administration, in the case of the cities the Bezirksausschuß. This was subject to guidelines from the interior ministry. These concerned mainly the nature of debts that could be incurred, as well as the period over which the debt had to be reserviced. Debt could be taken up, subject to approval by the authorities, for anything that was in the interest of the common weal, a stipulation that was interpreted increasingly liberally. Kaufmann, Kommunalfinanzen, ii. 477-80.

2 Krabbe, Die deutsche Stadt, p. 164.

3 Wolfgang R. Krabbe, Kommunalpolitik und Industrialisierung. Die Entfaltung der städtischen Leistungsverwaltung im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert (Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln/Mainz, 1985), p. 361.

4 On the current theory of municipal debt, see Kaufmann, Kommunalfinanzen, ii. 437-48.

5 Krabbe, Die deutsche Stadt, pp. 163-5.

tax reform failed to provide the means or the necessary mechanisms for local government to cope with the fast rising demands and strains on local government resources, and thus taking up debt remained the only alternative. Again, it is important to keep a regional perspective of this problem. For the amount of debt, large as it undoubtedly was, was never really a problem for well-off cities like Frankfurt, Bonn or Cologne, where there would always be sufficient assets to balance the debt. But it was a tremendous problem for some of the poorer new industrial cities and the smaller cities, where propertied wealth had little presence, which found it almost impossible to finance even the spiralling ordinary spending on roads, education, etc. through current income, without taking up debt.[1]

It remains to be explained what caused the significant increase in municipal spending that occurred. From 1876 to 1891, municipal spending increased by an overall 108%, yet in the following two decades, public spending on administration, education, public welfare and transport each increased by over 200%. One general explanation which covered all of these areas in some way or another was that the state tried to shift some of its administrative burdens onto the locality. The state had often used the rivalry between local governments, for example, to move out to cities prestigious government offices which would raise the municipal profile while shifting a significant part of the cost to these municipal governments - often, the highest bidder won.[2] Another general trend which affected all areas of municipal government was that towards 'scientific' municipal government. This is evident, for example, in the mushrooming of various city congresses (Städtetage) on a regional, provincial, state and even

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[1] See, for example, the report of the Lord Mayor of the Upper Silesian Town of Gleiwitz, Menzel, 'Die Überbürdung der oberschlesischen Industriestädte mit Schullasten', Städte-Zeitung, 10.11.1905, No. 3, pp. 59-62, continued in Städte-Zeitung, 24.11.1905, No. 4, pp. 91-3, Städte-Zeitung, 8.12.1905, No. 5, pp. 117-8.

[2] There are several examples of this with regard to Frankfurt alone. See, for example, Frankfurt's successful bid for the Oberlandesgericht and the positive impact the Prussian authorities judged this to have on the population of the city. Maly, Macht, p. 171. HStAW 405 n. 1071 fos. 208-10. Zeitungsbericht, 11.3.1879. For Germany in general, see W. H. Dawson, Municipal Life and Government in Germany (London, 1914), pp. 358-9.

national level, and in the publication of municipal journals such as the Städte-Zeitung, which had the aim of promoting good, scientific and enlightened city government.[1] One of the most obvious examples of this trend is the rise of town planning as a 'science'. If the first stages of urbanisation occurred largely uncontrolled and in an ad hoc manner, municipal expansion became increasingly trammelled, first by the need to improve hygenic standards, and then by a whole catalogue of considerations including technology, aesthetics, hygiene, social policy and economics. In addition to this, town planning was supposed to represent and underline the cultural spirit (Selbstverständnis) of the city.[2]

More specifically with regard to individual areas of expenditure, the rise in educational expenses can be explained by new demands made upon local government to improve the education system (for example the introduction of technical schools) without providing adequate means to pay for the changes. Also, as a rare measure to further equity between local communities and large cities, the 1897 education act, for example, introduced the principle that all communities which employed more than 25 teachers were wealthy enough to pay for them without state grants.[3] But there were other, less tangible reasons. For Frankfurt, these will be discussed in the following chapters, but in general these included insights into the importance of sanitary provisions ('space, light and air') for new school buildings which increased their cost, better pay for teachers as local authorities competed with the state, and with each other, for the best teachers, and efforts to reduce class size and make schooling generally more effective through the provision of school meals, for example.

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1 O. Ziebill, Geschichte des Deutschen Städtetages. Fünfzig Jahre deutsche Kommunalpolitik (Stuttgart, 1955), pp. 10-37, esp. p. 35. A good example of the growing 'science' in all areas of local government is a series of articles on gardening whose range includes a minute description of the type of trees recommended for various purposes as well as the type of fence suggested to protect public parks. Tapp, 'Städtische Gartenanlagen', Städte-Zeitung, 18.1.1907, No.8, pp. 192-4.

2 R. Baumeister, 'Grundsätze des Städtebaus', Städte-Zeitung, 18.1.1907, No. 8, pp. 189-92. Ladd, Urban Planning, chs. 3-4.This was, of course, an international phenomenon. C. E. Schorske, Fin-de-Siècle Vienna. Politics and Culture (New York, 1985). A. Sutcliffe (ed.), The Rise of Modern Urban Planning 1800-1914 (London, 1984).

3 Lücker, Entwicklung, p. 37.

The rising administrative cost of municipal government can be explained not only by the increase in the sphere of local goverment activities. It is also likely that this increase in administrative duties led to diseconomies of scale as the size of the burden of administration increasingly meant that it could only be carried out by professionals rather than by the voluntary work of the citizen. Also, whereas most municipal enterprises before 1890 were capital-intensive (such as gas- or waterworks), many enterprises that were municipalised after that date were rather more labour-intensive, such as tramways. As a result, there was a large increase in the number of municipal employees particularly from about 1890 onwards.[1]

The rise in public welfare spending after 1891 may be attributed to changing attitudes towards social policy, in particular an emphasis on preventive and scientific social work, as well as on 'proto-corporatist' social policy, directed at a malfunctioning labour market.[2] It was also an inevitable reaction to the process of urbanisation which posed unprecedented challenges to scientists and local politicians alike. After the pioneering efforts of some cities to create a healthy urban environment in as much as that was possible, other cities followed suit in an effort to improve not just overall physical but also moral health, as the two came to be seen as inextricably linked.[3] Finally, added burdens on local government under the amended Social Insurance Law show that here, too, local government was required to bear increasing general government responsibilities.[4]

Perhaps the most important determinant of the increase in municipal transport expenditure was the wave of incorporations (Eingemeindungen) which set in around 1900. In extending their city limits to the surrounding areas and communities large municipalities hoped to create space

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1 Mombert, Gemeindebetriebe, pp. 4-7. In general, see Dawson, Municipal Life, p. 359.

2 G. Steinmetz, Regulating the Social. The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany (Princeton, 1993), pp. 188-214.

3 J. Reulecke, 'Von der "Hygienisierung" der Unterschichten zur komunalen Gesundheitspolitik', in J. Reulecke and A. Gräfin zu Castell Rüdenhausen (eds.), Stadt und Gesundheit. Zum Wandel von 'Volksgesundheit' und kommunaler Gesundheitspolitik im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert, (Stuttgart, 1991), pp. 11-14.

4 Dawson, Municipal Life, p. 359.

for better and cheaper housing, away from the congested city centres. The problem with this was that the new villages or areas that were incorporated were often without adequate road or drainage systems, all of which now had to be financed by the municipal government after the takeover.[1] Also, these measures could only relieve the municipal housing market if the city spent considerable sums on creating sufficient and cheap transport facilities through road building and the extension of tramway lines.

None of the increases in these areas of municipal expenditure appear to be related, or in any way connected, to Miquel's finance reforms. Yet even the above cursory survey of the reasons for the growth of municipal spending on transport, education and public welfare shows that a crucial factor in this increase was a new awareness of the means required to alleviate current social (and ultimately political) problems caused by urbanisation and industrialisation, and of the importance of the city in this endeavour. As has been shown, the role of local self-government in mediating between a changing society and the state had always been at the core of liberal ideals, but never before had there been this awareness of the pioneering role of local government in addressing current social questions, and hence in its overall importance in the German system of government.

This increased municipal self-confidence was reflected at various levels. In the academic debate, the left-liberal student of Gierke, Hugo Preuß, started to challenge Gneist's accepted wisdom that self-government was part of the hierarchical state by arguing that both local government and the state were parts of an unbroken ascending chain of human communities, so that local self-government, rather than the state or the monarchy, became the foundation of the body politic.[2] At a different level, Prussian cities increasingly became political actors in

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1 J. Reulecke, Geschichte der Urbanisierung in Deutschland (Frankfurt, 1985), pp. 78-86. Rebentisch, 'Industrialisierung', pp. 90-113, esp. 104-6.

2 See, for example, H. Preuß, Staat, Recht und Freiheit. Aus 40 Jahren Deutscher Politik und Geschichte (Tübingen, 1926), pp. 25-102.

their own right. In 1896 the Prussian Städtetag (city congress) was formed.[1] And, during the controversy surrounding the 1891/92 school bill, the Prussian ministry for education was inundated with petitions from ostensibly non-political local governments and their representatives. Some observers thought that this increased municipal self-consciousness, translated into rivalry between the different municipalities, was directly responsible for some of the tremendous increases in municipal spending before the First World War.[2]

Therefore, it is undeniable that the 1893 tax reforms failed to provide local self-government with adequate means to raise sufficient income in order to meet spiralling local expenditure during the last two decades before the Great War. Yet since debts were seen as a perfectly legitimate way of financing certain activities of local government, the debt crisis was, although existent, not quite as dramatic as it may first appear. More important than this was the failure of Miquel's reform to take any account of the extraordinary variety of cities that were affected by his general reforms. There could be little self-government in communities where income was so low that expenditure on education alone took two-thirds of total ordinary expenditure.[3] For most of the larger Prussian cities, however, Miquel's reforms, which were the practical manifsestation of the liberal ideal of self-government and the confirmation of the distinct role of local self-government in the Prussian governmental structure, confirmed and emphasized the growing sense of self-importance felt by Prussian municipalities. Whereas there was a certain stimulus to expenditure through a number of concrete changes in local taxation, the most significant impact of Miquel's tax reforms on local finance was more intangible, in that it furthered the cities' awareness of the worth of self-government. Because Miquel's reforms had introduced the important principle that local government was primarily responsible for the welfare of the local community, local government began to take a long-term view that it should invest for that purpose. That Miquel's reforms did strengthen municipal

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1 Ziebill, Geschichte des Deutschen Städtetages, pp. 20 ff..
2 Lücker, Entwicklung, p. 35.
3 Ibid., p. 38.

self-government successfully is demonstrated by the emergence of some formidable threats to the ideal of local self-government by 1914, which were the result of this very success. On the one hand, it has been pointed out that municipal government was so effective in raising revenue and in administration itself that the states found it increasingly expedient to shift some of their financial and administrative burdens onto the cities. Yet this happened at the same time that municipal financial autonomy was being challenged for the first time by the imperial state, as was the case with the Empire's appropriation of indirect taxation on consumption from 1910. In a similar vein, the Empire tried to appropriate the unearned increment tax in 1911, just after the cities had pioneered this new tax with great success.[1] In that case, the Empire was not quite so successful in her endeavour,[2] but both instances demonstrate that in the last years before the Great War municipal government appeared as though it could become the victim of its own success, through increasing financial and administrative burdens and diminishing means of raising revenue. Miquel's tax reforms, therefore, were a precondition for the ensuing 'golden age of municipal life',[3] as they were a product of, and a main influence on, changing attitudes about the role of self-government in public life which became evident with the increase in spending on municipal businesses since the mid-1880s.

The following chapter will seek to put the liberals' theory of local government outlined above, and the assumptions that lay behind Miquel's local finance reforms, into context by looking at liberal policies of local finance in Frankfurt am Main. It will discuss the Frankfurt liberals' assumptions about their city's evolving budget whose scale was increasing in Frankfurt just as vastly as in other big cities. This will show whether the liberals in the city were willing to put substance to their ideals, especially those in social welfare which were bound to be costly, and whether they were willing to find the money for them. A study of liberal attitudes, especially

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1 Dawson, Municipal Life, pp. 397-9. On the problems of Imperial finance in general, see P.-C. Witt, Die Finanzpolitik des Deutschen Reiches von 1903 bis 1913. Eine Studie zur Innenpolitik des Wilhelminischen Deutschland (Lübeck/Hamburg, 1970).

2 Dawson, Municipal Life, p. 399-400, n. 1.

3 Krabbe, Die deutsche Stadt, p. 165.

at the grass roots, towards municipal finance will further illuminate current liberal attitudes concerning the importance of the city in the German administrative structure, and the extent to which liberals hoped to achieve their policies in local government in practice.

# CHAPTER FIVE: LIBERAL FINANCIAL POLICIES IN FRANKFURT AM MAIN

## 5.1. Introduction

Having explored the attitudes of liberal academics and politicians active at the state or national level towards municipal finance, this chapter seeks to analyse how these assumptions of liberals 'at the top' translated into grass-roots liberal perceptions of the increasing size and the changing function of municipal finance. Naturally, in this case-study of liberal attitudes towards municipal finance in Frankfurt, allowances have to be made for the fact that Frankfurt was Germany's richest city with a strong civic tradition as a result of its former independence and wealth. As a result, it would be misguided to try to investigate the hardships caused by Miquel's finance reform. New industrial cities like Solingen or Barmen would be much better suited for an investigation of this kind. Moreover, the citizens of the former Imperial City of Frankfurt were more used to the idea of the city being the focal point of the common weal, so that it was likely that the change in attitude about the role of municipal government manifested in the budget was going to be less pronounced than in newer industrial cities in the Ruhr basin or elsewhere. Yet the fact that Frankfurt was Prussia's wealthiest city also had advantages. For Frankfurt's wealth meant that perhaps in no other city were the opportunities for realising the goals of municipal self-government as great as here. If one contemporary argument against a particular item of municipal expenditure did not stick here in contrast to other communities, it was the excuse of having no money. In other words, if the liberals in charge of local government in Frankfurt were relatively unconstrained in their decisions about expenditure, it should be particularly fruitful to look at their assumptions about municipal finance. It is on this aspect that this chapter will concentrate through an analysis of the growth of municipal expenditure and the corresponding increase in local income through municipal debt and taxation.

## 5.2. Municipal Expenditure[1]

An evaluation of Frankfurt liberal attitudes towards municipal finance must begin with a brief examination of the actual development of Frankfurt municipal expenditure during this period. Table 8, which is illustrated by Graph 1, shows the growth of general budget expenditure from

Table 8:

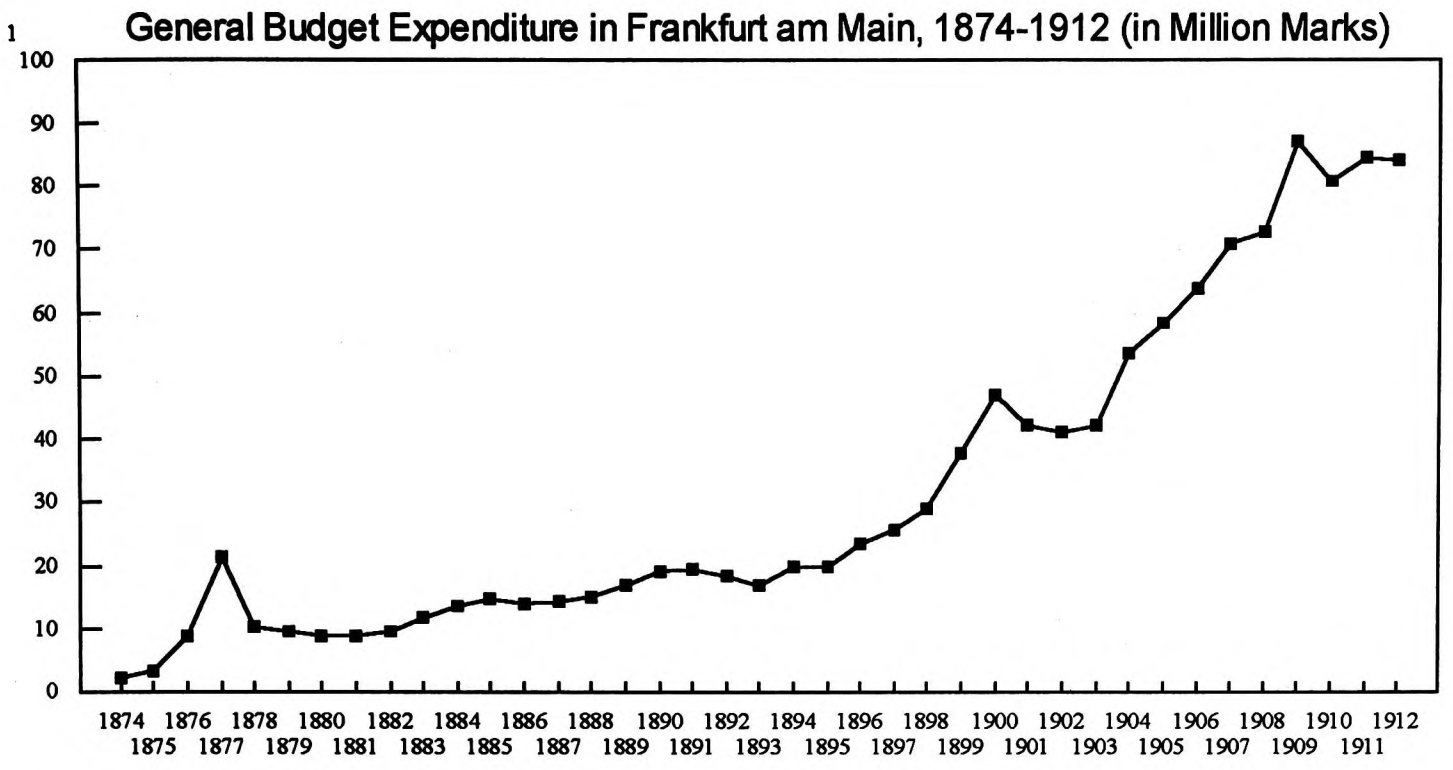
General Public Expenditure in Frankfurt am Main, 1874-1912 (in Marks)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1874 | 2,132,073 | 1894 | 19,921,988 |
| 1875 | 3,448,016 | 1895 | 20,012,264 |
| 1876 | 9,005,974 | 1896 | 23,628,865 |
| 1877 | 21,481,195 | 1897 | 25,579,738 |
| 1878 | 10,180,773 | 1898 | 29,026,743 |
| 1879 | 9,751,943 | 1899 | 37,964,204 |
| 1880 | 8,939,979 | 1900 | 47,068,341 |
| 1881 | 8,853,591 | 1901 | 42,267,235 |
| 1882 | 9,662,445 | 1902 | 41,323,465 |
| 1883 | 11,915,595 | 1903 | 42,286,448 |
| 1884 | 13,622,739 | 1904 | 53,597,155 |
| 1885 | 14,664,721 | 1905 | 58,468,089 |
| 1886 | 14,173,161 | 1906 | 63,923,020 |
| 1887 | 14,303,701 | 1907 | 70,845,172 |
| 1888 | 15,033,689 | 1908 | 72,885,562 |
| 1889 | 17,117,564 | 1909 | 87,229,571 |
| 1890 | 19,116,464 | 1910 | 80,871,728 |
| 1891 | 19,423,187 | 1911 | 84,590,046 |
| 1892 | 18,363,703 | 1912 | 83,999,170 |
| 1893 | 16,939,446 | | |

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[1] Throughout the Chapter, figures and graphs represent nominal values both in order to enable a comparison with the general statistical data for municipal finances given above, and because the precise amount of inflation during the period is not yet clear. Furthermore, whereas for the actual effects of expenditure, income and debt, the figures given have to be discounted by the rate of inflation, in any five-year average prices were never below 75% and never above 106% of 1913 prices. Indeed, over the entire period from 1871 to 1913 inflation was minimal, if it existed at all. Whereas there does appear to be a period of modest inflation from about 1896-1913, inflation during that period averaged at about 1% per year which does little to change the overall growth pattern of municipal expenditure in Frankfurt as evidenced in Table 8. (From 1896 to 1912, nominal municipal expenditure in Frankfurt rose by an average of over 22% per year.) Finally, available statistics on inflation or deflation have been compiled on a national basis, whereas a completely accurate compilation of real values of expenditure, income and debt would have to take into account price changes in Frankfurt alone. For a summary of various analyses of price changes in Germany during the period, see F. B. Tipton, Jr., Regional Variations in the Economic Development of Germany during the Nineteenth Century (Middletown/Conn., 1976), pp. 41-2, 82-3. For a comparative set of data, see B. R.

Graph 1:




1874 to 1912.[1] The figures show that Frankfurt municipal expenditure rose in bursts similar to municipal budgets elsewhere. In the initial boom until about 1876, expenditure rose by over 400% in the three years of 1874 to 1876 alone. Subsequently, more careful budgeting to recover from this initial burst of activity, as well as Miquel's prudence after 1880, led to relatively moderate increases of a little over 200% in budget expenditure in the next 20 years. 1895 formed a watershed in Frankfurt fiscal policy too, because the following years witnessed an extraordinary rise in municipal expenditure, which more than quadrupled in the years 1895

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Mitchell, European Historical Statistics, 1750-1975 (2nd. edn., London, 1981), pp. 779-80. For the most recent analysis of German inflation during the Empire, and especially from the 1890s, see N. C. Ferguson, Paper and Iron. Hamburg Business and German Politics in the Era of Inflation, 1897-1927 (Cambridge, 1995), esp. pp. 20-27.

[1] The figures are the sums of ordinary (recurrent) and extraordinary (one-off) budget expenditures in Marks and include expenditure in the Reste-Verwaltung which consisted of unspent funds from the previous year. (On account of the latter, the figures given here slightly differ from figures for total expenditure 1894-1906 given in Table 9.)

The 'blip' in 1877 is a mistake of accounting, for it includes a loan of 16 million Marks, whereas usually loans were recorded through annual repayments of debts and interest charges.

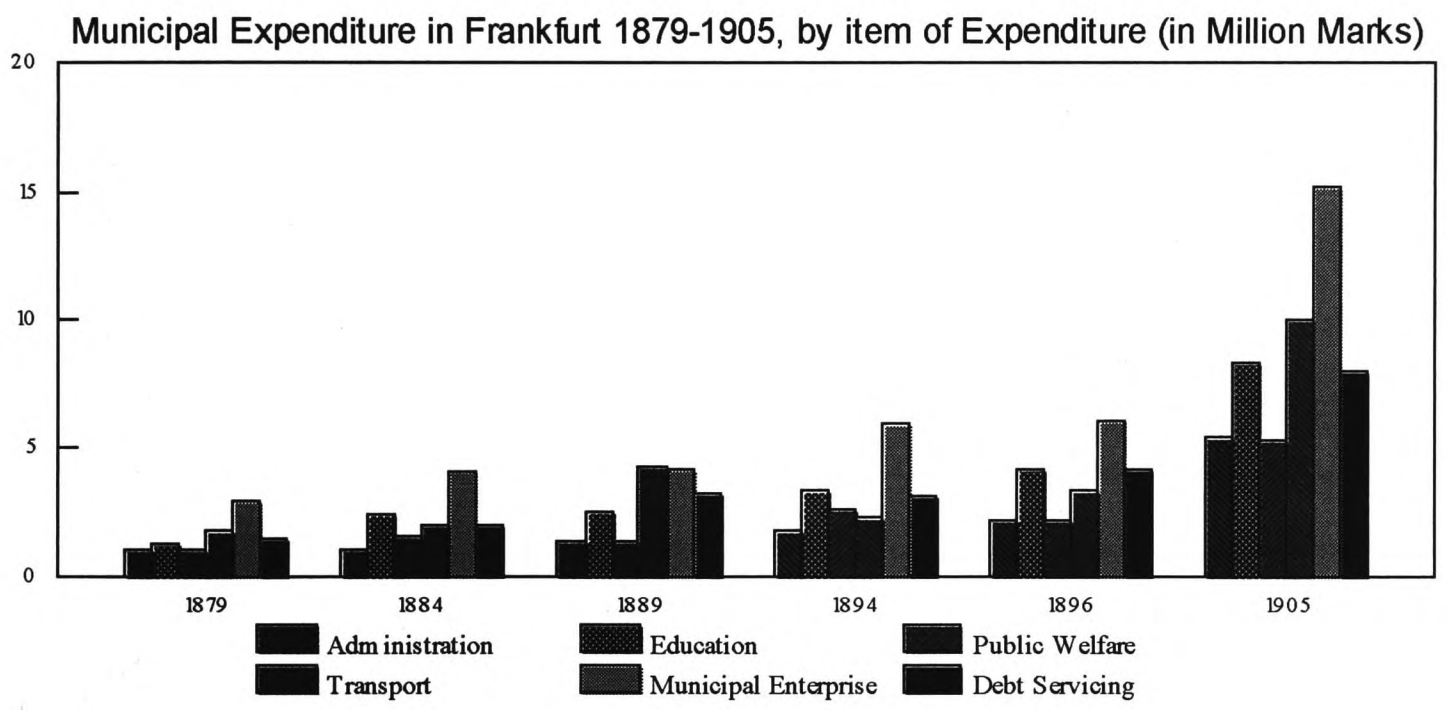
It is important to note that the years denote financial, rather than actual, years. Until 1876, the financial year ended on 31 December, whereas from 1877 the financial year carried on from April to March (the financial year of 1877 consisted of fifteen months). Unless indicated otherwise, this and the following tables have been compiled from the annual administrative reports of the Magistrat to the city council. See MAB 1874-1912.

## Table 9:

Municipal Expenditure in Frankfurt 1879-1905, by item of Expenditure (in Marks)

| | Administration | Education | Public Welfare | Transport | Municipal Enterprise | Debt Servicing | Ecclesiastical Affairs | Other | Total Expenditure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1879 | 1,045,507 | 1,223,388 | 1,023,362 | 1,796,805 | 2,894,745 | 1,422,258 | 344,155 | 1,723 | 9,751,943 |
| 1884 | 1,011,492 | 2,384,269 | 1,562,775 | 1,989,549 | 4,035,847 | 1,970,516 | 99,747 | 91,544 | 13,145,739 |
| 1889 | 1,347,794 | 2,490,039 | 1,378,118 | 4,239,848 | 4,159,892 | 3,215,826 | 129,985 | 156,062 | 17,117,564 |
| 1894 | 1,777,739 | 3,338,836 | 2,663,737 | 2,319,792 | 5,946,766 | 3,160,022 | 309,745 | 41,031 | 19,557,668 |
| 1896 | 2,186,796 | 4,226,867 | 2,170,305 | 3,386,880 | 6,017,020 | 4,206,219 | 104,543 | 325,831 | 22,624,461 |
| 1905 | 5,451,115 | 8,383,929 | 5,288,808 | 10,078,482 | 15,193,021 | 8,061,599 | 100,443 | 4,283,419 | 56,840,816 |

## Diagram 2:




to 1911. As a result, by 1910 the size of Frankfurt's ordinary expenditure surpassed that of no less than 18 states.[1]

In consideration of the amount spent on various broad categories, a comparison between Table 9 and Table 7 shows that Frankfurt differed from the aggregate of Prussian cities in its relatively high spending on municipal services from as early as the 1870s.[2] Already in that

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1 See the speech by L. Heilbrunn, Frankfurter Zeitung, 10.11.1910 (3. Morgenblatt).

2 The summary of individual spending items into several broad categories essentially involves certain subjective criteria which are not always unambiguous. For example, expenditure on the sewage and drainage systems is linked to road improvements as well as improvements in public health. Nonetheless, the city's eagerness to expand the systems is primarily connected with its ultimate financial rewards (see chapter seven), therefore it has been accounted for under 'Municipal Enterprise'. As a result, there should be extreme caution

decade it was one of the few cities to invest heavily in expensive drainage and sewage systems, and throughout the period the city spent large sums on the purchase of property. What is significant about Table 9 is, in short, the constantly high investment of the city in municipal services, and the relatively steep rise of expenditure on transport and education over the period.

Correspondingly, expenditure on the servicing of the municipal debt was relatively high during the early years to finance many of these municipal services such as the sewage and drainage systems, whereas it was relatively low in 1905. The main reason for the low figure in 1905 is that, from 1898 onwards, most of the income and expenditure on municipal services was administered in a separate budget, true to the principle that, ideally, current income from municipal services should exceed and provide for all related current expenditure and debt-servicing on this item.

The existence of an entirely separate budget for municipal services already shows that the ordinary budget itself is by no means a complete indicator of municipal financial activity, as from 1897/98 the method of accounting for municipal financial transactions grew increasingly complex.[1] The general budget consisted mainly of two parts, the ordinary budget (Ordinarium) and the extraordinary budget (Extraordinarium). Whereas the former included all regular items of income and expenditure such as spending on schools, salaries, debt-servicing, etc., the latter was composed of those items which were non-recurrent such as particular buildings, parks and transactions regarding municipal property. This distiction had practical consequences, as it was generally held that all current expenditure on regular items in the ordinary budget should be covered by the city's own income, and that it could only raise

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when comparing the ratios between the items of expenditure in Table 9 with those for Prussian cities in general in Table 7.

The figures for total expenditure differ slightly from those in Table 8, because they do not include expenditure in the Reste-Verwaltung. In 1889 the figure for debt-servicing is unusually high because it includes a one-off payment for debt servicing that year. MAB 1879/80, pp. 6-12. MAB 1884/85, pp. 16-32. MAB 1889/90, pp. 22-53. MAB 1894/95, pp. 22-56. MAB 1896/97, pp. 30-68. MAB 1905, pp. 4-34.

[1] MAB 1897/8, pp. 32-3. Also Maly, Macht, p. 357.

debts for expenditure in the extraordinary budget.[1] From 1897, a supplementary budget (Neben-Verwaltung) was separated from the general budget, which again consisted of largely two components. The first denoted direct income and expenditure on municipal services (again divided into ordinary and extraordinary transactions), whereas the second (Nebenkassen und Fonds der Nebenverwaltung) describes funds which provided the capital stock for the foundation and improvement of municipal enterprises and other major capital outlays such as schools and roads (here, the single biggest budgetary item, the fund for debts, accounted for over 60% of expenditure and income). Finally, a third separate account existed for the movement of public capital (e.g. transfers of capital with the municipal bank or money transfers between the various municipal offices) and interest-yielding assets.[2] This was the 'extrabudgetary account' (außeretatsmäßige Rechnung/Stammrechnung), which formed the large bulk of what has been summarised in Table 10[3] as 'other financial transactions'.[4]

Table 10 and the corresponding Diagram 3 show the complete growth in municipal transactions from 1899 to 1912. They demonstrate just how much local financial activity extended beyond general budget transactions. The growth of municipal budget activity, which is impressive enough when considering the general budget alone, rises quite dramatically after 1895 in complexity and size. Nonetheless it is important to recognise that these figures belong to two quite different categories. Whereas expenditure on the general budget and on municipal services was actual, expenditure on supplementary funds and other financial

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[1] It is against this background that the amount of debt-servicing in Table 9 has to be evaluated. For even though expenditure on the servicing of the municipal debt and corresponding interest payments never exceeded 15% of the total general budget, they fluctuated between 20% and 25% of all regular budget expenditure which had to be financed through taxes and other means of income.

[2] Originally in 1897, it also included Nebenkassen und Fonds der Nebenverwaltung, but soon this was accounted for as supplementary budget expenditure. Compare MAB 1897/8, pp. 110-11 to MAB 1899, pp. 106-9.

[3] The figures are for the financial year, from 1 April to the March 31 of the following year. MAB 1899, pp. 106-7. MAB 1903, p. 177. MAB 1905, p.163. MAB 1908, p.73. MAB 1911, p.74. MAB 1912, p.78.

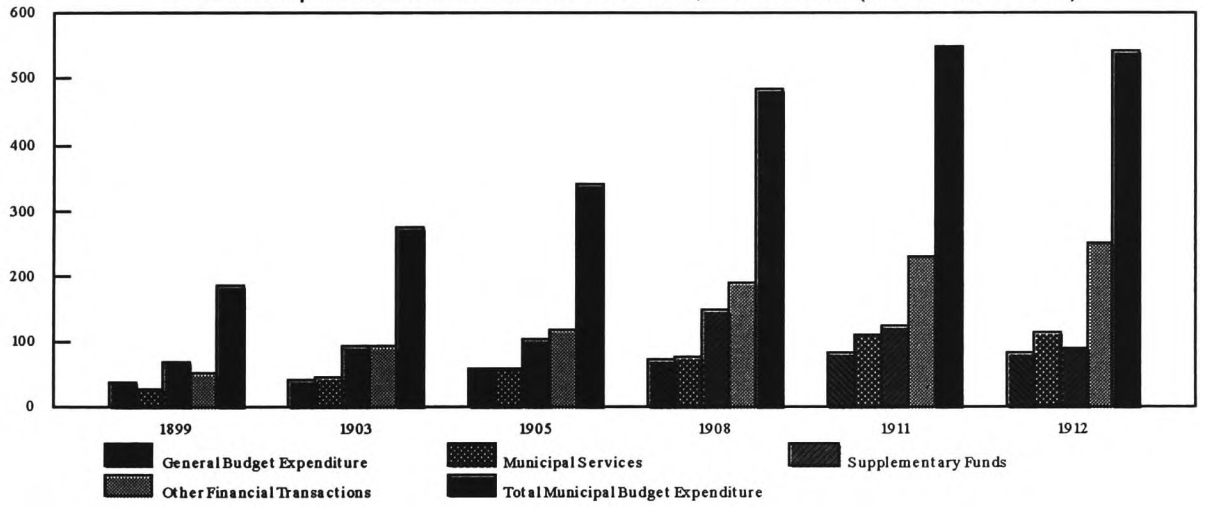
[4] The other, albeit relatively insignificant, item of expenditure consisted of transactions to private welfare foundations.

Table 10:

Public Expenditure in Frankfurt am Main, 1899-1912 (in Marks)

| | General Budget Expenditure | Supplementary Budget Expenditure | | Other Financial Transactions | Total Municipal Budget Expenditure |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | a) Municipal Services | b) Supplementary Funds | | |
| 1899 | 37,964,204 | 27,574,874 | 68,187,675 | 53,396,830 | 187,123,583 |
| 1903 | 42,286,448 | 44,236,384 | 94,539,496 | 93,384,395 | 274,446,723 |
| 1905 | 58,468,089 | 58,696,994 | 105,363,593 | 117,691,809 | 340,220,485 |
| 1908 | 72,885,562 | 74,973,328 | 148,109,544 | 188,248,256 | 484,216,690 |
| 1911 | 84,590,046 | 111,331,917 | 124,104,973 | 230,441,383 | 550,468,319 |
| 1912 | 83,999,170 | 113,990,229 | 91,583,003 | 252,454,354 | 542,026,756 |

Diagram 3:




transactions recorded money transfers between different funds and departments and included such items as debts and direct taxes which were collected for the state.

Naturally, the general budget remains of greatest importance, since it included all municipal income resulting from taxation and the expenditure relating to it, so it is this budget which was of overriding concern to policy-makers and the public alike. But for a fair assessment of the actual development of municipal expenditure, without capital transfers or funds, expenditure

on the general budget, as well as on municipal services once these were listed separately, has to be added. Table 11 and Graph 2 show the actual municipal expenditure and demonstrate the extraordinary rise in municipal activity after 1895.[1] After an average increase by 977,127 M. per annum during the years 1874 to 1896, municipal expenditure increased by an average of 10.9 million M. per annum in the period 1896 to 1912. The increase was strongest during the years 1896 to 1900 and 1904 to 1909, when municipal spending increased by an annual average of 15,032,989 M. and 12,550,014 M. respectively.

This brief survey of Frankfurt municipal expenditure speaks for itself in at least one respect, that municipal finance grew extremely complex from the 1890s onwards. It is also obvious that municipal expenditure, regardless of its type, rose to extraordinarily high levels from the 1890s and particularly during the 1900s until about 1909. From 1910 to 1912 the growth slowed down considerably, although it is not possible to say whether municipal expenditure would not have picked up again but for the war.

hat is most surprising in a study of minutes of council debates or political rallies is the lack f political debate whenever the issue of spending was discussed. It would appear to be reasonable to expect the various liberal parties to fight over each item of expenditure: after all, municipal spending was the most effective way of realising the parties' various political goals, such as education reform or social justice. Also, governments which hand out money are usually more popular than governments which are seen to take money away, so that it would seem likely that the parties tried to seize in the best possible way the opportunity of appearing to be the responsible driving force behind particular items of municipal expenditure. Naturally, there were certain basic political decisions to be made, such as the construction of a drainage and sewage system or the priority that should be given to the building of schools.

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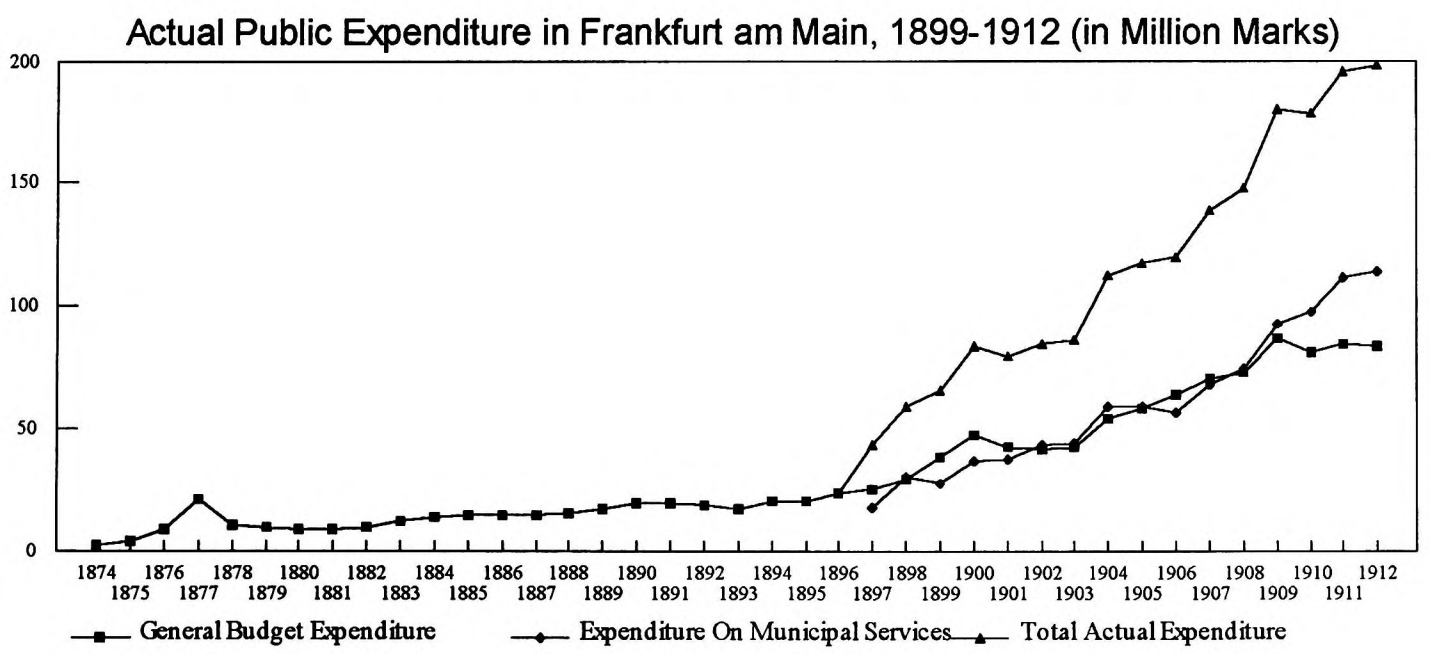
[1] The figures for general budget expenditure are taken from Table 8, and those for municipal expenditure on municipal services have been compiled from the relevant data in MAB 1897/98-1912.

Table 11:

Actual Public Expenditure in Frankfurt am Main, 1895-1912 (in Marks)

| | general budget expenditure | expenditure on municipal services | total actual expenditure |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1895 | 20,012,264 | | 20,012,264 |
| 1896 | 23,628,865 | | 23,628,865 |
| 1897 | 25,579,738 | 17,837,834 | 43,417,572 |
| 1898 | 29,026,743 | 30,201,854 | 59,228,597 |
| 1899 | 37,964,204 | 27,574,874 | 65,539,078 |
| 1900 | 47,068,341 | 36,692,480 | 83,760,821 |
| 1901 | 42,267,235 | 37,457,460 | 79,724,695 |
| 1902 | 41,323,465 | 42,942,771 | 84,266,236 |
| 1903 | 42,286,448 | 44,236,384 | 86,522,832 |
| 1904 | 53,597,155 | 58,918,344 | 112,515,499 |
| 1905 | 58,468,089 | 58,696,994 | 117,165,083 |
| 1906 | 63,923,020 | 56,338,168 | 120,261,188 |
| 1907 | 70,845,172 | 67,817,311 | 138,662,483 |
| 1908 | 72,885,562 | 74,973,328 | 147,858,890 |
| 1909 | 87,229,571 | 92,675,680 | 179,905,251 |
| 1910 | 80,871,728 | 97,772,583 | 178,644,311 |
| 1911 | 84,590,046 | 111,331,917 | 195,921,963 |
| 1912 | 83,999,170 | 113,990,229 | 197,989,399 |

Graph 2:



Yet once these parameters on spending had been set, for most of the period no party had a comprehensive political agenda for municipal spending. It would be impossible to consider Diagram 2, for example, in a party-political light, as for the most part liberal politics was not responsible for the composition and the amount of municipal spending.

One important reason why these issues remained largely outside the political debate is that with regard to spending, the Magistrat was in a much stronger position than the city council. For even though every item of expenditure had to be sanctioned by the council, it was only the members of the Magistrat, who were charged with the day-to-day running of the administration, who were really in the know about the necessary expenditure for each item. It was in control of daily expenditure and had to consult the city council only when actual spending diverged significantly from planned expenditure. It was up to the Magistrat, in consultation with the council, to determine fees and prices for municipal services, and to determine conditions of pay and employment with the growing number of municipal employees.[1] Most councillors, by contrast, were rather ill-qualified to judge the necessity of measures such as individual street improvements and so on. In Frankfurt, the city of finance and trade, this problem was certainly less pronounced than elsewhere, as members of the social élite continued to be recruited into the council until 1914 and beyond.[2] Nonetheless, the council's finance commission, which had the task of scrutinising the Magistrat's suggestions for each budget, frequently complained at not having enough information, or that the budget became too complicated for any amateur to follow.[3]

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1 H. Luppe, 'Der städtische Haushaltsplan 1912/13', in Frankfurter Zeitung, January 1912. The article is in BAK NL 44 n. 19 fo. 1.

2 This is in marked contrast to other cities. See, for example, Croon, 'Stadtvertretungen', p. 304. Croon, 'Vordringen', p. 38. Reulecke, Geschichte, pp. 135-6.

3 See the urgings of the finance commission for more transparency in the budget reports drawn up by the Magistrat, e.g. MPS, 1877, §189, p. 158. MPS, 1894, § 166, pp. 95-6, MPS, 1900, §282, p. 136, §1273, p. 556. In 1902, the budget proposals had a volume of no less than 848 pages. MPS, 1903, §282, p. 129. This was a general problem faced to a greater or lesser extent by all cities. Luppe, 'Der städtische Haushaltsplan 1912/13', BAK NL 44 n. 19 fo. 1.

The other reason why politics seemed to play such a minor role when it came to municipal expenditure lies in the nature of the expenditure itself. In the area of administration, municipal expenditure only aroused the interest of the electorate in particular circumstances, for example when a local official had embezzled funds or when a local councillor was awarded municipal contracts.[1] Yet apart from these instances, it appears that during the election campaigns the liberals were not often required to defend themselves against Mittelstand attacks on the issue of general municipal expenditure on administration.

Given the importance of the issue of education to Frankfurt liberals, it is not really surprising that there was plenty of controversy about expenditure on schools, and particularly about teachers' pay. Indeed, of all municipal employees, the teachers were the most numerous, the best-organised and the most vociferous group. They took an active part in the initial diversification of municipal politics in 1882, as they formed a teachers' committee which should oversee the election of their 'teacher's candidate'. The nominee, Harnischfeger, was convinced that even if his candidature was not successful this time, his nomination would mean that at least in future the municipal council would have to take note of the teachers' plight.[2] Even though on this occasion Harnischfeger was endorsed also by the National Liberals, it was usually the Democrats and the Progressives who competed for the support of municipal teachers, and especially of primary school teachers.[3] In contrast to any other occupational group, and in opposition to the usual liberal municipal version of the liberal 'Volk' rhetoric which addressed Frankfurters in general or at least a particular class, these two liberal parties directly targeted the teaching profession by advertising themselves as the true

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1 These issues have been discussed below in chapter three.

2 Frankfurter Zeitung, 21.11.1882 (Morgenblatt).

3 Unfortunately, the Democrats did not state occupation in their membership lists so that it is difficult to compare the proportion of teachers in liberal party membership. Progressive and National Liberal parties had a similar proportion of teachers among their members (7-8%), the crucial difference being that a majority of National Liberal teachers were better-paid teachers such as Oberlehrer, secondary school teachers and headmasters, whereas with one exception Progressive Liberal teachers universally came from the lower ranks of the profession. The membership lists for 1893 are in HStAW 407 n. 160 fos. 415-25 (National Liberal Association) and HStAW 407 n. 150[1] fos. 466-77 (Progressive Liberal Association).

champions of the teachers' interests.[1] At the same time, these debates reveal more about the way in which liberals conducted politics and their realism in appreciating the potential benefits of the allegiance of such a large pool of voters, than about the liberals' financial considerations, even though these were sometimes invoked as an argument.

The brunt of expenditure on public welfare was spent on necessities such as poor relief and the municipal hospital. More interesting items from a political point of view such as the Gewerbegericht (a tribunal for the arbitration of trades disputes) or the Arbeitsnachweisstelle (labour exchange) made up only a tiny fraction of overall spending on welfare.[2] And in their hostility towards parish pump politics, most liberals found it hard to consider the issue of street pavements or street clearances in a political light. Of course, there were individual contentious issues to be dealt with, such as the building of a bridge over the Main which turned into a battle of principle between Magistrat and city council,[3] but these were not principled political debates over the amount of spending to be devoted to each project as such. The one item of expenditure which was subject to considerable political controversy was municipal services. Throughout, liberals across party lines agreed that municipal services were justified if they were beneficial to the local economy. As has been pointed out in chapter one, this was notably the case with the decision to go ahead with the establishment of the local drainage system in 1867, but this argument was also the main driving force behind all other larger municipal projects, such as the building of a disastrously expensive theatre, or the lavish rebuilding of the burnt-out cathedral.[4] These decisions were by no means uncontentious and

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1 It appears that the Progressive Liberals were more successful than the Democrats at courting the teachers' vote. The inadequacy of municipal teachers' pay was a frequent topic in the meetings of the Progressive Liberal Association, and there are indications that their meetings were disproportionally well attended by teachers. HStAW 407 n. 150² fos. 3 (Progressive Association meeting, 9.1.1895), 37-8 (Progressive Association meeting, 15.11.1895), 99 (Progressive Association meeting, 22.11.1895), 222 (Progressive Association meeting, 3.2.1902). For an example of the Democrats trying to outdo the Progressives in their fight for the teachers' vote, see the letter to the editor in Kleine Presse, 19.11.1892.

2 In 1896, for example, both cost the city about 25,500 M., which was just over 1% of the city's total welfare expenditure that year. MAB 1896/97, p. 51.

3 Maly, Macht, pp. 85-7.

4 MPS, 1867/68, §331, pp. 293-302. MPS, 1869, §486, p. 550.

sparked off considerable grass-roots opposition, usually among left-liberals. Yet ultimately, the Democratic leadership, and particularly the Democratic councillors, were in favour of these projects, and it was they, after all, who were in control of Democratic municipal policy.[1] Much more contentious than municipal services of this kind was expenditure on municipal enterprises, that is the municipalisation of businesses with the express primary motive of making profits for the city treasury. Of these businesses, the municipal provision of water was obviously the least contentious, because it was quite obviously a sanitary measure.[2] By contrast, Frankfurt was one of the few German cities where the provision of gas was still in private hands by 1914,[3] even though the Democrats wanted to municipalise gas throughout the Empire. If this was not achieved, it was certainly not because of Democratic half-heartedness or lack of effort. To convince the Magistrat to municipalise gas in 1869, the Democrats even started a campaign for potential customers to sign up for their custom of municipal gas in advance, in order to prove to the Magistrat that municipalisation carried minimal financial risk.[4] Yet at that time the idea seemed too novel and risky to the Magistrat which, after all, had just commissioned the building of the extensive drainage system two years earlier, whereas in 1883, when the issue was again under debate, the plans did not agree with Miquel's ideas of strict financial discipline.[5] It is only in the 1890s that the attitude of the Magistrat changed as more and more other enterprises were municipalised. But by then, it was too late. The city did build a municipal gas works for some of its newly-incorporated suburbs after

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1 See, for example, HStAW 407 n. 138[1] fos. 44-6. Democratic Association meeting, 10.3.1879. HStAW 407 n. 138[1] fos. 48-51. Democratic Association meeting, 17.3.1879.

2 It is interesting to note that in marked contrast to England, German cities never saw anything wrong in making profits from the sale of water. Even though they saw it as a basic utility, lower costs did not lead to reductions in the price of water, but rather to increased profits. Mombert, Gemeindebetriebe, pp. 24-31.

3 By 1914, of cities over 100,000 population, 80.5% possessed municipal gas works. Krabbe, Die deutsche Stadt, p. 121.

4 On the Democratic campaign, see Frankfurter Journal 14.1.1870, 19.1.1870, 25.1.1870, 27.2.1870, 17.4.1870.

5 On the intermittent tug-of-war between the Democrats and the Magistrat over the issue, see Wolf, Liberalismus, pp. 37-8, Maly. Macht, pp. 47-8, 194-5. Even though as mayor of Osnabruck Miquel had actively promoted municipal ownership of enterprises, the Gründerkrach had sharpened Miquel's awareness of the financial risks involved in municipalisation. Lembke, Johannes von Miquel, p. 47.

1900, but the fact that the Frankfurt Gas Company's concession to supply gas did not run out until 1959 meant that any municipalisation would involve an extortionate mark-up for the company's shareholders. Along with other cities in similar situations,[1] the city decided that this would be an irresponsible squandering of public funds and concentrated instead on the improvement of the existing contract.[2]

During the 1890s, the city's Democrats, and an increasing number of Progressive Liberals, started to make their case for the municipalisation of enterprises more successfully. The issue that brought about a change was the municipalisation of electricity in Frankfurt. The fact that electricity was municipalised so successfully was due overwhelmingly to the Herculean efforts of Leopold Sonnemann, who led private campaigns to promote the issue from the late 1880s and who, when he saw that he was getting nowhere, organised an international electricity fair which took place in 1891. The purpose of this exhibition was to establish, once and for all, which form of electrical transmission was preferable, direct or alternating current. It was at this fair that the superiority of the alternating current was established once and for all, which solved the problem not only for the Frankfurt city government, but for municipal authorities around the world.[3] Despite all these efforts, however, Sonnemann was only able to convince the Magistrat and some doubtful councillors by conceding that initially the plant would be operated through a private firm, the Swiss BBC. The plant started operation on 1 January 1895, but it was not fully under municipal control until 1 April 1899.[4] The following municipal acquisition came in the late 1890s, when there was general agreement to

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1 Swimming against the tide with regard to municipalisations, another pioneer in social reform, Strasbourg, took pride in the fact that, in a similar situation, it had avoided the waste of public funds on buying the local electricity works and achieved terms of contract with the private operator which had made this arrangement preferable to municipalisation. Dr. Leoni, 'Die Verbindung von Städten und Privatkapital für wirtschaftliche Unternehmungen', in Verhandlungen des Vierten Deutschen Städtetages (1914), pp. 46-56.

2 MAB 1909, pp. xix-xx.

3 On the history of the establishment of an electrical power station, see MPS, 1892, §656, pp. 291-308. See also Eine neue Zeit..!, esp. pp. 11-2, 18-20. See also Hermann Schaefer, '"New Industries" and the role of the State: The development of Electrical Power in South Germany from c.1880 to the 1920s', in W. R. Lee, German Industry and German Industrialisation. Essays in German Economic and Business History in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (London, 1991), pp. 200-19, esp. p. 203.

4 Geschichte der Frankfurter Zeitung, p. 760. Maly, Macht, pp. 287-90.

municipalise the local tramway system. Having refused to municipalise the system in 1890, the change of ownership followed directly from the municipal production of electricity, which could now be used to switch to an electrified tramway system. Compared to earlier battles, then, this municipalisation was relatively uncontentious, because it fitted directly Adickes' land policies and his ideas about how the pressure on inner city housing might be relieved. Even so, in principle Adickes believed that ultimately private corporations were more efficient and responsive to market needs than municipalised companies, which explains why private gas works continued to exist in the city during his mayorality. Therefore, even though in the city council the general support of Democrats, Social Democrats and most Progressive Liberals for municipal enterprises became overwhelming, there was an element of ambiguity in the liberal city government's approach to the issue as a result of Adickes' basic hostility to municipalisation.

It has been noted in chapter two that municipalisation was an integral part of the Democrat programme. To achieve their goal, they fought with determination and ingenuity. Yet despite this, the Magistrat had the upper hand most of the time in that the left-liberals never managed to insist on municipalisation against the intentions of the Magistrat. This confirms the latter's strong position with regard to expenditure. Through its technical know-how and its knowledge of financial details it was in a uniquely strong position which it could use very effectively as soon as there were disagreements with the city council. Hence, even in the few areas where party political concerns did exist, it was extremely difficult for city councillors to realise their own political agenda.

Municipal expenditure moved into the political debate only gradually, especially after 1900. One reason for this was the appearance of the SPD in the council, which did not leave many items of spending unchallenged, even though it usually did not get very far. Added to this was the rapidly increasing number of municipal employees, so that the battles about municipal

spending on pay became much more intense. After all, previously the battles for the sympathy of municipal employees had been confined to the teachers. Yet with the growth of other municipal employees in the administration of municipal services, the issue of working conditions for municipal employees became more important and complex. And after 1900 the SPD brought the issue of municipal employees constantly to the attention of the council, thus emphasising, to the chagrin of the liberals, their claim to represent the municipal workers.

Yet despite this relatively late surge in the political debate about municipal expenditure, by and large the city council accepted the yearly increases in budget spending as inevitable, and there was enough evidence to show it that this was true. In a speech to the Bürgerverein Ostend, the Progressive Liberal Geiger pointed out that every increase in the population by 10,000 automatically led to an increase in municipal spending by one million marks per year (through the provision of extra schooling, etc.) without a corresponding increase in income tax revenue.[1] And it is true that each year the highest increases in ordinary budget expenditure went on schools, followed by items such as road building and debt-servicing.[2] Therefore, with the exception of municipalisation of enterprises liberals in Frankfurt never had a clear political agenda on municipal expenditure, which was both the result and the cause of the Magistrat's strong position in determining the size and the composition of municipal expenditure. Although liberal political awareness about spending on social matters changed somewhat after 1900, liberals in Frankfurt had few political qualms about the extraordinarily rapid growth of

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[1] Frankfurter Zeitung, 22.11.1904 (3. Morgenblatt). In 1906, to justify the tax increases Ladenburg pointed out in an election rally that in the five years before 1904, the population had increased by 16%, whereas taxes had risen only by 5%. The figures are incorrect, but nevertheless in the period 1900 to 1904, population increased by 11% while taxation increased by just over 5%. During the same period, expenditure increased by 12%. Frankfurter Zeitung, 16.11.1906 (Drittes Morgenblatt).

[2] In 1900, for example, the highest increase in expenditure in the ordinary budget was on schools (434,000 M.), followed by road building (136,000 M) and debt servicing (102,700 M.). MPS, 1900, §1273, pp. 556-7. In 1905, expenditure on schools witnessed the highest increase again (Mk. 180,000), while road building and street improvements necessitated an increase of 111,000 M.. MPS, 1905, §29, p. 13. In fact, there has always been a correlation between population growth and municipal expenditure. However, contrary to the assumptions of contemporaries and historians alike, Jürgen Bolenz has shown that the correlation between average income of the population and municipal expenditure was even closer. Bolenz, 'Wachstum', pp. 215-25.

municipal expenditure from the 1890s, or the overall composition of that expenditure. Rather, it was accepted as an inevitable corollary of good municipal government.

## 5.3. Municipal Debt

The developments in municipal expenditure outlined above raise the question of how the increases in municipal spending were financed. A large part of municipal spending was, of course, matched by corresponding income, such as fees for the drainage and sewage systems, income from municipal property, and so on. To fund the difference between income and expenditure, there were two sources of finance, debt and taxation. Table 12 charts the development of the municipal debt from 1873, when all debts were remnants of pre-Prussian times, to 1913. These figures are illustrated in Graph 3. In Table 12, the increasing value of municipal assets has also been added from when they became published,[1] and the difference between assets and debts results in the figures for net municipal wealth. This is described in Graph 4.

Even a brief glance at the increase in municipal debt in Graph 3 reveals that the increase in municipal spending described above was accompanied by an increase in municipal debt which was no less dramatic. Municipal debt increased by almost 50 million M. in the two decades from 1873 to 1894, and by roughly the same amount in the following six years until 1900. The truly dramatic increase, however, came between 1902 and 1911, when municipal debt rose by 190,274,545 M., or by an average of over 21 million M. per year. Whereas between 1872 and 1913 Prussian per capita public debt increased by about 450%, the per capita

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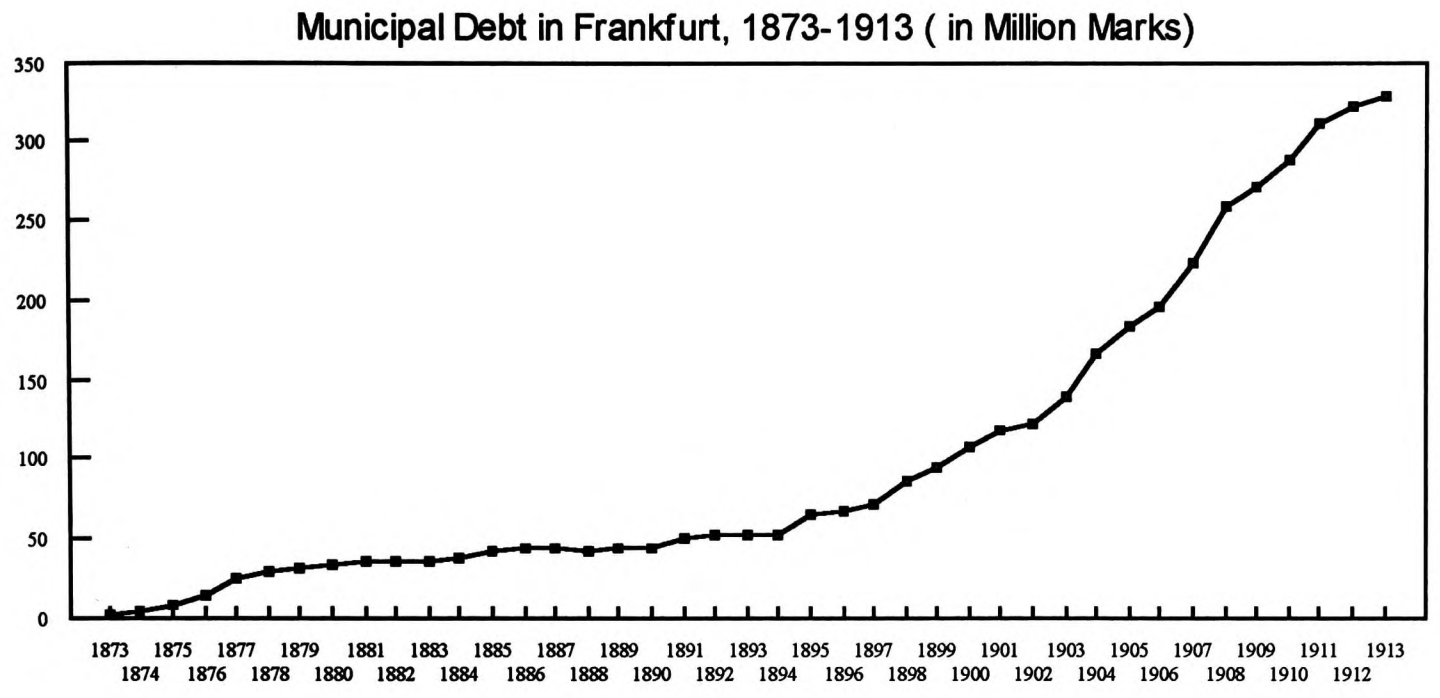
[1] Figures for municipal assets were only included in the printed reports of the Magistrat from 1890. The earliest figure for municipal assets in this period appears to be from 1882. However, the definition of what constituted municipal assets changed over the years, and was only conclusive once all municipal property was properly recorded and evaluated, from 1893. Figures before then should be treated as estimates rather than actuals. IfSG ASA 47 fo. 25 f.. MAB 1891/2, p. 16.

Table 12:

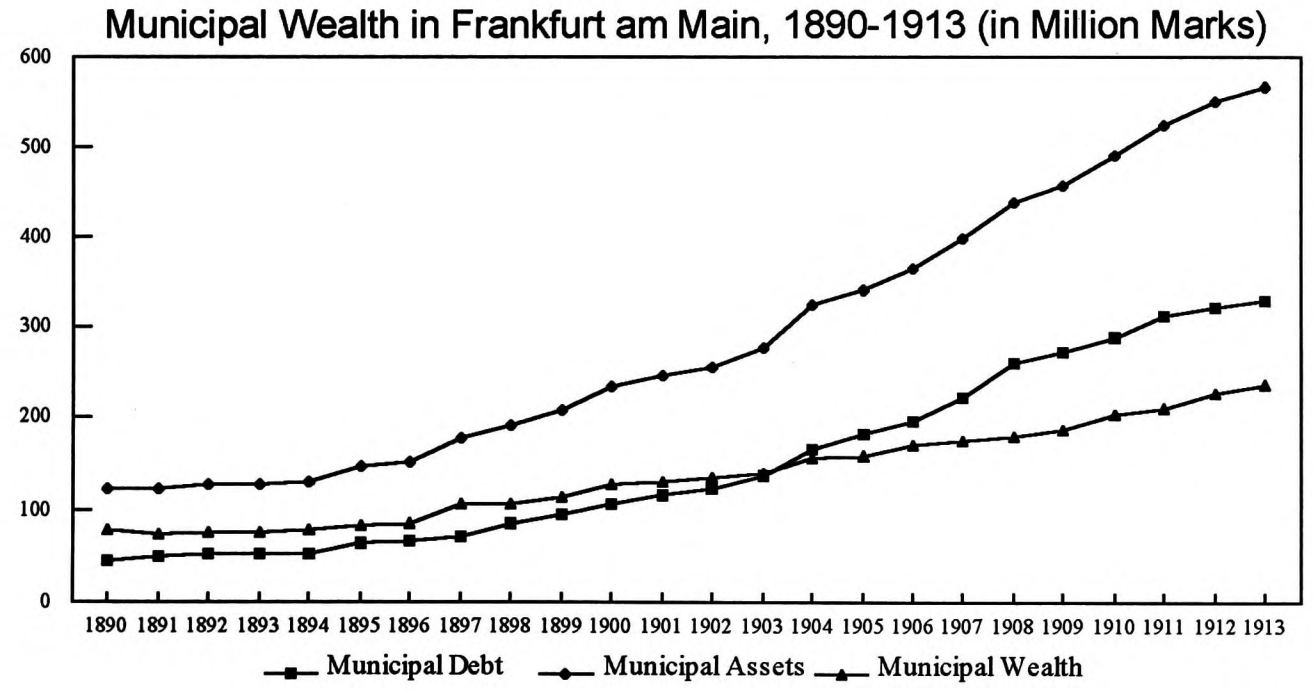
Municipal Debts and Assets in Frankfurt am Main, 1873-1914 (in Marks)

| | Total Debts | Total Assets | Municipal Wealth |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1873 | 2,114,228 | | |
| 1874 | 4,072,885 | | |
| 1875 | 6,570,485 | | |
| 1876 | 13,437,556 | | |
| 1877 | 24,213,746 | | |
| 1878 | 28,861,319 | | |
| 1879 | 30,344,742 | | |
| 1880 | 33,073,260 | | |
| 1881 | 33,840,908 | | |
| 1882 | 34,436,431 | 70,936,035 | |
| 1883 | 34,764,260 | | |
| 1884 | 37,285,488 | | |
| 1885 | 41,297,602 | | |
| 1886 | 43,043,602 | | |
| 1887 | 43,066,002 | | |
| 1888 | 41,928,316 | | |
| 1889 | 42,826,973 | | |
| 1890 | 43,407,869 | 121,958,632 | 78,550,763 |
| 1891 | 48,700,915 | 122,617,240 | 73,916,325 |
| 1892 | 51,997,920 | 126,579,527 | 74,581,607 |
| 1893 | 51,704,344 | 127,203,115 | 75,498,771 |
| 1894 | 51,802,961 | 130,291,481 | 78,488,519 |
| 1895 | 64,067,439 | 146,207,580 | 82,140,141 |
| 1896 | 65,552,279 | 150,464,961 | 84,912,681 |
| 1897 | 70,874,651 | 176,785,111 | 105,910,460 |
| 1898 | 84,947,672 | 191,542,130 | 106,594,458 |
| 1899 | 94,026,958 | 208,080,809 | 114,053,850 |
| 1900 | 106,918,667 | 233,564,971 | 126,646,304 |
| 1901 | 116,337,872 | 245,260,293 | 128,922,421 |
| 1902 | 122,155,131 | 256,024,115 | 133,868,983 |
| 1903 | 138,189,569 | 277,830,305 | 139,640,735 |
| 1904 | 166,326,297 | 323,019,054 | 156,692,756 |
| 1905 | 182,581,723 | 341,683,113 | 159,101,390 |
| 1906 | 196,329,683 | 365,479,646 | 169,149,963 |
| 1907 | 222,947,688 | 397,676,161 | 174,728,472 |
| 1908 | 259,214,027 | 438,232,193 | 179,018,165 |
| 1909 | 271,101,420 | 457,960,814 | 186,859,393 |
| 1910 | 288,023,051 | 490,954,292 | 202,931,240 |
| 1911 | 312,429,676 | 523,779,815 | 211,350,138 |
| 1912 | 322,247,186 | 548,474,046 | 226,226,860 |
| 1913 | 327,896,274 | 565,157,118 | 237,260,843 |

Graph 3:




Graph 4:




increase in Frankfurt municipal debt from 1873 to 1913 was nearer to 3,500%.[1] As a result, by 1910 Frankfurt liberals poited out with considerable municipal pride that there were only eight German states whose debts were higher than those of the city of Frankfurt.[2]

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For Prussian public debt, see Schremmer, 'Taxation and Public Finance', p. 454.
See L. Heilbronn's speech in Frankfurter Zeitung, 10.11.1910 (3. Morgenblatt).

It is precisely this increase in municipal debt in the years after 1895, and particularly from about 1900 onwards, which was so alarming to contemporary observers of Frankfurt municipal finance and of Prussian cities in general. However, as Frankfurt liberal policy-makers were quick to point out, debt could not be seen in isolation from municipal assets, for which the debt had been incurred in the first place. As Graph 4 illustrates, despite the phenomenal increase in debt, municipal wealth unburdened by debt increased steadily because of the increase in assets as well as debts. It is important to note that not all municipal assets were disposable, for the figure, though correct in a statistical sense, included, for example, schools and other public buildings. Frankfurt liberals must also have been concerned by the fact that debts grew faster than municipal assets, so that from 1904 onwards the value of Frankfurt's municipal debts was higher than that of its net municipal assets.

The amount of municipal debt in Frankfurt was hardly ever an election issue in Frankfurt because liberals of all parties agreed in their assessment of the significance of this debt. Their attitude was brilliantly summarised by the Frankfurt Stadtrat Woell in a speech on the role of credit in municipal budgets, delivered to the second German municipal conference in Munich in 1908.[1]

Woell distinguished between debts for three types of expenditure. Debts incurred for municipal enterprises which would provide the servicing of the debt out of their own income were unproblematic: indeed they were a sign of progressive local government. Debts incurred for other assets such as drainage, sewage and other provisions which would provide for their servicing through fees fell into the same category of economic advancement. Hence it was only debts incurred for regular, ordinary expenditure which were dependent on the tax base of each municipality. Here, Woell recommended the hoarding of investment funds for large,

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[1] Woell, 'Der Kreditbedarf im Haushalt der Städte', in Verhandlungen des Zweiten Deutschen Städtetages am 6. und 7. Juli 1908 zu München (Belrin, 1908), pp. 8-14.

regular expenditures such as the building of schools, roads, etc., to avoid having to make large interest payments. Debts should only be incurred for those expenditures which could not wait and which did not recur periodically. Woell concluded that, based on the meagre data that was available at the time, in German cities, about 75% of all debts that were incurred fell into the first two categories. Of the 25.25% that was spent for unproductive purposes, 23.25% was spent on administrative duties and schoolbuilding, items that were generally regarded as Staatsaufgaben, duties which local government undertook in lieu of the state. Hence, only 2% was spent on such luxuries as fire services, welfare and cultural services. Woell concluded:

> Die zunehmende städtische Kreditbenutzung ist danach nichts Tadelnswertes; sie stellt sich vielmehr als ein unentbehrliches bedeutsames Mittel des kommunalen Fortschritts dar.[1]

Woell's optimistic assessment was shared by Frankfurt liberals throughout most of the period under investigation. If anything, what is striking is the absence of any controversy in the municipal council when new debts were incurred.[2] And even at a time when the Magistrat tried to keep debts in check during the 1880s, there were many who doubted the wisdom of this, arguing that this led to a disproportionate burden on the present generation for benefits which would accrue to present and future generations. There was, after all, no need to panic about the municipal debt because of the enormous value of the assets which counterbalanced it.[3] Also, in Frankfurt, most of the municipal debt was serviced not by the taxpayer but by the municipal enterprises which had incurred these debts in the first place. Throughout the years of spiralling debt, municipal assets serviced around 70% of the municipal debt.[4]

This Frankfurt view of municipal debts as expressed by Woell is quite representative of other cities. At the 1908 municipal convention, the motions which summarised his ideas were

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1 'The increasing use of municipal credit is therefore nothing reprehensible. Rather, it is an indispensable, significant means of municipal progress.' Ibid., p. 14.

2 For 1875, when the first major debt was incurred, see the small note in Frankfurter Beobachter, 10.11.1875. See also the council minutes when debts of 27 million M. each were approved, MPS, 1900, §1096, pp. 484-5. MPS, 1900, §1223, pp. 538-40. MPS, 1903, §341, pp. 205-7.

3 See, for example, the discussion in the Democratic Association on the municipal budget of 1883 in HStAW 470 n. 138² fos. 150-3. Democratic Association meeting, 12.3.1883.

4 See, for example, the table in MAB 1905, p. 38, and MAB 1908, p. 76.

carried without much criticism from the representatives of other cities. At the following municipal congress in 1911, the Lord Mayor of Dessau, Ebeling, spoke again about the question of municipal debt in the light of the availability of further data. He confirmed that in Prussian cities of over 25,000 inhabitants, over half of all debts were raised for municipal enterprises. Also, municipal wealth had increased faster than municipal debt, and furthermore in recent years there had been a significant accumulation of assets through the establishment of municipal funds. Finally, it was pointed out that German municipal taxation per head was in line with that of other countries (as far as this could be compared given the differences in administrative structures between them), and that overall taxation was still much lower in Germany than in either England or France.[1] Ebeling confirmed Woell's assessment that the growth of municipal debt as such was justified, and that it was nothing wrong. What did cause controversy at these municipal conventions was rather the problem that the growth of municipal debt entailed, namely the increasing difficulty of obtaining cheap credit. For the growth of Imperial and state debts of similar magnitudes led to a scarcity of capital, and it was this lack of cheap credit, rather than the need or desire of municipalities to finance many of their activities through debts, which was of such concern to liberals in the cities.[2]

Liberals wholeheartedly supported the growth of municipal expenditure and the corresponding increase in municipal debt. In their assessment of their own cities' financial situation liberals in Frankfurt, as well as in many other cities represented at the Städtetag saw the growth in

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[1] Ebeling, 'Bericht des Vorstandes über die Prüfung der Kreditverhältnisse der Deutschen Städte (auf Beschluß der Hauptversammlung in München 1908), in Verhandlungen des Dritten Deutschen Städtetages am 11. und 12. September 1911 zu Posen (Berlin, 1911), pp. 7-15, esp. pp. 8-10. According to Ebeling, total German debt in 1907 accounted for 407 M. per head, of which 66 M. was incurred by the Empire, 220 M. by the various states and 121 M. by local government. (The low figure for local government is due to the inclusion not just of municipal government, but also of local government in the countryside in this average figure.) By contrast, in France public debt was at 718 M. per head, and in England 557 M.. Ibid., p. 8.

[2] In 1914, of 29 billion M. of public debts, 7.5 billion M. were incurred by the municipalities, 16.3 billion M. by the individual states and 5 billion M. by the Empire. Reulecke, Geschichte, p. 111. Inevitably, this shortage of capital led to an increase in the cost of borrowing. The problem was compounded by the fact that municipal bonds (Obligationen), through which some 80% of debt was raised, had to be sold at a higher price than state or imperial bonds, since the latter were considered to be a more secure investment by the market. Mitzlaff, 'Die Formen und Wege zur Befriedigung des Kreditbedarfs der Städte', in Verhandlungen des Zweiten Deutschen Städtetages (1908), pp. 14-23, esp. pp. 18-9.

municipal financial activity as nothing extraordinary. In this, they were quite aware that they were not always in agreement with contemporary observers. Woell noted, for example, that the view put forward by Frankfurt liberals and agreed to by the Städtetag about the desirability of funds differed from many academic treatments including Richard von Kaufmann's and Walter Klose's recent studies of municipal finance. For while the latter maintained that the accumulation of funds imposed financial obligations on the present generation for the benefit of future generations, Woell and others maintained that the laws of Leistung und Gegenleistung, of return on investment, did not apply. It was a citizen's duty to provide all he could for the common welfare of his community.[1]

On the whole, liberals in the cities were quite right in congratulating themselves on good financial management, as they increased their net wealth which enabled them not only to provide for the duties imposed upon them as a tier of the German administrative structure, for example the provision of schooling, but also to become more independent and self-conscious centres of local self-government. This link between financial expansion and self-government was only too clear to the representatives of the Städtetag. Indeed, echoing Woell's remarks, the Mayor of Munich, Borscht, pointed out in his opening speech to the congress that the size of the current municipal debt of a total of 4 bn. M. was nothing negative:

> sondern ein sicheres Kennzeichen emporsteigender Entwicklung, nicht ein Beweis finanzieller Mißwirtschaft, sondern im Gegenteil der Ausdruck seltener Opferfreudigkeit ist. In einer Zeit, in der fast überall der Ruf nach Entlastung ertönt und einzelne Staaten kein Bedenken tragen, für die Erfüllung ihrer eigenen Obliegenheiten die Mitwirkung der Städte in Anspruch zu nehmen, erscheint es wohl veranlaßt, hervorzuheben, daß gerade die deutschen Städte ohne Unterschied das Maß ihrer Verpflichtungen niemals einzuschränken versuchten.[2]

To liberals in the cities, therefore, the expansion of municipal financial activity was the essence of self-government, and in this they agreed with liberal theory. Indeed, this explains why, in

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1 Woell, 'Kreditbedarf', pp. 11-2.

2 '...but is a clear sign of increasing development, not a proof of financial mismanagement, but, on the contrary, a sign of rare willingness to make sacrifices. At a time when there are calls for support almost everywhere and individual states have no scruples about using the co-operation of the cities to fulfil their own obligations, it seems appropriate to point out that it was precisely the German cities that were unanimous in never trying to reduce their own obligations.'. Verhandlungen des Zweiten Deutschen Städtetages (1908), p. 7.

the case of Frankfurt as in the case of the debates in the municipal conferences, there was so little difference in opinion between left-liberal and right-liberal, or even civic leaders of other parties, on the growth of municipal expenditure. For liberals and other municipal leaders at the grass roots shared the liberal-conservative consensus on the value of local government, to which ideas about municipal finance were inextricably linked, in high-political debates as well as in the cities themselves. This could not have been put more succinctly by the Mayor of Munich in his speech to the 1911 municipal congress, in which he justified the enormous municipal debt:

> Vergegenwärtigt man sich, .... welch eine ungeheure Förderung und Mehrung die höchsten kulturellen Güter des deutschen Volkes gerade durch die Opferwilligkeit und den Weitblick des deutschen Bürgertums erfahren haben, ....dann begreift man aber auch, wie wohlberechtigt der Wunsch dieser städtischen Gemeinswesen ist, von der Staatsgewalt so gewürdigt und behandelt zu werden, wie sie es als mächtige und uneigennützige Träger der öffentlichen Wohlfahrtspflege, als Grundpfeiler staatlicher Ordnung verdienen.[1]

## 5.4. Municipal Taxation

If Frankfurt liberals were in broad agreement about financial policy with regard to municipal expenditure and municipal debt, this was not the case with regard to taxation. On 16 November 1884, Sonnemann delivered a speech to the Frankfurt Democratic Association to mark the fifteenth anniversary of its foundation in which he gave a critical assessment of the party's history and its future prospects. In his speech he considered it necessary to deal not only with high politics, but also with the party's involvement in local politics. For, according to Sonnemann (as recorded by the police inspector present at the meeting):

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1 'If one recalls that it is precisely due to the generosity and far-sightedness of the German bourgeoisie that the most valuable cultural assets of the German people have benefitted from such tremendous promotion and enrichment, then we also realise the justification of the desire of these municipal corporations to be appreciated and treated as they deserve to be, as powerful and selfless bearers of the public, social welfare system, as pillars of the state.'. Ibid., p. 7.

> Wer reformieren wolle, müsse zunächst in seinem eigenen Hause beginnen. Der democratische Verein dürfe mit Befriedigung auf seine 15 jährige Wirksamkeit zurückblicken. Es sei dies namentlich in Bezug auf das Steuerwesen der Fall, welches hier wie in keiner anderen preußischen oder deutschen Stadt geregelt sei. Grade jetzt werde von Berlin gesucht, unsere Steuereinrichtungen nachzuahmen. Redner erläutert näher das hiesige Steuersystem und kommt zu dem Schluß, daß die ganze Steuerlast nur auf einer kleinen Zahl von Schultern der Reichen ruhe.[1]

This quotation not only illustrates the close links that the Democrats perceived between local, state and national politics. More importantly in this context, Sonnemann singled out the establishment of Frankfurt's system of local taxation as the most important Democratic achievement in local politics. The crucial significance of the issue of taxation for the self-understanding of Frankfurt's left-liberals has already been noted in chapter two, when it was shown that just after the annexation, hostility to the imposed indirect tax on meat and flour (Schlacht- und Mahlsteuer) served as one of the first rallying cries of a forming left-liberal opposition. This was all the more effective since opposition to this Prussian tax served as a reminder that the tax burden had doubled as a result of the annexation.[2] Taxation was an issue over which Democrats had come to define themselves, but it was also regarded as one of their biggest vote-winners.[3]

On the whole, there were two basic tenets to the Democrats' views on taxation. The first was that taxation should be according to the principle of ability to pay, so that those with lower incomes should pay less. The second was that local taxation was the enabler of effective local self-government, hence local fiscal autonomy should be guarded as much as possible. Interestingly, of these two principles, the former appears to have been considered more

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1 'Whoever wants reform should start in his own backyard. The Democratic Association may look back on its activities over the past fifteen years with satisfaction. This is true namely for the local tax system, which is unlike that of any other city in Prussia or Germany. Just now Berlin is seeking to imitate our tax system. The speaker illustrates further the local system of taxation and comes to the conclusion that the entire burden of taxation rests only upon the shoulders of a small number of wealthy individuals.' HStAW 407 n. 138[3] fo. 80. Democratic Association meeting, 16.9.1884.

2 Kropat, Frankfurt, pp. 63-4.

3 See also, for example, the Democratic petition against the threat of new taxes in the North German Confederation in Frankfurter Zeitung, 27.5.1869 (2. Blatt), and HStAW 407 n. 138[1] fos. 9-13, when a public petition to the Prussian Diet in early 1879 concerning current discussions about changes in the local tax system was used quite obviously as a publicity drive by the party to recruit new members. Democratic Association meeting, 28.1.1879.

important than the latter. In their attempt to have the tax on meat and flour abolished, the democratic veterans of 1848, Hadermann and Wolschendorff, noted that one of the evils of the tax was that it had been simply imposed upon the city by the Prussian state, without any prior consultation. But the emphasis in this question had to lie in a just distribution of the tax burden and in the subsequent relief of the poorer classes of the population. Given this priority it even had to be accepted that the Prussian state would benefit from the proposed substitution of the purely local tax by the Prussian class tax.[1]

Hadermann and Wolschendorff failed to bring about the abolition of the hated meat and flour tax in 1868, and the Frankfurt Democrats, who were still in the minority in the city council, had to wait for the abolition of the tax by the Prussian state in 1873, due to take effect from 1 January 1875. In 1874 the city council's finance commission debated the adjustments that would have to be made in response to the abolition of the meat and flour tax. Whereas the majority published its report recommending further indirect taxes (such as a special local tax on meat), Sonnemann wrote a minority report of his own. In it he proposed the abolition of all indirect taxation and an increase in the local tax supplement on the class and income tax. Furthermore, this local tax supplement was to be reduced for people on middle and lower incomes.[2] This was one of Sonnemann's finest hours in local politics. With his report, he had caught his fellow councillors (though perhaps not his political friends) completely unawares, and after a heated discussion Sonnemann's motion was carried.[3] Henceforth, the conviction that all taxes including local income tax supplements ought to include a progressive element became generally accepted in Frankfurt municipal politics.

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1 MPS, 1867/68, §82, pp. 95-6. The secondary importance of the role of Prussia is all the more notable considering that these two Democrats were among the most vociferous opponents of Prussia, at a time when the Rezeß had not yet been settled.

2 From a full local tax supplement of 100% for incomes over and including tax band 11 (mean income 13,200 M. p.a.), the supplement was progressively reduced to 23% for those with the lowest taxable incomes (mean income 540 M. p.a.). Anzeige-Blatt der städtischen Behörden zu Frankfurt am Main, 31.12.1874.

3 IfSG AS P 854 (1874), §277, fos. 529-74. City Council meeting, 15.5.1874. AS P 855 (1874), §655. City Council meeting, 31.10.1874. Maly, Macht, pp. 94-5.

In consequence, in 1890 31% of income tax payers were in the lowest tax band, providing 7.59% of taxable income. Yet they paid only 1.45% of local income tax revenue. By contrast, 88 individuals (out of 60,300 income tax payers) in the highest tax band had 25.69 % of all taxable income, but they contributed 35.73% to local income tax revenue.[1] These figures not only demonstrate the effect of Frankfurt's progressive legislation, but they also show that the Frankfurt progressive tax system was made possible through the extraordinary wealth of a small number of individuals. Indeed, Frankfurt defied ordinary tax logic that an increase in the tax on the poor yields more revenue than a tax on the rich. When in 1892 the city council discussed new local surcharges for the state income tax rates in response to Miquel's tax reform, in addition to the degression which was built into the state tax the Magistrat itself proposed a further degression of the local surcharge, from 100% of the state income tax for all incomes above 9,000 M., down to a rate of 85% for all incomes below 3,000 M.. Against this proposal, the council's finance commission, of which Sonnemann was still a member, suggested that the rate of degression should be reduced still further, from a surcharge of 100% for incomes up to 10,500 M. down to a rate of 70% for all incomes below 3,000 M.. One of the most compelling arguments of the commission was that the further reductions were significant for those who benefited from them, whereas the extra revenue lost amounted to barely 4% of that paid by the wealthy citizens with an income over 10,500 M.. Partly as a result of this argument, the proposals of the finance commissions were accepted unanimously in the council.[2] The local tax rates were based on the state income tax and were levied in addition to local income tax. The effect of the new Frankfurt local income tax rate was, therefore, to increase the progressive impact of total income taxation. Incomes in the lowest tax band from 900 to 1,050 M. had to pay 6 M. per annum in state income tax, and a local income tax supplement of 70% (4.20 M.), which amounted to a total annual income tax

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1 MPS, 1890/91, p. 74.
2 MPS, 1892, §206, pp. 96-9.

of about 1%, or 10.40 M..[1] By contrast, a person with an income of over 100,000 M., who was paying the highest state income tax rate at 4% had, with a local income tax supplement of 100%, had a total income tax burden of 8%.

The fact that progressive local taxation was relatively easy to carry out in Frankfurt should not distract attention from the fact that Frankfurt's income tax was grounded upon firm political principles. Hence, despite rapidly rising expenditure in the 1890s and 1900s, income tax revenue rose slowly and naturally, and despite frequent suggestions to the contrary the local tax rate was never increased above 100% of the state income tax rate after 1892.[2] Frankfurt left-liberals appreciated that Miquel had only given permission for Frankfurt's peculiarly progressive tax system, despite personal misgivings, because of his personal connections with Frankfurt. At the time, he had made clear that any change of the tax rate would necessitate a review of the whole system, and Frankfurters were in no doubt that any increase above 100% of the top rate of the local income tax supplement would lead to the abolition of the city's progressive tax system (and an infringement of municipal freedom).[3]

The fact that Frankfurt Democrats in particular could (justifiably) call themselves the party of progressive taxation is an important factor in explaining their popularity in the Frankfurt municipal elections. For it must be remembered that whereas the abolition of indirect taxation in 1874 was a measure designed to benefit the working classes in particular, progressive income taxation was not. Especially from 1883, when those with incomes below 900 M. were exempt from paying income tax, it was not really the poor who benefited from progressive income tax rates. In 1890, when old class and income taxes were still levied on all incomes

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[1] Anzeige-Blatt der städtischen Behörden zu Frankfurt am Main, 3.5.1892, also MAB 1892/93, pp. 63-4.

[2] In the 1904 municipal tax reform, each rate of the income tax was raised by 5%. This was possible, since previously the overall local income tax supplement (a top rate of 100% and progressive reductions to 70%) amounted to an aggregate supplement of 95% of the state income tax. A rise by 5% in 1904 brought the aggregate rate of the local income tax supplement up to 100% and meant that no further municipal tax increases were possible without state approval. See the tax reform proposals for 1904 in MPS,1903, §1270, esp. pp. 609, 621, 629-30.

[3] MPS, 1895, §361, pp. 222-3. MPS, 1903, §1270, p. 612. MPS, 1904, §19, p. 17.

above 420 M. per year, almost 60% of those taxpayers earned incomes below 900 M.. Even though during the subsequent decades (and especially from 1900 onwards) an increasing number of workers earned more than 900 M. and hence benefited from the system of progressive local income tax supplements, when the system was conceived in the early 1890s it was clearly the Mittelstand, that is small shopkeepers, artisans and other groups with small incomes between 900 and 3,000 M., that benefited most, with a smaller benefit extending to the quite well-to-do with incomes up to 10,500 M.. There is nothing coincidental about this, since a large majority of those with incomes above 900 M. had the vote.[1] The most tenacious opponent of the tax system, councillor Caspari, was right to object to the fact that, if the aim of progressive taxation was to relieve those on lower incomes, it was absurd to class those with earnings between 5,000 and 7,000 M. among them.[2] Yet Democrats were well aware of this. In a report on various forms of direct taxation, the minority of the council's finance commission (yet again including Sonnemann) argued successfully against the majority of the commission and the Magistrat that of all taxes, the progressive income tax was crucial to Frankfurt's well-being. For a trading city like Frankfurt, it was particularly important to cultivate a thriving Mittelstand which was the primary beneficiary of the changes.[3] This explains the stubbornness with which left-liberals clung to the ideal of progressive income taxation, and why the SPD representative in the council, Max Quarck, was quite prepared to consider a revision of the local income tax if that meant that other direct taxes and charges levied on all citizens such as the hated tax on rents could be dropped.[4] For the Democrats and their left-liberal allies, therefore, progressive income taxation was an ingenious device which enabled them to carry out an effective Mittelstandspolitik on the one hand, while enabling

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1 MAB 1893/94, pp. 78-9. MAB 1890/91 p. 74. Note that the figure given in both accounts for the same tax year 1890/91 differs slightly.

2 MPS 1904, §85, p. 44.

3 MPS 1894, §177, pp. 109-10. See also A. Meyer's speech on the budget to the Democratic Association, in Frankfurter Zeitung, 8.3.1894 (2. Morgenblatt). The article is also in HStAW 407 n. 161[1] fo. 266.

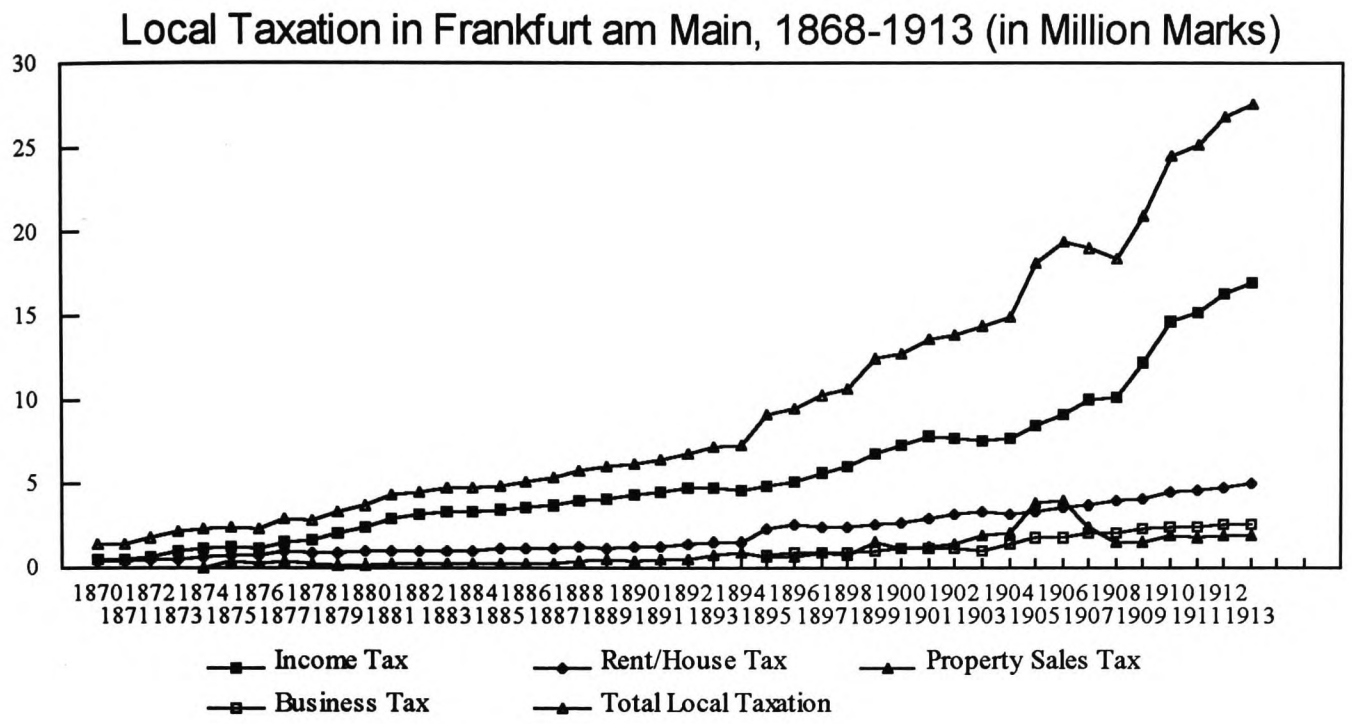
4 MPS, 1903, §282, p. 156.

Table 13:

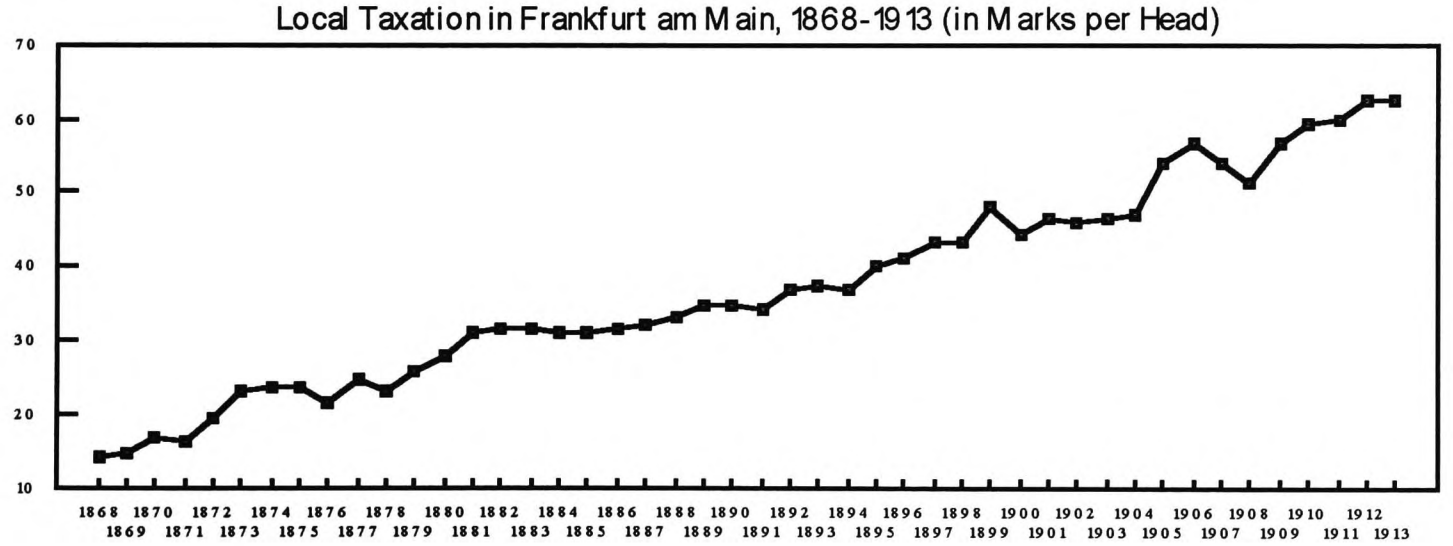
Local Taxation in Frankfurt am Main, 1868-1913 (in Marks)

| | Income Tax | Rent/House Tax | Property Sales Tax | Business Tax | Other | Total | Per Head |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1868 | 383,407 | 414,586 | | | 338,235 | 1,136,228 | 14.20 |
| 1869 | 417,588 | 429,210 | | | 386,953 | 1,233,751 | 14.85 |
| 1870 | 503,414 | 445,906 | | | 513,961 | 1,463,281 | 16.96 |
| 1871 | 521,117 | 449,120 | | | 477,427 | 1,447,664 | 16.14 |
| 1872 | 601,511 | 560,419 | | | 645,353 | 1,807,283 | 19.48 |
| 1873 | 985,995 | 556,945 | | | 668,880 | 2,211,820 | 23.09 |
| 1874 | 1,140,059 | 691,968 | | | 492,512 | 2,324,539 | 23.57 |
| 1875 | 1,268,812 | 737,527 | 359,174 | | 50,692 | 2,416,205 | 23.73 |
| 1876 | 1,167,400 | 803,000 | 246,599 | | 53,130 | 2,270,129 | 21.57 |
| 1877 | 1,492,218 | 1,063,160 | 367,825 | | 95,398 | 3,018,601 | 24.91 |
| 1878 | 1,668,300 | 917,659 | 219,395 | | 73,800 | 2,879,154 | 23.22 |
| 1879 | 2,118,748 | 957,572 | 158,173 | | 70,966 | 3,305,459 | 25.89 |
| 1880 | 2,503,690 | 1,001,352 | 165,326 | | 71,634 | 3,742,002 | 28.00 |
| 1881 | 2,933,700 | 1,017,897 | 235,122 | | 122,510 | 4,309,229 | 30.92 |
| 1882 | 3,165,903 | 1,039,112 | 234,516 | | 120,480 | 4,560,011 | 31.41 |
| 1883 | 3,355,973 | 1,060,573 | 211,877 | | 112,088 | 4,740,511 | 31.78 |
| 1884 | 3,380,155 | 1,089,915 | 219,007 | | 115,929 | 4,805,006 | 30.99 |
| 1885 | 3,497,739 | 1,112,690 | 219,224 | | 116,446 | 4,946,099 | 30.90 |
| 1886 | 3,561,685 | 1,147,688 | 263,318 | | 107,380 | 5,080,071 | 31.43 |
| 1887 | 3,778,477 | 1,181,913 | 297,969 | | 113,660 | 5,372,019 | 32.01 |
| 1888 | 3,948,243 | 1,249,287 | 422,356 | | 120,914 | 5,740,800 | 32.97 |
| 1889 | 4,177,499 | 1,187,838 | 497,631 | | 127,734 | 5,990,702 | 35.03 |
| 1890 | 4,379,599 | 1,225,207 | 443,453 | | 177,967 | 6,226,226 | 34.72 |
| 1891 | 4,501,719 | 1,310,701 | 480,451 | | 167,093 | 6,459,964 | 34.53 |
| 1892 | 4,765,639 | 1,358,983 | 494,291 | | 243,959 | 6,862,872 | 36.89 |
| 1893 | 4,714,638 | 1,499,004 | 755,653 | | 233,649 | 7,202,944 | 37.71 |
| 1894 | 4,647,565 | 1,529,811 | 852,705 | | 284,385 | 7,314,466 | 36.79 |
| 1895 | 4,948,365 | 2,313,289 | 592,251 | 834,346 | 418,192 | 9,106,443 | 40.21 |
| 1896 | 5,151,559 | 2,518,071 | 589,308 | 889,157 | 311,791 | 9,459,886 | 40.95 |
| 1897 | 5,603,428 | 2,470,290 | 873,227 | 920,519 | 432,710 | 10,300,174 | 43.19 |
| 1898 | 6,073,334 | 2,425,144 | 761,268 | 906,224 | 512,522 | 10,678,492 | 43.51 |
| 1899 | 6,771,509 | 2,596,491 | 1,583,363 | 1,031,353 | 420,907 | 12,403,623 | 48.19 |
| 1900 | 7,335,398 | 2,745,477 | 1,114,376 | 1,101,479 | 420,089 | 12,716,819 | 44.62 |
| 1901 | 7,776,686 | 3,008,800 | 1,270,925 | 1,130,896 | 449,613 | 13,636,920 | 46.38 |
| 1902 | 7,658,663 | 3,209,600 | 1,359,962 | 1,114,136 | 473,236 | 13,815,597 | 45.75 |
| 1903 | 7,587,386 | 3,365,878 | 1,922,530 | 1,020,716 | 481,534 | 14,378,044 | 46.38 |
| 1904 | 7,747,085 | 3,152,070 | 1,999,372 | 1,448,656 | 539,194 | 14,886,377 | 46.88 |
| 1905 | 8,464,212 | 3,350,469 | 3,801,135 | 1,737,345 | 734,707 | 18,087,868 | 53.67 |
| 1906 | 9,149,377 | 3,567,284 | 3,967,373 | 1,863,137 | 798,146 | 19,345,317 | 56.40 |
| 1907 | 10,010,151 | 3,736,788 | 2,486,081 | 1,997,424 | 762,233 | 18,992,677 | 53.95 |
| 1908 | 10,199,598 | 3,963,898 | 1,532,019 | 2,027,851 | 681,069 | 18,404,435 | 51.12 |
| 1909 | 12,265,543 | 4,127,212 | 1,564,603 | 2,282,390 | 688,491 | 20,928,239 | 56.71 |
| 1910 | 14,574,220 | 4,456,555 | 1,931,824 | 2,390,443 | 1,164,004 | 24,517,046 | 59.13 |
| 1911 | 15,174,392 | 4,599,769 | 1,840,472 | 2,405,537 | 1,141,551 | 25,161,721 | 59.88 |
| 1912 | 16,309,006 | 4,790,036 | 1,963,941 | 2,557,921 | 1,275,171 | 26,896,075 | 62.27 |
| 1913 | 16,939,601 | 4,981,810 | 1,905,562 | 2,624,203 | 1,197,741 | 27,648,917 | 62.51 |

Graph 5:




Graph 6:




them to maintain a rhetoric of social justice for all.

Table 13 and Graph 5 illustrate the steady growth of income tax in Frankfurt and show its importance relative to all other taxes.[1] Frankfurt liberals on the left and on the right were generally ambiguous about the second pillar of the tax system until 1895, the rent tax. On the one hand, liberals such as Sonnemann never tired of pointing out that it was, at least, a highly

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[1] It is important to note that Table 13 does not include revenue from fees such as the Kanalgebühr, as they were accounted for seperately.

progressive tax which at one time ranged from 0.5 to 15% of rentable value.[1] And as an old local tax which had been in operation for half a century it was the only direct tax which Frankfurt could raise independently from the state. On the other hand, while it taxed property it did tax the occupiers rather than the owners of accommodation. Also, ever since Frankfurt's loss of independence its citizens had lost the ability to control immigration into the city. Therefore, particularly in the years before the reform of the system of poor relief in 1883,[2] Frankfurters were aware that the system of taxation offered the best way of preventing large-scale migration of the poor into the city.[3] It is tempting to assume, therefore, that even Sonnemann, who had been responsible for abolishing indirect taxation in 1873, was quite content to keep this tax which did affect the poor and which made sure that there were at least some remaining deterrents for poor migrants into the city.[4]

Another reason for Sonnemann's enthusiasm for the tax was that it benefited the Mittelstand, in the sense that local businesses only paid a uniform rate of 2%,[5] which was less than a state tax with a local supplement added on to it. Ultimately it was state interference which brought this tax to an end, because Miquel's local tax reforms stipulated that all local rent taxes had to be abolished by 1900,[6] so that the tax was gradually phased out after 1895 and replaced by a house tax, an adapted version of the building tax which had just been transferred from the state to local government.

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 8.3.1892 (2. Morgenblatt), in HStAW 407 n. 161[1] fo. 266.

2 For a discussion on this reform, see chapter seven.

3 Kropat, Frankfurt, pp. 64-8.

4 Sonnemann's dialectical approach to taxation was not necessarily a contradiction. The abolition of indirect taxation in 1873 could be presented to his working class constituents as a significant victory, while Sonnemann had to be careful not to be too radical for his other Reichstag and municipal council electors. After 1884 Sonnemann lost the working class votes to the SPD, so that from now on he had to concentrate on appealing primarily to those who were wealthy enough to qualify for the municipal franchise.

5 MPS, 1894, §177, p. 106. To the above percentage rates a further uniform rate of 1% of rentable value has to be added, the Laternengeld.

6 See Sonnemann's announcement of this fact in the council and his plea, supported by the Magistrat, in favour of the tax. Nevertheless, Sonnemann did not lose much time in becoming an open critic of the tax, taking pride in the fact that he had opposed it ostensibly ever since the 1870s. MPS 1893, §306, pp. 155-6. By contrast, see Sonnemann's speech in HStAW 407 n. 161[2] fo. 10. Democratic Association meeting, 8.10.1894.

Most other local taxes and fees that were raised were similar to those raised in other Prussian cities, and, as elsewhere, local legislators met fierce hostility from property-owners with every proposition of levying a property tax (Realsteuer). As First Mayor, Miquel had never managed to increase the burden of the Realsteuer to relieve the income tax against opposition from both Democrats as well as from property-owners, as the latter were committed to keeping their tax burden as low as possible.[1] Property-owners continued to exert a powerful influence in the city council, for example when they managed to transform the proposed sewage fee from a fee of 1% of property value to be paid by the owner to one of 2% of rentable value to be paid by the occupier.[2] Nevertheless, Miquel had learnt his lesson, and the imposition of tighter government restrictions on municipal taxation, even if liberals concerned about the sanctity of self-government objected to them, did have the desired effect. Thus, for the 1904 municipal tax reform the Magistrat made it clear that the authorities would authorise no further tax increases unless most of these were increases in Realsteuern, since these were underdeveloped in Frankfurt and had not yet reached the desired 150% of income tax revenue.[3]

Apart from the local income tax, there was one other tax which formed the basis of Frankfurt left-liberals' pride in having the most progressive system of local taxation in Germany with regard to social policy.[4] This was the Wertzuwachsstuer, a levy imposed on the value of property every time it was sold and which progressively taxed the speculative gain on the value of property. The local authorities had wanted to introduce it in 1895, but this had been rejected by the Prussian authorities, presumably because the proposed tax on the sale of land

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1 Herzfeld, Miquel, i. 516-19. This is perhaps the best printed summary of financial policy in Frankfurt during the 1880s.

2 Kleine Presse, 19.12.1894 (2. Blatt).

3 See the proposal of the Magistrat for a tax increase with its frequent reference to the obligations imposed by the local tax reform of 1893. MPS, 1903, §1270, pp. 609-30. See also Adickes' plea for the Magistrat's suggestions, §1270, p. 648.

4 Speech of councillor Funck in MPS, 1904, §19, p. 17. Frankfurters were flattered by the suggestion of a Prussian Ministerialrat that the Frankfurt tax system was, in effect, a Social Democratic one. Frankfurter Zeitung, 27.11.1904 (3. Morgenblatt).

was deemed too high.[1] In a subsequent more successful attempt, Frankfurt was the first city in Germany to introduce such a tax in 1904. It was based on an already existing property sales tax (Währschaftssteuer), and introduced a supplementary tax on the sale of buildings if they were resold within 10 years or on the sale of land if it was resold within five years, and for both categories if they had increased by more than 30% of their value during that time.[2] As Table 13 shows, the increased tax rates as well as the new supplement brought substantial new revenue to the city coffers. More importantly, the tax translated liberal theory directly into liberal practice, for, ever since Henry George, liberals, not only in Germany, but notably also in England, were concerned to tax the unearned increment on land, which became perceived as the major root of high rents.[3] But the tax had obvious political merits, too. Given that some new revenue had to be found, this tax had the greatest potential since it combined the social instincts of Adickes,[4] one of whose primary concerns was a municipal policy to realise affordable housing, with the policy aims of Frankfurt left-liberals to stand for the interests of 'small men'. The Wertzuwachssteuer thus gave new credence to the old left-liberal claim that one of the most significant achievements of Frankfurt left-liberals was the creation of a progressive, pioneering and social system of taxation;[5] a claim that was made all the more important in the face of constant SPD attacks against the bourgeois coalition of property owners who acted only in their own self-interest.[6] Nonetheless, municipal taxation remained one of the few areas in which SPD attacks remained rather vague and ill-defined, precisely

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1 For the original proposals, see the 'Steuerordnung das Währschaftsgeld in Frankfurt a.M. betr.', in MPS, §733, pp. 445-6. Kaufmann noted that initially the Prussian authorities were reluctant to allow any differential treatment between land and buildings, and to allow rates above 1% of their value. Kaufmann, Kommunalfinanzen, ii. 320.

2 A good summary of the terms of the tax, also in the context of the general trend in Germany to introduce such a tax, is in Kaufmann, Kommunalfinanzen, ii. 327-9.

3 Ladd, Urban Planning, pp. 177-8. Waller, Town, p. 259. A. Sutcliffe, Towards the planned city. Germany, Britain, the United States and France, 1788-1914 (Oxford, 1981), p. 39.

4 On Adickes' and the other liberals' social policy, see chapter seven.

5 See the statement of Emil Ladenburg at an electoral rally in the run-up to the local elections, which demonstrates how these two taxes - income tax and the property sales tax - were at the heart of liberal social policy in Frankfurt. Frankfurter Zeitung, 16.11.1906 (3. Morgenblatt).

6 Volksstimme, 17.11.1906.

because the left-liberals had created a system of taxation whose main principle of social justice seemed so closely to match their own.

From 1868 to 1913, local taxation per head grew more than fourfold, a considerable increase in the tax burden of the individual even allowing for the fact that average wages during this period may have as much as doubled.[1] This explains the somewhat paradoxical point that, even though it was municipal expenditure which grew so dramatically in Frankfurt, it was municipal taxation with its relatively modest and steady growth which caused such political controversy. In addition, the political attention given to taxation rather than other aspects of municipal finance is indicative of the relative roles of council and Magistrat. If the latter body, in charge of the day-to-day administration, was much more competent to argue about municipal expenditure, the former, elected body representative of the people of Frankfurt had much more authority when it came to the taxation of its constituents.

In this sense, municipal finance policy was not much different from that of other levels of government. Throughout the nineteenth century, in England, as elsewhere, it was taxation that was central to politics, true to de Tocqueville's observation that 'there is scarcely any public matter which does not begin or else end in a tax'.[2] State expenditure was largely of concern inasmuch as it affected taxation. This was no different in German municipal government, least of all in Frankfurt. And yet it is important to note that in this 'golden age' of local government, this 'epoch of liberal debt management'[3] the growth of municipal expenditure and debt, while becoming more contentious from the 1900s, was so much less central in the political debate at the time. The example of Frankfurt shows how, in one of the most heavily spending cities, it was the issue of taxation which continued to be the most

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1 Tipton, Regional Variations, p. 83. A. V. Desai, Real Wages in Germany, 1871-1913 (Oxford, 1968), esp. pp. 34-8. Mitchell, European Historical Statistics, p. 194.

2 Quoted in Matthew, 'Disraeli', p. 615.

3 Reulecke, Geschichte, p. 111.

sensitive political issue. The left-liberals' success in creating a policy which was clothed in the rhetoric of social concern, but which was effectively one designed to support those with middling incomes, who formed the bulk of the municipal electorate, was at the very core of the left-liberals' appeal throughout the period under investigation. Through the ability to participate in this level of government they had the opportunity to deliver on their promises which they duly did. This had been an important area in which they were able to distinguish themselves from other local parties, and it explains their ability to withstand the assaults of both the Mittelstand and the SPD with relative success.

The experience of Frankfurt suggests that the last two decades before the First World War were in many ways the epitome of the liberal ideal of self-government, as local government fulfilled its administrative obligations dutifully and efficiently, and as it expanded its sphere of activity, particularly in the economic sector. As a result, municipal self-confidence vis-à-vis the state grew directly in proportion to the growth of municipal financial activity. Yet ultimately, it was policies of taxation which were most important for liberal political success. This may explain why it was so difficult for liberals to make political capital out of this flurry of municipal activity. For despite relatively generous municipal employment contracts, cheap water and gas bills and other benefits which municipal socialism entailed, liberals were politically on the defensive against the advance from the SPD, shielded only by restricted franchise laws.[1] Also, even though the last decades before the Great War witnessed in many ways the fulfilment of a liberal ideal of self-government with regard to local independence, this ideal was never purely the intellectual property of liberalism, but was based on an even wider acceptance across party lines which came even to include the reformist wing of the SPD.[2]

To generalise with confidence from Frankfurt, it would be necessary for further studies on the financial policies of liberals in other cities to be conducted. In Frankfurt, as increasing

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1 The political implications of municipal socialism will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

2 See the various works by Hugo Lindemann, the main SPD authority on the subject of local self-government.

numbers qualified for the franchise, the liberals managed to stem the SPD's advance with surprising success. Clearly, this is in part the result of their policies of taxation, rather than of 'municipal socialism'. This may suggest that in other cities, too, the success of urban liberalism was crucially dependent on whether liberals there fully appreciated the importance of taxation rather than municipal socialism as a tool for electoral success.

This chapter has also demonstrated that liberal attitudes towards municipal finance were not simply a response to increasing burdens imposed upon them by the rapid pace of urbanisation. Underlying their financial attitudes in theory as well as in practice was a clear consciousness that the question of municipal finance was inextricably linked to the question of local self-government. The positive view which so many liberals shared about the growth in municipal debt is by no means self-evident. It contrasts sharply, for example, with the gloom felt by many cities in England after the turn of the century who were ever more conscious of the financial burdens of self-government.[1] The system of grant-in-aid, which became ever more important for municipal finance from the 1880s onwards,[2] and Lloyd George's social legislation were clear admissions of the limits of the ideal of local self-government.[3] In Germany, on the other hand, the liberals' embrace of the ideal of self-government was not entirely unconnected with the fact that their influence over the growing sphere of local government at least in a small way compensated for their marginalisation in state and national politics. The growth of municipal finance in the nineteenth century, which was not just absolute, but also relative to state and national budgets, underlined and emphasised the liberals' growing claim that local self-government had become an indespensible factor in Germany's federal structure.

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1 Note, for example, Charles Vince's sombre assessment in 1902 of municipal government in Birmingham, home to the optimism surrounding the 'municipal gospel' just three decades earlier. C. A. Vince, History of the Corporation of Birmingham, iii (Birmingham, 1902), p. iv.

2 Waller, Town, pp. 263-72.

3 J. Harris, 'The Transition to High Politics in English Social Policy, 1880-1914' in M. Bentley and J. Stevenson (eds.), High and Low Politics in Modern Britain (Oxford, 1983), pp. 60, 73-7.

# CHAPTER SIX: LIBERAL EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN FRANKFURT AM MAIN

## 6.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters have established that, in Frankfurt as elsewhere, spending on education took up the most significant share of ordinary public expenditure. For this reason alone it is worth enquiring about the assumptions and goals that lay behind the willingness of local liberal politicians to spend such vast sums on a single item. As has been shown, liberals had to be particularly careful in justifying their expenditure in this area, since all the running and maintenance costs of schools as well as some of the costs of school buildings had to be borne directly by the tax- and feepaying electorate. A much more important reason for looking at liberal attitudes towards education is that education was perhaps the issue that was most central to the liberal message.[1]

To liberals in the cities, education was important in three ways. Firstly, education was closely tied to the liberal ideal of individual self-improvement which had been central to liberal thought since the days of Adam Smith.[2] In Germany, the ideal of Bildung[3] played a particularly important role in the way liberals sought to bring about their goal of a 'classless bourgeois society', at least until the German revolution of 1848/49.[4] It appears to be the case that from the mid-nineteenth century onwards liberals increasingly lost sight of this ideal of

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1 J. J. Sheehan, 'Wie bürgerlich war der deutsche Liberalismus?', in Langewiesche (ed.), Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert, pp. 30-4.

2 J. S. Shapiro, 'Was ist Liberalismus?', in Gall (ed.), Liberalismus, pp. 20-36, esp. pp. 27, 35. In general, see various liberal writers in L. Gall and R. Koch (eds.), Der europäische Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert. Texte zu seiner Entwicklung, 4 vols. (Frankfurt, 1981).

3 The German term Bildung is used here because it denotes not just education, but comprehensive scholarliness and cultivation.

4 M. Kraul, 'Bildung und Bürgerlichkeit', in Kocka (ed.), Bürgertum, iii. 45-73. Gall, 'Liberalismus und "Bürgerliche Gesellschaft"', 324-56. Sheehan, German Liberalism, pp. 32-3.

universal Bildung, once so eloquently proposed by Humboldt,[1] as part of their effort to preserve the current social status quo and to keep Bildung open only to those that were currently part of the educated bourgeoisie.[2] Unfortunately for our understanding of German liberalism, historians of education have carried out their equivalent debate, about the intended and actual social stratification of secondary education through the course of the Empire, without any apparent concern for the political implications which this debate had on liberal assumptions of a bürgerliche Gesellschaft, a society of citizens.[3]

The growing liberal appreciation of the role of education in maintaining and preserving the social structure of Germany, and especially in preserving the character of the bourgeoisie against other emerging sections of society was given further impetus from 1890 onwards as an integral part of Emperor William II's 'New Course'. According to the Emperor, German schools had in the past failed to educate 'true Germans', and henceforth he regarded school education as a central element in the combat against the SPD.[4] In the absence of any monographs on the subject,[5] the changing attitudes of liberals towards education remains open to speculation. However, it would appear likely that liberals shared the central ambiguity of the German bourgeoisie towards education, on the one hand considering that Bildung should

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[1] For an introduction into the concepts behind the reformer's educational reforms, see C. Menze, Wilhelm von Humboldt (Sankt Augustin, 1993).

[2] This effort to maintain an ideal of 'bourgeois universality' through Bildung was already being undermined by the social changes which made the bourgeoisie increasingly heterogenous already during the 1850s. See, for example, Sheehan, German Liberalism, pp. 169-71.

[3] Among the central works which discuss the issue of social stratification in secondary education are D. K. Müller, Sozialstruktur und Schulsystem. Aspekte zum Strukturwandel des Schulwesens im 19. Jahrhundert (Göttingen, 1977). F. K. Ringer, Education and Society in Modern Europe (Bloomington, 1979). J. C. Albisetti, 'The debate on secondary school reform in France and Germany', in D. K. Müller, F. K. Ringer and B. Simon, The Rise of the Modern Educational System: Structural change and social reproduction 1870-1920 (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 181-96. J. C. Albisetti, 'Systematisation: a critique', in Müller, Ringer and Simon (eds.), The Rise of the Modern Educational System, pp. 210-6. For a local case study on Minden, see P. Lundgreen, M. Kraul and K. Ditt, Bildungschancen und soziale Mobilität in der städtischen Gesellschaft des 19. Jahrhunderts (Göttingen, 1988).

[4] C. Führ, 'Die preußischen Schulkonferenzen von 1890 und 1900. Ihre bildungspolitische Rolle und bildungsgeschichtliche Bewertung', in P. Baumgart (ed.), Bildungspolitik in Preußen zur Zeit des Kaiserreichs (Stuttgart, 1980), pp. 189-223, esp. p. 210. Nichols, Germany, pp. 88-90, 97-101.

[5] Curiously, historians of education appear to have largely ignored the political dimension of their subject, whereas political historians, too, appear to have failed to notice the centrality of the issue towards state politics. For an illustration of this, see Nipperdey's summary of the history of late nineteenth-century education in Nipperdey, Deutsche Geschichte 1866-1914, i. 531-61.

be used in defence of the intellectual and social properties of the Bürgertum against encroachment by other aspiring social groups, while on the other hand increasingly appreciating the potential of good universal education as an integrative element in a society marked by social strife.

A second, central reason why education was a primary liberal concern was that it touched a raw nerve among liberals because of the issue of religion.[1] Across Europe, in places where schools did exist in the early nineteenth century, the vast majority were denominational schools, either run directly by the church, or where the resident clergy at least had an important say in the syllabus.[2] During the second half of the nineteenth century, once in power, liberals across Europe embarked on a programme of separation of Church and State, which affected particularly the area of education. This became increasingly regarded as a state matter, hence the question of secular or clerical control of education became one of the most controversial issues in late nineteenth-century European politics.[3] For Germany, the liberals' battle for the separation of Church and State during the Kulturkampf has attracted some attention,[4] and yet it seems to have been overlooked that, with regard to the important issue of education, the question about the relationship between church and state (and notably about the issue of denominational schooling) did not just go away after the 1870s. Despite a number of attempts by various Prussian ministers of education to introduce a state-wide education bill, most notably during the 1890s, the divisions and controversies over denominational schooling

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1 For the best description of the general friction between German liberalism and religion, see Langewiesche, Liberalismus, pp. 180-2.

2 This was the case even in Prussia, the country with one of the first universial education systems. See A. Mächler, 'Aspekte der Volksschulpolitik in Preußen im 19. Jahrhundert. Ein Überblick über wichtige gesetzliche Grundlagen im Hinblick auf ausgewählte Gesichtspunkte', in Baumgart, Bildungspolitik, pp. 224-41.

3 Hugh McLeod, Religion and the People of Western Europe 1789-1970 (Oxford, 1981, reprinted 1990), pp. 15-21. Gregory M. Luebbert, Liberalism, Fascism or Social Democracy. Social Classes and the Political Origins of Regimes in Interwar Europe (New York, 1991), pp. 56-7.

4 From the point of view of the Centre Party and its relationship with liberalism, see D. Blackbourn, 'Progress and Piety: Liberals, Catholics and the State in Bismarck's Germany', in D. Blackbourn, Populists and Patricians. Essays in Modern German History (London, 1987), pp. 143-67. See also Sheehan, German Liberalism, pp. 135-7.

were so great that by 1914 no comprehensive state-wide education bill had yet been passed. It appears that the various abortive Prussian education bills each time fostered strong and resourceful liberal opposition in the Prussian Chamber of Deputies. More important in the context of this investigation is that they also triggered strong and united resistance from liberals at the grass roots level, and of liberals in the cities in particular.[1]

Liberals in the city were concerned about the various education bills partly because these touched upon their strongly-held views about the separation of Church and State. The other reason why these liberals had such strong views on this matter is that education touched upon a third liberal preoccupation and one that was central particularly to urban liberalism, that of self-government. For an important aspect of education was that it was part of the prerogative of local government, a role that was increased by the inability of many states to pass any state-wide education laws.[2] Local government had the strongest influence on primary education, which affected over 90% of the population. In Prussia, state and local government roughly shared their responsibilities according to the principle that the former was responsible for 'inner' school administration, whereas the latter was in charge of 'outer' school administration.[3] Rather conveniently from the point of view of the Prussian state, this meant that local government was primarily responsible for the building and maintenance of school buildings, as well as the payment of teachers, whereas the state determined the qualitative content of education such as the syllabus (including its religious content).[4] By and large, this system in which the locality paid for education, and the state directed it, applied not just to

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1 On the two most notable attempts at drawing up a state-wide education law, see Folkert Meyer, Schule der Untertanen. Lehrer und Politik in Preußen 1848-1900 (Hamburg, 1976), pp. 167-183. For the cities' opposition, see p. 176.

2 Paul von Gizyki, 'Das Volksschulwesen', in W. Lexis (ed.), Das Unterrichtswesen im Deutschen Reich. vol. iii: Das Volksschulwesen und das Lehrerbildungswesen im Deutschen Reich (Berlin, 1904), pp. 1-232, here p. 3.

3 For a critical discussion of the legal basis of this practice, see Hugo Preuß, 'Die staatliche Bestätigung der Mitglieder städtischer Schuldeputationen nach preussischem Recht', AfR, xv (1900), 202-25, esp. 209 ff..

4 E. N. Anderson, 'The Prussian Volksschule in the Nineteenth Century', in Entstehung und Wandel in der modernen Gesellschaft. Festschrift für H. Rosenberg zum 65. Geburtstag, ed. by G. A. Ritter (Berlin, 1970), pp. 265-6.

primary, but also to secondary schooling. Notable exceptions to this were the classical neo-humanist state Gymnasien, which were under the direct supervision of the Prussian ministry of education and whose teachers were state civil servants.

However, the principle that local government should merely pay for, but have no say in, professional matters concerning primary and secondary education should not be overemphasised in practice. Conscious of their role as educational sponsors, liberals in the cities were increasingly encouraged to meddle with educational policy. For this reason the cities developed into centres for educational reform in primary and secondary education during the Empire, as this chapter will demonstrate. If to liberals in the cities, rapidly expanding municipal finance was the practical underpinning of the liberal ideal of self-government, education was perhaps its most central purpose. For only a truly liberal education, which in a conservative state like Prussia could only be sustained through local self-government, could ensure that German society would be permeated by liberal ideals of self-fulfilment and religious tolerance.

This chapter will consider the relationship between urban liberalism and education in the case of Frankfurt through a study of the assumptions that shaped liberal attitudes towards primary as well as secondary education. The chapter will conclude with a brief analysis of the motives which led to what Frankfurt contemporaries considered the crowning glory of their achievements, the establishment of Germany's first civic university. For the central motives which led to the foundation of Frankfurt's civic university nicely illustrate the crucial driving force behind Frankfurt's education system in general, namely to establish, despite an increasingly nationalistic and conservative national political and social atmosphere, a local education system whose emphasis would be primarily on the dissemination of liberal values such as tolerance and enlightenment.

## 6.2. The Establishment of a Non-Denominational System of Primary Education

By the time the Prussians annexed the city of Frankfurt, its education 'system' had two central characteristics. Firstly, it was denominational. The city's Roman Catholic Domschule dates back to its foundation in the 9th century, and the first school for girls' education was founded by a Roman Catholic order of English nuns (Englische Fräulein) in 1749.[1] There were two important Jewish secondary schools, the reformist Philanthropin and the orthodox Realschule der Israelitischen Religionsgesellschaft, and but for the notable exception of the grammar school, all Frankfurt schools were staffed by teachers from one denomination only, and were supervised by a denominational school board.[2]

Secondly, the standard of public education in Frankfurt was low. Frankfurt may have had a better education system than the other Hanseatic free cities, but compared to Prussian or southern German cities with a system of universal primary education, Frankfurt was notably backward. And even in the schools that existed, headmasters appointed from outside and other observers were shocked at the standards prevailing in most of the schools. In 1868, out of 21 teachers of the Philanthropin, only nine had received an academic education of any kind. Of these, only two had been trained for teaching in secondary education, and four for teaching in primary education.[3] In all existing Frankfurt schools the curriculum was radically improved in order to advance to Prussian levels of education, efforts which rather predictably triggered local opposition to this introduction of 'Prussian militarism' into the schools.[4]

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[1] Ph. Maué, 'Die Englische Fräulein-Schule', in Zu den öffentlichen Prüfungen in der katholischen höheren Töchterschule, genannt Englische Fräulein-Schule (Frankfurt, 1869), pp. 4-7. Hermann Herterich, 'Aus der Geschichte der Domschule', in Vereinigung ehemaliger Domschüler Frankfurt a. M. (ed.), Handbuch (Frankfurt, 1929), pp. 5-12.

[2] The Philanthropin was a partial exception to this. Even though it was funded entirely by the local Jewish community, in the pursuit of its aim to further religious harmony it employed Christian teachers in addition to trying to attract Christian pupils.

[3] Festschrift zur Jahrhundertfeier der Realschule der israelitischen Gemeinde (Philanthropin) zu Frankfurt am Main 1804-1904 (Frankfurt, 1904), pp. 121-2.

[4] Festschrift zur Hundertjahrfeier der Musterschule in Frankfurt am Main, 1803-1903 (Frankfurt, 1903), pp. 137-40. For the suspicion aroused by the Prussian headmaster Tycho Mommsen in the Frankfurt Gymnasium, see Otto Körner, Erinnerungen eines deutschen Arztes und Hochschullehrers 1858-1914

Upon annexation, Frankfurt's entire school system had to be reorganised, since before 1866 schools had been subject to denominational boards and had been financed by the state of Frankfurt.[1] Now that the state had ceased to exist, the city of Frankfurt had to define a new relationship with its schools according to Prussian law. If the Frankfurt schools already had difficulties in coping with demand before 1866, pressure on the education system increased exponentially as a result of an increase in population and particularly the introduction of universal education.[2] Despite these strains, the reorganisation of Frankfurt's education system was not complete until 1872, and even this was only the result of intense pressure from the Prussian authorities.[3] Two new supervisory bodies were set up, a municipal board for secondary education (städtisches Curatorium für höhere Schulen),[4] and a school deputation (Schuldeputation) which oversaw municipal primary education.[5] The former comprised three members each of the Magistrat and of the city council respectively, as well as representatives of each main Christian denomination (Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist).[6] The latter consisted of three members of the Magistrat, three members of the city council, one Protestant and one Roman Catholic minister, and another representative of each of the main Christian denominations.

Indeed, the set-up of the administration of schooling was Gneist's ideal of self-government as a link between state and society in action. In contrast to the previous denominational school

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(Munich/Wiesbaden, 1920), p. 19. For another anecdotal account of the clash between Prussian and Frankfurt educational attitudes, see Bonn, Wandering Scholar, pp. 28-9.

1 F. C. Paldamus, 'Zur Lage des Frankfurter Schulwesens', in Einladungsschrift zu den am 29., 30., 31. März und 1. April stattfindenden öffentlichen Prüfungen an der höheren Bürgerschule (Frankfurt, 1871), p. 13.

2 Paldamus, 'Zur Lage', pp. 3-5.

3 A. Anderhub, Verwaltung im Regierungsbezirk Wiesbaden 1866-1885 (Wiesbaden, 1977), pp. 115-9.

4 Schools of 'higher' education were the Realschule (secondary modern school), the Oberrealschule (upper secondary modern school), the Realgymnasium (an intermediate school between the upper secondary modern school and the grammar school) and the Gymnasium (grammar school). Liberal attitudes to these various schools will be discussed later in the chapter.

5 The school deputation was responsible for all Volksschulen (primary schools), Bürgerschulen (citizens' schools) and Mittelschulen (middle schools). See below for liberal policies towards these schools.

6 As the two Jewish schools of higher education did not receive any municipal funding they were directly supervised by the provincial school authorities in Kassel.

boards, the city acquired a much more direct control over the running of its schools' affairs. Yet at the same time, it is striking that the two new supervisory bodies, each of whose majority consisted of local government representatives of city council and Magistrat, were directly responsible not to local government, but to the Prussian authorities in Kassel (in the case of the Curatorium) and Wiesbaden (for the deputation). In addition, of course, members of the Magistrat were also directly responsible to the state in their usual role as Stadträte. This left little scope for independent action on educational matters by the local government of Frankfurt.

One of the first matters, and easily the most important and controversial, to be decided by the liberal city government after the reorganisation of the city's school administration was the question of whether new schools erected by the municipality would in principle be denominational or not. This was a debate that started with the opening of the mittlere Bürgerschule in 1860/61, but was conducted with more intensity once it became clear that the city would be in greater control of its education after the annexation.[1] By 1872 onwards, both Magistrat and city council had decided that all new schools established by the city government would be non-denominational. In this decision, Frankfurt liberals followed the mainstream of liberal opinion during the Kulturkampf until 1879. The central arguments put forward by Frankfurt liberals are well summed-up in a motion introduced by Carl Wilhelm Nolte in the city council in 1869.[2] Nolte brought forward the classic liberal argument that denominational control over schooling would impede progress which was why a progressive city which Frankfurt aspired to be needed non-denominational schools in which religious education would be treated like any other subject. To liberals in Frankfurt as elsewhere, the secularisation of schooling became a yardstick for cultural progress in a modern state.[3]

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[1] The debate that surrounded the restructuring of the local school administration can be found in IfSG, AS 1312.

[2] IfSG, AS 1312 fos. 40-43. Motion by W. Nolte: 'Alle nun zu creierenden städtischen Schulen sind aconfessionell' ('All municipal schools to be founded from henceforth are non-denominational), January 1869.

[3] See also, for example, the speech of the Democrat Wedel in the city council on 16 March 1905,

Implicit in Nolte's statement was another point often made in this context, that denominational schools would be impractical in a city that showed an unusual degree of confessional variety, for not only was there a significant Jewish minority, but there was also a small, but nonetheless unusual, number of other confessions in the city.[1] It has been shown above that in Frankfurt there existed no tradition of non-denominational schooling in primary education whatsoever, and it is therefore all the more noteworthy to observe how Frankfurt liberals fashioned this into a central Frankfurt peculiarity. If Frankfurt had been devoid of any non-denominational primary school before 1866, Nolte spent all the more time pointing to the tradition in the neighbouring Duchy of Nassau where a comprehensive system of non-denominational schools had been established since 1817. Over the next decades Frankfurt liberals approximated the Nassau tradition of non-denominational schooling ever more closely to the Frankfurt educational system, so that Frankfurt schools of this kind became simply referred to as 'unsere nassauer Simultanschule'.[2] In addition, Nolte and his contemporaries did not let it go unnoticed that these schools had also been established in the Grand Duchy of Hesse, as well as in cities across Southern Germany, notably in Baden, Bavaria and Austria. If backward, denominational schools were obviously the norm in the old Prussian provinces, it is clear that these were inappropriate for the city of Frankfurt, a city that had so much more in common with the liberal states of Nassau or Baden, anyway.

Finally, Nolte pointed out that denominational schools were unlawful even according to Prussian laws. The argument was based entirely on the arguments of Gneist in his book Die

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reprinted in E. J. Müller, Aufklärungen über den Schulkampf im Jahre 1904 und 1905 in Frankfurt am Main (Frankfurt, 1905), p. 63. It is worth remembering that the law that officially sparked off the Kulturkampf was the Prussian Law of School Supervision (Schulaufsichtsgesetz) of 11 March 1872. F.-M. Kuhlemann, 'Niedere Schulen', in C. Berg (ed.), Handbuch der Deutschen Bildungsgeschichte, vol. iv: 1870-1918 (München, 1991), pp. 179-228, here p. 184.

[1] See, for example, the arguments exchanged on this issue in the early 1870s between the head teacher of the Mittlere Bürgerschule, Finger, and his former student, in F. A. Finger, Ausgewählte pädagogische Schriften (Frankfurt, 1887), i. 276. In 1880, there were 1,057 'Dissident Confessions' in Frankfurt which amounted to less than 1% of the total population. Of these, 280 belonged to evangelical free churches, and 166 were German Catholics. Frankfurt was unusual in that it had an Anglican congregation (which numbered 40), and there were 44 Baptists in the city. Beiträge zur Statistik (1882-5), pp. 34-5.

[2] See, for example, Frankfurter Zeitung, 6.11.1904 (Drittes Morgenblatt).

confessionelle Schule, which Gneist had published literally only days before Nolte's motion. Henceforward throughout the period, the right-wing liberal Gneist was appropriated by Frankfurt left- and right-liberals to give some credence to the view that denominational schooling was out of character with the Prussian educational system, anyway, as Gneist argued that with the introduction of compulsory education in 1717 by the head of state, King Frederick William I, education had effectively become a state concern.[1]

These arguments which Nolte put forward so comprehensively in 1869 were used time and again by Frankfurt liberals whenever they were called upon to defend their stand on the issue of denominational schooling. Until 1880, Roman Catholic and Protestant schools were scaled down in size while all new schools that were built were non-denominational in character, so that by 1880 already half of all Roman Catholic children in Frankfurt were educated in non-Catholic schools.[2] Thus far, Frankfurt liberals had behaved rather predictably, and apart from the particular Frankfurt rhetoric in which the debate was carried out there was probably little difference between left- and right-liberal opinion on the role of religion in education in Frankfurt and elsewhere in Germany.

Until the end of the Kulturkampf, it was easy for Frankfurt liberals to put their policies into practice, because under the Prussian minister of education nothing was done to hinder them in their educational zeal.[3] With the installation of Robert von Puttkamer as the Prussian minister

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1 R. Gneist, Die confessionelle Schule. Ihre Unzulässigkeit nach preußischen Landesgesetzen und die Nothwendigkeit eines Verwaltungsgerichtshofes (Berlin, 1869). It is interesting to note that through this argument, it is on the issue of education, and not of self-government or local finance reform, that Gneist became by far the most frequently quoted academic on any subject by Frankfurt left-liberals. This shows not only how closely liberal academic debate and liberal grass roots politics were intertwined. It also consolidates the view advanced in chapter four, that Gneist's views were so popular and influential because they could be made to fit into a variety of often contradictory political views.

2 E. F. A. Münzenberger, Der stille Culturkampf auf dem Gebiet des Frankfurter Schulwesens (Frankfurt, 1880), pp. 10, 22.

3 It is always important to remember that even during the Kulturkampf the conservative Prussian state never actively promoted non-denominational schooling in any way. During this time it was only the case that now the Prussian state would do nothing to hinder the establishment of non-denominational schools. Rather, the emphasis of the controversial minster of education, Adalbert Falk, lay on the appointment of state school supervisors to replace the clergy currently in charge of the task. M. Lamberti, 'State, Church and the Politics of School Reform during the Kulturkampf', CEH xix (1986), 63-81.

for education to replace Adalbert Falk, which marked the effective end of the Kulturkampf and Bismarck's partial reconciliation with the Centre Party,[1] it was bound to become much more difficult for Frankfurt's schooling authorities to pursue the ideal of non-denominational schooling against the conservative inclinations of the Prussian educational authorities. Furthermore, until 1879 there was little that Frankfurt's Roman Catholic community could do to stop liberal educational policy as it would not dare to affront Frankfurt liberals, and those on the left in particular. After all, it was those liberals and their national organ, the Frankfurter Zeitung, who were one of the few liberal allies of German Catholics against the repression of the Kulturkampf. After 1879, however, Frankfurt Catholics were no longer bound by such tactical considerations, and from then on they fought bitterly to preserve Frankfurt's tradition of denominational schooling. It was under these conditions after 1879 that the Frankfurt liberals' commitment to the principle of non-denominational education was truly tested, and it is the extraordinary tenacity with which Frankfurt liberals clung to this ideal almost unanimously that is a truly remarkable feature of Frankfurt liberalism. The ferocity of Frankfurt liberal educational policy can best be illustrated by two examples of clashes between the Frankfurt school authorities and the state authorities in Wiesbaden. Together they reveal the limits of local self-government in education in the case of Frankfurt, and they demonstrate that explanations other than the Kulturkampf are needed to explain the extraordinary commitment of Frankfurt liberals to this ideal of non-denominational education.

The main bone of contention between the Catholic community and the Frankfurt school authorities was whether, as a result of the compensation settlements for the secularisation of church property in 1803, the city was legally obliged to maintain a confessional system of education as it had existed then, or whether the city was simply committed to the upkeep of

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[1] E. L. Evans, The German Center Party 1870-1933. A Study in Political Catholicism (Carbondale/Edwardsville, 1981), pp. 80-82.

the few denominational schools which existed then and which were expressly mentioned in the treaty. In February 1880, the Imperial Court decided in favour of the latter interpretation, that according to private law there was no legal obligation for the city to establish any more denominational schools. However, under new directives from Berlin the authorities in Wiesbaden decided that, as this decision was not based on administrative law, they were free to ignore it, and consequently ordered the city of Frankfurt to establish new denominational schools in proportion to demand. Unaffected by admonitions from Wiesbaden to respect the wishes of those parents who wanted a Roman Catholic education for their children, the city council continued to deny the establishment of new denominational schools until matters came to a head from 1882 to 1886. Countermanding the city government's efforts to transform the Protestant Bürgerschule in the recently incorporated suburb of Bornheim into a non-denominational school, the Wiesbaden authorities ordered not only that the Bürgerschule remained Protestant, but also that the new primary school that was to be opened in that area would become a Roman Catholic school.[1] The city refused to acquiesce, so that by February 1885 Wiesbaden's patience had run out as it insisted that it alone had the legal right to establish the denominational character of a school, even without the consent of the local authorities.[2] The council remained unimpressed. It pointed out that the authorities could only make the school into a Roman Catholic one once it had been opened. Therefore, the council refused to hand over the brand-new buildings for their use as a school. To the council, this also settled the question of the Bürgerschule, since its Protestant character was tied to the opening of the Roman Catholic elementary school in the district. And, for a time, the council even refused to pay the salaries of teachers of the Bürgerschule who did not declare their support for non-denominational schools.[3]

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1 IfSG AS 1173 fos. 3-7. Printed documents on confessional schooling in Frankfurt, October-December 1882.

2 Anderhub, Verwaltung, p. 242.

3 IfSG AS 1173 fo. 20. School commission of the city council on the proposed budget of 1885/86, March 1885.

Ultimately, this was a conflict that the council could not win, particularly because it did not enjoy the full support of the Magistrat which in its dual function as a local body and as an administrative arm of the state was rather less keen on a head-on confrontation with the state authorities.[1] Once the Magistrat had managed to convince the council that its refusal to grant teachers' pay and to open a primary school in an area where it was badly needed was dangerously close to being illegal and pointless,[2] the council had no option but to give in. However, principle had to be maintained. From now on, each annual budget passed by the council contained the amendment first introduced on 2 March 1886 that the funding of the Bornheim and other denominational schools in no way implied an acceptance or permission of denominational schooling in Frankfurt. This result was more of a compromise than a defeat. For whereas the city could no longer take its autonomy on educational matters for granted, the Prussian state had to concede that the recently established non-denominational schools would be there to stay. During the course of the conflict in the early 1880s it had to promise that non-denominational schools, once thus established, would not be changed in character.[3] Subsequently, before the opening of every school a tussle ensued between the city council, the school administration in Wiesbaden and the Roman Catholic parishes in Frankfurt to determine the confessional character of the new school. With regard to existing schools, the council took full advantage of Wiesbaden's promise not to change the character of any non-denominational school. Thus, the council would usually enlarge a non-denominational school so that it became a Doppelschule, that is a school in which there were two separate classes in every year. If it was the case that the old school building became too small in the process, the council would grant new funds for another building which then functioned as an

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1 On the conflict between the council (through its school commission) and the Magistrat, see, for example, IfSG AS 1173 fos. 15-17. School commission to Magistrat on a Magistrat proposal of 9.1.1885. IfSG AS 1173 fo. 23. Magistrat to city council, 20.3.1885.

2 IfGS AS 1173 fo. 23. Magistrat report, 20.3.1885. IfGS AS 1173 fos. 44-8. Magistrat to city council, 24.5.1886. IfGS AS 1173 fos. 49-52. School Commission to Magistrat, 23.12.1886.

3 This dispute is also described in Anderhub, Verwaltung, pp. 238-42.

extension of the old school. After a few years, this new wing would become a separate new school, and only then could Wiesbaden step in to transform the school into a denominational one. However, the Prussian authorities were now presented with a fait accompli, so that in practice they could do little to avert the non-denominational character of the new school. By contrast, the council usually refused any funds for denominational schools to become a Doppelschule, as it was usually careful to restrict their school size to minimal levels.[1] Another favourite method employed by the city council was that of stalling requests from Wiesbaden for as long as possible, and never giving out more information than absolutely requested. This went so far that the Roman Catholic parish council even sent a letter to the minister for education urging the authorities there in future only to communicate to the Frankfurt city council by telegraph, to speed up communication between the parties involved.[2] Through the tactics thus employed, definite orders by Wiesbaden, for example for the establishment of more denominational classes,[3] sometimes arrived after the start of the new academic year, by which time they had become redundant.

It is striking that in the two decades that followed the resolution of the original dispute with the Wiesbaden authorities, the city council more often than not got its way against the efforts of Roman Catholic parish councils, the administration in Wiesbaden and, at times, even the Magistrat (though this was rare). In the two decades from 1886 to 1906, in Frankfurt itself, 17 out of 19 schools which were founded during this period were non-denominational, and

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1 This method is described, for example, in J. A. Kunz, Entstehung und Durchführung des Simultanschulwesens in Frankfurt a. M. (Frankfurt, 1927), pp. 5-9. By 1909, all single sex non-denominational schools in Frankfurt had at least two classes in every year (i.e. a total of at least 16 classes), whereas all those that were denominational had a single tier of classes (i.e. a total of 8 classes). Führer durch das Städtische Schulwesen von Frankfurt am Main., ed. Städtische Schulbehörden (Frankfurt, 1909), p. 10.

2 See the complaint of the Roman Catholic Parish Council to the Prussian minister for education, 18 April 1896, in IfSG AS 1173 fos. 104-9.

3 Actually, in this instance the council had successfully denied Wiesbaden the right to impose the ad hoc institution of new denominational classes. For this controversy, see IfSG AS 1173 fos. 93-111.

only two schools were Roman Catholic.[1] The second of these had been opened in 1906, eleven years or so after the city had been prompted to do so by the ministry for education in Berlin.[2] The Frankfurt liberals' success in the enforcement of their ideal of non-denominational education is very striking, and it is all the more remarkable when considered in the context of the fate of non-denominational education elsewhere in Prussia. In the years 1886 to 1906, about 90% of Roman Catholic and 95% of Protestant children received their education in denominational schools in Prussia.[3] By 1906, out of 37,761 publicly funded primary schools, only 900 were non-denominational. These non-denominational schools were concentrated in a few pockets of the kingdom, including 119 in the governmental district of Wiesbaden which included the Duchy of Nassau, where non-denominational schools continued to be the norm throughout the period of the Empire.[4] Considering how few non-denominational schools had survived by 1906, particularly in areas where there had been no tradition of them before the Kulturkampf, the establishment of such a comprehensive system of non-denominational primary schools in Frankfurt is an extraordinary achievement of Frankfurt liberal policy.

This result could only be brought about by unanimous and concerted liberal action. Among liberals, there was disagreement about how far non-denominationalism should go. Liberals on the right aimed at preserving the current status of Frankfurt's non-denominational schools in which children of all denominations were taught in the same classroom, except for religious education, which would still be denominational.[5] Most Frankfurt left-liberals, on the other

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[1] The city of Frankfurt did, however, have to accept the denominational character of the schools in those areas which were incorporated into the city in 1895 and 1900 respectively. Of nine such schools, six were denominational (four were Protestant and two Roman Catholic) and only three were non-denominational. These figures have been compiled from the table in Führer durch das Städtische Schulwesen, pp. 10-11.

[2] See the letter from the prussian minister for education from 29 June 1895 to Wiesbaden, which was then forwarded to the city. IfSG AS 1173 fos. 76 ff.. According to Kunz, the legitimacy of the Roman Catholic claim for the building of this school in the west of the city had been recognised by the ministry as early as 1883. Kunz, Entstehung, p. 9.

[3] Gizycki, 'Das Volksschulwesen', pp. 60-1. Frank- Michael Kuhlemann, 'Niedere Schulen', p. 185.

[4] E. Loening, 'Die Unterhaltung der öffentlichen Volksschulen und die Schulverbände in Preussen', JöR, iii (1909), pp. 68-138, here p. 110.

[5] See the affirmation at a meeting of Frankfurt's National Liberal party that they were not against religion as such, but that they merely wanted religion to take its rightful place in education. Frankfurter Journal, 2.2.1892 (Abendblatt), also in IfSG S2/381.

hand, increasingly saw the current denominational schools as a first step towards a school where religion would be excluded from the classroom altogether.[1] The latter view was also taken unanimously by the SPD, which espoused the liberal view that religious influence on schools impeded progress and hindered workers from improving their situation. Naturally, it was also very suspicious of denominational primary education which was regarded by the Prussian government as a bulwark against socialism.[2]

These differences were, however, secondary in the fight against the Prussian school authorities, and to achieve their aims as far as possible the liberal parties rallied around the lowest common denominator, the National Liberal view of denominational schools. So important was this issue to Frankfurt liberals that this became a party-political issue right from the start. Already in 1882, the Frankfurt Democrats vowed not to nominate any candidate who had not committed himself against denominational schooling.[3] Usually, it was difficult for the left-liberals to strike any political capital out of their resolute stance, except perhaps on occasions when the National Liberals accepted the support of the Centre Party in local council elections such as in 1898.[4] The policy of non-denominational education was, therefore, the one issue around which Frankfurt liberals of all parties could unite. It is also noteworthy that this issue offers another example of the degree of co-operation which was possible - and which, indeed, occurred - between liberal and Social Democrat councillors inside the council. On 15 March 1906 the SPD councillors introduced a motion condemning the clauses on denominational schooling of the 1906 School Bill which had just been passed by the parliamentary school commission. Also, the motion afforded a note of thanks to the city's two liberal deputies for their efforts at opposing the bill. In the ensuing council debate, the city's

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1 See, for example, the speech by Karl Funck at a Progressive Liberal meeting, 13.12.1889. HStAW 407 n. 150[1] fo. 294. See also Müller, Aufklärungen, pp. 16-19.

2 M. Quarck, Kommunale Schulpolitik. Ein Führer durch die Gemeindetätigkeit auf dem Gebiete der Volksschule (Berlin, 1906), pp. 67-70.

3 Frankfurter Zeitung, 22.11.1882 (Abendblatt).

4 On the other hand, Chapter Three has shown that this did not prevent the left-liberals from incurring heavy losses against the coalition of National Liberals, Mittelstand and Centre Party.

leading opponent of non-denominational education, the independent councillor Trommershausen, attempted to expose this motion as an SPD effort to gain the lead in the Frankfurt school debate. But to liberals, this argument did not count. The Progressive Liberal councillor Goll pointed out that on this matter, all allies were welcome, regardless from whence they came. Quarck's motion was carried by a large majority of SPD and liberal votes.[1]

If the motives that have been outlined above can explain why Frankfurt liberals, like their liberal counterparts elsewhere, favoured non-denominational education during the period of the Kulturkampf, it is doubtful that these alone are sufficient to explain the sheer resolve and determination of Frankfurt liberals to fight for the principle of non-denominational education, in blatant opposition to the policies of the Prussian ministry of education after 1879. In fact, there was one particular reason which strengthened Frankfurt liberal resolve to fight against denominational schools more than any other motive, and this was the overwhelming influence over Frankfurt liberalism exercised by the city's Jewish citizens.

Frankfurt was the German city with the highest proportion of Jews among its inhabitants. In 1871, 10,000 Jews lived in the city, making up 11% of the population. That figure declined marginally to 9.7% by 1890,[2] and, though as a result of subsequent incorporations of rural and industrial suburbs as well as of largely non-Jewish immigration, it shrank to a still considerable 6.3% in 1910.[3] Jews in Frankfurt were not just numerically very strong, but they were also highly self-conscious and articulate, perhaps the natural result of the incessant debate about emancipation during the first half of the nineteenth century in which full emancipation had been granted twice (1811 and 1848) before being taken away again. From the late eighteenth century Frankfurt had developed into a centre for Jewish reform, epitomised by the

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1 MPS, 15.3.1906, § 298, pp. 139-40. In contrast, note Quarck's public rhetoric of condemnation of lax liberal policy on the issue in Quarck, Kommunale Schulpolitik, pp. 71-2.

2 Statistisches Handbuch der Stadt Frankfurt am Main, ed. Statistisches Amt (Frankfurt, 1907), p. 37.

3 Statistische Jahresübersichten (1912), p. 21.

development of the Philanthropin in its quest for 'humanism and enlightenment'[1] outlined above. This development did not meet with universal acclaim, so that in 1851 a small group of orthodox Jews formed a breakaway Jewish community, the Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft.[2] Their new rabbi, Samson Raphael Hirsch, became the leading figure in German Jewish modern orthodoxy,[3] not least because of his foundation, in 1853, of the very successful orthodox counterpart to the Philanthropin, the Realschule der Israelitischen Religionsgesellschaft, an orthodox Jewish secondary modern school.[4] Finally, Frankfurt Jewish self-consciousness was heightened further by the fact that tensions ran high between the mainstream reformist Jewish community and the breakaway Jewish orthodox society. In 1869, during the debate about the future relationship between the Jewish schools and the city administration, the Jewish orthodox sect found it necessary to remind the council that for more than half a century before the actual split, its members had been 'persecuted' and 'suppressed' by the 'fanaticism' of the reformist majority. As a result, it argued that the split between the two communities was now much deeper and more divisive than those between the various Christian denominations.[5]

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1 F. Michel, 'Jahrhundertfeier der Emanzipation der jüdischen Bewohner Frankfurts', in Philanthropin. Realschule und Lyzeum der israelitischen Gemeinde zu Frankfurt a. M.. Programm Ostern 1912 (Frankfurt, 1912), pp. 35-49, here p. 48.

2 In general, see R. Liberles, Religious Conflict in Social Context. The Resurgence of Orthodox Judaism in Frankfurt am Main 1838-1877 (Westport/London, 1985).

3 In fact, Hirsch was the founder of German Jewish modern orthodoxy. M. A. Kaplan, The Making of the Jewish Middle Class. Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany (New York/Oxford, 1991), p. 146. Liberles, Religious Conflict, p. 18

4 The school was successful at least as far as numbers were concerned. It had been founded with 84 students, and five years later that number had increased to almost 200. Festschrift zur Jubiläumsfeier des 50 Jährigen Bestehens der Unterrichtsanstalten der Israelitischen Religionsgesellschaft zu Frankfurt a. M. (Frankfurt, 1903).

5 Declaration of the Council of the Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft from 11 February 1868, in MPS 1869, §74. In 1876 Rabbi Hirsch demanded a separate cemetery for the Jewish orthodox community with the words 'Lieber in Sachsenhausen christlich beerdigt sein, als zusammen mit jenen.' ('Better to be buried Christian in the suburb of Sachsenhausen than be buried with those [the reformist Jews])'. In P. Arnsberg, Die Geschichte der Frankfurter Juden seit der Französischen Revolution (Darmstadt, 1983), i. 853. On the split between the two Jewish communities, see 'An den Hohen Senat der freien Stadt Frankfurt auf die hochverehrlichen Rathschlüsse vom 15. Januar und 13. April 1858. Gehorsamster Bericht und Bitte von Seiten des Vorstandes der israelitischen Gemeinde dahier. Das Verhältnis der Mitglieder der Religionsgesellschaft zur israelitischen Gemeinde betreffend.', in IfSG AS 1.312 fos. 63-73.

Ralf Roth argues with particular reference to 1848 that there was in practice little difference between the various denominations (in which he includes the Jews) with regard to their involvement in the liberal movement, as they were active as liberals in the Constituierende Versammlung roughly in proportion to their strength in the population.[1] More generally, Roth concludes that Frankfurt liberalism was sustained by considerable, though by no means exclusive, support from the confessional minorities, i.e. Jews, Calvinists and Roman Catholics, more or less throughout the years 1814-1914.[2]

Roth's argument may be generally true for the period before 1866, and it may be true that a large number of members of the different parish councils or heads of the Jewish communities were liberals. However, for the period after 1866, Roth's argument that liberalism was sustained by all denominations in roughly equal measures needs further qualification by looking at the influence of the various faiths on liberalism itself. During the period 1866 to 1914, particularly Frankfurt left-liberals, but also National Liberals, were overwhelmingly influenced by Jews. As far as the Prussian authorities were concerned, for example, Frankfurt left-liberals and Jews were synonymous.[3] In 1881, the Frankfurt police president noted with regret that Sonnemann's election to the Reichstag had been made possible through the unanimous support of Frankfurt Jews.[4] But in the wider public, too, left-liberals were identified with the Frankfurt Jewish community, a perception which in the early years the Democrats even encouraged publicly,[5] and which was strengthened by the fact that some of the left-liberals' most visible public figures such as Sonnemann and Geiger, were Jewish. At an election meeting of the Mittelstand parties in 1904, for example, the reporter of Sonnemann's Kleine Presse was thrown out at the start of the proceedings with the universal chorus of

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1 Roth, 'Liberalismus', p. 72.

2 Roth, 'Liberalismus', pp. 71-8.

3 See, for example, the Prussian report that the only ones not to cheer the current Prussian victories against France were the 'Jews', a statement that equates ostensible Jewish hostility towards Prussia directly with that of the city's Democrats. HStAW 405 n. 1065 fos. 268-9. Zeitungsbericht, 19.11.1870.

4 HStAW 405 n. 1072 fos. 292-3. Zeitungsbericht, 12.12.1881.

5 See the anonymous letter 'Zur Stadtverordnetenwahl' in Frankfurter Zeitung, 23.11.1870 (1. Blatt).

'schmeiße 'mer 'n 'naus, den Juddebub', even though the reporter himself was Protestant.[1] To the great irritation of the Frankfurter Zeitung, even the Protestant party which had been set up to defend denominational schooling in alliance with the Mittelstand came to refer to the left-liberals as the 'jüdisch-demokratisch-fortschrittliche Partei'.[2]

It appears, however, that public perceptions about the Jewish character of the city's left-liberals were largely correct. For it is not just that so many prominent left-liberals were Jewish, or that the city's left-liberal press was largely in Jewish hands,[3] but it also seems that the most active members at the grassroots were of that faith. Time and again the Prussian police officer's report on the regular Democrat party meetings showed that the officer present was struck by the number of Jews present. At an election rally for the Imperial parliament in 1890, the officer noted that the audience consisted of 450 to 500 Jews.[4] While this particular example may be more an example for the indiscriminate identification by the Prussian authorities of Jews and Democrats, reports of other meetings were more specific. At a meeting in 1884, of the 308 men present, most were Jewish,[5] while at another meeting the officer present was also struck by the fact that the 110 people present were 'almost exclusively Jews'.[6] At another gathering, in 1879, the officer present was even more specific, as he reported that the meeting in question was attended by nine Christians and 43 Jews.[7]

It has been generally accepted that during the Empire Jews had a natural tendency to support liberalism, and left-liberalism in particular, at first because of a genuine convergence of aims, and then more for want of a better alternative.[8] The fact that the unusually large group of

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1 'Let's throw him out, the Jewish rogue'. Frankfurter Zeitung, 6.11.1904 (Drittes Morgenblatt).

2 The 'Jewish Democratic Progressive Party'. Frankfurter Zeitung, 29.11.1904 (3. Morgenblatt).

3 On the importance of the Frankfurter Zeitung to German Jewry, see E. Kahn, 'The Frankfurter Zeitung', YLBI, ii (1957), 228-35.

4 HStAW 407, n. 161[1] fo. 107. Democratic Association meeting, 3.2.1890.

5 HStAW 407 n. 138[3] fo. 108. Democratic Association meeting, 13.10.1884.

6 HStAW 407 n. 138[2] fos. 68-72. Democratic Association meeting, 14.10.1882

7 HStAW 407 n. 138[1] fo. 108. Democratic Association meeting, 17.11.1879. Interestingly, the Progressive Liberals appear to have been identified with Frankfurt's Jewry in similar ways and to a similar degree. See, for example, HStAW 407 n. 150[1] fos. 159-61. Progressive Liberal meeting, 29.3.1884. See also the following report in HStAW 407 n. 150[1] fo. 172.

8 P. Pulzer, Jews and the German State. The Political History of a Minority, 1848-1933 (Oxford,

Frankfurt Jews supported, and were active in, the liberal parties there is relatively unsurprising given that these were the only political parties that existed apart from the Mittelstand groups from the 1890s with anti-Semitic tendencies.[1] What is rather more interesting is not only the quality of the Jewish support in that it provided both many leading figures and many grass-roots activists who regularly discussed official party policy at the frequent party gatherings. Rather, it is clear that the Jewish sections of the Frankfurt population had a crucial influence on the shaping of liberal party policy in the city. This can be shown on a number of issues. The issue of Sunday closing, for example, which was important in local politics in Frankfurt and elsewhere, brought Frankfurt left-liberals into particular disarray. It was a matter of great concern especially for practising Jews, because Sunday closing meant Jewish shopkeepers would have to keep their shop closed on Sunday on top of the Shabbat. The ambiguity of left-liberals on this issue stemmed from the fact that opposition to Sunday trading would lose them considerable Mittelstand support. By contrast, it is the liberals' policy on education, and their insistence on non-denominational education in particular, which was most clearly and successfully influenced by their Jewish supporters.

The Jewish communities were connected with the issue of non-denominational schooling in two ways. First, it was argued by the local Roman Catholic hierarchy that, since the Jews were freely allowed to run their own schools, the Roman Catholic church should be allowed to do so, too. But to liberals, this was precisely the point. After centuries of ill-treatment by the Frankfurters, fairness demanded that if Jews were required to pay for their own schools, then the Roman Catholics should have to do so, too. The city did not mind Roman Catholic

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1992), pp. 88-90, 121-47. W. E. Mosse notes that even the Jewish economic élite, most of whom were conservative before 1868, gradually shifted towards liberalism as they became unwelcome in an increasing number of parties. W. E. Mosse, The German-Jewish Economic Elite 1820-1935. A Socio-Cultural Profile (Oxford, 1989), pp. 226-32.

[1] For the similar case of the city state of Hamburg, where the debates about Jewish emancipation 1860/1864 were very similar to those in Frankfurt, and where Jews were also predominantly Jewish, see H. Krohn, Die Juden in Hamburg. Die Politische, Soziale und kulturelle Entwicklung einer jüdischen Großstadtgemeinde nach der Emanzipation (Hamburg, 1974).

schools as such, so long as these schools were paid for by the Roman Catholic church, and not by the city.[1] In response, Roman Catholic advocates tried to show how they, in turn, were disadvantaged by the city vis-à-vis the Jews,[2] for example in the provision of religious education in non-denominational schools, or by the anti-Catholic, but never anti-Jewish, content of some of the textbooks used there.[3]

There was another way in which Jews influenced the debate about education, and this was really the heart of the matter. For in virtually any liberal public statement on the issue, be it in the council, at election rallies or at party meetings, it was emphasised how non-denominational education was instrumental in creating a tolerant society. As soon as non-denominational education became challenged by the Prussian authorities in the early 1880s, for example, the left-liberal election manifesto of 1882 called for a defence of the non-denominational system so that the 'liberal spirit, the spirit of religious tolerance and equality, which has always had a home in Frankfurt' might continue to prevail.[4] Clearly, this implied primarily a liberal commitment to combat anti-Semitism, and very often, this was expressly stated at the respective meetings.

The strength of anti-Semitic feeling in Frankfurt is not quite clear. In her study of anti-Semitism in Frankfurt, Inge Schlotzhauer shows that, with a number of notable exceptions, political anti-Semitism was never a viable political force in Frankfurt politics and was, for most of the time, dependent on outside help for its survival.[5] Furthermore, anti-Semitic groups in Frankfurt were somewhat ambiguous in their anti-Semitism. In 1908 the Mittelstand, which included the city's most engaged anti-Semite, Hermann Laas, among its

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1 See, for example, councillor Wedel in MPS, 1906, §298. Frankfurter Zeitung, 28.11.1904 (Morgenblatt). Karl Funck in HStAW 407 n. 161[4] fo. 166. Joint meeting of the Democratic and Progressive Associations, 2.11.1903.

2 See in general E. F. A. Münzenberger, Die Entwicklung des Frankfurter Schulwesens im letzten Jahrzehnt (2nd. edn., Frankfurt, 1880), pp. 62-75. Ernst Münzenberger was the resident Roman Catholic priest of the central Frankfurt parish (Stadtpfarrer), between 1871 and 1890.

3 Münzenberger, Der stille Culturkampf, pp. 14, 22.

4 Frankfurter Zeitung, 23.11.1882 (Abendblatt).

5 I. Schlotzhauer, Ideologie und Organisation des politischen Antisemitismus in Frankfurt am Main 1880-1914 (Frankfurt, 1989).

ranks, successfully nominated the practising Jew Josef Fromm for the Ostend ward where the electorate was 35% Jewish.[1] And there are other indications which show that anti-Semitism in Frankfurt was relatively restrained. After all, despite considerable controversy, Germany's first statue of Heinrich Heine was erected in Frankfurt in 1913.[2] In his memoirs, Selmar Spier wrote of his teenage years in Frankfurt during the 1900s that the tension within the Jewish community, between orthodox Jews living in the East of the city (close to the synagogue) and reformist Jews aspiring to live with the gentile social élite in the West end of the city, was itself much greater that any tension between Jews and gentiles.[3] And such an assessment would be entirely congruent with the Jewish orthodox community's plea in 1868 outlined above, that the tensions within the Jewish community were greater than those between Christian denominations.

Nonetheless, it would be surprising if there was no anti-Semitism in the city with the highest proportion of Jewish inhabitants in Germany. After all, until 1864 anti-Jewish feeling was still strong enough to prevent full Jewish emancipation, though this was largely for economic reasons.[4] If there are personal accounts which testify for the absence of anti-Semitism in Frankfurt, there are also those which claim the opposite. In Wilhelmine Frankfurt there was a story current which, to contemporaries, epitomised Frankfurt peculiarity, but which is equally revealing about attitudes towards Jews in Frankfurt. A local builder threw a brick at a Jew who came from outside Frankfurt. The Jew ducked, and the brick flew past him and

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1 P. Arnsberg, Geschichte, ii. 484. It is equally telling, however, that Fromm soon moved over to join the Progressive People's Party in the council.

2 Scholtzhauer, Ideologie, pp. 263-94.

3 S. Spier, Vor 1914. Erinnerungen an Frankfurt geschrieben in Israel (2nd edn., Frankfurt, 1968), pp. 39, 56-7, 83.

4 For a description of the overwhelming popular hostility towards Jews in Frankfurt during the first decades of the ninteenth century as reflected in the curtailment of Jewish rights after 1815, see I. Schlotzhauer, 'Die bürgerliche Gleichstellung der Frankfurter Juden im Urteil zeitgenössischer Schriften', JHL, xxxiv (1984), 129-62. Preissler, Frühantisemitismus. Note that Preissler's title of 'early anti-Semitism', though, is misleading, as he himself shows that this form of anti-Jewishness was not so much shaped by any ideology or programme, but was determined by fears of economic rivalry among particular trades and professions threatened by Jewish competition. On the distinction between this earlier anti-Jewishness and anti-Semitism which developed from the 1870s, see P. Pulzer, The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria (2nd edn., London, 1988), esp. p. ix.

destroyed a window pane. The Jew brought the matter to court, but the official there (Amtmann) declared

> Erschtens ämol hawwe mers mit eme Judd zu dhu; un sogar mit eme auswärtige Judd. Was hat sich dann der Judd aach zu bicke. Hett der sich net gebickt, do wer die Scheib heut noch ganz. Do werd der Judd in der Sach gestroft.[1]

Furthermore, despite Schlotzenhauer's conclusions she herself devotes much of her analysis to the 'Deutscher Hof' hotel, whose notoriety derived from the fact that it was perhaps Germany's only 'Jew-free hotel'.[2] The fact that the hotel was a great commercial success,[3] and that its proprietor, Hermann Laas, was a city councillor from 1905 to 1910 indicates that, however much it was hidden behind other Mittelstand concerns, there was a strong anti-Semitic undercurrent among sections of the Frankfurt population.[4] Moreover, in practice the Frankfurt liberals had to take account of this undercurrent in their political considerations. Left-liberals in the city had to accept that the successful capture of the Reichstag seat in the 1907 election was only made possible because the Democrats had consciously nominated a Christian, rather than Jewish, candidate in order to avoid opposition from anti-Semitic circles in the run-off elections.[5] Therefore, even if anti-Semitism largely remained politically and socially unacceptable throughout the period, there was a considerable current of anti-Semitic feeling in Frankfurt as in other cities of the Empire, which Frankfurt liberals had every reason to be extremely concerned about, particularly since so many of them were Jewish themselves.[6] To Frankfurt liberals, the fight against denominational schools was the centrepiece of their fight against anti-Semitism. Thus, they emphasised that the denominational peace and

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1 'First of all, we are dealing with a Jew; and even with a Jew from out of Frankfurt. What did the Jew have to duck for? Had he not ducked, the window pane would still be in one piece. So the Jew will be punished in this matter.'. G. W. Pietzsch, 'Erinnerungen eines Lehrers', ed. by W. Klötzer, AFGK, xlix (1965), pp. 5-78, here p. 35.

2 Schlotzhauer, Ideologie, pp. 192 ff., here p. 208.

3 Schlotzhauer, Ideologie, pp. 205-6.

4 For an example of the quite considerable anti-Semitic literature on Frankfurt, see «Germanicus», Die Frankfurter Juden und die Aufsaugung des Volkswohlstandes (Leipzig, 1890). Anti-Semitic pamphlets and reports of anti-Semitism in Frankfurt are in HStAW 407 n. 187.

5 Pulzer, Jews, pp. 186-7.

6 For a different interpretation which emphasises the 'largely successful political and social integration of the Jewish population', see Rohr, 'Kommunaler Liberalismus', p.p. 169-70. Roth, 'Liberalismus', pp. 72-4.

harmony which existed in Frankfurt was the result of the non-denominational school system. By contrast, denominational schooling was held responsible for denominational rifts, the Kulturkampf and anti-Semitism.[1] The emotiveness with which left-liberals fought denominational schooling as a major contributor to anti-Semitism is best illustrated by a speech of the common ~~left-liberal~~ Democratic and Progressive Liberal candidate for the Prussian Chamber of Deputies in 1882, Josef Stern, himself one of the editors of the Frankfurter Zeitung. Highlighting the importance of non-denominational schooling, Stern continued:

> Hiermit hänge auch die Judenfrage zusammen. Diese sei nicht ein bloßes Produkt einiger Hetzer, sondern die Folge der unduldsamen Ausnahmegesetze, die wir seit 10 Jahren haben, seit die Majorität sich über die Rechte der Minorität hinauszusetzen wagte.... Er erzählte, wie ein jüdischer Krüppel aus den Freiheitskriegen trotz des königlichen Aufrufs von 1813 keine Stellung erhielt, und wie dessen Sohn, der auf Grund der Verfassung studirte, den Schein als preußischer Oberlehrer eines Gymnasiums in der Tasche hatte, aber als Jude nirgends eine Anstellung finden konnte. Dies war im Jahre 1862. Ersterer sei des Redners Vater, der zweite er selbst gewesen. Daß er nach solchen Erfahrungen nicht blos für seine Glaubensgenossen, sondern auch für das gute Recht aller Stände und Konfessionen eintreten werde, deß könne man sicher sein. (Stürmischer Beifall)[2]

What emerges from these examples is that Frankfurt left-liberals led such a determined fight against the excesses of the Kulturkampf not just out of principle,[3] but because of an acute awareness of the implications excessive state power might have on their Jewish supporters.[4] And, for precisely the same reason, they fought against denominational schooling with the

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1 Karl Funck in HStAW 407 n. 161[1] fo. 247. Joint public meeting of the Progressive and Democratic Associations, 3.1.1892.

2 'This was also tied to the Jewish question. This was not merely the work of a few rabble-rousers, but the result of the intolerable laws of exception, which we have had for ten years, ever since the majority dared to disregard the rights of the minority.... He told how a Jewish cripple from the wars of liberation was unable to find employment despite the royal proclamation of 1813, and how his son, who studied on the basis of the constitution, had the qualifications of a head teacher at a grammar school (Gymnasium) in his pocket, but as a Jew was unable to find employment anywhere. The former had been the speaker's father, the latter he himself.... One could be certain that, after such experiences, he would fight not only for his fellow Jews, but for the just rights of all estates and denominations. (rapturous applause)' Frankfurter Zeitung, 17.10.1882, in HStAW 407 n. 138[2] fo. 76.

3 Adolf Kullmann, 'Die Stellungnahme der Frankfurter Zeitung zum Kulturkampf', esp. pp. 14-5.

4 For one of the few modern studies which recognise the link between the Kulturkampf and anti-Semitism, see U. Tal, Christians and Jews in Germany. Religion, Politics and Ideology in the Second Reich, 1870-1914 (Ithaca, 1975).

same stubbornness and resilience. Denominationalism and anti-Semitism became inextricably linked to Ultramontanism, and it came as no surprise to left-liberals when in 1902 the (Jewish) Progressive Liberal Geiger complained of an uninhibited, impertinent use of anti-Semitic language at Centre Party meetings of a quality which had thus far been unprecedented in Frankfurt.[1]

The resolution and the unanimity of the Frankfurt liberals' fight against the Prussian authorities and the Roman Catholic Church[2] derived to a crucial degree from the Jewish influence in Frankfurt liberalism, and its resulting concern about the dangers of anti-Semitism. In a German environment which was increasingly receptive to anti-Semitic ideas from the 1880s onwards,[3] it became one of the principal goals of Frankfurt liberals to ensure that at least the city of Frankfurt would be, and remain, a cradle of tolerance and religious equality.[4] Above all, therefore, in Frankfurt the liberals' fight against denominational schooling was intimately connected to their fight against anti-Semitism, which was itself of existential concern to the strong Jewish support of Frankfurt liberalism.

Since Frankfurt was the city with the highest proportion of Jewish inhabitants in Germany, it is safe to assume that the strength of Jewish influence over liberal politics was unusual.[5] Therefore, at least the degree to which the liberals' stance on non-denominational education was influenced by Jewish concerns was likely to be peculiar to Frankfurt, even if Jews undoubtedly played a significant part in local politics in other big cities such as Berlin or

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 11.11.1902 (3. Morgenblatt).

2 Protestant calls for denominational Protestant schooling arose only around the turn of the century.

3 On the strength of the anti-Semitic movement in neighbouring Hesse, see White, The Splintered Party, pp. 134-47.

4 The left-liberal 1904 election manifesto is another good example of how religious harmony was considered by Frankfurt liberals to be the essence of the common weal. Non-denominational education for the young would ensure that this ideal would be preserved for future generations. Frankfurter Zeitung, 6.11.1904 (1. Morgenblatt).

5 At the same time, Manfred Hettling has shown for another city with an influential and disproportionally large Jewish community that in Breslau Jews also constituted the 'core group' of liberalism. Hettling, 'Von der Hochburg zur Wagenburg', pp. 253-76, esp. pp. 268-74.

Breslau. There was another major motive for the Frankfurt liberals' resistance to Prussian efforts at reintroducing denominational education in the city, but in this respect Frankfurt liberals were less unusual. For in Frankfurt as anywhere else, educational battles between the city and the state struck at the heart of another central liberal concern, that of local self-government. Frankfurt liberals declared that they were happy to bear the tremendous financial burdens which education imposed upon the local budget, but at the very least they demanded a say in how their schools were run.[1] In recent years, Frankfurt schools had flourished because of the principle of self-government, so while nobody would challenge the supervisory role of the state it was clear that the quality of education in Frankfurt was directly linked to the amount of self-government left to Frankfurt on educational matters.[2] Right- and left-liberals agreed in their verdict on the link between local self-government and education even if, at times, left-liberal rhetoric was somewhat stronger as it identified the state's interference in favour of denominational schooling as part of a bid for unbridled state power, a return to the 'Caesarism of Rome'.[3] State intervention was decried as an 'act of violence',[4] and threats of interference by the ministry 'amounted to rape'.[5]

In their emphasis on the intimate connection between education and local self-government Frankfurt Liberals were by no means the exception. In his speech to mark the 100th anniversary of the Prussian city ordinance of 1808, the Mayor of Halle, Richard Robert Rive put forward this view succinctly. Speaking about the local school in general, he argued that:

> Eigenartig wirkt ihr Bild im Rahmen der Selbstverwaltung. Die Rechte der Selbstverwaltung sind in ihr am wenigsten zur Entwickelung gekommen, das Können der Selbstverwaltung aber feiert in ihr seinen stolzesten Triumph. Materielle Opferfreudigkeit und ideale Begeisterung haben die Städte

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1 Frankfurter Journal, 2.2.1892 (Abendblatt), also in IfSG S2/381.

2 See the speech by the Frankfurt Stadtrat responsible for school affairs, Otto Grimm, on the eve of his by-election victory to the Prussian Chamber of Deputies in Frankfurter Journal 17.12.1891 (Beilage), also in IfSG S2/381. This point was also made by the Democrat Heinrich Rößler in Frankfurter Zeitung, 14.11.1882 (Abendblatt).

3 HStAW 407 n. 161³ fo. 241. Democrat deputy Sänger on 14 October 1900.

4 HStAW 407 n. 161³ fo. 234. Democrat deputy Sänger on 11 April 1900.

5 Democrat councillor Wedel in MPS, 1908, §168, p. 194.

> emporgetragen, um ungeachtet aller formalen Schranken das städtische Bildungswesen zur vornehmsten Schöpfung der Kultur zu machen.[1]

Rive was not alone in this view. When he had elaborated this particular line of argument at a previous meeting of the Prussian city congress in 1904, his view had been supported by a near unanimous vote (one delegate was opposed, none abstained).[2]

At another conference of the Prussian city congress in 1906 to discuss the Prussian finance bill for education (Schuldotationsgesetz), the Mayor of Breslau emphasised the unique position of education in local self-government. At a time of social, political and religious strife, education was the one issue over which local parties could unite in their endeavour to achieve the highest standards.[3] Even the rather more conservative Mayor of Kiel, Fuß, agreed. The state apparently did not recognise that the cities were not mere administrative units of the state, but that they were 'historisch gewordene individuelle Organe' (historically developed individual organs) whose growth would be hampered through undue state interference, to the detriment of the state itself.[4]

At the same time, the concern of German liberals in the cities for self-government with regard to education did not arise out of an obsession with Selbstverwaltung for its own sake. Concluding his views on the importance of self-government in education in 1908, Rive claimed:

> So durchdringt städtische Kulturpflege die ganze Lebenssphäre des Volkes. Erziehung der Jugend für das Leben, lebendige Verwirklichung der Bildungsideale, Hebung des Volkes zu sittlicher, geistiger und wirtschaftlicher Kraft und über allem ein frischer Hauch ewig junger, echter Kunst, das ist der soziale und ideale Gehalt städtischer Bildungsarbeit.[5]

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1 'Its image is a peculiar one within the framework of self-government. In it the rights of self-government have been developed the least, yet in it the ability of self-government celebrates its proudest triumph. The cities have upheld material generosity and idealistic enthusiasm in order to make urban education into the finest creation of culture, notwithstanding all formal limitations.' R. R. Rive, 'Die Entwicklung der preußischen Städte seit dem Erlaß der Städteordnung von 1808', in Verhandlungen des Sechsten Preußischen Städtetages am 5. und 6. Oktober 1908 zu Königsberg (Königsberg, 1908), pp. 29-36, here pp. 34-5.

2 For Rive's speech, see Verhandlungen des Vierten allgemeinen Preußischen Städtetages am 6. und 7. Dezember 1904 zu Berlin (Berlin, 1905), pp. 24-8. For the vote on the motions based on Rive's talk, see p. 35.

3 Verhandlungen des Fünften allgemeinen Preußischen Städtetages am 15. Januar 1906 zu Berlin (Berlin, 1906), p. 28.

4 Verhandlungen des Fünften Preußischen Städtetages (1906), p. 22.

5 'Thus the municipal development of culture permeates the entire life of the people. Education of the

This view was supplemented, also to universal acclaim, by the Mayor of Breslau, who emphasized:

> es gibt keine Aufgabe, die die Menschen, die in der Gemeinde für die Gemeinde arbeiten, so zu Opfern veranlaßt und daher ihre Opferfreudigkeit so schult und übt, wie eben die Schulverwaltung. Die guten Wirkungen für Staat, Gemeinde und Schule, für Lehrer und Schüler liegen vor Augen.[1]

Local school administration epitomised, therefore, the true values of self-government, for not only did it fulfil its immediate task, the most efficient and effective imparting of knowledge, but it would ultimately lead to the moral and spiritual improvement of the community. Local self-government in education alone could lead the individual towards the higher values of true culture, morality and self-sacrifice. This was in complete agreement with the faith which Frankfurt liberals placed in the local administration of education. According to the Democrat leader Rößler, education should not be dominated by the spirit of sectarianism, but by scientific and enlightened education.[2] For the natural sciences, and 'unconditionally rational and scientific thinking' alone could liberate permanently the German people from superstition and prejudice.[3] Moreover, left-liberals held that it was the free development of schools (i.e. under the auspices of local government) which was the foundation of 'the most important cultural properties' of the people.[4] As has been shown, the whole point of the Frankfurt liberals' insistence on non-denominational education was to create a free and tolerant society, with a particular though by no means exclusive thrust against anti-Semitism, at least for the community of Frankfurt.

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young for life, the vivid realisation of the ideals of Bildung, raising the people to moral, spiritual and economic power and, above all, a fresh breeze of eternally young, true art: this is the social and idealistic content of municipal work in education' Verhandlungen des Sechsten Preußischen Städtetages (1908), p. 35.

1 'there is no task which encourages the people who work in the community for the community to make such sacrifices and which thus trains and exercises their will to make sacrifices, as school administration itself. The beneficial effects on state, community and school, for teacher and pupil are clear to see.' Verhandlungen des Fünften Preußischen Städtetages (1906), p. 28.

2 Quoted in Müller, Aufklärungen, p. 91.

3 Heinrich Rößler. Sonderabdruck des Physikalischen Vereins (Frankfurt, 1924), p. 4. Also in IfSG S2/1054.

4 See the left-liberal resolution of 4 June 1904, carried by all against one vote, printed in Müller, Aufklärungen, p. 16.

For the liberals in Frankfurt, as in other cities, self-government in education was, perhaps, the most important concern of practical politics. For they were highly aware that education was the 'key to the future', that it was perhaps the best way to influence generations of people, and particularly the young. True to its ideal, self-government in education was the best way of overcoming the conflicts within and the fragmentation of society which contemporaries were so worried about. Doubtless many liberals on the right (though not necessarily in Frankfurt) accepted the government's stance that primary schools had a particular role to play in combatting Social Democracy.[1] However, whereas the government held that this could be best achieved through uniform emphasis on religious and moral teaching, liberals in the cities, if they believed in it at all, maintained that this could only be overcome by schools which were organised and financed by the community and which thus bound the community together.

It is doubtful if in their aspirations for self-government in education liberals stopped there. For surely, by the 1900s control over local education was the most important means left at the liberals' disposal to liberalise German society. Increasingly marginalised in national and state politics, education was the most potent way left for those liberals who were still largely in control of the cities to try to reverse the withdrawal of their ideals in German society. Frankfurt liberals were in no doubt about the crucial role of education in the shaping of society. According to Frankfurt liberal doctrine, confessional discord and intolerance destroyed the foundations of Frankfurt's economic and social welfare, as well as the principles of culture, philanthropy and harmony upon which Frankfurt society was founded. These virtues were the direct result of Frankfurt's system of non-denominational schooling. Since education held the key to the future ('Nur wer die Schule hat, hat die Zukunft')[2], only non-denominational schooling could prevent a spiritual and material decline, the return to

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[1] This government policy was noticeable even in Frankfurt. According to the new powers vested in him through the 1906 law on the financing of schools, the Prussian minister decided in 1908 that of eight new schools, three were to be denominational. Of the three, the minister ordered two of these to be established in predominantly industrial areas. See Quarck's complaint in MPS, 1908, §168, pp. 191-203.

[2] 'Only those who control the school control the future'.

backwardness and small-mindedness. Education was thus the key to Frankfurt's position as a model of German self-government and the preservation of liberal values, of everything that Frankfurt stood for.[1] In Frankfurt as elsewhere, liberals in the cities could hope that future generations, infused with the virtues of tolerance, morality and self-denial on account of schools controlled by liberals through self-government, would perhaps be less susceptible to conservative ideals drenched in Prussian militarism, and more open to liberalism.[2]

## 6.3. The Quality of Primary Education

The strength of the Frankfurt liberals' concern for non-denominational primary education stands in striking contrast to the attention they gave to other aspects of the primary school system. If they considered themselves as extremely progressive on account of their success in the introduction of non-denominational schools in Frankfurt, primary education in Frankfurt was otherwise of a surprisingly poor quality particularly during the first decades of the period under investigation. Before 1866, there was a relatively small number of Bürgerschulen which taught the curriculum of primary schools but which, on account of their school fees, were not attended by children from poor backgrounds. Once school attendance had become compulsory upon Prussian annexation, there developed a two-tier system to provide the most basic primary school education. To cater for the poorer sections of the population, primary schools with an annual fee of 6 M. were established, whereas children of better-to-do parents could attend the Bürgerschulen at a cost of 18 M. per annum.[3]

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1 See the left-liberal programme for the 1904 elections in Frankfurter Zeitung, 27.11.1904 (3. Morgenblatt).

2 For example, Frankfurt left-liberals liked to emphasise that their primary aim was to educate not Protestant or Catholic Prussians, but Frankfurters. Councillor Rößler in Frankfurter Zeitung, 14.11.1882 (Abendblatt).

3 Frankfurt's system of primary education also included the Mittelschulen, which included a foreign language in their curriculum.

When this system was established following the reorganisation of primary education in the early 1870s, it was argued that, because the city now had to build several schools at once to be able to offer universal education, it was financially unfeasible to build further Bürgerschulen, and that therefore more poorly equipped primary schools had to suffice for the time being. The standards of these two types of schools differed wildly. During the 1880s, for example, there were around 45 pupils in each class of the Bürgerschulen, whereas the city's primary school classes averaged between 60 and 70 pupils.[1] Moreover, these averages conceal the fact that many classes had over 80 pupils, and in some there were over 100.[2] More importantly, in Prussia, schooling was compulsory for eight years. In the majority of village schools throughout the country, pupils were all taught in one class as there were not enough for the community to be able to afford more than one teacher and one large room which served as the village school. In large cities, however, the advantage of teaching each age group separately was increasingly recognised, so that more and more urban primary schools had seven or even eight forms. In Frankfurt, the local Bürgerschulen conformed to this standard, as these had seven grades (pupils would move up each year from grade seven to grade one, in which they would remain for two years). By contrast, the primary schools only had four grades, so that pupils would be stuck in each grade for two years.

Even though the city councillors had voted as recently as 1882 to maintain them in primary schools, school fees were abolished from 1886, largely for economic reasons. Only around 60% of the fees were actually collected, and a large proportion of this sum came from the municipal poor relief fund.[3] Of course, with the abolition of fees for primary schools any

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1 See, for example, the annual school reports of the Magistrat, here MAB 1883/4, pp. 152-4, MAB 1885/6, pp. 184-7, MAB 1886/7, pp. 197-200. Furthermore, in 1880/81 there were ten Bürgerschulen with 4,859 pupils compared with three primary schools with a total of 2,112 pupils. Sozialdemokratie und Stadtverwaltung (1906), p. 71.

2 MAB 1887/8, p. 199.

3 Maly, Macht, p. 212. Furthermore, the income derived from primary school fees was insignificant. During the financial year 1885, the income of 16,679 M. amounted to 1.9% of the annual income of the education budget, and to 0.18% of ordinary budget income. MAB 1885/6, pp. iv, 184.

argument for the Bürgerschulen became even harder to maintain, as it had been difficult enough to justify a fee of 18 M. when the primary school fee had been 6 M. before. Moreover, by this time Frankfurt had remained the only city with over 100,000 inhabitants which still had primary schools with only four grades.[1]

In their debates, Frankfurt's Democrats, who were otherwise so self-consciously progressive on social matters and who never missed an opportunity to discuss the denominational aspect of the city's primary schools, were for the most part surprisingly ignorant of the problems created by the existence of the two-tier system of primary schooling in the city. It appears that they were only spurred into action by a public protest of the local teachers' association against the glaring inadequacies of the Frankfurt primary schools.[2] Only now did the Democrats acknowledge that there existed, in effect, a separate school system for two classes, the poor and the better off, so that from now on the abolition of school fees and establishment of seven grades for all primary schools became a prominent Democrat demand.[3]

Given that there were no arguments which could be publicly given in defence of the current system, the Frankfurt liberal city government had no option but to elevate its primary schools to Bürgerschulen - though despite the strength of the argument that Frankfurt's system of schooling was hopelessly backward this decision was triggered by a Prussian law of 1888 which abolished all primary school fees.[4] This meant that there was no longer anything to prevent the poorer sections of the population from sending their children to the superior Bürgerschulen. From April 1889, therefore, the three primary schools were upgraded to

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1 For a general overview, see the summary of primary school conditions in various German big cities in Vorstand des Lehrer-Vereins zu Frankfurt a. M. (ed.), Herr Direktor Dr. Georg Veith und die vierklassigen Volksschulen zu Frankfurt a. M.. Eine pädagogische Abfertigung, (2nd. edn., Frankfurt, 1887) pp. 56-65. This demonstrates clearly the backwardness of the Frankfurt system of primary schools.

2 The report of the meeting of 5 November 1886 is printed in Vorstand (ed.), Herr Direktor Dr. Georg Veith, pp. 42-54.

3 Frankfurter Zeitung, 2.12.1886 (1. Morgenblatt).

4 As a result of Democrat pressure the issue was considered by the council from March 1887 onwards, but the Magistrat remained resolutely opposed to any change in the dual primary school system. Sozialdemokratie und Stadtverwaltung (1906), p. 71.

Bürgerschulen, so that all Frankfurt primary schools were free and had seven grades.[1] Within the next few years, Frankfurt caught up with the primary school system in other cities. A relatively high number of pupils managed to reach the final seventh grade compared to other German cities, and the city was able to afford the highest teachers' salaries in Prussia by 1903. At the same time, by 1902 the average class size of a Frankfurt primary school was but average compared to other cities.[2] Average class size was around 51, although about 14% of classes still had more than 60 pupils.[3] This does not mean, of course, that children from more privileged backgrounds had to go to the same school as those from the poorer sections of society. There were still the more advanced primary schools, the Mittelschulen, with a school fee of originally 36 M. and which taught compulsory French and optional English on top of the usual primary school curriculum. These schools were later heavily criticised by the SPD since the relatively high school fee effectively barred children of industrial workers or other sections of the population with small incomes.[4] Presumably, it is for this reason also that the right of existence of the city's Mittelschulen was never questioned, or even considered to be a problem, by the liberals, because they were accepted by such a large proportion of Frankfurt's Mittelstand, and especially by its poorer sections such as the lower civil-servants, white collar workers and small shopkeepers and artisans.[5]

More contentious than the Mittelschulen were the local preparatory schools to which those who aspired to attend the local grammar school usually went for three years, thus avoiding having to spend the first years in a primary school. These Vorschulen were attached to the secondary schools and charged the same exorbitant fees, and it is these preparatory schools in

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1 MPS, 1889/90, pp. 232-3.

2 Gizycki, 'Das Volksschulwesen', pp. 204-13. Gizycki points out that the number of children reaching the highest primary school grade is a factor not only of the quality of education, but also of parents' income and the corresponding need for the children to work in their spare time, as well as general health conditions.

3 MPS, 1898/99, p. 449.

4 Sozialdemokratie und Stadtverwaltung (1906), p. 71.

5 Amongst liberals there was the widespread conviction that 'standesbewußte' ('estate-conscious') parents who sent their children to the middle schools would want to pay school fees as part of this consciousness. For the views of the Stadtrat responsible for schools, Ziehen, and the Democrat leader Rößler, see F. Schäfer, Schulen und Schulpolitik, pp. 45-6, 50.

particular which remained bastions of social exclusiveness.[1] These schools were welcomed by liberals on the right and especially in the Magistrat, but as these schools of a particular 'estate' (Standesschule) contradicted the very principle of popular primary schools (Volksschule), they came under periodic Democrat attack from 1892.[2] Democrat hostility to the preparatory schools began in earnest after 1900, presumably in response of the SPD's pressure to improve the standards of Frankfurt's primary education. Hence, for Democrats it became a matter of social justice that all groups of society should initially go to the same primary school,[3] and soon liberals even on the right came to accept that citizens from all backgrounds would benefit from a universal primary school. From 1904, there was a left-liberal majority in the city council in favour of the eventual abolition of the preparatory schools, and from 1909 that consensus between councillors ranging from National Liberals to Social Democrats was strong enough to challenge the reluctance of the Magistrat to follow the council in its hostility to preparatory schools. Nonetheless, as a result of Magistrat resistance Vorschulen were not abolished until 1926 (although this had been in preparation since 1917).[4]

After a period of relative neglect, therefore, the quality of Frankfurt's primary schools received more political attention and was thus improved considerably from the 1890s onwards, largely for three reasons. First, this was the result of the genuine social political concerns of left-liberals who demanded the abolition of preparatory schools or even free school materials (Lernmittelfreiheit), not as part of a general fight to avoid the spread of socialism, but out of an understanding that an improvement of education for the poorer classes of society formed part of their responsibility towards the common weal of the Frankfurt community.[5] For the

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1 The other great advantage of the preparatory schools, especially from the point of view of the less intellectually versatile children of the wealthier citizens, was that after three years its pupils would progress to the secondary school automatically, without entrance exams and with little regard for the pupils' merits.

2 See the speech by the Democrat Wedel in Kleine Presse, 23.11.1892.

3 See Heinrich Rößler's speech in HStAW 407 n. 161[4] fo. 75. Democratic Association meeting, 17.2.1902.

4 Schäfer, Geschichte, pp. 83-93.

5 Apart from Rößler's speech in HStAW 407 n. 161[4] fos. 75-7 (Democratic Association meeting, 17.2.1902), see also headmaster Dörr in a speech delivered to the Frankfurt Democrats in HStAW 407 n. 161[4] fo. 40. Democratic Association meeting, 29.4.1901. See also Eduard Jungmann in Frankfurter Zeitung,

most part, however, men like Rößler were in a minority, and even when, as in the case of the preparatory schools, they were successful in persuading the council, they still had to encounter the hostility of a rather more conservative Magistrat under the leadership of Adickes.[1]

The second factor that led to the improvement of the primary schools was the work of individual philanthropists or of voluntary associations. Usually, specialist schools of various kinds would be founded by private associations or individual philanthropists and would, if proven successful, be taken over or at least supported by the city. Thus, the city's schools of trade and commerce went back to private foundations. Moreover, it was in this way that Frankfurt could boast of one of the country's leading institutes for the deaf and dumb in the country,[2] an institute for the mentally ill from the late 1880s, as well as a school for children with learning difficulties from 1889.[3] Apart from the benefit which accrued to primary schools from these efforts by taking children with special needs out of their care, primary schools benefited from Frankfurt philanthropic efforts also in much more direct ways. As a result of private efforts, by 1914 pupils had the opportunity to attend summer camps and various other school trips,[4] there were substantial scholarships for needy primary school pupils, and a warm breakfast was distributed to 'poor' children every day.[5]

Finally, perhaps the strongest motive which led to the improvement of the city's primary schools was that, at a time when even the emperor had underlined their principal importance in the educational system, primary schools now became a matter of local prestige, of civic pride.

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11.11.1902 (3. Morgenblatt).

1 The differing views on social policy between Magistrat and various city councillors will be discussed in chapter seven.

2 Chosen to represent Prussian deaf and dumb institutions, it received the great prize at the world exhibition in St. Louis in 1904. 'Die Taubstummen-Erziehungs-Anstalt zu Frankfurt a. M.', in Deutsche Taubstummenanstalten, -Schulen und -Heime in Wort und Bild (Halle, 1915), pp. 1-12. For the innovativeness of the institute, see also C. Perini, J. Vatter und die Taubstummen-Anstalt zu Frankfurt a. M. (Friedberg, 1910).

3 This school was particularly promoted by the philanthropist Charles Hallgarten. 'Die Hilfsschule in Frankfurt a. M.', in Deutsche Hilfsschulen in Wort und Bild' (Halle, 1913), pp. 3-10.

4 Frankfurter Ferienwanderungen, ed. Centrale für private Fürsorge (Frankfurt, 1911).

5 A compilation of these private efforts is in Herber, Vom Volksschulwesen Frankfurts (Berlin, 1914), pp. 24-35.

The buildings of Frankfurt's first primary schools had been rather makeshift and completely inadequate for the number of pupils that attended them,[1] but by 1914 Frankfurt liberals prided themselves in the quality of their primary school buildings. New school buildings were designed according to newly-accepted hygenic standards to provide the minimum quantities necessary of 'light, air and sun',[2] so that from 1906 even the SPD no longer complained that they were inadequate and instead admitted that at last the standard of primary school buildings had started at least to approximate to that of secondary school buildings.[3]

Impressive though the change of emphasis and the improvement in the quality of primary school education were, they were but part of a general phenomenon in Germany which saw a fundamental change in the way the role of education and of the primary school in particular was perceived from the 1890s onwards. It was during this decade that it became clear that repressive legislation had failed to contain the SPD, and that it was no longer a political option given the intense unpopularity of the Umsturzvorlage of 1895 and the Zuchthausvorlage of 1899. As it was evident that the 'social question' would get more, not less, pronounced following another industrial take-off from the mid-1890s, the German state, as well as bourgeois social reformers, turned their attention to the primary schools and all matters concerning the education of the country's youth. Beyond the traditional role of primary education imparting bourgeois values of thrift, diligence and sobriety,[4] social reformers became interested in the 'moral' and physical health of the young as this was affected not just by the primary school itself, but also by the domestic and social environment. Social reformers therefore undertook to improve the health of the primary pupils through immediate care by municipally employed doctors, through the sponsorship of popular leisure and sport activities,

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1 Poppe, Meine Erfahrungen, p. 6.
2 See, for example, 50 Jahre Günthersburgschule 1906-1956. Festschrift (Frankfurt, 1956), p. 13.
3 Sozialdemokratie und Stadtverwaltung (1906), p. 72.
4 J. Reulecke, 'Bürgerliche Sozialreform und Arbeiterjugend im Kaiserreich', AfS, xxii (1982), 299-329, here 304-10.

and through the provision of recreational school trips to the countryside.[1] It is this national phenomenon of a rising concern for the education and the upbringing of the sons (and increasingly also the daughters) of the less well-off which manifested itself in the actions both of the Frankfurt municipal government as well as of local philanthropists and various societies to improve primary school buildings, to provide medical care for primary school pupils, and to organise school trips to the surrounding countryside with incrasing frequency.

By 1914, therefore, primary schools had improved considerably in Frankfurt, though there is little evidence to suggest that they in any way surpassed the standard of schools in other large German cities. If anything, in the early years the standard of primary schools in Frankfurt was appalling when compared to other schools in cities of similar size. If, therefore, Frankfurt liberals prided themselves in the fact that 'Die Frankfurter Schulen stehen an der Spitze des Schulwesens in ganz Preußen' with reference to their primary schools,[2] it is evident that this could only apply to the non-denominational system, where Frankfurt liberals were, indeed, in the forefront of the fight against denominational schooling. As this section has shown, however, the liberals' self-congratulatory rhetoric should not conceal the fact that in other crucial respects, with regard to issues that might have mattered rather more to the average parent such as standard of teaching, school size, and equipment, the quality of Frankfurt primary schools was really quite mediocre.

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[1] A. Gräfin zu Castell Rüdenhausen, 'Die Überwindung der Armenschule. Schülerhygiene an den Hamburger öffentlichen Volksschulen im Zweiten Kaiserreich', AfS, xxii (1982), 201-26. See also P. D. Stachura, The German Youth Movement 1900-45. An Interpretative and Documentative History (London, 1981). The growing concern for the young at this time was not just a German phenomenon. J. Springhall, Youth, Empire and Society. British Youth Movements 1883-1940 (London, 1977). M. Mitterauer, A History of Youth (Oxford, 1992), esp. pp. 151-2, 182-225.

[2] 'The schools of Frankfurt are at the top of the entire Prussian school system.'. Deputy Sänger at a Democratic Association meeting in April 1900. HStAW 407 n. 161[3] fo. 234.

## 6.4. Secondary Education[1]

As one of Germany's principal cities engaged in international commerce and trade, in which there was a considerable amount of English and particularly French being spoken,[2] in Frankfurt there was an unusually large demand for modern languages to be taught in its secondary schools, instead of the otherwise prevalent Latin. In the early 1870s, therefore, the majority of pupils in secondary education were taught in four secondary modern schools without Latin, while the city's neo-humanist Gymnasium and one secondary modern school taught Latin as the second language. In subsequent decades, the Gymnasium became increasingly popular, since it was the only school whose final examinations were a qualification for the study of any subject at university. Nonetheless, by 1890, only 27.7% of pupils in secondary education went to the neo-humanist grammar schools (compared to 59.2% in Prussia), 21.3% went to other secondary schools with Latin, the Realgymnasium (compared to 24.9% in Prussia), while the majority of Frankfurt pupils, 51%, went to non-Latin teaching secondary schools, the Oberrealschulen (compared to 15.9% in Prussia).[3]

Ever since the establishment of secondary modern schools with an emphasis on modern languages and science in Prussia in 1859, whose purpose was to complement the traditional curriculum of the Gymnasium with its emphasis on Latin and Greek, there was a growing debate about the extent to which the final examinations of these Realschulen should be a qualification to university admission. From 1870, graduates of the latter schools were entitled

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[1] There were two kinds of secondary schools throughout the period. From 1882, there were a number of Realschulen, which pupils would attend for six or seven years following the preparatory schools. The second type of school consisted of the Gymnasium, the Realgymnasium and the Oberrealschule, which children could attend for a maximum of nine years after leaving the preparatory schools. This section will discuss exclusively the development of the latter type of schools, since these schools occupied the prominent position in local and national debates about secondary education.

[2] There existed a small Anglican church, and, more importantly, the French Reformed community was extremely tightly knit so that it managed to preserve French as its first official language until 1916. 400 Jahre Französisch-Reformierte Gemeinde, Frankfurt am Main, in IfSG S3/H14.691.

[3] P. Bode, 'Die Entwicklung des lateinlosen höheren Schulwesens in Frankfurt a. M.', in Programm der Adlerflychtschule zu Frankfurt am Main (Frankfurt, 1901), pp. 20-7.

to study mathematics, sciences and modern languages, but they were still barred from the important subjects of law and medicine.[1] This was only in part a debate about how education could best reflect, and prepare its students for, a dynamic, industrialising society, for example through greater emphasis on the teaching of science. Opening up Germany's universities to graduates of the country's Realschulen would have implied opening up higher education to the sons of the commercial bourgeoisie and even the lower middle classes, who tended to frequent those schools. This not only called into question the homogeneity of Germany's social élite, the Bildungsbürgertum, whose main defining feature was a common classical education at a neo-humanist grammar school as well as a university education, at a time when its ideals and values had come under increasing attack, anyway.[2] More importantly, it was also a debate about the homogeneity of Germany's ruling elite, whose members had almost all passed through Germany's universities, usually through the faculty of law.[3] As a result, the battle lines in this debate were complex and interwoven, but as the century drew to its close and the Empire's industry became ever more dynamic and resourceful, it became increasingly difficult for Prussian policy-makers to ignore the calls for secondary school reform coming not only from industry and commerce, but also from the army, and, after 1888, from the Emperor himself.[4]

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[1] Moreover, until 1887 for graduates of the Realschulen the entitlement to read for a degree entailed the restriction that those who wanted to obtain a teaching degree in these subjects could only look for employment at Realschulen and were barred from teaching at the Gymnasium.

[2] This argument should be treated with caution, however, as Jürgen Kocka has cast doubt over the existence of a Bildungsbürgertum with a recognisable degree of cohesion and common identity. J. Kocka, 'Bildungsbürgertum - Gesellschaftliche Formation oder Historikerkonstrukt?', in J. Kocka (ed.), Bildungsbürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert. Politischer Einfluß und gesellschaftliche Formationen (Stuttgart, 1989), iv. 9-20.

[3] On the crucial social and political function of the Bildungsbürgertum, see K. H. Jarausch, Students, Society and Politics in Imperial Germany. The Rise of Academic Illiberalism (Princeton, 1982), esp. pp. 8-11. The conservative desire to preserve the social and educational cohesion of a small ruling élite was also considered to be a crucial issue of the debate at the time. See, for example, the reformist article by F. Paulsen, 'Der Sieg der Einheitsschule oder das Ende des klassischen Gymnasiums. Item: das Ende des Realgymnasiums' PJbb, lxviii (1891), 866-75, especially 871, as well as the conservative Hans Delbrück's revealing reply in ibid., p. 875.

[4] On the complex high political debates surrounding school reform, and the aspirations and fears of their participants, see J. C. Albisetti, Secondary School Reform in Imperial Germany (Princeton, 1983).

It is worthy of note that the Prussian army, of all bodies, was one of the most vociferous proponents of school reform, out of its need to recruit officers capable of dealing with new technologies in warfare. In 1901,

The debate really took off when the Prussian ministry of education decreed that from 1882 the teaching of Latin in those Realschulen which did teach the language be increased by 20% at the expense of the sciences and modern languages. Conversely, the teaching of Latin in the Gymnasien was reduced to the benefit of sciences and French.[1] To underline the approximation of their curriculum to that of the Gymnasium, Latin-teaching Realschulen now called themselves Realgymnasien. In spite of this, the issue of real concern to the Realschulen was left unchanged, as their pupils were still not admitted to the study of any further subjects at university.

The next round in the debate was the school conference of 1890, which was attended by representatives of the three branches of secondary education at the invitation of the Prussian ministry of education, and its proceedings were enthusiastically followed by the Emperor himself.[2] Despite the latter's expressed concern that German schools no longer educate young Greeks or Romans, but Germans,[3] the position of the classical Gymnasium remained relatively unchanged. Furthermore, the Oberrealschule, whose curriculum did not include Latin, received a boost, as it was decided to abolish that hybrid between this Oberrealschule and the neo-humanist Gymnasium, the Realgymnasium. Again, rather than end the controversy about the relative position of the various types of secondary schools, the conference fuelled it even further.[4] The ministry did not dare abolish the Realgymnasium, for example, as a result of the angry protests from the larger Prussian cities which were its principal sponsors. In response to

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it appointed the Frankfurt school reformer Julius Ziehen as director of education at the military academy in Berlin. Likewise, the army's support was pivotal in swinging the balance at the 1900 school conference which paved the way for university admission for all secondary school graduates. Ludwig Ziehen, 'Julius Ziehen', p. 42, in IfSG S2/2107. M. Messerschmidt, 'Schulpolitik des Militärs', in Baumgart (ed.), Bildungspolitik, pp. 242-55. This confirms Geoff Eley's arguments against the Kehrite school's belief in the exclusively reactionary tendencies of the military. G. Eley, 'Army, State and Civil Society: Revisiting the Problem of German Militarism', in G. Eley, From Unification to Nazism. Reinterpreting the German Past (2nd edn., London, 1992), pp. 85-109.

1 M. Kraul, Das Deutsche Gymnasium 1780-1980 (Frankfurt, 1984), p. 92.

2 See in general Führ, 'Die preußischen Schulkonferenzen', 189-223.

3 Kraul, Das Deutsche Gymnasium, p. 101-4.

4 See, for example, the debate conducted in the pages of the Preußische Jahrbücher. Paul Cauer, 'Das Ergebnis der Schulkonferenz', PJbb, lxvii (1891), 88-98. See also Delbrück's commentary in ibid., 105-9.

the conference, a number of interest groups were set up such as the Gymnasialverein, an association dedicated to the defence of the neo-humanist grammar school.[1]

As in any other large Prussian city, the decisions of the school conference in December 1890 caused considerable concern in Frankfurt, because the decision to abolish the Realgymnasium affected a quarter of all students engaged in secondary education, in all about 1,000 pupils, and it meant the degradation of the Musterschule, the popular school opened in 1803 upon which hinged so much Frankfurt educational pride.[2] On 11 January 1891, Franz Adickes became First Mayor of Frankfurt. Before, as Mayor of Altona he had become interested in and enthused by the Altonaer System, an educational trial introduced in 1878 which established the same curriculum for the first three years of both types of secondary modern school. Only then would the pupils have to decide whether to continue their education at a secondary modern school with Latin as the third language, or one which taught French instead.[3] The advantage of this system was that pupils no longer had to decide about their future career at the age of nine, but could postpone that decision until the age of twelve.

Given the unusually high proportion of the city's élite whose sons did not attend a neo-humanist grammar school, but rather the other forms of high school with greater emphasis on modern language and science teaching, Frankfurt was a fertile ground for school reform. Hence, in the aftermath of the December conference of 1890, Adickes quickly seized the initiative in Frankfurt to establish the Frankfurter System. In less than a year, the Prussian ministry had given its approval to the scheme, so that the new curriculum could be introduced by Easter 1892.[4] The Frankfurt system was based on the same principle as that of Altona, with the important difference that a common curriculum for the first three years was not only

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1 Führ, 'Die preußischen Schulkonferenzen', p. 204.

2 Among its staff it could boast Adolf Diesterweg from 1812 to 1818, who later spearheaded the reform of the Prussian primary education system. See also Musterschule, p. 134.

3 As a result of neighbouring Hamburg's strong trading links with English speaking countries, the first modern language taught in Altona (as in Hamburg) was English, not French. K. Reinhardt, 'Die Reformanstalten', in W. Lexis (ed.), Die Reform des höheren Schulwesens in Preußen (Halle, 1902), p. 331.

4 Festschrift zur Einweihung des Goethe-Gymnasiums in Frankfurt a. M. (Frankfurt, 1897), p. 4.

introduced for the two types of Realschulen, but for the grammar school as well. In other words, like the secondary modern schools, the Gymnasium now started with French as a foreign language, and only after three years did its curriculum start to differ as it introduced Latin with 10 hours per week, as opposed to the Realgymnasien, whose students were taught Latin for eight hours per week as the emphasis on French was stronger than in the grammar school. There were two major benefits of this system. Firstly, it gave the vast number of children who attended one of the Realschulen at least the theoretical opportunity of switching to the Gymnasium until they reached the age of twelve. Secondly, it gave a new lease of life to Frankfurt's Realgymnasien. If the effect of the new curricula of 1892 had been to emphasise the difference between the curriculum of the Realgymnasium and that of the Gymnasium across Prussia,[1] the Frankfurt system re-emphasised the similarity of those two types of schools, thus giving added weight to reformist efforts at opening up Prussia's universities to the graduates of secondary modern schools. What is striking about the Frankfurt system is that it provided a direct response to the Emperor's three central criticisms of the current system of secondary education. At the expense of Latin and Greek, there was a significant increase in the teaching of German and history, a relatively small increase in the teaching of mathematics, and an overall reduction in the number of teaching hours, reflecting William's concern for the students' health endangered by 'excess of of mental work'.[2]

As a result, Frankfurt became a centre for educational reform during the 1890s. By 1901, there were thirty-seven reformed systems of higher education, of which twenty-six were modelled on the Frankfurt system, and eleven on the Altona system. Of these, a total of eight were in Prussia. The 1890s were still a period during which the system was on trial, but even by 1913 there were only twenty-three grammar schools which taught the Frankfurt

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1 Kraul, Das städtische Gymnasium, p. 105.

2 Albisetti, Secondary School Reform, p. 3. K. Reinhardt, Die Frankfurter Lehrpläne (Frankfurt, 1892), p. 37.

curriculum, out of a total of 364 grammar schools.[1] The repercussions of the Frankfurt trial were nonetheless enormous. For whereas before advocates of the Realgymnasium secondary modern schools had tried to argue their case by emphasising the schools' similarity to the neo-humanist grammar schools through added emphasis on the teaching of Latin, the argument was now reversed. The Frankfurt example demonstrated that Latin was not essential to the nature of the neo-humanist grammar school, that, just as in other secondary schools, the teaching of Latin could wait until the fourth year, well after the introduction of a modern foreign language. If the supporters of the classical neo-humanist Gymnasium needed any evidence of the severity of the threat which the traditional concept of the grammar school faced, it was surely this. Their apprehension was confirmed by the attention received in 1898 by a petition prepared by Adickes and signed by three Frankfurt Stadträte and a further forty-six lawyers calling for the admittance of graduates from the Realgymnasium to read law received in 1898.[2] So intense had the debate become that another conference was convened in 1900, and this time the dispute was resolved successfully. In principle, the right of graduates of all three types of secondary school, the Oberrealschule, the Realgymnasium and the Gymnasium, to study any subject at university was accepted. In a way, this decision made the Frankfurt system redundant since it took the urgency out of the choice of schools, as they all led to the same degree. This is precisely why the result was accepted by the supporters of the neo-humanist Gymnasium, because this was seen as the only way of avoiding the general introduction of the Frankfurt system in Prussia.[3]

Considering the important role of Frankfurt in the reform of secondary education in Germany, it is curious that there was so little debate among the various liberal parties about the issue. It confirms Albisetti's view that secondary school reform was not a party-political issue, in

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1 K. Groh, Ist der Versuch der Preußischen Unterrichtsverwaltung, den Frankfurter Lehrplan auf das Gymnasium zu übertragen, geglückt? (Gütersloh, 1915), pp. iv, 63-72.

2 Führ, 'Die preußischen Schulkonferenzen', p. 207.

3 Führ, 'Die preußischen Schulkonferenzen', pp. 208-10.

marked contrast to questions concerning primary education.[1] And yet, the Frankfurt debate highlights a number of important aspects of municipal politics in general, and of the Frankfurt polity in particular. The introduction of the Frankfurt system demonstrates, perhaps better than any other issue in Frankfurt municipal politics, the acting potential of an enterprising and resourceful mayor. This was very much Adickes' project. He managed to inspire the member of the Magistrat responsible for education, Otto Grimm, by his idea, with which he found himself in total agreement with the headmaster of the municipal Gymnasium, Karl Reinhardt. It was these people who worked out the project almost amongst themselves.

The issue also shows the relative unimportance of the city council, and with it the concept of self-government in education, once qualitative matters, rather than budgetary concerns, were under discussion. In this case, it was much more important for Adickes and other members of the school board to find agreement with the ministry than with the city council, as the latter's support was not strictly necessary.[2] Another reason why the issue did not feature heavily in political debate was that in a narrow sense this was a debate about educational theory, conducted very much on its own terms. Frankfurt liberals did not just introduce a new curriculum and then leave it at that. In Karl Reinhardt and Julius Ziehen, the city had two gifted academics who engaged in debates with other leading educational theorists at the time. The former not only developed the curriculum, but also organised new textbooks to be written by himself and his colleagues to include new teaching methods as a necessary complement to the reform, while the latter led the debate through countless speeches, pamphlets and books in defence of the system.[3] Therefore, even though the debate about admission to university was

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1 Albisetti, Secondary School Reform, pp. 60-1.

2 On the good relationship between the Prussian minister of state for education responsible for universities, Althoff, and Adickes and their discussions on the subject of school reform, see F. Adickes, Persönliche Erinnerungen zur Vorgeschichte der Universität Frankfurt a. M. zum 18. Oktober 1914 (Frankfurt, 1915), pp. 7-8.

3 Ludwig Ziehen, 'Julius Ziehen', pp. 40-1, in IfSG S2/2107. See in particular the impressive catalogue of Ziehen's publications in IfSG S2/2107, which includes a host of articles and books written on the Frankfurt curriculum.

a highly political one concerning the exclusivity of governing élites, it should not be forgotten that this issue was subject to intense academic debate as well.

Finally, the school reforms were discussed and introduced in Frankfurt at precisely the time when the liberal councillors were concentrating on attacking the education bill for primary schools. This made left-liberal initiatives for secondary school reform extremely awkward, since the introduction of the Frankfurt system depended upon the goodwill of the very same minister for education, Count von Zedlitz und Trützschler, whom the liberal parties otherwise so bitterly opposed on the question of primary education.

Nonetheless, even though left-liberals continued to emphasise the importance of non-denominational and universal education above all other educational issues, they welcomed Adickes' efforts. After all, in 1884 the Frankfurter Zeitung had led demands for a common curriculum for secondary schools based on the introduction of the more useful French and English as first foreign languages. Not only was such a system more responsive to local needs, but it was also a step towards the diminution of class differences,[1] since at least for a time students from a large number of schools, frequented by children from a greater variety of social backgrounds, would be taught the same subjects. When the Frankfurt system was finally introduced in a slightly less radical form than that suggested by the Frankfurter Zeitung, Frankfurt liberals supported the moves for two principal reasons. Frankfurt left-liberals had no pretensions that their policies with regard to secondary education were anything other than Mittelstandspolitik, because it was clear that it was the Mittelstand who were the principal users of Frankfurt's secondary modern schools.[2] Therefore, they were happy to support one of the central motives of the system, that of ultimately opening up Germany's universities to wider sections of the middle classes. And, naturally, they also found that the idea of

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 9.11.1884 (Morgenblatt).

2 HStAW 407 n. 161[4] fo. 72. Democratic Association meeting, 10.2.1902. Therefore, there were few considerations at the time to make secondary education accessible to children of the poorer sections of the population, and even discussions about the number of scholarships available were essentially led for the benefit of the poorer sections of the middle classes.

Frankfurt's leading role in educational reform agreed very much with their own vision of Frankfurt as a beacon of liberal educational values, and with their civic pride in general.[1]

If municipal pride was an important driving force in finally improving the quality of primary education in Frankfurt, this civic pride, which was fuelled by the establishment of the 'Frankfurt system', was pivotal in the way Frankfurters viewed their secondary schools. Finding resources had never been a problem for the long-established Gymnasium or the Musterschule. The schools that emerged from 1890, however, were nothing short of lavish. During that decade, Frankfurters came to insist on the educational value of artful interior decorations for the city's classical grammar schools, so that the Lessing Gymnasium was opened with a rich endowment of prints and copies of paintings by German and especially by Frankfurt artists.[2] It is quite unthinkable that simliar generosity would have been displayed towards the local primary schools. Whereas in this case the interior decoration was largely funded by private donors, the attitude of Frankfurt liberals was quite similar. For the new building of the Goethe-Gymnasium, for example, the city council refused to grant the full 140,000 M. which the Berlin architect wanted for the stone masonry. It cut the request by 50,000 M., which left a still considerable 90,000M. to be spent on the beautification of the building.[3] City councillors were aware of the fact that the new building would accommodate a school whose progress would receive national and international attention, hence this building was an opportunity to show what Frankfurt could do.[4] The school, in turn, was conscious of what it owed the city for its generosity. At the inauguration of the new building, the headmaster, Karl Reinhardt, pointed out:

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1 HStAW 407 n. 161[1] fo. 272. Democratic Association meeting, 19.2.1902. Note that in contrast to the issues on non-denominational as well as universal primary education this issue was discussed at least with some contention. In other words, at no time did the reform of secondary education become an article of faith for Frankfurt left-liberals.

2 Paul Ankel, 'Die künstlerische Ausschmückung eines humanistischen Gymnasiums', in Frankfurter Zeitung, 18.10.1902 (1. Morgenblatt). The article is also in BAK NL 20 n. 20 fo. 97.

3 Part of the cause for this expense was the fact that the architect insisted on using differently coloured stone for the building. MPS, 1894, §657, pp. 400-402

4 See the photographs of this magnificent building, which are printed in Programm des Goethe-Gymnasiums in Frankfurt a. M. (Frankfurt, 1897).

> An der Stirnseite dieses Rednerpultes stehen die Initialen des alten Wortes: "Senatus populusque Francofurtanus." Unsere Jugend möge, wenn sie diese Zeichen sieht, stets des eingedenk sein, daß es ihre Vaterstadt, daß es das große Gemeinwesen ist, dem sie die kostbare Gabe dieses Schulhauses verdankt; sie möge sich dadurch bestärken lassen in der Freude an ihrer schönen Heimat und in der Liebe zu ihrer Vaterstadt und ihrem Vaterlande.[1]

In this statement, gratitude and allegiance to the country is only mentioned once, almost as an afterthought at the end. Otherwise, this building was a memorial to the generosity of the people of Frankfurt, and students were to be aware that they owed their gratitude not to the Empire or the Prussian state, but first and foremost to their Heimat, the community of Frankfurt.

Thus, in Frankfurt debates about secondary education were conducted with much less ferocity and passion than those about primary education. One reason why secondary education did not feature as prominently in current policy debates was that there was little room for contention about the Frankfurt system. Left-liberals, the Magistrat and the state authorities all more or less agreed on the desirability of the system. There were other significant and rather crucial differences in the way in which Frankfurt liberals approached primary and secondary education. Most obvious of all was the difference in funding. Even after various cuts in the building estimate, the city granted almost 440,000 M. for the building of the Goethe-Gymnasium in 1894. By contrast in 1906, for example, the Günthersburg primary school was opened, at a cost of 325,000 M..[2] Yet the main difference was that the former was built for a total of 9 classes, one class in each year,[3] each of which was to contain about 30, or at most 40, students. The primary school, on the other hand, was designed for 16 classes and opened with 17, each consisting of an average of 50 pupils.[4] This example highlights the

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1 'On the front of the speaker's desk are the initials of the old words: "Senatus populusque Francofurtanus." Whenever our young people see these initials, may they always remember that it is their home town, that it is this this great community, to which they owe the precious gift of this school building; may they be strengthened by this thought in the joy of their surroundings [Heimat] and the love of their home town and fatherland.' Programm des Goethe-Gymnasiums (1897), p. 6.

2 50 Jahre Günthersburgschule, p. 12.

3 See the meeting of the Magistrat on building extensions to the grammar school of 29 April 1902, in AS 978.

4 50 Jahre Günthersburgschule, p. 14.

quantitative difference in resources which were employed in primary and secondary education. These differences are essentially due to the fact that liberals were well-aware that secondary education was a central concern of their own constituency, the Mittelstand, whereas until the mid-1900s only a few of those who sent their children to primary schools had enough income to qualify for the local franchise. It is no accident that the quality of primary schooling became a central concern for the left-liberals only after the turn of the century. Once this had happened, however, liberal city councillors were relatively quick to agree to improvements in primary education, for example on the abolition of preparatory schools. However, even then improvements of the system had to be wrought from the Magistrat which remained relatively hostile to qualitative improvements in primary education, at least under the mayoralty of Adickes.[1]

Underlying the various qualitative and quantitative differences in the Frankfurt liberals' approach to primary and secondary education, however, there was a fundamentally similar vision about the goals of education. The main reason for the fact that secondary education featured so much less prominently in current political debates was because it did not touch the sensitive issue of religion. For unless they were religious foundations, all Frankfurt secondary schools were non-denominational. Yet this difference masks the fundamental point that secondary education was based on the same assumptions about non-denominationalism as primary education. Interestingly, after naming the city's first grammar school after its favourite son, Goethe, the municipal authorities chose to name the second local grammar school founded in 1897 after Lessing, the enlightened neo-humanist friend of Moses Mendelssohn, who was best remembered for his fight for Jewish emancipation through his work 'Nathan der Weise'. This point was not lost on the representative of the Prussian

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[1] This was the direct result of Adickes' social attitudes towards the position of the poor in society, which will be discussed in chapter seven.

educational authorities, who at the inauguration of the new school buildings in 1903 urged the school to become a true cradle of tolerance in the spirit of Lessing. He continued:

> So wird sie [diese Anstalt] Achtung vor der ehrlichen Überzeugung des Nächsten und jene edle Duldung betätigen, die nicht Streit und Haß stiftet, sondern Frieden und Versöhnlichkeit fördert und im gegenseitigen Verkehre nicht das betont, was uns trennt, sondern das, was uns eint.[1]

Therefore, underlying Frankfurt secondary as well as primary education was the principle of non-denominational education with the aim of creating and maintaining a tolerant society in Frankfurt.

The second feature which underlay Frankfurt liberals' approaches to education was local, civic pride. Here, too, there were quantitative differences. Lavish spending on secondary schools could be justified with the argument that the whole country was looking at Frankfurt's secondary schools. Nonetheless, from the 1890s it became regarded among liberals in Frankfurt and other German cities as a part of good city government to provide a comprehensive system of education including primary and vocational education.[2] Primary as well as secondary schools were provided for through liberal municipal budgets, and they were part of a Frankfurt system of education. For Frankfurt liberals, education was an intrinsically local matter not just because it was financially and ideologically a most important element of self-government. Much more importantly, whatever the views of the Prussian King or his ministers towards the role of education and the values it should impart, to Frankfurt liberals education was the means by which they could put their own stamp on Frankfurt society.

Finally, a study of liberal attitudes to primary and secondary education together confirms Lothar Gall's view that liberals had abandoned their earlier ideal of creating a 'classless society

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[1] 'Thus it [this institution] will instil respect for the honest conviction of one's neighbour and that noble tolerance which does not cause dispute or hatred, but which promotes peace and reconciliation and which in mutual discourse does not emphasise what separates, but what unites.' Programm des Lessing-Gymnasiums zu Frankfurt a. M. (Frankfurt,1903), p. 7.

[2] The fact that vocational schools, for example, became accepted as a central educational concern of German cities is demonstrated by the attention the schools received in the debates of the German and Prussian Municipal Conferences of the 1900s. See Verhandlungen des Zweiten Deutschen Städtetages (1908), pp. 35-56.

of citizens', at least through the obvious medium of education.[1] Liberals were concerned about high school fees or the number of scholarships available to poor but gifted students, but this was entirely seen to be in the interest of the Mittelstand. Interestingly, though, it appears as though the Frankfurt SPD was not primarily interested in this liberal ideal either, for it completely accepted the fact that secondary education was a prerogative of the middle classes. The party was thus largely interested in secondary education only in asmuch as it drained away resources from primary education, which was its primary concern since it affected the overwhelming majority of its constituency.[2] At least in Frankfurt, therefore, the liberal abandonment of the ideal of a 'classless society of citizens' in the realm of education is unlikely to have made a great political impact since both Liberals and the SPD accepted the social assumptions that underlined the current education system.

At the same time, there is no evidence, at least for Frankfurt, that liberals instead reverted to the opposite goal of trying to prevent any encroachments into their bouregois society from aspiring outsiders, for example through positively barring upward social mobility. It is simply that from the 1870s liberals in Frankfurt had different priorities. The priority was no longer the creation of an harmonious society through changes in the social structure. During the Empire, it became much more important to establish and defend liberal values in society as a whole, both against encroachments of socialism and from Prussian conservative values. The emphasis had shifted, therefore, from the mid-nineteenth-century ideal of classic, humanist Bildung to one which emphasised the aim of science and rationality not only as a preparation for a modern world of industry and commerce, but also as a defense of core liberal social and political values of religious tolerance and self-government.

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[1] Gall's argument about the transition in 1848/49 of the bourgeois ideal from a 'classless society of citizens' to a 'bourgeois class-society' has been presented in chapter one.

[2] See, for example, Sozialdemokratie (1906), pp. 66-75, Sozialdemokratie (1908), pp. 10-5, Sozialdemokratie (1910), p. 116. The fact that the vast majority of workers and of lower civil servants and white collar workers (Angestellte) sent their sons to primary schools was by no means unusual. For the case of Minden, see Lundgreen, Karul and Ditt, Bildungschancen, p. 78.

## 6.5. Conclusion. The Establishment of the Civic University of Frankfurt

In 1914, Germany's first civic university, a university entirely funded not by the state but through individual donations and subscriptions, was opened in Frankfurt. This university has rightly been regarded as the epitome of the civic spirit that prevailed in the city of Frankfurt. The university was seen by contemporaries like Franz Adickes as a testament to Frankfurt's Bürgersinn,[1] and this was also the view taken by Paul Kluke in his study of the history of the University of Frankfurt, as he summed up the motives that led to the foundation of the university:

> Es geschah vielmehr noch aus der Fülle und Geborgenheit einer gesättigten Kultur, die eines grandiosen Fortschrittes gewiß war, und aus einer wirtschaftlichen Blüte, daß ein auch politisch befriedigtes großes Bürgertum nun auch auf diesem Gebiet sich zu betätigen begann. Nicht eine soziale Umgestaltung suchte man einzuleiten, sondern hielt Ausschau nach Selbstbestätigung, um sich mit würdiger und weithin sichtbarer Leistung ein bleibendes Denkmal zu setzen.[2]

According to Kluke, the university was not a response to any particular need which other universities could not satisfy: rather it was simply the product of a self-satisfied, affluent bourgeoisie whose actions turned out to be their swansong. Beneath the surface, however, there were rather more complex reasons behind the foundation of the civic university, and these reasons, in fact, sum up nicely the central themes of liberal attitudes towards education in Frankfurt which have been discussed in this chapter.

As with the establishment of the Frankfurt system of secondary education, the university could never have been established but for the energy and the ambition of the First Mayor, Adickes.[3]

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1 L. Heilbrunn, Die Gründung der Universität Frankfurt a. M. (Frankfurt, 1915), p. 85.

2 'Rather it [the foundation] happened because of the abundance and security of a satiated culture certain of magnificent progress, and because of an economic boom that a politically content, sizeable bourgeoisie began to activate also in this area. No attempts were made to introduce social transformations, rather self-affirmation was sought, so that through dignified and high-profile achievement a permanent memorial to oneself might be erected.' P. Kluke, Die Stiftungsuniversität Frankfurt am Main 1914-1932 (Frankfurt, 1972), p. 21.

3 On Adickes' easy relationship with Prussian government officials ranging from Bismarck to Althoff, see Adickes, Persönliche Erinnerungen, pp. 1-9.

During the last years of his mayorality, few wealthy individuals or corporations could hope for any favourable assistance from the city without making a donation to Adickes' pet project.[1] Equally important were Adickes' conservative credentials in Berlin which ultimately overcame conservative fears about the potential danger of establishing a university in that centre of left-liberalism, Frankfurt.[2] In a sense, this shows the liberal councillors' impotence when it came to positive educational initiatives, because the initiative for drastic change could only come from the city's executive body, the Magistrat, and its president, the mayor, in particular. Yet the reason for this was that this was Gneist's ideal of local self-government in action. It was the mayor above all others who embodied the link between state administration and local government, and in this function he was ideally placed to initiate change as long as he enjoyed the trust of both the elected representatives of the community's citizens and the government bureaucracy.[3] Under these conditions, local government could thrive most, and this is why the left-liberals' choice of two right-liberal mayors in succession as discussed in chapter two had been so cunning. Adickes' educational initiatives demonstrate just how much could be achieved by local self-government.

As with liberal policy towards primary and secondary education, the liberal aim of creating a more enlightened society infused with liberal values also lay behind the foundation of the

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[1] Adickes' increasingly aggressive (and, indeed, corrupt) methods for obtaining donations for 'his' university are well described in BAK NL 44 n. 8 fos. 216-20. Hermann Luppe, 'Mein Leben'.

[2] Compare the hostile position of the Conservative and even National Liberal parties in the Prussian Chamber of Deputies with the positive and encouraging tone of Adickes' discussions with the Prussian minister for education and his bureaucrats. Heilbrunn, Gründung, pp. 88-90, 123-8. It is also interesting to note that among the most vociferous defenders of the University in Berlin were the current minister of education, von Trott zu Solz, as well as the erstwhile promoter of the Frankfurt system during his tenure as Minister for Education, Zedlitzch von Trützschler. Adickes, Persönliche Erinnerungen, p. 54.

[3] Equally, the maintenance of the non-denominational school system after the Kulturkampf owes a great deal to Miquel, who, as First Mayor, also made full use of the ambiguities of his office. Openly, he was fully supportive of the council's grievances against the Prussian school authorities, and yet it was under his direction that the Magistrat became less than resolute against Prussian help for the denominational schools. On the other hand, Miquel did nothing to discourage the impression among Prussian authorities that as long as he was in charge of Frankfurt, the local education system would be spared the worst excesses of left-liberal policies; hence they refrained from an all-out effort to refashion Frankfurt's schooling system along confessional lines. Anderhub, Verwaltung, pp. 238-42. Miquel's report of 31 May 1880 to the Wiesbaden education authorities in which he summarised - deferentially, but firmly - the position of Frankfurt liberals on denominational schooling and which subsequently became one of the cornerstones of the Frankfurt liberals' defence of their position, is reprinted in Müller, Aufklärungen, pp. 82-5.

university. The university had emerged to a significant degree from the Institut für Gemeinwohl, founded by the philanthropist William Merton in 1896, which later developed into the Akademie für Handels- und Sozialwissenschaften.[1] These institutes endeavoured to study the social and economic environment, with a particular emphasis on linking up academic theory and practical reform, and in disseminating the results among as wide a group as possible.[2] When the academy was integrated into the university, Germany's first independent university faculty of economic and social sciences was established.[3] In similar vein, Merton established Prussia's first chair of educational theory (Pädagogik) in 1915, with the express aim of linking academic research and practical work, so that educational science might be able to take issue on the general questions of the relationship between education and economic and social conditions. In particular, Merton hoped for academic input on questions such as the social usefulness of scholarships or the promotion of gifted people. It is no accident that Frankfurt's first professorship for educational theory was awarded to Julius Ziehen, promoter of the Frankfurt system who otherwise devoted most of his writings to the practical usefulness of educational theory.[4] As with primary and secondary education, therefore, there was a clear aim that the university should further the general education of society with the aim of creating a more enlightened community, which would be more harmonious and less riven by social conflict as a result of the education it had received. The university was simply the most ambitious institution set up to achieve this liberal goal, this time with the aim of creating a community infused with liberal values not only in Frankfurt itself, but also far beyond the city limits.

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1 See also R. Wachsmuth, Die Gründung der Universität Frankfurt (Frankfurt, 1929), pp. 46-60.

2 Lerner, Die Stiftungsuniversität, p. 34.

3 Elsewhere, chairs in national economy were part of a faculty of philosophy or law. Kluke, Die Stiftungsuniversität, p. 92.

4 G. Böhme, 'Schulpolitik, Volkserziehungswissenschaft und Universitätspädagogik - Aus Anlaß des 60. Todestages von Julius Ziehen (1864-1925)', in G. Böhme (ed.), Geistesgeschichte im Spiegel einer Stadt. Frankfurt am Main und seine grossen Persönlichkeiten (Frankfurt, 1986), pp. 122-39, esp. p. 128. J. Ziehen, 'Schulpolitik und Pädagogik', Zeitschrift für lateinlose höhere Schulen, xvii, 33-48.

Moreover, the foundation of the university was, like other liberal policies in primary and secondary education, closely intertwined with the Jewish population in Frankfurt. Indeed, this was one of the principal objections from Prussian conservatives to the foundation of the university, as newspapers such as the Kreuzzeitung feared that a university in a city like Frankfurt would inevitably become infused with the 'jüdisch-democratische Geist', the 'Jewish Democrat spirit', prevalent in the city.[1] And, indeed, the university was predominantly funded by donations from Jews. The baptised Jew William Merton donated more than 4 million M. to the University, and the Jewish couple Georg and Franziska Speyer donated another 4 million M.. Of the capital of 14.6 million M. which had been provided by the time of the opening of the university,[2] more than 8 million M. came from Jews or baptised Jews.[3]

The resulting emphatically non-denominational character resulted in Frankfurt being the first university without either a Protestant or a Catholic faculty of theology.[4] And it became something of a sine qua non for the university that the donors received a guarantee in the university statutes that all appointments were to be made without regard to creed.[5] For even though at the time it was perfectly possible for a Jew to occupy a chair at any German university, in practice Jews were still very much discriminated against in university life.[6] After all, one of Germany's leading professors of medicine, the Nobel Prize winner Paul Ehrlich, was led to accept Althoff's and Adickes' invitation to move his Institute for Vaccine Research from Berlin to Frankfurt by the fact that the academic establishment of the capital still refused to

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1 Kluke, Die Stiftungsuniversität, p. 66.

2 Wachsmuth, Die Gründung, p. 80. Merton's overall donation of about 4 million M. went to his institutes which then formed part of the university, so that these donations are not part of the 14.6 million M. necessary for the actual foundation. However, Merton did pledge further funds for the opening itself, and continued to donate money to the university after 1914.

3 See the overview of Jewish donations to the university in Arnsberg, Geschichte, ii. 292-9.

4 J. Conrad, 'Allgemeine Statistik der Deutschen Universitäten', in W. Lexis (ed.), Die Deutschen Universitäten (Berlin, 1893), pp.115-70. Here see, for example, Table x, pp. 156-7.

5 Kluke, Die Stiftungsuniversität, p. 90.

6 With regard to pursuing an academic career, Max Weber noted 'If he is a Jew, of course one says lasciate ogni speranza.'. M. Weber, 'Science as a Vocation', in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (reprint, London, 1993), p. 134.

offer him an ordinary chair on account of his being Jewish.[1] To the university's Jewish sponsors this was, at last, a chance to make sure that at least one university in Germany would not discriminate against Jews.[2] A central raison d'etre of the university, therefore, was that it was to be a model institution of religious tolerance, where excellence would be based exclusively on merit, and not on religious discrimination.

The most contentious issue surrounding the proposed university from its inception was that which underlined all other issues in education in Frankfurt, that of self-government. Given the peculiar German university system in which the most important examinations, for instance for the subjects of law and medicine, were examined by the state, it was inconceivable for the Prussian ministry of education and to Adickes that the new university should be anything other than a state university. On the other hand, the civic founders of the university demanded a say in the running of the university, if only to make sure that the university respected their ideals about religious toleration. In addition to the university's private sponsors, the city's left-liberal councillors also wanted to establish some guarantee of municipal influence over the university's affairs.[3] This was particularly important for them in order to escape the logic of the Social Democrats' arguments. For stealing the left-liberals' clothes, the socialists pointed out that it was neither the job of the city nor of the citizens of Frankfurt to donate a university to the Prussian state over which the original donors would exercise virtually no control.[4]

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[1] Wachsmuth, Die Gründung, p. 38-9. Heilbrunn, Die Gründung, pp. 57-9. Kluke, Die Stiftungsuniversität, pp. 54-5, esp. p. 103, n. 8.

[2] Kluke, Die Stiftungsuniversität, p. 85.

[3] It should be noted that even though this was a civic university, and even though the city made very few direct monetary contributions to it, the city had always been heavily involved in the promotion of higher education through the provision of cheap municipal land and/or buildings as well as through the provision of direct grants to various institutions which would form the nucleus of the university. Therefore, the city was also recognised as one of the university's principal founders. The sheer scale of municipal financial involvement, especially in the purchase of sites and the construction of the university buildings, which ran into several million Marks, is hinted at in BAK NL 44 n. 8 fo. 197. Hermann Luppe, 'Mein Leben'.

[4] Heilbrunn, Die Gründung, pp. 161-75. Many left-liberals asked themselves, too, whether it was sensible to surrender the fruits of old-Frankfurt civic spirit to reactionary Prussia. Kluke, Die Stiftungsuniversität, p. 77.

Consequently, the concessions made by the state were considerable. The university received an unprecedented organisation through the creation of a grand council, made up of representatives of the donors and of the city, which then elected an executive organ, the Kuratorium (committee), from its members.[1] These bodies were largely responsible for all matters financial, but the Kuratorium even had the right to interfere in the curriculum of individual faculties by suggesting a curriculum of its own. Frankfurt liberals had thus achieved for their university the kind of influence which they had consistently but unsuccessfully craved for in primary and secondary education. This further emphasizes the importance of the ideal of self-government in education which could acquire a kind of momentum of its own. It was the enabler of the liberals' educational drive, with regard both to Adickes' positive innovations and to the liberals' negative resilience against the state about primary education. But it was not just the crucial enabler of liberal educational policies: it was also their intermediate aim. For it was through the liberals' attempt at increasing, or at least at marking clearly, the boundaries of self-government in education vis-à-vis the state that they could hope to create a truly liberal society, at least within the boundaries of Frankfurt, a city characterised by tolerance, culture and true learning.

As always, given the dearth of studies on urban liberals in Germany it is difficult to estimate the extent to which Frankfurt liberals were typical in their aims and ambitions for education. Clearly, given that Frankfurt was the largest Jewish city in Germany, their influence on educational policy was likely to be greater here than anywhere else, even though it is likely that it was also significant in other cities with substantial Jewish populations such as Breslau, Berlin or Hamburg. The realisation that Jewish political participation was much greater in municipal than in national or state government is, of course, nothing new.[2] Yet the example of

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1 In 1914, 16 out of 38 members of the grand council, and 8 out of 21 members of the Kuratorium, were Jewish or of Jewish origin. Arnsberg, Geschichte, ii. 295.

2 In general, see S. Wenzel, Jüdische Bürger und kommunale Selbstverwaltung in preussischen Städten, 1808-1848 (Berlin, 1967).

Frankfurt shows that for the 'Jewish élite' participation in local government could be motivated by more than the simple desire to 'find the enhanced status and public esteem which some of them craved, an outlet for their public spirit, and a degree of influence on the conduct of public affairs'.[1] For Jews in Frankfurt, participation in liberal municipal politics offered the best hope in their fight against discrimination and anti-Semitism.[2] Given that the German Jewish population was largely urban, in an increasingly anti-Semitic national social and political environment, participation in local government as liberals offered the most effective and realistic way of resisting this national trend. In this sense, active participation in, and the extension of, local self-government became a matter of vital self-interest for Jews living in Germany during the course of the Empire.

The political effects of liberal educational policies in Frankfurt were ambiguous. Whereas they did unite the liberals at crucial moments and provided important rallying cries for their supporters, it is unclear whether their rigid hostility to denominational education were of electoral benefit to them. After all, in the 1904 elections, which were the only local elections ever to be held around the single issue of denominational education (prompted by the current debates about the new Prussian School Bill), the coalition of Mittelstand, Protestant and Catholic groups emerged as the clear winner and as the second biggest party group inside the municipal council. After vociferously defending Roman Catholics against the excesses of the Kulturkampf, Frankfurt left-liberals lost their political capital with many of the city's Roman Catholic population through their stubborn discrimination against denominational schools. Given the liberals' educational aims, it is ironic that this policy became the catalyst for the denominalisation of local politics through the foundation of separate Roman Catholic and

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1 Mosse, The German-Jewish Economic Elite, p. 222.

2 In the same vein, Donald Niewyck has argued that Jews largely considered activity in defence of liberal values to offer the most realistic way to combat the anti-Semitism of the Weimar Republic. Donald L. Niewyk, The Jews in Weimar Germany (Louisiana, 1980).

Protestant parties during the 1890s and 1900s which led to the gradual emergence of the Centre Party as a local political force by 1914.

Moreover, the impact of liberal educational policies on their electoral fortunes relative to the SPD is difficult to ascertain. Unlike secondary and tertiary education, liberals clearly failed to create a model system of primary education, for example by not fulfilling the demand for free school materials. Demands such as this were usually refused by the Magistrat with reference to an ostensible lack of resources. Given the city's ability, however, to establish an entire university through fundraising and direct public contributions of millions of marks, liberals clearly could have improved the quality of primary education beyond recognition had they really wanted to. Yet the political failures of liberal educational policies should not be exaggerated. The liberals' education policies were distinct from those of the SPD more in degree than in kind. Both agreed largely on the fundamental necessities of non-denominational education and local self-government in education. Liberals began to take up SPD demands for the abolition of preparatory schools, and they displayed considerable willingness to invest in primary education after 1890. As has been shown, liberals and Social Democrats in Frankfurt even agreed on the social assumptions that lay behind the educational system, and neither fundamentally questioned the fact that primary education provided for the education of poorer employees' and workers' offspring, whereas secondary education was largely a Mittelstand prerogative.[1]

This chapter has also shown how for Frankfurt liberals, education was the single most important unifying vision: it was an issue which not only united the various liberal parties, but which also brought them into considerable agreement with the Social Democrats. They may have used differing tactics to pursue their goals. The Democrats led in the confrontations with

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[1] It appears that co-operation between liberals and Social Democrats on education occurred not just in Frankfurt. For the case of Saxony, see Karl Heinrich Pohl, 'Sachsen, Stresemann und die Nationalliberale Partei. Anmerkungen zur politischen Entwicklung, zum Aufstieg des industriellen Bürgertums und zur frühen Tätigkeit Stresemanns im Königreich Sachsen vor 1914', JLF, iv (1992), 197-216, esp. 211-3.

the Prussian ministry on primary education, whereas the liberals on the right were instantly supportive of Adickes' collaborations with the government over educational reform. In this way, they formed perfect complements, because in their different approaches they rarely sabotaged each other. On the whole, therefore, liberals in Frankfurt shared the vision of creating in Frankfurt a community based on morality, tolerance, culture and education. Through education Frankfurt liberals attempted to create a liberal society and to ensure these liberal values for the future. Even though the strength of this vision ensured in the short run the realisation of their educational goals, that is the creation of a non-denominational system of primary education, the Frankfurt system of secondary education and a civic university, it must remain doubtful whether these institutions actually did achieve their purpose of the creation of a more tolerant society. The evidence presented in this chapter about the toleration of the considerable Jewish minority in the city is more than ambiguous, and it is not at all clear that throughout the nineteenth century and up to 1914 Frankfurt was any less anti-Semitic than equivalent cities in Germany or abroad.[1]

Yet as a result of the Jewish influence on Frankfurt liberalism, it is likely that liberal insistence on local self-government in education and the ideals of a tolerant society were more pronounced in Frankfurt than elsewhere. Nonetheless, the general thrust of Frankfurt liberal educational policy is unlikely to have been unique. It is true that Frankfurt was the first city to establish a civic university, but preparations for civic universities were also underway in Cologne and Hamburg. The minutes of the Prussian Städtetag show an impressive degree of liberal unanimity with regard to the aims and ideals of education. Indeed, the quality of a city's schools became central objects of civic rivalry throughout the country. With dwindling political influence at state and national level, and given the general liberal perception that Bismarck's break with the liberals in 1879 instigated not only a political, but also a

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[1] Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, 'Minderheiten in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft. Juden in Amsterdam, Frankfurt und Posen', in Kocka, Bürgertum, iii. 392-420.

fundamental economic, social, intellectual and moral shift towards conservatism,[1] control over local education became the liberals' best hope of recreating a liberal society in Prussia, at least within the cities. Indeed, this goal, whether it was ultimately realised or not, took clear precedence over party political efforts to meet some of the SPD's demands for practical improvements in primary education.[2] This chapter has thus shown that liberals in Frankfurt as elsewhere came to develop a distinctive vision of education, which emphasised standards of academic rigour, tolerance and individuality, and this was not only a crucial element of their self-understanding. It was this vision of liberals in the cities which became a fundamental determinant of the quality and the nature of Prussian education during the Empire.

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[1] Dieter Langewiesche, 'Bildungsbürgertum und Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert', in Kocka (ed.), Bildungsbürgertum, iv. 95-121, esp. 100-1. This contemporary liberal view has been, of course, deeply influential in the subsequent historiography. For doubts about its validity, see K. D. Barkin, 'The Second Founding of the Reich: a Perspective', GSR, x (1987), 219-35.

[2] To Frankfurt left-liberals, a tolerant and progressive society was the sine qua non for any policies designed to improve the position of the workers. Frankfurter Zeitung, 27.11.1904 (Drittes Morgenblatt).

# CHAPTER SEVEN: LIBERAL SOCIAL POLICY

## 7.1. Introduction

Throughout Europe, the crucial determinant of liberalism's viability as a modern political force in the twentieth century was whether it could face up to the 'social question', that is, whether it was able to formulate a political programme which could address the economic and political aspirations of the growing proletariat while at the same time satisfying the increasingly heterogeneous middle classes. Put differently, the challenge was whether an ideology dominant in the middle of the nineteenth century which believed in market capitalism and individualism, one which set the political and ideological framework for industrialisation to happen in the first place, could re-invent itself successfully enough to solve the problems largely created by industrialisation, for instance problems of urban squalor, poverty and unemployment.[1]

Historians have established that German liberals had tremendous problems in adapting their ideologies to this process of social change. In contrast to other liberal movements, and particularly compared to the British Liberal party,[2] German liberals failed to articulate and represent adequately the social and economic demands of the emerging labouring classes, which responded to this failure with the establishment of an independent labour movement

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[1] R. Bellamy, Liberalism and Modern Society. An Historical Argument (Cambridge, 1992). Gregory M. Lubbert, Liberalism, 15-109.

[2] The question why in Germany liberals did not manage to contain labour until the twentieth century, in marked contrast to Britain, was a central issue in the Sonderweg debate. See in particular J. Breuilly, 'Liberalism or social democracy? Britain and Germany, 1850-1875', in J. Breuilly, Labour and Liberalism, pp. 115-59. Most recently, see S. Berger, The British Labour Party and the German Social Democrats, 1900-1931 (Oxford, 1994). For a survey of the literature, see C. Eisenberg, 'The Comparative View in Labour History. 'Old and New Interpretations of the English and German Labour Movements before 1914', IRSH, xxxiv (1989), 403-32.

during the 1860s.[1] Moreover, in subsequent decades German liberals seemed largely unable to adapt their programme of reform developed in and for the 1850s to a rapidly industrialising society.[2] Many leading liberals took part in current debates about social policy, especially in the Centralverein für das Wohl der Arbeitenden Klassen, founded in 1844, and later in the Verein für Sozialpolitik. Yet the liberals' very involvement in these associations, which acted largely as forums for intellectual debate composed of conservatives as well as liberals,[3] epitomises the liberals' failure to find a common, coherent approach to social policy that was unequivocally liberal in character. These problems were compounded during the 1880s, when they failed to find a uniform response to Bismarck's conservative social insurance legislation.[4] If social policy received more attention from national politicians during the 1880s, largely as a result of Bismarck's decision to take the political battle to the SPD through his anti-socialist laws and his social insurance legislation, the response to the 'social question' became a question of critical importance from the 1890s onwards. For during those decades the most dramatic industrial and economic boom of Imperial Germany occurred,[5] which caused social problems of extraordinary scale and quality. From the 1890s onwards, liberals had to cope with an increasing process of fragmentation of the bourgeoisie, the social group on which

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[1] T. Offermann, Arbeiterbewegung und liberales Bürgertum in Deutschland, 1850-1863 (Bonn, 1979). For a case study which highlights the liberal failure to appeal ideologically and organisationally to the workers in the most rapidly industrialising German state, Saxony, see R. J. Bazillion, 'Liberalism, Modernisation, and the Social Question in the Kingdom of Saxony, 1830-90', in Jarausch and Jones (eds.), In Search of a Liberal Germany, pp. 87-110. By contrast, on the following period in Saxony which witnessed considerable liberal success at re-inventing itself, see J. Retallack, '"What is to be done?" The Red Specter, Franchise Questions, and the Crisis of Conservative Hegemony in Saxony, 1896-1909', CEH, xxiii (1990), 271-312.

[2] Rita Aldenhoff, 'Das Selbsthilfemodell als liberale Antwort auf die soziale Frage im 19. Jahrhundert. Schulze-Delitzsch und die Genossenschaften', in K. Holl, G. Trautmann and H. Vorländer (eds.), Sozialer Liberalismus (Göttingen, 1986), pp. 57-69.

[3] R. vom Bruch (ed.), Weder Kommunismus noch Kapitalismus. Bürgerliche Sozialreform in Deutschland vom Vormärz bis zur Ära Adenauer (München, 1985), p. 11-3. R. vom Bruch, 'Gesellschaftliche Funktionen und politische Rollen des Bildungsbürgertums im Wilhelminischen Reich - Zum Wandel von Milieu und politischer Kultur', in Kocka, Bildungsbürgertum, iv. 179.

[4] Liberal inability to develop a coherent approach to social reform was a striking contrast to the long tradition of conservative state reform in Prussia, of which Bismarck's social legislation can be considered a climax. On the history of the most important of Bismarck's social reforms, the 1883 sickness insurance law, see U. Frevert, Krankheit als Politisches Problem 1770-1880. Soziale Unterschichten in Preußen zwischen medizinischer Polizei und staatlicher Sozialversicherung (Göttingen, 1984). In general, see Gerhard A. Ritter, Social Welfare in Germany and Britain (Leamington Spa, 1986), pp. 17-130.

[5] See, for example, the summary of Germany's industrial output in Berghahn, Imperial Germany, pp. 298-9.

liberalism relied substantially for support. Liberals had to find ways of dealing with the 'new' Mittelstand of white-collar employees and lower civil servants, an upwardly mobile, extremely heterogeneous social group with little in common other than its dissociation from blue-collar labour.[1] To make matters worse, from 1900, SPD and particularly 'free' trade union membership exploded, with the result that by 1912 the SPD had become the largest party in the Reichstag.[2] Therefore, liberals were caught between placating demands from labour on the one hand and from the 'new' Mittelstand on the other, and the more they were seen to appease one group, the more they offended the other.[3] Finally, historians have been struck by the relative absence of new intellectual approaches shown by the main liberal parties to the social problems that resulted from Germany's economic and social change during those years. It is true that liberal politicians like Friedrich Naumann, or liberal academics like Lujo von Brentano, Hugo Preuß and Max Weber were concerned about these issues, but in practice they exercised little influence on the major liberal parties.[4]

The implications of these debates for local government have so far been largely neglected, even though it was in the cities where the social problems of a rapidly industrialising and urbanising society were most pressing. Among the reasons for this is, firstly, that the effect of the state's social legislation during the nineteenth century was a gradual erosion of local social responsibilities towards the poor. This was partly because freedom of movement overburdened the poor relief budgets of local authorities with the influx of the migrating agrarian poor, and partly because the social problems of a national industrialising economy

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1 For a discussion of the Mittelstand as a political phenomenon, and its implications in the case of Frankfurt, see chapter 3.2.

2 In 1912, the number of trade union members was more than half of the total number of votes cast for the SPD in the Reichstag elections of that year. Berghahn, Imperial Germany, pp. 335-7.

3 R. Koch, 'Liberalismus und soziale Frage im 19. Jahrhundert', in Holl, Trautmann and Vorländer (eds.), Sozialer Liberalismus, pp. 29-30. Langewiesche, 'Bildungsbürgertum', pp. 95-121. Langewiesche, 'Liberalismus und Bürgertum in Europa', p. 376. Sheehan, German Liberalism, pp. 233-57. Sheehan, 'Wie bürgerlich war der deutsche Liberalismus?', pp. 36-7.

4 G. Trautmann, 'Die industriegesellschaftliche Herausforderung des Liberalismus. Staatsintervention und Sozialreform in der Politikökonomie des 18./19. Jahrhunderts', in Holl, Trautmann and Vorländer (eds.), Sozialer Liberalismus, pp. 34-56, esp. p. 34. P. Theiner, Sozialer Liberalismus und deutsche Weltpolitik. Friedrich Naumann im Wilhelminischen Deutschland, 1860-1919 (Baden-Baden, 1983).

required social provisions on a national scale.[1] Secondly, at least since 1848 the state recognised that the growing number of urban poor could pose a potential political threat to the existing order.[2] Thirdly, historians analysing liberalism for its innovative attitudes towards labour have often been concerned with looking at the German 'social liberalism' in the light of the ideas of 'new liberalism' developed in England. Hence, their focus of enquiry has been on attitudes developed by liberals with regard to social interventionist policies of the state, rather than the locality.[3] Yet it was apparent that during the Empire the cities were major centres of social reform, to the extent that around the turn of the century the cities openly practised 'municipal socialism', albeit without the political connotations which the Webbs originally attached to the term.[4] However, following the conclusions of urban historians sceptical of party politics in the local sphere, the cities' efforts at social reform have been largely seen as products of an enlightened local bureaucracy headed by an innovative mayor, in the face of stubborn resistance of local councils full of reactionary house-owners seeking only their own immediate benefit.[5]

And yet, even if the initiative for social policy mostly came from the Magistrat, it was the 'political' city councils which put the individual Stadträte into office in the first place. Moreover, as social policy initiatives invariably cost money, the city council at the very least had to approve of the Magistrat's initiatives. In this way, Langewiesche has emphasised that innovative social policies mainly emanated from urban liberals. Thus, the municipal strand of

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1 C. Sachse and F. Tennstedt, Geschichte der Armenfürsorge in Deutschland. Vom Spätmittelalter bis zum 1. Weltkrieg (Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln, Mainz, 1980), pp. 196-218.

2 F. Tennstedt, Sozialgeschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland. Vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg (Göttingen, 1981), esp. pp. 84 ff.. This continued to be a major motive of the state's social legislation, for example under Bismarck. Ibid., p. 222.

3 See Karl Holl's definition of social liberalism in K. Holl, 'Überlegungen zum deutschen Sozialliberalismus', in Holl, Tennstedt and Vorländer (eds.), Sozialer Liberalismus, p. 229.

4 W. R. Krabbe, 'Munizipalsozialismus und Interventionsstaat. Die Ausbreitung der städtischen Leistungsverwaltung im Kaiserreich', GWU, xxx (1979), 265-83. Krabbe, Die deutsche Stadt, pp. 121-6. For a good case study of the regressive influence of house-owners in the city council, see R. J. Evans, Death in Hamburg.

5 F. Tennstedt, Vom Proleten zum Industriearbeiter. Arbeiterbewegung und Sozialpolitik in Deutschland 1800-1914 (Köln, 1983), pp. 573-95. Hartwig, 'Großstadt und Bürgerlichkeit', pp. 19-64. Reulecke, 'Bildungsbürgertum und Kommunalpolitik', 138-44.

social liberalism invariably has to be taken into account in any evaluation of liberal approaches towards social policy before the First World War.[1] Langewiesche's views are confirmed by the example of Frankfurt. Far from considering social policy to be their Achilles heel, the issue on which they were bound to fail whatever they did, Frankfurt liberals viewed their achievements in the area of social policy with pride. At a left-liberal election rally in 1904, for example, the city's leading Democrat, Heinrich Rößler, proclaimed that at the German Städtetage it was recognised that thanks to liberal city government, Frankfurt was leading the field in the three important areas of policy: finance, education and social policy.[2]

Having studied liberal policies on finance and education, this chapter will focus on liberal social policy in Frankfurt am Main, both because the issue was of fundamental concern to the Frankfurt liberals themselves, and because a case-study of urban social policy can fill important gaps in current scholarship about the ability and the willingness of German liberals to react positively to the social and economic changes that were taking place around them. In particular, as suggested earlier, one crucial reason why a viable social liberalism at national or state level could not develop was because in Germany, in contrast to England, liberals were not in government and were thus unable to link social reform to any effective finance reform.[3] Only at the local level, where liberals were in control of both, did they therefore have the opportunity to come up with a viable programme of social policy. The first two sections of this chapter will investigate the evolution of liberal social policy in Frankfurt am Main, and the assumptions underlying these policies, to examine the potential of innovative and constructive liberal social reform at the local level. The third section will consider the political implications

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1 Langewiesche, 'Deutscher Liberalismus im europäischen Vergleich', p. 17. For a summary of liberal involvement in urban social reform, see Langewiesche, Liberalismus, pp. 200-11.

2 Frankfurter Zeitung, 8.11.1904 (3. Morgenblatt).

3 G. Schmidt, 'Liberalismus und soziale Reform: Der deutsche und der britische Fall, 1890-1914', TAJG, xvi (1987), 228-32. In contrast to Holl's exclusive focus on state policies of social interventionism, Gustav Schmidt has argued convincingly that the structure of the state, i.e. the relationship between locality, state and nation was a central difference with regard to why liberals were so much more successful in addressing the social question in England than they were in Germany. Ibid., pp. 228-9

of liberal social policy as it was conducted in Frankfurt am Main. In particular, it will seek to address the crucial issue of the extent to which a progressive local social policy was enabled by and dependent upon a restrictive local franchise.[1]

## 7.2. Liberal social policy after the Annexation of Frankfurt am Main

In a brief address on his local political life during the celebrations of his seventieth birthday, Leopold Sonnemann singled out one personal political achievement which stood above all others. This was to have directed the Frankfurt citizens' attention to questions of social policy from the 1860s onwards.[2] Indeed, there can be no doubt as to Sonnemann's commitment to improving the social conditions of the growing proletariat from the very start of his career. Sonnemann was the driving force behind a final liberal effort to articulate workers' issues through the Vereinstag der deutschen Arbeitervereine from 1863, and in subsequent years he did everything he could to keep the gap between workers and the bourgeoisie from widening.[3] Even after the Eisenach congress of 1869, Sonnemann never gave up hope. Against the instincts of most of his southern German colleagues, he managed to include a commitment to social justice as a central demand in the programme of the German People's Party when it was founded in 1868. Subsequently, to the Frankfurt Democrats in particular the view that social and political justice formed two sides of the same coin became the central article of faith.[4] Moreover, the Frankfurt Democrats' strong commitment to social welfare became the central feature distinguishing them from the Progressive Liberals, one that was at least as important as

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[1] Langewiesche, 'Deutscher Liberalismus im europäischen Vergleich', p. 17. Langewiesche, Liberalismus, pp. 210-11.

[2] Leopold Sonnemann's siebzigste Geburtstagsfeier (Frankfurt, 1901), p. 7.

[3] August Bebel, Aus meinem Leben (Stuttgart, 1910), i. 82-8, 102-13, 194-5. See also BAP, 90 Kn 1n. 13 fo. 137. Sonnemann to Knorr, 4.7.1865. See also Verhandlungen des ersten Vereinstages der deutschen Arbeitervereine.

[4] See, for example, councillor Paul Holdheim in HStAW 407 n. 138² fo. 6. Democratic Association meeting, 9.1.1882. On Sonnemann's and the Frankfurt Democrats' leading role with regard to social justice within the German People's Party as a whole, see Gerteis, Sonnemann, pp. 41-54, esp. pp. 47-8. Geschichte der Frankfurter Zeitung, pp. 159-63, 168-73. Hunt, The People's Party, pp. 24-5, 111-19.

differing views about the nature of the federal state.[1] Thus, the German People's Party's economic and social programme included the commitment to a form of neo-corporatism (Genossenschaftswesen), the abolition of all privileges and monopolies, the establishment of technical schools (Fortbildungsschulen), and the abolition of indirect taxation in favour of progressive direct taxation.[2]

The Frankfurt Democrats' local political demands have to be seen in this context. It has been shown in chapter two that the earliest, most consistent Democrat political demand was for the abolition of the indirect tax on meat and flour, a measure that was of disproportionate benefit to the poorer sections of the city. In addition, there was an early Democrat commitment to the provision of adequate housing through the municipality.[3] These policies were undoubtedly designed to benefit the poorer sections of the city's inhabitants, but they did not feature prominently among the Democrats' goals after 1875. By that time, the question of indirect taxation had been resolved, and municipal involvement in housing gave way to a greater emphasis on public thrift and economy as the growing indebtedness of the city at the end of the Gründerzeit featured prominently in the public mind. In addition, Democrats were adamant and consistent in their demand for the municipalisation of gas, and many of them also strove successfully for the municipalisation of the city's water supply. Progressive though these latter demands undoubtedly were, it should be noted that these policies, aimed at an improvement of the common weal, were not social policies as such, that is policies directed at social reform in order in some way to solve the 'social question'.[4] Nor were they intended to be such by contemporary Democrats, who emphasised time and again the general benefit of these policies for the entire community.[5]

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1 See, for example, Sonnemann's speech to the Frankfurt Democratic Association on the relationship between Democrats and Progressive Liberals in Frankfurter Zeitung, 15.10.1890 (1. Morgenblatt). The article is also in HStAW 407 n. 161[1] fo. 130.

2 Frankfurter Journal, 15.10.1873, in AfSG S3/015.102.

3 Frankfurter Zeitung, 15.11.1872 (2. Blatt). Wolf, Liberalismus, p. 36.

4 See George Steinmetz' definition of 'social policy' in Steinmetz, Regulating the Social, pp. 67-9.

5 See, for example, Frankfurter Zeitung, 23.11.1872 (2. Blatt). Frankfurter Zeitung, 18.11.1878

In contrast, Democrats were peculiarly unconcerned about the traditional areas of municipal welfare policy and poor relief, and in particular about the complete disarray of municipal policy towards the poor before 1883, which stemmed from the fact that before the city's annexation poor relief had lain entirely in the hands of private charities. And when they finally realised that the current system was untenable and that an effective, efficient system of poor relief needed to be established, this was motivated primarily by the need to reduce the spiralling cost of poor law provision, rather than by genuine concern for the welfare of the poor.[1] Therefore, while at the national level Democrats, and Sonnemann in particular, actively promoted social policies such as Bismarck's social legislation, at the local level they tended to promote progressive policies aimed not so much at any particular group, but at improving social welfare in general.

In this sense, perhaps the prominent proponent for municipal social reform in Frankfurt at the time was the physician Georg Varrentrapp. As a city councillor from 1867 until his death, Varrentrapp was the city's leading National Liberal who was twice selected as the party's candidate for the Reichstag elections. He was perhaps the first Frankfurter to recognise in 1860 that the supply of cheap, affordable housing became an increasing social problem for families with low incomes. He thus became the driving force behind Frankfurt's first charitable building society which had built its first flats by 1868.[2] Much more importantly, as the chief protagonist of public hygiene in Frankfurt, it was Varrentrapp who lobbied hard and successfully for the establishment of a sewage and drainage system, the second in Germany, which had been under discussion since 1854 and the building of which finally began in 1867.[3] He was also the moving spirit behind the municipal take-over of the provision of water with

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(Abendblatt).

[1] See the Democrat councillor Martin May on the reform of Frankfurt's provisions for the poor in HStAW 407 n. 138[2] fos. 19-21. Democratic Association meeting, 23.1.1882.

[2] Henriette Kramer, 'Die Anfänge des Sozialen Wohnungsbaus in Frankfurt am Main, 1860-1914', AFGK, lvi (1978), 123-90, esp. 134-7.

[3] E. Marcus, 'Dr. Georg Varrentrapp', in Jahresbericht über die Verwaltung des Medizinalwesens der Stadt Frankfurt a.M. (1886), 268. The article is also in IfSG S2/796.

the help of reservoirs from the nearby Vogelsberg mountain range in 1875.[1] Even though these policies were supported by many Democrats around Sonnemann, it was largely as a result of Varrentrapp's efforts that the city caught up with and surpassed most other German cities in the provision of public hygiene. With regard to the provision of public welfare, therefore, the first decade after Frankfurt's annexation was marked by the city's recognition that it was its duty to provide for minimum sanitary standards for the city. The motives for this recognition, however, were not shared by all.

Varrentrapp himself was no doubt genuinely concerned about the provision of sanitation for the welfare of Frankfurt's citizens. His reputation as one of the leading experts on public sanitation in Germany and his local standing as the son of Frankfurt's leading physician in his day, from old Frankfurt stock,[2] gave his arguments about the urgency of sanitary reform important weight. Nevertheless, other arguments weighed more heavily in the minds of many of those who actually approved the considerable sums involved in these projects. Rather than a concern for general sanitation, these were concerned about the loss of revenue from the visitors and delegates of the Bundestag now that the German Confederation had ceased to exist. Providing for a cleaner and healthier city was one way of attracting more visitors (Fremdenverkehr).[3] Thus, it was the current First Mayor's central policy for Frankfurt to aim:

> zu einem Zentralpunkt des Welt- und Verkehrslebens zu werden, der mit dem Anreitz, den er dem Vermögenden bietet, es verstehe, die Vorteile der Freizügigkeit sich in umfassender Weise zuzuwenden.[4]

For once, the left-liberal Otto Kanngießer agreed. While usually never missing an opportunity to criticise the excessive spending of the city as he saw it, he advised in 1877 that:

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1 MAB 1874, p. v.

2 They were described as 'Pettenkofer der Begründer der wissenschaftlichen Hygiene in Deutschland, Varrentrapp der Vater der praktischen Hygiene'. A. Spiess, 'Georg Varrentrapp. gestorben am 15. März 1886', in Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für öffentliche Gesundheitspflege, xviii (Brunswick, 1886), iii- xxiv, quotation at xv. The article is also in S2/796. It is likely that Spiess slightly overrated Varrentrapp's importance, given that as Frankfurt's municipal physician he owed his job to him. Nevertheless, Varentrapp was a key figure in the German public health movement. Ladd, Urban Planning, pp. 38-9.

3 Forstmann, 'Frankfurt', p. 376.

4 'at becoming an infrastructural centre of world importance which can make full use of the opportunities presented by the freedom of movement, through the incentives it offers to the wealthy.' Neue Presse, 26.1.1857, in IfSG S2/3052.

> Alle Bestrebungen der Bevölkerung müssen ... darauf gerichtet sein, den Arbeitsmarkt möglichst zu heben... Fremde heranzuziehen und für diesen Zweck nützliche Ausgaben, die ja nur ein Anlagekapital sind, nicht zu sparen. Soll in dieser Beziehung das Richtige geschehen, so wird während einer Reihe von Jahren der Aufwand der Commune ein erheblich größerer sein, denn es ist klar, daß bedeutende Unternehmungen, welche der Stadt als solcher zu Gute kommen und nicht blos eine gewinnbringende Anlage im engeren Sinne sind, nur von der Commune ausgehen können.[1]

These arguments also provided the rationale behind most of the other improvements made to the city: the planning and construction of a new central railway station, the construction of several new streets through the crowded inner city area and finally the building of a new opera house which, as a result of inept financial management by the city administration, brought the city close to financial ruin in the late 1870s. Even though many of these policies had their origins in the last few years before the city's annexation, the strength and extent of this feeling largely derived from the Prussian take-over of the city, which spurred many Frankfurters into action to make up for the losses they perceived the annexation to entail. On the first day of publication after Frankfurt's loss of independence, the Frankfurter Zeitung thus summarised the dominant view among local liberals that the building of a drainage system and other improvements in municipal hygiene and the construction of the theatre were the expression of one and the same aim, namely to 'preserve the prosperity of the city'.[2]

Naturally, this expansion of municipal activity was not without opposition. At first, this came largely from the group of councillors around Nikolaus Hadermann, and, after his death in 1871, around Otto Volger.[3] These 'old Democrats' were opposed to the 'modern' organisation and programme of Sonnemann's Democrats, and they tried to prevent, for example, the city's economic (and in particular its industrial) expansion after 1866.[4] More important than this

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1 'All the population's efforts must be directed at promoting the labour market as much as possible, ... attracting foreigners and not withholding the necessary expenditure for this purpose, which is, after all, investment capital. If the right action is taken in this regard, local expenditure will be considerably greater over the next few years, for it is clear that significant projects, which benefit the city in general and are not simply profitable in the narrow sense, can only emanate from the commune.' Kanngießer, Geschichte, pp. 447-8.

2 Frankfurter Zeitung, 16.11.1866 (2. Blatt).

3 HStAW 405 n. 1066 f. 294-5. Zeitungsbericht, 18.2.1872.

4 Wolf, Liberalismus, p. 28.

relatively small group which merged into the Democratic Association in 1873 was the hostility of those who joined the Progressive Liberal Association in 1874. In the council, Berthold Geiger quickly proceeded to become their most prominent spokesman, and with his colleagues he offered fierce resistance to any proposals that increased municipal provisions. Rigorously opposed to any form of municipalisation of private monopolies, the Progressives were fiercely critical of lavish municipal spending on civic buildings.[1] They were thus essentially opposed to municipal intervention with the aim of raising the welfare of Frankfurt's citizens as a whole, and they were even more hostile to suggestions that the city intervene in favour of any particular group. In response to demands from certain sections of the public for the creation of a shelter and a soup kitchen for the homeless following the examples set by Paris and London, it was noted at a Progressive Liberal meeting that such institutions brought more harm than good, and that it was inappropriate for the city's coffers to be thus 'exploited'.[2] Moreover, this Progressive Liberal attitude to the municipal provision of welfare persisted in subsequent decades. When the more moderate Carl Funck took over from Geiger in leading the party during the 1890s, there continued to be a strong minority within the party, including Geiger himself, who persisted with this attitude. Meanwhile, the majority under Funck's leadership was increasingly willing to compromise with the social policy of the Democrats, so that from the 1890s the social policy of this section of the Progressives became increasingly similar to that of the Democrats.

Therefore, despite Sonnemann's claims to have directed his fellow citizens' attention to social policies from the 1860s, no party in Frankfurt developed any consistent municipal social policy during the 1870s. It appears that during this time Sonnemann and his political friends focused their attention on the social policy of the Empire rather than of the city, which is hardly surprising given Sonnemann's intensive involvement in national politics at this point. The

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1 See, for example, HStAW 407 n. 150[1] fos. 12-3. Progressive Association meeting, 10.2.1879.

2 HStAW 407 n. 150[1] f. 15. Progressive Association meeting, 10.2.1879

abolition of local indirect taxation such as the controversial tax on meat and flour, for example, was a matter for the city council to decide upon, but it is likely that the Democrats proposed it with more than one eye turned to the national elections, since the main beneficiaries of this measure did not even have the municipal vote.[1] Instead, the Democrats around Sonnemann and the National Liberals shared a commitment to raising the general welfare of the community through municipal policies, such as the provision of minimum standards of hygiene. In the former independent Free City, the assignment of such a role to the city government was nothing new. What was new, however, was the sheer scale of that provision. There were, of course, important differences between the views of left- and right-liberals about which policies were legitimate for the cities to conduct in the general interest. Whereas the Democrats largely shared the National Liberals' concern for civic building and public hygiene, the National Liberals remained at best cautious about the municipalisation of private enterprises. Nevertheless, with the significant exception of the Progressive Liberals, the city's liberals were in considerable agreement about the principle of expansive municipal activity, not out of a commitment to a particular section of the city's society, or as part of a programme of social reform, but simply for the common weal.

## 7.3. Frankfurt under Miquel: The beginning of 'kommunale Daseinsfürsorge'[2]

During the 1880s, social policy in Frankfurt underwent a dramatic change. Where there had been no consistent concern for municipal social policy among any of the political parties or the local administration before, both the administration and the Democrats developed theoretical and practical models of social policy of unusual sophistication. This sea change in attitudes

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[1] For the interconnectedness of German politics in this sense, see in general Thompson, 'Left-liberals', pp. 10-11.

[2] 'Kommunale Daseinsfürsorge' denotes a city government's provisions for the common weal, a term that evoked traditional notions of civic responsiblities for all those living within the city area. Langewiesche, Liberalismus, pp. 201-4.

was the result of a number of interdependent factors. One such factor was the increasing attention paid by the Democratic leadership to matters of social policy. The early 1880s saw the rise to prominence within the party of Karl Flesch, who, upon finishing his degree in jurisprudence started to work as a lawyer in his home town in 1880.[1] Flesch started to publish on the problem of social policy, and put forward his views at a number of meetings of the Democratic Association.[2] Furthermore, during the 1880s Sonnemann himself started to shift some of his attention from imperial to municipal social policy, even though the effect of this was most clearly manifested during the 1890s, once he had given up all hope of ever re-entering the Reichstag. Thus his first mention of social policy in the municipal context appears to have been made during the hotly-contested 1884 election campaign for the Reichstag, in which he called for a municipal social policy to help a particular section of society, the artisans and craftsmen, for example through municipally subsidised credit.[3] Perhaps most importantly for Democratic attitudes towards social policy was the emergence during this decade of Heinrich Rößler as the party's most respected and influential leader, second only to Sonnemann himself.[4] Rößler's advance was in part the result and in part the cause of the growing social political consciousness of the Democrats. For Rößler was a strong authority on matters of social policy. In the year that he took over at the newly-created Deutsche Gold- und Silber- Scheideanstalt (DEGUSSA) in 1873, he created a pension fund for his employees, and in 1884 he introduced the eight-hour day for his workers.[5] Such was

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1 Max Flesch-Thebesius, 'Der Frankfurter Sozialpolitiker Dr. Karl Flesch', AFGK, xlvii (1960), 77-88, here 78.

2 For an example of his speeches in 1882-1883, see HStAW 407 n. 138² fos. 2-7. Democratic Association meeting, 9.1.1882. HStAW 407 n. 138² fos. 144-8. Democratic Association meeting, 6.3.1883.

3 HStAW 407 n. 138³ fos. 108-19. Democratic Association meeting, 13.10.1884. The meeting was summarised in the Frankfurter Zeitung, which is in HStAW 407 n. 138³ fo. 126. Sonnemann repeated his views on this question in HStAW 407 n. 138³ fo. 137. Democratic Association meeting, October 1884.

4 During the start of the decade, Rößler was far from prominent in the debates of the Democratic Association, neither was he a member of the party committee. For a list of the committee in 1882 and 1883, see HStAW 407 n. 138² fo. 108. By the end of the decade, Rößler was, alongside Sonnemann, the most frequent speaker at the Democratic Association, with four out of seventeen speeches given by each. Frankfurter Zeitung, 15.10.1890 (1. Morgenblatt). The article of the Annual General Meeting of the Democratic Association is also in HStAW 407 n. 161¹ fo. 130.

5 See in general Heinrich Rößler 1845-1924, pp. 44-61.

his commitment to social policy that despite political differences he was on good terms with the local representatives of the SPD throughout his life, so that he was usually exempt from Social Democratic criticism of Democrat policies.[1] Rößler soon found that co-operation with workers' representatives not only enhanced the quality of life for his workers, but also the efficiency of his company. Given the strong hostility of the chemical industry to free trade unions in general, his public defence of their usefulness and their positive influence on the chemical industry demonstrates particularly well Rößler's genuine concern for social policy.[2] Naturally, the transition of the Democrats' commitment towards a progressive social policy did not happen overnight, nor was this process complete by 1890. In 1902 Rößler himself admitted that it had taken some time and effort by the party leadership to arouse social-policy concerns among the rank and file.[3] The nature of this transition which occurred largely during the 1880s is well illustrated by the 1886 municipal election campaign, during which matters of social welfare found an unusual amount of attention. While the official Democrat programme was concerned with poor relief mainly in order to reduce its cost to the city, Sonnemann reiterated his party's commitment to the municipalisation of gas, which would have yielded enormous financial benefits to the city. He called for an active, involved municipal government which should take the initiative in matters such as technical education, the establishment of electricity works and housing. The aim of this extensive programme of 'social reform', as Sonnemann put it, was familiar. These measures would ensure that, instead of being left behind, Frankfurt would become an advanced community which would not care for the interest of particular sections, but which would look after the interests of all sections in an

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1 In a debate on the crucial issue of the extension of the municipal franchise, for example, in his accusations against the Democrats Max Quarck acknowledged that Rößler was a 'white raven among the black'. Volksstimme, 17.2.1903, in HStAW 407 n. 161[4] fo. 122. See also Rößler's orbituary in the SPD organ Volksstimme, 17.4.1924. This article is also in IfSG, S2/1054.

2 See Rößler's speech in 1905 on 'Was kann der Arbeiter zur Lösung der Frage [Bekämpfung von Giftgefahren] tun?', in IfSG S1/6.

3 H. Rößler, 'Die Sozialpolitik in unserem Gemeinwesen. Vortrag, gehalten im Demokratischen Verein', in Gemeinnützige Blätter für Hessen und Nassau. Zeitschrift für soziale Heimatkunde, iv (1902), 49-56, here 49-50.

equal manner. Interestingly, Sonnemann summarised these policies as 'economic' matters.[1] At the same time, another candidate, Franz Wirth, was also committed to the common weal. Yet he emphasised a specific commitment to raise standards amonst working and artisanal classes. Therefore, technical education, the provision of electricity, and the improvement of poor relief and health, as well as the improvement of housing, were policies that were designed to benefit these particular sections of the population above all others.[2] This change of semantics is important, for it indicates a careful transition, which was still ambiguous in 1886, from a commitment towards the general welfare of the city to an overt social policy which was primarily directed towards the poorer sections of society.

Another crucial change that occurred during the 1880s was the appointment of Karl Flesch as a salaried Stadtrat and chairman of the Armenamt, for Flesch not only inspired the city's practical social policies from 1884 onwards: he also provided a theoretical foundation for them. In fact, he was one of the first social reformers to appreciate the fundamental difference between social policy and poor relief.[3] The entire justification of the former was to make the latter redundant.[4] The core of Flesch's theory was that traditional legal theories of contract failed to take account of the social realities of the time.[5] Thus, individual contracts of employment or housing contracts were never agreed between equal partners. In the first case, there was a discrepancy between current wage arrangements, which simply provided the minimum needed by the worker to continue in his work, and the actual minimum needed by the individual not only to sustain himself and his family, but also to participate in culture and public life. The latter included the cost of living, as well as the cost of education, of going to the theatre, of visiting art galleries, and so forth. The other fundamental problem with current

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 23.11.1886 (Abendblatt).
2 Frankfurter Zeitung, 2.12.1886 (1. Morgenblatt).
3 Luppe, Mein Leben, p. 16.
4 Weitensteiner, 'Karl Flesch', pp. 46-7.
5 H. Sinzheimer, Der Sozialpolitiker Karl Flesch und seine literarisch-wissenschaftliche Tätigkeit (Frankfurt, 1915), pp. 9-10.

contracts of employment was that the individual worker had almost no protection against breach of contract by his/her employer.[1]

These two observations, about the failure of the employment contract to provide adequate pay and its failure to provide any safeguards for workers against unfair and even unlawful treatment by their employers, were at the root of Flesch's social-policy concerns. Hence Flesch supported all efforts at social enquiry which could highlight the precise extent of the problem. By the end of the decade, Flesch was able to prove that despite the relatively high wage of Frankfurt workers, they could only make ends meet with the help of charity, even if they displayed the highest amount of thrift and diligence.[2] This confirmed the Democrat's resolve that the 'social question' could only be solved if the community, and the municipality in particular, took measures to improve general real wage levels. This should be done through subsidised municipal services, generous terms of employment in municipal enterprises, cheap access to cultural events and, perhaps above all, cheap rents in healthy and adequate accommodation.[3] It is important to note, therefore, that Flesch's views on social policy were not just a more sophisticated version of the traditional liberal belief that the social question could be resolved through education and self-help. Important though education and culture were to the welfare of every individual,[4] Flesch's policies, for example the provision of cheap housing, had a direct effect on the individual's disposable income, and were thus interfering in the labour market. Indeed, this was a central objective of the Democrats' social policy.[5] Flesch's ideas were bound to become extremely influential among the city's left-liberals, not

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1 K. Flesch, 'Zur Kritik des Arbeitsvertrages', in Karl Flesch's soziales Vermächtnis (Frankfurt, 1922), pp. 15-44.

2 K. Flesch (ed.), Frankfurter Arbeiterbudgets. Haushaltsrechnungen eines Arbeiters einer Königl. Staats-Eisenbahnwerkstätte, eines Arbeiters einer chemischen Fabrik und eines Aushilfearbeiters (Frankfurt, 1890).

3 K. Flesch, 'Wohlfahrtseinrichtungen für Arbeiter und deren Familien', in Karl Flesch's soziales Vermächtnis, pp. 63-100.

4 Sinzheimer, Der Sozialpolitiker, p. 7.

5 Flesch himself used the slogan 'Wohnfrage ist Lohnfrage' (housing is a function of pay). Karl Flesch, 'Sozialpolitik in der Gemeinde und im Erwerbsleben', in Karl Flesch's soziales Vermächtnis, pp. 100-23, here p. 112.

only because he continued to propagate his views in speeches to the gatherings of the Democratic Associations at regular intervals after his appointment. His views were profoundly based on and appealed to Democratic values. Like his Frankfurt Democrat colleagues Flesch insisted on the inalienable link between social and political freedom.[1] Likewise, even though most Democrats held no particular views on municipal social policy until the 1880s, Flesch's view that it was the duty of municipal self-government to become involved in areas where the state and even the Empire failed could not fall on deaf ears in a party with such passionate beliefs in the value of local self-government.[2]

The third factor which led to a fundamental change in municipal social policy during the 1880s was the social policy concerns of Frankfurt's First Mayor, Johannes Miquel, which have often been overlooked.[3] Miquel's period of office has been commonly characterised as one in which Miquel successfully balanced the budget after the poor financial management of his predecessor, but in which he failed to have the vision of his successor in responding to the challenges of modern city government.[4] Put more positively, the 1880s are often seen as a precondition for the activity and drive of Franz Adickes, First Mayor from 1890 to 1912.[5]

There is a good deal of truth in this assessment, as the cornerstone of Miquel's policy was undoubtedly sound financial management: after all, this was part of the reason why he was elected in the first place. Most importantly, by 1883 Miquel had successfully tackled the biggest long-term financial burden on the municipal budget, the provision of poor relief. This had been made necessary after freedom of movement since 1867 meant that private poor relief

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1 Sinzheimer, Der Sozialpolitiker, p. 4.

2 Weitensteiner, 'Karl Flesch', p. 225.

3 According to his biographer, social policy was one of the few areas where Miquel was denied success during his time as First Mayor. Herzfeld, Miquel, i. 524, 526.

4 Hence the Frankfurter Nachrichten wrote on the death of Adickes: 'Adickes folgte dem ängstlichen Miquel, dem rechnenden Finanzmanne, der stetes im Banne des Ausgleichs seines Budgets lebte, der an neue Aufgaben erst herantrat, wenn die Notwendigkeit des Augenblicks sie forderten.' ('Adickes succeeded the anxious Miquel, that calculating man of finance, who constantly lived under the spell of his balanced budgets, who approached new tasks only when they became inevitable'.) Frankfurter Nachrichten 4.2.1915 (Mittagsausgabe). See also Julius Rothenberger, 'Von Miquel bis Adickes (1880-1912)', in Jahrbuch der Frankfurter Bürgerschaft (1926), 126.

5 Typically, see Klötzer, 'Frankfurt', p. 172.

could no longer provide for the influx of the poor into the wealthy city of Frankfurt, particularly after the depression set in during the mid-1870s.[1] The situation was made worse by the fact that this private relief was not co-ordinated with the new municipal relief, which often resulted in payments by both bodies to the same recipients. Even worse, the private system enabled many paupers to stay in Frankfurt after their arrival until they were eligible to receive municipal support. Miquel responded by introducing the well-proven Elberfeld system of poor relief,[2] and by the co-ordination of private and public poor relief by the Armenamt, so that in effect the private bodies were subsidising public poor relief.[3] It is certainly true, therefore, that Miquel's reorganisation of poor relief was a phenomenal success, as per capita spending on poor relief continued to fall throughout the 1880s.[4] However, at least as noteworthy is the fact that the reorganisation of poor relief was the first recognition by a city which until 1866 had had no system of poor relief at all, and which had grudgingly granted the statutory provisions of poor relief subsequently imposed by Prussian state laws, that the municipality had an obligation to provide for all the poor in the community. Reflecting the changes that had occurred in the system of poor relief during the previous decade, Karl Flesch noted in 1890 that:

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[1] For the general impact of the freedom of movement on municipal poor relief, see Steinmetz, Regulating the Social, pp. 112-8.

[2] Codified in Elberfeld in 1853, this was a decentralised system of poor relief which enlisted a large number of volunteers to supervise each recipient of poor relief personally and to encourage each pauper to become self-reliant. The Elberfeld system is described in Steinmetz, Regulating the Social, pp. 158-60.

[3] From 1876-1881, per capita expenditure on municipal poor relief doubled. M. Büttel, Die Armenpflege zu Frankfurt a.M. mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Kinderpflege im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert bis zum Eintritt der neuen Armenordnung im Jahre 1883 (Frankfurt a.M., 1913), pp. 108-117. According to the actuary Ebeling, the municipal poor relief budget rose from 3,636 M. in 1870 to 202,500 M. in 1877. HStAW 407 n. 138[1] fo. 31. Democratic Association meeting, 24.2.1879. Büttel's and Ebeling's figures do not add up, which may be explained by different measures of accounting for total poor relief expenditure. For the reorganisation of the system of poor relief, see MAB (1882/83), pp. 109-15, and MAB (1883/84), pp. 155-60. For the new Frankfurt system of poor relief relative to its Elberfeld model, and for the theoretical underpinnings of Miquel's reform, see P. Stein, 'Das Verhältnis der freiwilligen und zwangsgemeinschaftlichen Körperschaften in der Wohlfahrtspflege', in Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik, Gemeindebetriebe. 1. Band: Neue Versuche und Erfahrungen über die Ausdehnung der kommunalen Tätigkeit in Deutschland und im Ausland, cxxviii (Leipzig, 1908), 427-40.

[4] Weitensteiner, 'Karl Flesch', p. 44.

> Einführung und Durchführung der Armenordnung...bedeutet nichts weiter als den Bruch mit all' den Prinzipien und Gewohnheiten, die unser Armenwesen von jeher beherrscht hatten....[1]

In recognition of this new obligation, the Magistrat also decided to employ the first municipal medical doctor in Germany, Dr. A. Spiess, almost immediately after the reorganisation of poor relief had come into effect on 1 April 1883.[2]

Miquel's most important contribution to the 'social question', however, lay in his support for, and substantial identification with, the programmes of Flesch. Indeed, Flesch's very appointment to the Magistrat in 1884 deserves attention, and not only because he was only thirty years old at the time of his appointment. As shown above, he was an outspoken Democrat who by that time had already pronounced many of his views on the social question, some of which he had published.[3] It is simply inconceivable that Miquel could have appointed the left-liberal had he not at least partially agreed with his views.[4] This agreement is best illustrated by their shared view that the lack of adequate housing was central to the 'social question'. In 1883, Miquel was the moving spirit behind an inquiry of the Verein für Sozialpolitik into the housing question, which was published in 1886 and discussed at a conference in Frankfurt in September of the same year. The importance of this investigation for housing reform throughout Germany can hardly be overestimated, for it ended over a decade of silence and public inactivity on the issue and provided the basis for subsequent discussions. It was the first time that details concerning the extent and the nature of the housing question had been brought into the public sphere.[5] Miquel's initiative is even more remarkable considering that he did not react strictly to demand. It may be true that the First Mayor had gained a valuable insight into the defects of the Frankfurt housing market during

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1 'the introduction and realisation of the system of poor relief...signifies nothing less than a break with all principles and customs which had traditionally dominated our poor relief...'. K. Flesch and H. Bleicher, Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Armenwesens in Frankfurt am Main und zur Armenstatistik (Frankfurt, 1890), p. 3.

2 MAB (1883/84), p. 9.

3 See the list of Flesch's publications in Karl Flesch's soziales Vermächtnis, pp. 226-32.

4 It is likely that Adickes, for example, would never have appointed Flesch. As late as 1906, the Mayor managed to prevent the election of Flesch's right hand man, Hermann Luppe, to the post of a salaried Stadtrat despite (and also because of) Luppe's left-liberal and SPD support. Luppe, Mein Leben, p. 20.

5 Bullock and Read, The Movement for Housing Reform, pp. 63-70.

his reorganisation of the city's system of poor relief,[1] but during the 1880s Frankfurt could boast the best housing conditions of any large city in Germany.[2]

What appears to have galvanised Miquel into action, apart from his own concern for the social question, was Flesch's concern for housing and insistence on the importance of social enquiry. Flesch's influence on Miquel's views is only too evident in the latter's introduction to the Association's report. His article was an exposition about the various ways in which current laws failed to take account of current realities in the housing market. The tenant had little or no protection against breaches of contract by the owner, and there was little that the individual tenant could do against financial exploitation. In this sense, the weaknesses of current tenancy agreements were directly analogous to the problems inherent in employment contracts. Therefore, he demanded an Imperial housing law which gave the municipalities extra powers to enforce certain hygiene standards and to protect the tenants from breaches of contracts.[3] Miquel's insight, therefore, about the inadequacy of the law in failing to take into account current social political realities was entirely borrowed from Flesch.[4]

The combination of these factors, the growing Democratic awareness of social policy through its leadership, the appointment of the Democrat Flesch to run the city's administration of social policy as a Stadtverordneter, and the interest of the First Mayor in the 'social question' produced quite dramatic results in Frankfurt during the 1880s. In 1887 and 1889, the city council agreed to the building of a number of flats for municipal civil servants.[5] Modest though the scale of this building was, it was nevertheless the first time the municipality built houses on its own. And in January 1890, the AG für kleine Wohnungen whose purpose was

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1 Bullock and Read, The Movement for Housing Reform, pp. 64-5.

2 H. Lindemann (C. Hugo), 'Wohnungsstatistik', in Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik, Neue Untersuchungen über die Wohnungsfrage in Deutschland und im Ausland, lxiv (Leipzig, 1901), 285, 290-91, 331-2, 340.

3 Johannes Miquel, 'Einleitung', in Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik, Die Wohnungsnoth der armen Klassen in deutschen Großstädten und Vorschläge zu deren Abhilfe, xxx (Leipzig, 1886), ix-xxi.

4 See also Flesch's own contribution to the inquiry. K. Flesch, 'Die Wohnungsverhältnisse in Frankfurt a.M.', in Schriften, Die Wohnungsnoth, pp. 57-91.

5 Maly, Macht, pp. 237-238, 265.

the building of small, adequate and hygienic flats, was founded. Miquel became the president of the company, and, most unusually, he did not resign his post when he left Frankfurt but kept it until his death in 1901. And as member of the board, Flesch undertook the effective running of the company. Again, these were only beginnings, as at the outset there was no public money involved in the company. Yet it is important to note that Frankfurt's most successful charitable housing company was founded with the active support and encouragement of Flesch and Miquel.[1] In the realm of education, 1889 saw the establishment of a Hülfsschule to cater for those children who could not follow the lessons in ordinary schools.[2] More importantly, in 1890 the city finally established a gewerbliche Fortbildungsschule, a technical school for those craftsmen and apprentices who required particular skills in their employment such as reading, writing or arithmetic.[3] Thus a demand which the Democrats had campaigned and lobbied for had come to fruition.[4]

Finally, at least as significant as Miquel's and Flesch's housing initiatives were their attempts to improve their other great social concern apart from the insufficiency of the wage: the legal insecurity of the worker. Flesch created the gewerbliche Schiedsgericht, an industrial tribunal which proved to be a cheap and efficient way of settling outstanding disputes between employers and employees. As a result of Miquel's backing, the Frankfurt tribunal became the model for the nationwide Gewerbegerichtsgesetz in 1890.[5] Finally, the pioneering idea of a municipal labour exchange, which was eventually established in 1895, also had its origins in the deliberations of Miquel and Flesch.[6]

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1 Kramer, 'Anfänge', pp. 148-51. 70 Jahre Aktienbaugesellschaft für kleine Wohnungen Frankfurt a.M., 1890-1960 (Frankfurt, 1960).
2 MAB (1889/90), p. 235.
3 MAB (1889/90), p. v. MAB (1890/91), pp. 254-6.
4 Kleine Presse, 23.10.1889. See also HStAW 407 n. 161[1] fo. 28. Democratic Association meeting, 21.10.1889.
5 Weitensteiner, 'Karl Flesch', pp. 123-39.
6 Roth, Gewerkschaftskartell, pp. 159-60.

At first sight, Miquel's enthusiasm for social policy in Frankfurt seems as puzzling as it is unexpected. To begin with, his policies in Frankfurt were diametrically opposed to those he had advocated in Osnabrück in the late 1860s and late 1870s. According to his biographer, in Osnabrück his 'social policy' had aimed at cushioning the blow which the introduction of the freedom of trade had dealt to the city's craftsmen by reintroducing a modified guild system on a voluntary basis.[1] By contrast, even before Miquel's appointment to his position in Frankfurt, Sonnemann had left Miquel in no doubt that such a policy of supporting a guild system, even if it was associative and rested on a voluntary membership,[2] would be unwelcome in Frankfurt. Left-liberals considered guilds to be restrictive and backward, and thus a contradiction to their own commitment to Frankfurt's unrestricted economic progress.[3] What is most striking, however, is that through the introduction of the gewerbliche Schiedsgericht Miquel pursued a policy which brought him into direct confrontation with the city's guilds. For the gewerbliche Schiedsgericht was an intervention into the guilds' affairs, and if there was to be a court that was to decide on disputes between an employer and an employee, the guilds preferred to introduce their own tribunals which would be free from outside interference and whose composition would be heavily in the employer's favour. By contrast, the municipal tribunal's independence was central to its existence, hence Miquel and Flesch vigorously defended the principle of parity in the composition of the court, that is of equal representation for workers and employers with a municipal appointee as chairman having the casting vote.[4] Miquel also seemed to contradict his own views stated in the Heidelberg Declaration of 1884, which showed great concern for the more traditional demands of the Mittelstand.[5] By contrast, in

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1 Herzfeld, Miquel, i. 389-403.

2 Herzfeld, Miquel, i. 511-2.

3 Despite the political challenge of the Mittelstand, liberals never budged from their conviction that guilds were synonymous with 'medieval institutions'. Yet in practice, the dividing line between voluntary guilds on the one hand, and artisans' associations to which the left-liberals had no objections on the other, was very unclear. Heinrich Rößler in Frankfurter Zeitung, 15.11.1898 (Morgenblatt).

4 Weitensteiner, 'Karl Flesch', pp. 120-3.

5 Frankfurter Zeitung, 28.3.1884 (Morgenblatt). For a more recent example of the view that the Declaration was more concerned about the Mittelstand than about the plight of industrial workers and employees, see Nipperdey, Deutsche Geschichte, ii. 329-30. It should be noted, however, that in contrast to

Frankfurt Miquel did not hesitate to engage in long negotiations with the representatives of the workers, an act which gave these representatives added legitimacy and gave them a further public sphere to operate in, thus undermining the intention of Bismarck's anti-socialist laws which Miquel had supported.[1] Furthermore, Miquel tried his very best to convince the Prussian authorities first in Wiesbaden and then in Kassel to allow the tribunal to halt its operations during strikes in order to preserve its neutrality.

It would be easy to explain these apparent contradictions with the traditional argument that Miquel's policies at the state and national level were different from those at the local level because at the local level Miquel's actions display the actions of a mayor who acted 'above' politics. That certainly could explain why Miquel was largely in agreement with Frankfurt Democrats in his social policies while steering his party to the right in national politics at the same time. However, this fails to take into account the apparently different policies Miquel pursued as mayor of Osnabrück and as mayor of Frankfurt. Moreover, with Miquel it is particularly difficult to define the point at which he stopped acting 'unpolitically' as Mayor and started acting politically as a national politician. For example, as the moving spirit behind the Association for Social Policy's housing investigation Miquel based his authority on his experience as a mayor, but his central demand was for an imperial law which could help the localities solve the housing problem.

Instead, Miquel's various actions in national, state and local politics reveal him as the expert and professional politician that he really was. Underlying his actions was a deep commitment to social reconciliation in a rapidly evolving industrial society which was one of German liberalism's core concerns. To distinguish between the 'political' and 'unpolitical' ways in which

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contemporary and later interpretations of the Heidelberg Declaration, a disproportionate attention to the plight of the Mittelstand at the expense of the working classes is not evident from its actual wording. Instead, the Declaration was largely aimed at satisfying the demands of the southern German agricultural constituencies of its signatories. The Declaration is printed in White, The Splintered Party, pp. 238-9.

[1] Through these negotiations, Miquel also prevented the expulsion of these socialist leaders from the city for their socialist activities. Weitensteiner, 'Karl Flesch', p. 116.

he pursued this central liberal goal misses the point. Moreover, Miquel combined this aim with a sharp awareness of political realities. In Osnabrück, Miquel presided over a city with deep and overlapping social, political and confessional tensions and a still powerful guild system which during the 1860s made it extremely hard to find any form of governing consensus.[1] In this situation, it is true that Miquel placated a strong artisanate, but he also showed a considerable awareness of the social problems of workers, even during his first period of office between 1865 and 1869. It was thanks to his efforts, for example, that the city built the first houses for miners working for the municipality.[2] By contrast, since among the Frankfurt political circles there was virtually universal hostility to any restrictive economic policy aimed at the Mittelstand which would hamper the city's progress, there was no point in Miquel even trying to take up his Mittelstand policies there. By contrast, the Frankfurt Democrats, and particularly Flesch, were the only ones at the time who had any realistic proposals for how the social question could be solved with regard to the workers, and Miquel took the opportunity to co-operate with the largest political party in Frankfurt on this issue. Miquel's political actions in state and national politics have to be judged against the fact that at that level he had to appeal to a different constituency than existed in predominantly liberal Frankfurt.[3] The breakaway of the Secessionists from the National Liberal party in 1880 and the results of the elections prior to the Heidelberg Declaration had made it abundantly clear that the National Liberals' constituency was in small towns and in the countryside, and it was to these areas that he had to appeal for political survival.[4] And yet this did not stop him from consistently lobbying for social reform at national level, too, even if his demands were rather

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1 Lembke, Johannes Miquel, esp. pp. 8-10. John, 'Kultur', pp. 184-6.

2 Lembke agrees with Herzfeld's assessment that Miquel's concern for the artisans was the cornerstone of his policies in Osnabrück, but then his discussion of Miquel's 'social policy' shows him to be surprisingly progressive. Lembke, Johannes Miquel, pp. 65.

3 A good example of this is that in the Heidelberg Declaration, he called for higher taxes on stock exchange transactions, a demand that was completely opposed to the interests of the city of Frankfurt and which could not even be contemplated in the local context.

4 White, The Splintered Party, pp. 84-122, esp. pp. 105-7, 112-3.

more careful and conservative as he adapted them to a national constituency.[1] In the same way, Miquel's social policies in Frankfurt demonstrate that he was an astute politician concerned with, and able to adapt his political ideals to, the political environment in which he operated.

Therefore, if during the 1870s, despite the massive investment in drainage and sewage systems, there was no clear and universal social policy in place, this had changed during Miquel's years in Frankfurt. By the time Miquel was called to Berlin to become Prussian minister of finance in 1890, not only was the city's responsibility for a general minimum sanitary provision for all members of the community accepted. More importantly there was a recognition that the municipality could and should play an active part in solving some of the social problems created by the modernising processes of industrialisation and urbanisation. For Frankfurt, the 1880s, and more specifically the years 1883 and 1884, marked the beginning of progressive municipal social reform.

This outcome is undoubtedly due in the largest measure to the inspiration and the energy of Flesch and the support of Miquel. Nonetheless, it would be mistaken to absolve the city council from any responsibility for the municipal social policies that emerged during the 1880s. Under the leadership of Rößler and Sonnemann, the Democratic Association became a firm supporter of these policies. For example, the new municipal gewerbliche Fortbildungsschule was a demand for which Democrats had campaigned and lobbied for some time.[2] The Democratic Association also supported the creation of the charitable building company AG für Kleine Wohnungen, with Sonnemann even suggesting a municipal subsidy for the company, at a time when the company was still under discussion and had not even been founded.[3] That Rößler was closely in tune with the First Mayor's ideas on housing is shown by the pivotal role

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1 Nipperdey, Deutsche Geschichte 1866-1914, ii. 330.

2 Kleine Presse, 23.10.1889, also in HStAW 407 n. 161[1] fo. 28. Democratic Association meeting, 21.10.1889.

3 HStAW 407 n. 161[1] fos. 51-2. Democratic Association meeting, 11.11.1889.

he played later in the creation of the 'Association Imperial Housing Law' through which he lobbied hard for the creation of a national housing law largely along the lines suggested by Miquel.[1] Rößler was also very involved in the creation of the industrial tribunal, so that he, together with the Democrat entrepreneur Schmidt-Knatz, persuaded the employers to agree to an equal franchise for the elections to the tribunal.[2] This is not to deny that scepticism about this progressive form of social policy among councillors was generally still quite strong, much stronger, in fact, than in subsequent decades. Also, Democratic house-owners could vote for their personal interest in preference to their party allegiance in the 1880s just as they could in subsequent decades. Nonetheless, a progressive city council was an absolute prerequisite for a municipal social policy.[3] Therefore, the gradual change in social-policy views of Frankfurt's Democrats in particular was a precondition of the change in attitude towards social policy that occurred during the 1880s. This change, together with the rise to prominence of Karl Flesch and Miquel's term of office, ultimately caused the progressive social policy of the 1880s. These factors were interdependent. Flesch was a Democrat through and through, and Miquel not only had similar social-policy aims, but he also needed the Democrats' support for the reforms which he pioneered in association with Flesch. Even though Frankfurt's social policies were largely conducted by Miquel and Flesch, therefore, social policy in Frankfurt am Main was not the result of some bureaucrats' actions, but was embedded in the evolving political environment of the city.

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1 H. Rößler, 'Die Aufgaben von Reich und Staat in der Wohnungsfrage', in A. Damaschke and H. Rössler, Der Kampf gegen die Wohnungsnoth, pp. 7-23. On the Verein Reichswohnungsgesetz (e.V.), see Bullock and Reid, The Movement for Housing Reform, pp. 255-67.

2 Weitensteiner, 'Karl Flesch', p. 115.

3 H. Rößler, 'Sozialpolitik in der Gemeinde', in IfSG S1/6 fo. 28.ii.

## 7.4. Social Policy in the Wilhelmine Era

During Adickes' term of office, social policy in Frankfurt expanded dramatically, both in quality and in scope. Adickes, who was in many ways the archetypal 'unpolitical' National Liberal mayor of this era,[1] has been regarded as one of the pioneers of municipal socialism in Germany,[2] and even his opponents could not but testify to the breadth of his vision.[3] Together with Miquel, Adickes, whom Sheehan has described as 'the ideal mayor in the late imperial period', is generally regarded as one of the leading mayors in the German Empire.[4] In contrast to Miquel, however, Adickes never had any designs to enter state or national politics, so that whereas his predecessor managed to move quite happily between the various levels of government, Adickes' career was entirely devoted to local government.[5] As a result, Adickes did not so much adapt himself to the Democrats' vision of social policy, but he came to Frankfurt with a social-policy agenda of his own. What distinguished Adickes was that he was one of the first mayors in Germany to develop a holistic, comprehensive concept of municipal social policy, where social policy was the essence of municipal government in its classic liberal aim of contributing to a harmonious society.[6]

A central social-policy concern, shared by both the left-liberals and the liberals on the right who followed Adickes, was a commitment to the city's Mittelstand. Against the background

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1 Thompson, 'Left-liberals', p. 45.

2 Notably by Frankfurt's First Mayor during the period of the Weimar Republic, Ludwig Landmann, in Franz Adickes. Sein Leben und sein Werk (Frankfurt, 1929), p. viii.

3 BAK NL 44 n. 21 fo. 2. 'Franz Adickes, sein Leben und sein Werk'. Book review by H. Luppe, typescript.

4 Sheehan, 'Liberalism and the City', p. 126. See also H. Delvos, 'Oberbürgermeister einst und heute', in Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 11.3.1964. The article is also in IfSG S2/649[3].

5 Even at the level of state politics, as a member of the Prussian upper chamber, the Herrenhaus, Adickes remained an authority first and foremost on matters concerning local government. See in general W. Klötzer, 'Franz Adickes, Frankfurter Oberbürgermeister 1891-1912', in K. Schwabe (ed.), Oberbürgermeister (Boppard, 1981), pp. 39-56, esp. p. 40. See also the biographical article by Alfred Hugenberg, leader of the DNVP in the Weimar Republic, who was, interestingly, Adickes' son-in-law. A. Hugenberg, 'Franz Adickes als Staatsmann und Politiker', in Franz Adickes, pp. 233-52. Unsurprisingly, however, the article tends to exaggerate Adickes' influence in state politics. BAK NL 44 n. 21 fo. 3. 'Franz Adickes, sein Leben und sein Werk'. Book review by H. Luppe, typescript.

6 Adickes and Beutler, Die sozialen Aufgaben, p. 12.

of rising electoral support for the Mittelstand parties described in chapter three, the Democrats supported all of Adickes' efforts to improve the local economy, in particular those to improve the prospects of the city's trade and commerce. They continued to be enthusiastic supporters of any moves by the Magistrat to improve the city's system of technical education for developing the skills of the city's artisans and craftsmen. Unlike Munich, for example, Frankfurt never acquired a leading role in the movement for technical education among German cities,[1] but Frankfurters were nonetheless satisfied that the quality of the municipal system of technical education in Frankfurt was well above average, as befitted a city whose local economy was so dependent on trade and commerce.[2] The demand for technical education undoubtedly formed the most consistent and often repeated Democratic social-policy initiative in favour of the Mittelstand, along with the favourable system of taxation discussed in chapter five. During the 1900s, this was increasingly complemented by calls for a exhibition hall in which small craftsmen and artisans could sell their work at low cost,[3] for the provision of cheap credit by the municipality, and for the realisation of other Mittelstand concerns such as the building of an old people's home.[4] While there is no doubt about left-liberal concern for the Mittelstand in general, which has been described in chapter three, it is clear that the left-liberals' policy towards the Mittelstand was only peripheral as far as social policy was concerned, occasional Democrat assurances that they would not be left out of social policies notwithstanding.[5] For, according to Adickes, the aim of social policy was to 'protect the weak, to constrain the reckless, to confront the overpowering might of capital and to reduce social conflict through raising the unpropertied classes'.[6] This agreed with the

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1 See the debate on municipal technical schools in Verhandlungen des Zweiten Deutschen Städtetages (1908), pp. 34-56.

2 See the speech by Stadtrat Otto Grimm to the Prussian city convention in Verhandlungen des Dritten allgemeinen Preußischen Städtetages am 29. und 30. Januar 1901 zu Berlin (Berlin, 1901), pp. 43-4.

3 Frankfurter Zeitung, 19.11.1906 (Morgenblatt).

4 Frankfurter Zeitung 8.11.1908 (3. Morgenblatt).

5 Frankfurter Zeitung 8.11.1908 (3. Morgenblatt).

6 Adickes, Die sozialen Aufgaben, p. 10.

left-liberal vision of social policy, whose aim was justice for the poor and a reconciliation with the working classes.

> Nur wenn es den unteren Schichten gut geht - wenn für ihr geistiges und leibliches Wohl gesorgt wird, kann heute ein großes Gemeindewesen aufblühen und gedeihen.[1]

Even though social policy was in the interest of all, and worked primarily to reconcile all sections of society, it is clear from these aims that to be successful, social policy had to be primarily directed not towards the Mittelstand, but towards the poorer sections of Frankfurt's society.

The centrepiece of Adickes' social concern, in line with most other social reformers in Germany during the last two decades before the First World War, was land policy, a comprehensive effort to create not only sufficient, affordable housing, but also a clean and aesthetically pleasant municipal environment.[2] Adickes pursued his ideals in three ways. In 1891, the Magistrat noted that in some parts of Frankfurt cramped housing conditions in large blocks of flats had begun to take over from more 'traditional' forms of housing in smaller units.[3] In line with other municipal reformers, what Adickes wanted to avoid most were the Berlin-style 'rent barracks'.[4] In his attempt to put an end to the speculation in building land and thus reduce the price of land and ultimately of housing, Adickes introduced a building ordinance which imposed strict requirements on the building of new flats, and which standardised the building regulations in all parts of the city. Furthermore, it introduced the principle of 'zoning', whereby the city was divided into different zones, so that, for example, industrial buildings could only be constructed in a zone designated for that purpose.[5] His

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1 'Nowadays it is only when the lower sections of society are well enough off - when their spiritual and physical welfare is taken care of, that a great community can blossom and prosper.'. Rößler, 'Sozialpolitik in der Gemeinde', in S1/6 fo. 28.i.

2 Under Adickes, Frankfurt became 'the generally acknowledged pioneer in German housing reform'. See in general Ladd, Urban Planning, pp. 139-85, here p. 167.

3 MAB (1890/91), pp. xii-xiv.

4 R. Koch, 'Franz Adickes', in G. Böhme (ed.), Geistesgeschichte im Spiegel einer Stadt: Frankfurt am Main und seine grossen Persönlichkeiten (Frankfurt, 1986), pp. 112-3.

5 MAB (1891/92), pp. x-xii.

efforts to circumscribe the housing market by building regulations peaked with the famous Lex Adickes, which was first introduced in the Prussian Parliament in 1893, but which was not passed until 1901, curtailed in its application to Frankfurt alone.[1] The Lex introduced the principle of 'Umlegung' which meant that private owners of land could be forced to exchange their land for an equivalent plot elsewhere if this was deemed necessary, for example for the building or widening of streets.

A second strand of Adickes' housing policies was his drive for incorporations (Eingemeindungen) to create more space for the city and thus to reduce the price of land. Whereas up to 1890 there had only been one reluctant incorporation (of Bockenheim in 1877),[2] there followed three 'bursts' of incorporation in 1895, 1900 and 1910, by which time the entire Frankfurt Landkreis had been incorporated into the city and Frankfurt had become the largest German city in terms of area.[3] The Magistrat pursued the policy of buying large tracts of land in the areas it had targeted for incorporation. This was doubly beneficial as the existence of Frankfurt as the biggest landowner in these communities added pressure for incorporation, and it meant that the city could acquire a lot of land cheaply before speculation set in as a result of incorporation.[4]

Thus, thanks to Adickes' extensive purchases of land, by 1914 the city of Frankfurt was perhaps the largest municipal owner of land within its city limits in Germany. Yet it soon became clear that the municipal ownership of land in itself did not automatically lead to an improvement of the housing market. If the municipality sought to influence the price of land through selling its land cheaply, it could lead to speculation as those who bought the land

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1 A. Sutcliffe, Towards the planned city, p.37. This is also a good introduction into the surrounding debates on urban planning in Germany and elsewhere at the time.

2 Maly, Honoratioren, pp. 104-9.

3 Rebentisch Dieter, 'Politik und Rauplanung im Rhein-Main Gebiet. Kontinuität und Wandel seit 100 Jahren', AFGK, lvi (1978), 195-6 and, more elaborately, D. Rebentisch, 'Industrialisierung', pp. 90-113. W. Hofmann, 'Oberbürgermeister und Stadterweiterungen', in Dietrich und Oestreich (eds.), Forschungen zu Staat und Verfassung, pp. 59-90.

4 Ibid., p. 109.

cheaply could resell it at market price for a quick profit. Conversely, if the municipality decided to hold on to its land, it effectively reduced the supply of land on the market, thereby increasing the price of available land even further. Therefore, to provide municipal land cheaply while seeking to prevent its use for speculative purposes, Adickes pioneered for Germany the idea of the Erbbaurecht, the system whereby the municipality would lease out its lands for extremely low fees to those who wanted to build houses. And, to facilitate conditions for private building even further, Adickes set up a municipal bank which could provide second loans to families and charitable building companies with little starting capital.[1]

The third important strand of Adickes' Bodenpolitik, and one closely linked to his policy of incorporation, was his support for the improvement of the city's infrastructure, and of the extension and improvement of tramways in particular. This was motivated by the desire to provide cheap and efficient transport to enable workers to live further away from their workplace where living conditions were better. The period saw the laying out of a number of parks,[2] which improved the living conditions for those who stayed in the city. Finally, Adickes was responsible for a large number of street clearances in the inner city area, partly to reduce congestion through the building of large streets and boulevards, and partly to improve the city aesthetically, by following Stübben's ideas, for example, on the desirability of wide-open spaces from which the city's landmarks such as the cathedral could be seen.[3]

There were two central reasons for Adickes' prominence among those concerned about the housing question. Firstly, he occupied something of a half-way house between two opposite poles in the debate. His extremely interventionist housing policies satisfied housing reformers

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1 Bangert Wolfgang, 'Baupolitik und Stadtgestaltung in Frankfurt a.M.. Ein Beitrag zur Entwicklungsgeschichte des deutschen Städtebaus in den letzten 100 Jahren' (Technische Hochschule Berlin PH.D. thesis 1936), 55-60.

2 Monographien Deutscher Städte, vol. vii: Frankfurt am Main, ed. E. Stein and G. Voigt (Oldenburg i. Gr., 1914), pp. 106-12. Bangert, 'Baupolitik', p. 41.

3 Josef Stübben was the architect of the Cologne Neustadt and of a large number of other city-planning projects in Europe. An admirer of Haussmann's Paris, he was the most influential advocate of the building of wide and spacious streets, and of creating 'air and light' around important monuments and civic buildings to enhance their aesthetic effect. Ladd, Urban Planning, pp. 96-103. Bangert, 'Baupolitik', pp. 38-47.

for whom the extortionate prices for small flats were rooted in supply-side problems such as speculative behaviour.[1] Yet at the same time Adickes was heavily interventionist in every aspect of the housing market save the actual building of housing, thus having also something to offer to those who considered the price of housing as a direct result of excess demand, and who therefore emphasised the need for 'laissez-faire' in the market.[2] The second reason for Adickes' prominence in the housing debate was that he put into practice what legal experts considered to be traditional 'Germanist' solutions to the social problem. Indeed, municipal socialism was often seen as a way of adapting notions of medieval, financially independent and socially benevolent city government to modern local government in order to enable it to reconcile the various classes which had grown apart even further as a result of the industrial revolution.[3] Thus, Adickes' policies were the direct answer to Gierke's attempts to construct a German 'social law' to mediate between public and private law which combined guarantees for individual freedom with collective social responsibility, in contrast to Roman law which sought to guarantee only the former, and to socialism, which sought to guarantee only the latter. In particular, Gierke emphasised that property carried with it rights as well as duties to the community. Gierke called on public law to enforce the 'proper' use of land, and this was precisely the point of Adickes' policies such as the Erbbaurecht and the Lex Adickes.[4]

Even though the city's left-liberals by and large supported Adickes in his endeavours, they had substantial misgivings about important areas of his policies. Not surprisingly, large sections of

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1 For example, Adickes' programme was the answer even to the more radical demands of a Friedrich Naumann. F. Naumann, Die Wohnungsnot in unserer Zeit. Vortrag auf dem 6. Verbandstage Deutscher Mietervereine in Cassel (Leipzig, n.d.).

2 For a summary of the economic background to the 'housing problem', see R. Tilly, 'Cyclical Trends and the Market Response: Long Swings in Urban Development in Germany, 1850-1814', in W. R. Lee, German Industry and German Industrialisation. Essays in German Economic and Business History in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (London, 1991), pp. 148-84.

3 K. Bücher, Die wirtschaftlichen Aufgaben der modernen Stadtgemeinde (Leipzig, 1898), esp. pp. 3-11.

4 O. von Gierke, 'Die soziale Aufgabe des Privatrechts', in E. Wolf (ed.), Quellenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen Rechtswissenschaft (Frankfurt, 1949), pp. 478-511. John, Politics, pp. 108-11, 120-22. On Gierke's social thought, see G. Dilcher, 'Genossenschaftstheorie und Sozialrecht: Ein "Juristensozialismus" Otto v. Gierkes?', in Quaderni Fiorentini per la storia del pensiero giuridico moderno, iii/iv (1974/75), 319-65.

the Progressive Liberal Association were opposed to the more interventionist and costly policies through which Adickes proposed to regulate the housing market.[1] But the Democrats also showed considerable unease, for example, at Adickes' expensive street clearance projects.[2] Moreover, in a discussion in the Democratic Association about Adickes' most famous innovation, the Lex Adickes, the proposed law was considered at best 'superfluous', and at worst a 'barbarian' intervention into the rights of the citizens.[3] Eight years later in 1901, when the law was again under discussion, Democrats were slightly more welcoming to the proposals, yet they were still hostile to the wide powers of expropriation which it offered to housing authorities, and they preserved a considerable scepticism as to how much of a solution the law would actually be.[4] Therefore, the left-liberal rank-and-file regarded the Lex Adickes with considerable suspicion, even though their leaders such as Flesch, Rößler, Funck and Rudolf Oeser supported Adickes' efforts with much more enthusiasm.[5]

Beneath these more predictable arguments, there were two fundamental reasons for left-liberal scepticism about Adickes' policies of housing reform. The first was that there was doubt as to whether Adickes' policies were actually working, and, as has been shown in chapter three, that doubt increased particularly during Adickes' last years in office. Adickes' peculiar policy of interfering with every aspect of the housing market save the building of municipal housing itself, and in particular his enthusiasm for buying up as much land as possible without interfering in the market directly, was self-contradictory and achieved the worst of both worlds. It meant that by 1907, around 49 % of all the land within the city limits was directly owned by the municipality, and a further 19% was owned by charities controlled by the city.[6] If the private provision of housing was the answer, therefore, Adickes' policies were perhaps

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1 See, for example, HStAW 407 n. 150[2] fo. 215. Progressive Association meeting, 28.10.1901.
2 See, for example, HStAW 407 n. 161[4] fo. 53. Democratic Association meeting, 11.11.1901.
3 HStAW 407 n. 161[1] fos. 323-7. Democratic Association meeting, 27.3.1893.
4 HStAW 407 n. 161[4] fos. 37-8. Democratic Association meeting, 13.4.1901.
5 HStAW 407 n. 161[4] fo. 92. Democratic Association meeting, 7.4.1902. HStAW 407 n. 161[4] fos. 26-7. Democratic Association meeting, 4.3.1901.
6 Silbergleit, Preussens Städte, pp. 174-7.

the main contributor to the shortage of housing through the withdrawal of 68% of land from the market.

Indeed, the city frequently pushed up the price of land available on the private market directly by buying land for considerably above the current price.[1] Given the sheer amount of land in municipal ownership, the most efficient way of providing cheap housing would have been for the city to take a more active part in the building of flats. As it was, Adickes' efforts at encouraging the less well-off (though not industrial workers) to build their own homes through the Erbbaurecht and cheap credit met only with partial success. It did enable the foundation of many new charitable building societies which could make extensive use of the Erbbaurecht through the building of housing with little starting capital of their own, which gave the building of flats by private charities a considerable stimulus. By contrast, Frankfurt's largest housing charity, the AG für kleine Wohnungen, made little use of the system since in the long run it gained considerably from the increasing value of the land.[2] Furthermore, the system was little used by individual families, who were put off by the idea that they would not own the land for posterity.[3] Finally, despite his ambitious and expensive street clearances which destroyed a considerable number of historic buildings, Adickes failed to solve the city's traffic problems.[4] Adickes' obsession with building wide streets aroused frequent complaints, because again it reduced the amount of land available for building and hence increased prices.[5] If the left-liberals were increasingly sceptical about the actual benefits of Adickes' wide-ranging policies, the second, crucial disagreement was over his motives. Adickes'

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1 Bangert, 'Baupolitik', pp. 53-4. BAK NL 44 n. 8 fos. 197-9. Hermann Luppe, 'Mein Leben'.

2 According to the data given by Kramer, less than one third of all flats built by charitable housing trusts were built by taking advantage of the Erbbaurecht. Kramer, 'Anfänge', pp. 143-8, 174-76. Note that the figure she gives for the number of flats built by charitable housing trusts by 1914 on p. 179 (6,512) contradicts the figure for the same item given on p. 178 (5,507).

3 Bangert, 'Baupolitik', pp. 56-8.

4 BAK NL 44 n. 8 fos. 191-2. Hermann Luppe, 'Mein Leben'. Bangert, 'Baupolitik', pp. 39-44.

5 HStAW 407 n. $161^3$ fos. 173-4. Democratic Association discussion group, 15.11.1899. See also the complaint by the National Liberal teacher Martell in HStAW 407 n. $161^4$ fos. 37-8. Democratic Association meeting, 13.4.1901. See also E. L. Hinderliter, 'Worker Protection in Imperial Germany. The Example of Frankfurt am Main 1869-1914' (Brown Univ. PH.D. 1977), 60-1.

policies on housing and on urban planning were primarily designed to benefit the community as a whole. Although he was undoubtedly interested in providing healthy and cheap living conditions for those on moderate incomes, he was more concerned about the provision of housing for the Mittelstand than for industrial workers.[1] For example, the Erbbaurecht and the cheap municipal credit facilities were primarily designed for the Mittelstand.[2] Nonetheless, for Adickes the provision of cheap housing was always secondary, as evidenced, for example, by his obsession with creating the widest possible streets, which may have pleased his aesthetic senses but which also pushed up prices considerably.[3] That Adickes was much more concerned to create a city which would remain attractive to its wealthy inhabitants than about the creation of cheap housing for the poorer sections of the population is shown by the fact that even though he supported a number of charitable building initiatives, by and large he and his right-liberal supporters remained hostile to charitable housing.[4] For if charitable housing trusts offered flats at below the market price, it would distort and disrupt the private housing market.[5]

Adickes was not alone in his hostility to charitable building societies offering rents below the market price. On some occasions he could count on the majority of house-owners, some of whom were also Democrats defying party principles, to vote down proposals for municipal subsidies for the AG für kleine Wohnungen.[6] Yet despite these occasional examples when house-owners' self interest could override party principles, it is clear that the underlying

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1 Adickes, Die sozialen Aufgaben, p. 41.

2 Bangert, 'Baupolitik', p. 57.

3 Bangert, 'Baupolitik', p. 39. BAK NL 44 n. 8 fo. 189. Hermann Luppe, 'Mein Leben'. Wide streets pushed up prices because the house-owners had to contribute significantly to the cost of the streets which served their property. Furthermore, wide streets reduced the amount of land available for building.

4 BAK NL 44 n. 8 fos. 192-3. Hermann Luppe, 'Mein Leben'. On the National Liberals' general lack of enthusiasm for the building of small flats, see the left-liberal Paul Zirndorfer's accusations in Frankfurter Zeitung, 1.11.1902 (3. Morgenblatt). Adickes' concern for the welfare of the city's wealthy inhabitants was born partly out of his conservatism, but partly also out of the realistic assessment that the city was heavily dependent on their income tax for its revenue.

5 This was precisely why Adickes opposed any municipal subsidies for charitable building trusts. Kramer, 'Anfänge', pp. 142-3. Bangert, 'Baupolitik', p. 61.

6 Weitensteiner, 'Karl Flesch', pp. 23-4. Flesch's frustration at the house-owners' rejection of the subsidies was shared by other Democrats. Kleine Presse, 30.10.1896.

motive of Adickes' housing policies was diametrically opposed to that of the left-liberals. Certainly, left-liberals would not have argued with the First Mayor's efforts at attracting the wealthy or supporting the Mittelstand. However, whereas the former was concerned to ensure that the private market would work without distortions from either speculation or underpriced housing, the latter followed the ideal of Karl Flesch, the point of whose social policy in housing was precisely to distort the market, in favour of those with lower incomes. Whenever the housing problem was discussed at meetings of the Democratic Association, Democrats enthusiastically supported the AG für kleine Wohnungen, the charitable building society which was based on Flesch's ideas. In general, they were in favour of municipal subsidies to charitable building companies, and of cheap provision of municipal land for building purposes.[1] Yet given Adickes' opposition to direct intervention in the housing market, Democrats were right in their assessment that their support for charitable building companies, and for the AG in particular, was the best thing they could do. Indeed, the AG für kleine Wohnungen was extremely successful, for it had built by far the largest number of flats relative to any other charitable building company by 1914.[2] Moreover, in 1914, as many as 65% of its tenants were unskilled workers, which means that the AG housed a considerably higher proportion of unskilled workers than even the Socialists' own Volks- Bau- und Spargesellschaft.[3] Through their support of a charitable company, which provided the cheapest housing in Frankfurt (which was well below the market rate) and which also pioneered institutions such as tenants' representative councils and communal facilities for entertainment and education, Frankfurt's Democrats displayed a genuine concern for solving the social question through interfering in the market. In many ways, the left-liberal

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[1] HStAW 407 n. 161² fos. 31-2. Democratic Association meeting, January 1895. Frankfurter Zeitung, 8.11.1904 (3. Morgenblatt). Frankfurter Zeitung, 19.11.1906.

[2] By 1914, 1,636 flats were in the hands of the AG, whereas Frankfurt's second biggest charitable building societies, the socialist Volks- Bau- und Sparverein had built 794 flats by 1914. Kramer, 'Anfänge', pp. 174-5.

[3] Kramer, 'Anfänge', pp. 152-3,163.

programme of housing reform was different from that of the SPD more in degree than in kind.[1] In this crucial sense, left-liberal social policy contrasted sharply with that of liberals on the right who were happy to follow the policies of Adickes, which were targeted at the community as a whole.

The different perception of the purpose of social policy between Adickes and the Frankfurt Democrats became apparent in another area which they all considered to be essential for solving the social question: the realm of education. This had been a long-standing Democratic concern, as from the 1860s onwards there had been various attempts, particularly by Sonnemann, to organise public lectures for workers, which had all met with relatively modest success.[2] In 1890, however, Karl Flesch led the initiative by leading Democrat and other social reformers such as Heinrich Rößler and the left-liberal philanthropist Charles Hallgarten to create a committee for popular lectures, which henceforth organised in close co-operation with the Social Democrats[3] an increasing number of extremely popular lecture series which took place annually during the winter.[4] Therefore, the initiative for these popular lectures came from the city's left-liberals, at a time when Miquel had just left the city and Adickes had not yet arrived. Nonetheless, Adickes supported such left-liberal initiatives, as there was little argument between himself and the Democrats about efforts to promote general access to the city's museums, cheap popular theatre and concert performances and compulsory technical education for primary school leavers.[5] As with Adickes' housing policy, however, this

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1 Rolling, 'Left-liberals', pp. 262-3. Rolling rightly comments on the differences between Adickes and 'bourgeois' left-liberal reformers, but he still sees the fundamental difference in approach to social policy as between liberals and socialists. However, his summary of SPD attitudes towards social policy presents them as being no different from those of Karl Flesch, for example.

2 On the Frankfurt Workers' Association, founded in 1861, see the reports of the annual meetings in Frankfurter Zeitung, 11.12.1866 (1. Blatt), 16.10.1868 (2. Blatt), 2.12.1868 (2. Blatt). 1874 saw the foundation of the Association for the Dissemination of Popular Education, again with the co-operation of some workers' representatives. Eichler, Sozialistische Arbeiterbewegung, p. 356.

3 Most notable amongst these was Rößler's employee Ludwig Opificius. .

4 Heinrich Rößler, 1845-1924, pp. 57-8. Eichler, Sozialistische Arbeiterbewegung, pp. 356-61.

5 Adickes, Die sozialen Aufgaben, pp. 41-2. Frankfurter Zeitung, 1.4.1912 (1. Morgenblatt). Franz Adickes, p. 197.

common approach to social policy through education masks a fundamental difference in motivation. Whilst there was general agreement that the 'lower classes' were 'hungry' for education, Adickes feared that if this hunger was not satisfied by the municipalities these groups would seek their satisfaction from other, 'foul' sources, in other words the SPD.[1] This is the origin of Adickes' support for popular 'cultural' entertainment, whilst in the realm of education Adickes was otherwise chiefly concerned about the contribution a well-educated, successful Mittelstand could make to the international competitiveness of the German economy.[2]

By contrast, Frankfurt's Democrats were as happy as Adickes to carry out any educational policy that would benefit the Mittelstand.[3] They agreed with the First Mayor that the 'lower classes' had a great desire for education, but they drew entirely different conclusions from this. Education was a crucial part of the social question in that it was greatly responsible for the gulf that separated the social classes.[4] Bildung had become a preserve for the wealthy, for a relatively small social group that had enough spare time and money to make use of cultural and educational facilities. And yet, Bildung was public property by right, hence it was the duty of social policy to ensure equal and universal access to it.[5] More significantly, the importance of co-operation between all sections of society in the organisation of public lectures or concerts was explicitly recognised, as this had been at the heart of the success of the Frankfurt public lecture series. Finally, during the 1890s Democrats came to appreciate increasingly that this commitment to universal education included the demand for free and universal primary education, as discussed in chapter six,[6] an issue that met with the strict

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1 Adickes, Die sozialen Aufgaben, p. 43.
2 Adickes, Die sozialen Aufgaben, pp. 41-3.
3 Rößler, 'Sozialpolitik in der Gemeinde', in IfSG S1/6 28.iv. In his speech to the German People's Party, Rößler showed himself in substantial agreement with the ideas of Flesch.
4 Karl Flesch, 'Die Bildungsfrage als soziale Frage', in Karl Flesch's soziales Vermächtnis, pp. 154-71, here p. 162.
5 Karl Flesch, 'Die Bildungsfrage', pp. 156-61.
6 Rößler, 'Sozialpolitik in der Gemeinde', in IfSG S1/6 28.iv.

opposition of Adickes.[1] Therefore, even in the area where there was greatest agreement on practical matters, there was a fundamental disagreement in the underlying vision of social policy. Whereas the point of Adickes' social policies in education was to combat Social Democracy, the aim of left-liberal social policies in education was to reduce class tensions through co-operation with the Social Democrats.

While Adickes' social policy was largely centred primarily on Bodenpolitik, and then on education, the city's left-liberals' approach to social policy was considerably more diverse. They continued to support Flesch in his efforts to improve the labour market, notably through the institution of a labour exchange whose organisation would again be based on the principle of parity, with equal representation of workers and employers on the board.[2] In contrast to his predecessor, Adickes showed only lukewarm support for Flesch's efforts. Indeed, Adickes publicly denounced Flesch's vision that the labour exchange could become a nucleus of an employment office (Arbeitsamt) which could regulate all matters concerning the labour market, from the placement of labour to the collection of statistical data.[3] Despite the fact that the protracted negotiations which led to the eventual creation of the municipal labour exchange in 1895 and the first 17 years of its operation fell during the mayoralty of Adickes, it was Miquel, and not his successor, who was officially remembered as one of the personalities who, next to Flesch, 'left his mark' on the labour exchange.[4] Left-liberal support of and commitment to the exchange was epitomised by the fact that their leader, Rößler, took over the running of the exchange after Flesch's death in 1915.

However, Democrats took their commitment to labour one step further. From the mid-1890s Leopold Sonnemann began to campaign tirelessly amongst his Democratic colleagues in Frankfurt and throughout southern Germany for the idea of unemployment insurance. In

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1 Adickes, Die sozialen Aufgaben, pp. 53-4.

2 On the Frankfurt labour exchange, see in general Roth, Gewerkschaftskartell, pp. 158-70.

3 Adickes, Die sozialen Aufgaben, p. 28.

4 Peter Schlotter, 'Fünfundzwanzig Jahre städtisches Arbeitsamt', in Frankfurter Wohlfahrtsblätter, xxiii (1920), 11-16, here 12, 16. This is also in BAK NL 44 n. 20 fos. 73-5.

October 1896 the Democratic Association showed general agreement with Sonnemann's view that, since social policy had come to a standstill at national level, unemployment insurance would have to be a local matter. In an extremely well-informed speech, Sonnemann demonstrated that the actual subsidy to such an insurance sysstem would be relatively low: in the city of Frankfurt it would amount only to about 100,000 M. per annum. Sharing Flesch's enthusiasm about the municipal industrial tribunal and the newly-created labour exchange, Sonnemann hoped that these organisations and their experience in the labour market would be an ideal foundation for a municipal system of unemployment insurance. Inevitably, there was some disagreement about the precise nature of such a municipal system of insurance, but Democrats were agreed that municipal unemployment insurance was both necessary and desirable.[1] By contrast, the Frankfurt Democrats led by Sonnemann had considerable difficulties in making themselves heard on the issue within the German People's Party at national level. It required several years of lobbying by Sonnemann, as well as his boycott of the 1898 party congress for the first time since the party's foundation thirty years before, to move the German People's party to accept as official party policy the demand for an imperial law which would give the municipalities greater freedom in devising a system of unemployment insurance.[2]

In a country which was peculiarly reluctant to introduce any form of national unemployment insurance scheme,[3] the attitude towards unemployment was, perhaps, one of the most important, and most divisive, issues that indicated the progressiveness of municipal social reformers. This became clear in the discussions during the third national Städtetag in 1911. There was a substantial minority there, such as the mayors of Cologne, Strasbourg and Schöneberg, who agreed with the Frankfurt Democrats that it was the municipality's duty to

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1 Frankfurter Zeitung, 20.10.1896 (3. Morgenblatt). The article is also in HStAW 407 n. 161² fo. 109. Democratic Association meeting, 19.10.1896.

2 HStAW 407 n. 161³ fos. 65-6. Democratic Association meeting, 4.10.1898. BAK NL 20 n. 8 fos. 42-51. Hunt, The People's Party, p. 114.

3 Ritter, Social Welfare, pp. 98-103.

organise unemployment insurance.[1] Their views confirm that in their advocacy of municipal unemployment insurance Frankfurt Democrats were very much on the progressive edge among municipal social reformers in Germany. Yet the discussions at the municipal congress showed that there was still a majority of cities who believed that, if at all, it was the duty of the Empire to provide such an insurance, and that all the cities could do was to wait for Imperial legislation on the matter. Unfortunately for the Frankfurt Democrats, the spokesman for the latter view was Franz Adickes.[2] Adickes denied the magnitude of the problem of unemployment, and was resolutely opposed to the principle of any public support for people who were not working.[3] As a result of Adickes' fundamental disagreement with progressive social reformers such as the Frankfurt Democrats, it was clear that any attempt to pursue the insurance in Frankfurt would be met by the First Mayor's fierce resistance. As a result, unemployment insurance was introduced in Frankfurt only in 1914, although there were still only relatively few cities in Germany which had established a system of unemployment insurance by the First World War.[4]

During the 1900s, the city's left-liberals had adopted a wide-ranging programme of social reform which Adickes largely opposed. During that period socialist and left-liberal ideas of social reform became increasingly compatible, with the Democrats accepting the SPD's demand for the municipal provision of basic foodstuffs such as milk and meat, for instance.[5] Left-liberals led by Flesch fought a long and unsuccessful battle against Adickes in their attempt to establish workers' councils in the municipalised companies.[6] In some cases

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1 On the introduction of municipal unemployment insurance, see H. Henning, 'Arbeitslosenversicherung vor 1914: Das Genter System und seine Übernahme in Deutschland', in Hermann Kellenbenz (ed.), Wirtschaftspolitik und Arbeitsmarkt (München, 1974), pp. 271-87. Steinmetz, Regulating the Social, pp. 203-13.

2 See the debate in Verhandlungen des Dritten Städtetages (1911), pp. 24-57. For Adickes' speech, see Ibid., pp. 28-40.

3 Verhandlungen des Dritten Städtetages (1911), pp. 29, 31-3.

4 On the issue of unemployment in Frankfurt politics, see Rolling, 'Left-liberals', pp. 332-95.

5 See in general Rolling, 'Left-liberals', pp. 258-331, here pp. 290-300.

6 See, for example, the left-liberal programme for the 1910 municipal elections, in Kleine Presse, 12.11.1910. BAK NL 44 n. 21 f. 4. 'Franz Adickes, sein Leben und sein Werk'. Book review by H. Luppe (typescript).

left-liberals even found ways of carrying out social reform through private initiative, in spite of the hostility of Adickes and the indifference of the SPD, as was the case, for example, with the establishment of postnatal advisory clinics in 1909.[1]

In summary, this section has confirmed the current view that liberals in the cities were extremely advanced, progressive and innovative in their social policy at the municipal level. Indeed, the aggregate of their policies, of progressive income taxation, the hostility to indirect taxation, their concern about speculation in the housing market and their demand for the municipalisation of monopolies which provided basic utilities, were the central demands of the SPD at municipal level, except, of course, that the Frankfurt liberals had developed these policies years before they were adopted by the SPD.[2] Nevertheless, the case of Frankfurt has shown that the municipal liberals' approach to social policy could be diverse and often contradictory. Although Adickes and Frankfurt's left-liberals agreed on the necessity of social policy directed primarily at the poorer classes for achieving the important goal of reconciliation between all parts of society, their visions of social policy differed fundamentally in the implications they drew from this vision.

In the first instance, even though Adickes' social policies were impressive in their scope and ingenuity, he was still very much in the Bismarckian mould as a reformer. As this section has shown, Adickes had little real sympathy for the concerns of the working classes. Instead, to Adickes social policy was a weapon with which to fight the SPD: through social policy he hoped to make socialism redundant.[3] As contemporaries recognised, in this sense Adickes was much less progressive than his predecessor Miquel, who never shared Adickes' fear of

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1 BAK NL 44 n. 8 fos. 165-6. Hermann Luppe, 'Mein Leben'.

2 Dieter Rebentisch, 'Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie und die kommunale Selbstverwaltung. Ein Überblick über Programmdiskussion und Organisationsproblematik 1890-1975', AfS, xxv (1985), 1-78, esp. 15.

3 Luppe, Mein Leben, p. 17.

Social Democrats as such.[1] By contrast, it was a fundamental tenet of left-liberal social policy that social reform could only be successful if it was conducted in co-operation with the representatives of labour, which in practice meant SPD members. This had ensured the success of left-liberal social political ventures under Miquel such as the labour tribunal, and it continued to be an integral element of other successful initiatives such as the AG für kleine Wohnungen and the popular lectures.

Secondly, despite the innovativeness of some of his proposals, Adickes' social policy was underlined by traditional, right-liberal assumptions. Thus he was in principle opposed to the free provision of services to the poor, as they were effectively a supplement to the real wage. Not only would this distort the labour market, but it would also be a critical impediment to individual self-responsibility and independence.[2] By contrast, it has been noted that such an attitude was diametrically opposed to that of Karl Flesch, the very purpose of whose social policy was to distort the labour market. But the left-liberals went even further, as they explicitly recognised that social policy was in effect about the redistribution of wealth, it involved taking money from the rich and giving it to the needy.[3] In contrast to Adickes, they recognised that the distinctive feature of social policy, as opposed to traditional poor relief, was that the former consisted of rights, rather than acts of charity which were subject to the whim of the municipal authorities.[4]

If, despite these opposing underlying assumptions about social policy, Adickes and the left-liberals worked together in most areas of social reform it was because they could largely agree on the general importance of municipal social policy. Nevertheless, this should not mask the fact that whereas Adickes was a social reformer who attempted to adapt the nineteenth-century liberal ideals of thrift, self-responsibility and a hierarchical order of estates

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1 See the speech by the Democrat councillor Paul Zirndorfer in Frankfurter Zeitung, 1.11.1902 (3. Morgenblatt).

2 Adickes, Die sozialen Aufgaben, p. 50.

3 Rößler, 'Sozialpolitik in der Gemeinde', in IfSG S1/6 28.ii.

4 Rößler, 'Die Sozialpolitik in unserem Gemeinwesen', p. 50.

to the newly emerging social problems of an industrialising, urban society, the left-liberals tried, with considerable success, to find entirely new ways of responding to the social problems of their day.[1] Rather than any individual measure of reform, it is this conceptual advance of social policy which was the real breakthrough in which the cities led the German state.[2]

## 7.5. Politics and Social Reform

The preceding two sections, which show the progressiveness and modernity of Frankfurt liberal social policy both in theory and practice, beg the obvious question to what extent the liberals' social policies were motivated by, and helped them in their fight against, the emerging Social Democrats. As described in the introduction to this chapter, the failure of the liberals to develop a coherent and persuasive 'social liberalism' has been considered to be one of the root causes of the liberals' failure to respond to the political challenges of the Wilhelmine period. For the local level, however, historians have adopted a different framework of interpretation for the social policies developed there. Some historians have argued that these social reforms were conducted in a 'political vacuum' by bourgeois or even liberal social reformers, simply as a response to the needs of their environment.[3] Other historians have beem more willing to acknowledge the political implications of the liberals' progressive social policy in the city, which leads to the conclusion that social liberalism was most progressive not at state or national level, but in the city.[4] Unfortunately for the liberals there, however, the

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1 This study, therefore, confirms recent observations by George Steinmetz about the changing views of social policy, from one that worked against the trade unions to one that co-operated with them. In the case of Frankfurt, it is striking how these two different notions of social policy matched the political fault lines between right and left-liberal attitudes to social policy. Steinmetz, Regulating the Social, esp. pp. 42-4.

2 D. Langewiesche, '"Staat" und "Kommune"', 621-35.

3 See, for example, Krabbe, Kommunalpolitik und Industrialisierung, p. 85. Reulecke, Geschichte der Urbanisierung, p. 125.

4 J. Reulecke, 'Stadtbürgertum und bürgerliche Sozialreform im 19. Jahrhundert in Preußen', in Gall (ed.), Stadt und Bürgertum, pp. 171-97, here pp. 196-7.

political benefits of developing a comprehensive social policy at the municipal level were nullified by the liberals' counterproductive refusal to remove or reduce municipal franchise restrictions. Social progressiveness was cancelled out by political regressiveness [1] By contrast, the general phenomenon of progressive municipal socialism on the one hand, and a restrictive franchise on the other, has led to the speculation by Langewiesche that liberal social policy was not contrary to, but conditional upon, a restrictive franchise. According to this view, the reason why liberals were only able to develop a coherent social policy at a local rather than a national level was that at the local level liberals did not feel beleaguered and threatened by the Social Democrats.[2] In this way, liberals were free to carry out social policies when it coincided with their own self-interest, regardless of political consequences [3] This latter interpretation has the obvious shortcoming that by 1914 local liberal élites were already challenged by the Social Democrats to a considerable extent [4] In contrast to Langewiesche, George Steinmetz has argued that one of the crucial differences between the nature of national and local social policy was that at the national level the government was much less, rather than more, dependent upon popular politics since at the national level government was not elected As a result, government at the national level could afford a more distant perspective on the increasing social pressures, and therefore on the rise of the SPD, than at the local level [5] In fact, Steinmetz has developed a model where various municipal social policies were a function partly of the strength of the SPD, but also of the nature of the bourgeoisie in charge of local government, and of the wealth of the city. Hence, measures such as poor relief were shaped by bourgeois attitudes and were dependent upon the city's wealth, but they were negatively

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1 Even though Reulecke finds that substantial aspects of municipal socialism were consciously conducted outside the realm of party politics (p. 125), this does not stop him from pointing out the adverse effect which liberal insistence on a restrictive franchise had on liberals in the cities who might otherwise have reaped the political rewards from their social policies. Reulecke, Geschichte der Urbanisierung, pp. 138-9 Sheehan, 'Liberalism and the City', pp. 136-7.

2 Langewiesche, 'Deutscher Liberalismus im europäischen Vergleich', p. 17. Langewiesche, 'German Liberalism in the Second Empire', p. 231.

3 Langewiesche, Liberalismus, pp. 210-1

4 Sheehan, 'Liberalism and the City', pp. 129-30.

5 Steinmetz, Regulating the Social, pp. 108-57, esp. pp. 144, 154.

affected by a strong local SPD membership which suggested to local élites that poor relief was unlikely to improve social order.[1] By contrast, it was crucial for the introduction of a system of municipal unemployment insurance in co-operation with the free trade unions just before the First World War that SPD presence in the city council was strong, but not threatening to local élites.[2] Steinmetz' analysis, which is based on a statistical aggregation of the causes and effects of municipal social policies, cannot take account of the full complexity of social and political relations within a single community like Frankfurt. Therefore, the rest of this chapter will test the general and often contradictory assumptions that have been made with regard to the relationship between liberal municipal social policy and the ascendancy of the SPD in municipal politics.[3]

There is no doubt that the advent of the SPD in Frankfurt municipal politics had a significant impact on municipal social policies. The liberals were the first to admit this. According to Heinrich Rößler, the greater interest in social questions of all parties since the 1890s was partly due to the enlightened efforts of leading bourgeois social reformers, but it was primarily the result of the growth of Social Democracy which had sharpened the general social consciousness.[4] This was recognised also by Adickes, who pointed out that the bourgeois social reform developed as an answer to the emergence of socialism.[5] As described in the previous section, this realisation resulted in contrasting responses from the liberals on the right who followed Adickes and from liberals on the left. The former proceeded to devise social policies against the SPD, while the latter were resigned to accept the SPD as a necessary evil and undertook increasingly to co-operate with the socialist movement from the mid-1880s

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1 Ibid., pp. 154-76.

2 Ibid., pp. 203-13.

3 The general problem of whether changing attitudes of the political élites were the response to their changing environment or the result of the changing political environment has been raised by L. Gall, 'Stadt und Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert. Ein Problemaufriss', in Gall (ed.), Stadt und Bürgertum, pp. 1-18, here pp 7-11.

4 Rößler, 'Die Sozialpolitik in unserem Gemeinwesen', pp. 49-50.

5 Adickes, Die sozialen Aufgaben, pp. 9, 26.

onwards. This left-liberal response to Social Democrat demands was partly triggered off by the leadership of men like Flesch, Sonnemann and Rößler. Whilst Sonnemann's and Rößler's early involvement with the labour movement has been noted above, Flesch anticipated, and indeed urged, SPD participation in local politics from as early as 1878, in an anonymous article written together with Carl August Schmidt and Eduard Bernstein.[1] Apart from principle, it was also clear to the Democrats that since the SPD had become the strongest political party at the Reichstag elections in the city, it was a party to be reckoned with, even if it did not yet pose a direct challenge to liberal hegemony in municipal elections.

At the same time, the question of the extent to which liberals were prompted to social policy by the rise of the SPD is more complex than might at first sight appear to be the case, and not only because there were in the case of Frankfurt broadly two liberal approaches to social policy. As has been pointed out in the previous chapter with regard to education, the increased liberal attention to social policy was part of a general shift and increase in an awareness of social policy that began during the 1890s as a result of a growing appreciation of the social consequences of demographic pressures, of industrial growth, and of the realisation that after the termination of the 'new course', further national social policies were unlikely to be forthcoming. In addition, Bismarck's social insurance laws had left many areas of welfare, such as poverty or the growing phenomenon of unemployment, untouched.[2] Partly as a result of this shift in attitudes, there was a considerable number of social policies in which no connection with political expediency can be detected whatsoever. For example, Karl Flesch was deeply influenced by Pastor von Bodelschwingh in Bethel in his concern for people with physical disabilities or those fighting addictions.[3] As a result, Frankfurt became one of the pioneers for finding ways of employment for people with disabilities by expanding the existing

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1 'Rückblicke auf die sozialistische Bewegung in Deutschland, kritische Aphorismen von ***', JSS, i (1879), pp. 75-96. On the authorship of the article, see Tennstedt, Vom Proleten, pp. 381-3, 573.

2 D. J. K. Peukert, Grenzen der Sozialdisziplinierung. Aufstieg und Krise der deutschen Jugendfürsorge von 1878 bis 1932 (Köln, 1986), esp. pp. 49-62.

3 Flesch-Thebesius, 'Der Frankfurter Sozialpolitiker Dr. Karl Flesch', p. 80.

system of labour exchanges to bring these people into the labour market.[1] Concern for handicapped people is unlikely to have generated many votes for the liberals. Instead, this concern shows that the Democrats' efforts at improving the labour market formed a genuine attempt to deal imaginatively with all aspects of the problem, even if they were unlikely to yield any immediate political benefits.[2] One of the reasons for the Democrats' social policy, therefore, lies in the self-image which the Democrats had of their own role as a socially progressive party, quite apart from immediate political expediency.[3]

Even in cases where the left-liberal social policy did respond to the demands of labour and the SPD, the relationship between social policy and electoral appeal could be very ambiguous indeed. This can be demonstrated best by the issue of municipalisation. This was an issue through which the Democrats could appeal particularly well to the potential electorate of the SPD, since it had always been a central issue of the Democratic programme, long before the SPD could make it into a demand of its own.[4] However, originally Democrat demands for municipalisation had been made mostly on economic grounds, so that municipalisation only became a part of social policy from the 1890s onwards.[5] During the discussions about the municipalisation of the first labour-intensive service, the tramways, it was quickly realised that one of the central tasks of the municipal owner would be to introduce model working

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1 Hermann Luppe, 'Arbeitsnachweis für Erwerbsbeschränkte', in Der Arbeitsmarkt, (1907/08), 37-40. The article is in BAK NL 44 n. 32 fo. 2.

2 Similarly, the left-liberals' concern for the homeless cannot be explained by political expedience, because by definition these did not meet the residence requirement necessary for the franchise. The motivation for this concern did not come out of an asthetic desire to take the homeless off the streets. Rather, it was argued that it was intolerable that a wealthy city like Frankfurt could not provide sufficiently for its poor. Josef Balzer in Frankfurter Zeitung, 12.11.1910 (3. Morgenblatt). See also Ludwig Heilbrunn in Frankfurter Zeitung, 10.11.1910 (3. Morgenblatt).

3 Unfortunately, in his concern to systematise the 'bourgeois' response in municipal government to the advent of the SPD, George Steinmetz fails to take into account the possibility of social policy based on genuine political conviction.

4 On the Social Democratic attitude towards municipalisation, see Hugo Lindemann (C. Hugo), Arbeiterpolitik und Wirschaftspflege in der Deutschen Städteverwaltung. Zweiter Band: Wirtschaftspflege (Stuttgart, 1904). Hugo Lindemann (C. Hugo), Die städtische Regie (Berlin, 1907).

5 See councillor Funck's emphasis, for the first time, that municipalisation was an instrument of social policy, even though in speaking about the tramways, Funck was only speaking about a general reduction in fares. Frankfurter Zeitung, 25.11.1888 (2. Morgenblatt). That municipalised tramways could be used for cheaper fares particularly for workers was not recognised in the official left-liberal municipal programme until 1896. Frankfurter Zeitung, 10.11.1896 (2. Morgenblatt).

conditions which would set an example for the entire community. This triggered a very small but resolute opposition within the Democrat party which objected to the cost of the introduction of such working conditions.[1] The problem in this and in other cases where the city was called upon to ensure good working conditions either in its own companies or the companies to which it contracted out services was that many liberal councillors were employers themselves, who were worried that working conditions among their employees might have to be improved according to the municipal example. Usually, only a small minority of left-liberals voted thus against party principle, but it did lay the left-liberals open to the SPD charge of half-heartedness in social policy, and of not going far enough. Even though left-liberals advocated a much more progressive municipal employment policy than the Magistrat, it was inevitable that they would be much more moderate on these issues than the SPD, both because of individual self-interest, and because they had to keep their Mittelstand constituency in mind.[2] In other words, municipal socialism could yield potential electoral benefits as it was popular with the electorate which usually enjoyed better services at lower prices, and could potentially bind municipal workers to the parties in power who were responsible for enlightened employment policies. But at the same time, municipal companies could be a tremendous political liability as they constantly exposed the liberal city government to the charge of not doing enough for its employees. Of all Frankfurt liberals, it was the ostensibly 'unpolitical' First Mayor who was most worried about the political dangers of municipalisations. Adickes clearly recognised that municipal corporations were particularly prone to 'popular demands for dangerous price reductions', and that they could easily lead to the use of the city council for workers' agitations, the more so with the presence of SPD representatives inside the council. This is why in principle Adickes preferred private stock

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1 HStAW 407 n. 161[1] fos. 188-91. Democratic Association meeting, 13.4.1891.

2 Virtually all debates of the last decades before the Great War about municipal employment practices tend to show this pattern. See, for example, MPS, 20.10.1908 and 27.10.1908, pp. 979-1010.

companies to municipal ones, even though in practice he accepted the need, for example, for the municipalisation of tramways.[1]

Similarly, Ralf Roth has described in some detail how some of the more progressive left-liberal social policies such as the creation of a labour exchange, which were designed to reduce social tension, could lead to tremendous hostility between the municipal authorities led by Flesch, and the official representatives of labour. This was not so much because of left-liberal inconsistency or half-heartedness, but because Social Democrats had every reason to fear the effect that these liberal initiatives of social reconciliation could have on the 'socialist' resolve of their followers. Unless SPD predominance was ensured in these municipally-sponsored institutions, the SPD was more keen to establish organisations such as a labour exchange of its own. Therefore, many left-liberal social policy initiatives became subject to constant barrages of hostile propaganda from the SPD, so that in the medium run their political disadvantages probably outweighed their political benefits.[2] Also, the principle of parity for institutions such as the labour tribunal meant that their boards consisted of elected representatives, chosen equally from employers and from employees. To the SPD, this presented another opportunity for political agitation, so that for most of the period the majority of the board of the labour tribunal consisted of representatives of the SPD.[3] Therefore, if active involvement in municipal socialism was a double-edged sword for liberals, this was also true for the Social Democrats. On the one hand, the SPD could benefit from it politically as it could point to the inadequacy of 'bourgeois' municipal socialism if left to its own devices, which could in turn

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1 Adickes, Soziale Aufgaben, pp. 29-30. See also p. 27.

2 On the problems of the municipal labour exchanges, see in general Roth, Gewerkschaftskartell, pp. 158-70, and especially Weitensteiner, 'Karl Flesch', pp. 176-224.

3 The reason for SPD predominance in the tribunal, even though half of the representatives were chosen from the employers, was that the party could muster a relatively steady number of small employers to vote for its list. Until the system of proportional representation was introduced in 1904, this meant that if the non-socialist employers were badly organised, or if they boycotted the elections, the SPD could catch all of the seats under the first-past-the-post system which applied for the entire list. The SPD favoured the system of proportional representation, however, because its majority amongst the employees was larger than its minority amongst the employers so that its majority was guaranteed in any case. Roth, Gewerkschaftskartell, pp. 130-3.

lead to a greater demarkation between liberals and Social Democrats.[1] By the same token, however, participation in liberal social policy could alternatively lead to the loss of the party's radical, 'social' edge and the increase of its progressive, 'reformist' wing and thus to the liberals and the Social Democrats moving closer together.[2] The example of Frankfurt shows that these two results were not necessarily contradictory, as the Frankfurt Social Democrats showed no signs of lessening their rhetoric barrages against the liberal councillors before the First World War while steadily improving their relationship with at least the left-liberals inside the town council.

The example of Frankfurt illustrates that there was no necessary and direct relationship between general social policy and electoral benefit. There is no doubt that social policy could and did yield electoral benefits, at least in the sense that it made the left-liberals less vulnerable to attacks by other emerging parties. This is especially true for the more particular social policies which the left-liberals adopted in response to pressure from the Mittelstand (for example the municipal assistance for artisans and craftsmen in selling their products at municipally sponsored exhibitions) and from the SPD (such as the provision of free school materials and free breakfasts for poor school children or the municipal provision of free or cheap milk and meat).[3] Even the more fundamental left-liberal social policies which attempted to remove some of the injustices of the capitalist economy could yield potential benefits. The case of Frankfurt's labour exchange shows that ultimately tenacity could pay off for the

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[1] To the evidence presented in this chapter can be added Adelheid von Saldern's study of the SPD in Göttingen, where the little notice the party took of local affairs was usually restricted to hostility in the area it was competent in, social policy. A. von Saldern, Auf dem Wege zum Arbeiter-Reformismus. Parteialltag in sozialdemokratischer Provinz Göttingen (1870-1920) (Frankfurt, 1984), pp. 119-22. Stefan Berger has argued that in Germany, as in England, the 'growing class consciousness of the working class can be perceived especially on the local level of politics'. By contrast, his examples of liberal and socialist co-operation are taken from state and national politics. Berger, The British Labour Party, p. 46-8, quotation on p. 47.

[2] Rebentisch, 'Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie', pp. 1-20. Koch, 'Liberalismus und soziale Frage', pp. 29-30.

[3] These particular demands are all taken from the left-liberal election programme of 1906, in Frankfurter Zeitung, 19.11.1906 (Morgenblatt).

liberals, since after a long struggle the socialist trade unions had to admit defeat and accept that they could not run an independent labour exchange against the municipal institution. This was partly because trade union funds were limited, but also because a municipal labour exchange was uniquely placed to enjoy the trust of both employees and employers. Whereas in this instance the electoral pay-off of this measure for the liberals is difficult to determine, it has been shown in chapter three that in the realm of municipalised services, despite considerable SPD pressure, the liberals did appear to have won the allegiance of the municipal tramway workers by 1914. Nevertheless, it is clear that political support in return for social policy could be extremely slow to materialise, and that it could never be taken for granted.

This leaves the question of the precise relationship between a progressive social policy and a restrictive municipal franchise. This association is not one merely made by recent historians: contemporaries were only too aware that the two were clearly inter-connected, and that one was in contrast to the other. Of Frankfurt liberals, it was Franz Adickes whose views on this subject resemble most closely the analysis of subsequent historians like Langewiesche. For Adickes, social reform could be carried out most easily at the local level, because, compared to the other levels of government, local government represented a 'neutral realm of peace' in which decisions were not subject to political conflict, but to political co-operation. However, Adickes was referring more to the non-political ideal of local government, which by 1903 was well and truly buried throughout Germany, than to the franchise itself, because he compared local government favourably not only to national, but also to state politics where parties also operated on the basis of a restricted franchise.[1] Otherwise, Adickes staunchly defended the German model of liberal social progressiveness in a restricted franchise by claiming that what was important was not the form of politics but the actual results, so that as long as liberals in

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[1] Adickes, Die sozialen Aufgaben, p. 65.

the cities carried out their social and other policies successfully, there was no need for a liberalisation of the franchise.[1] In this sense, there was no contradiction between Adickes' rather more conservative views on social policy and his paternalistic attitude towards political representation.[2]

Adickes' views contrasted sharply with those of Frankfurt's Democrats. Whereas the Progressive Liberals were at best only lukewarm in following the Democrats' lead for an extension of the franchise, [3] it is striking that those Democrats who were the most progressive in their views on social policy were also those who were the most consistent and progressive on municipal franchise reform. While Flesch did concede that the absence of labour representatives in the councils could to some extent be compensated by progressively-minded individual liberals,[4] he was adamant that truly progressive municipal social reform was inextricably linked to a progressive, that is universal, municipal franchise.[5] The centrality of franchise reform to Flesch's programme of social reform can be gauged from his view that:

> Soziale und politische Fortschritte müssen stets Hand in Hand gehen und sich gegenseitig durchdringen und ergänzen. Keine politische Freiheit kann bestehen ohne soziale Reformen; keine soziale Reform hat Wert ohne die weiteste Durchführung der Selbstverwaltung des Volkes.[6]

In fact, Flesch went even further than merely demanding a universal franchise, as he hoped that the system of proportional representation on the basis of a universal franchise which Flesch ultimately succeeded in introducing for the labour tribunals would become a model

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1 Adickes, Die sozialen Aufgaben, pp. 59-63.

2 Adickes' views expressed here and elsewhere may have been unusual in their sophistication, but they were far from unique in substance. For similar attitudes towards social policy and the question of political rights, see the section on Göttingen liberals and their Lord Mayor, Georg Friedrich Calsow, in A. von Saldern, Vom Einwohner zum Bürger. Zur Emanzipation der städtischen Unterschicht Göttingens, 1890-1920. Eine sozial- und kommunalhistorische Untersuchung (Berlin, 1973), pp. 227-35.

3 See, for example, HStAW 407 n. 150 ² fos. 51-3. Progressive Association meeting, 29.1.1896.

4 Flesch, 'Sozialpolitik in der Gemeinde und im Erwerbsleben', in Karl Flesch's soziales Vermächtnis, pp. 100-23, here pp. 101-2.

5 Weitensteiner, 'Karl Flesch', pp. 23-4.

6 'Social and political progress must always go hand in hand, they must permeate and complement each other. No political freedom can exist without social reforms; no social reform has any value without the most extensive implementation of the self-government of the people'. Quoted in Sinzheimer, Der Sozialpolitiker, p. 4.

throughout Germany.[1] As usual, Rößler agreed completely. The leading Democrat considered a restrictive franchise the greatest injustice of all, so that without its removal all other efforts at reconciliation between workers and the bourgeoisie were futile. Ideally, Rößler also welcomed the idea of proportional representation instead of the traditional first-past-the-post system in the city's electoral districts.[2] In the system of proportional representation, the Frankfurt Democrats took up a fundamentally liberal idea. John Stuart Mill had already realised that in an equal democracy, the first-past-the-post system would lead to that liberal fear, the tyranny of the majority, whereas proportional representation would at least ensure that the minority would be represented in proportion to its numerical strength.[3] Yet it is unlikely that the Democrats realised the irony that proportional representation was, in fact, increasingly welcomed as the best form of equal franchise by Prussian conservative and liberal opponents to a democratic franchise, because it seemed to offer the best guarantee for the preservation of at least a strong conservative and liberal minority against a likely SPD predominance in the state.[4] If, therefore, the Reichstag allowed in principle the introduction of proportional representation for elections to the labour tribunals, and if a city like Frankfurt was allowed to go ahead with this in 1904, then the reason was not the persuasiveness of the Democrats' arguments, but the fact that this would allow at least a minority of Christian and liberal trade union representatives to be elected to the tribunals' board.[5] This explains why the Democrats successfully pioneered proportional representation in Germany when at the same time they failed in their attempt to promote beyond the confines of Frankfurt the women's active vote, which they had managed to introduce for the elections to the labour tribunal.[6]

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1 Weitensteiner, 'Karl Flesch', pp. 142-61, 155-9.

2 Rößler, 'Sozialpolitik in der Gemeinde', in IfSG S1/6 28.ii. See also Rößler, 'Die Sozialpolitik in unserem Gemeinwesen', pp. 55-6.

3 J. S. Mill, Considerations on Representative Government (London, 1861), chapter 8. This is reprinted in J. S. Mill, Utilitarianism, On Liberty, Considerations of Representative Government, ed. H. B. Acton (reprint, London, 1991), pp. 277-98.

4 D. J. Ziegler, Prelude to Democracy. A Study of Proportional Representation and the Heritage of Weimar Germany, 1871-1920 (Lincoln/Nebraska, 1958).

5 Weitensteiner, 'Karl Flesch', pp. 154-6.

6 Weitensteiner, 'Karl Flesch', pp. 117-9.

There is no need here to recount in detail the futile Democrat efforts at the introduction of an extended municipal franchise.[1] Rößler and his fellow left-liberal leaders even managed once to impose strict party discipline not just over Democrat, but also over the much more sceptical Progressive Liberal councillors, so that in 1901 Rößler's motion to increase the municipal franchise to all income tax payers was accepted by a considerable margin. However, given that Progressive Liberals were usually more inclined to side with their National Liberal colleagues in order to preserve the current franchise, this majority was too fragile to be able to overcome Adickes' fierce hostility to the measure. There is no doubt that no other single issue did the Democrats' credibility as much damage as their inability to realise an extension of the franchise.[2] It left the left-liberals totally vulnerable to charges of inconsistency and betrayal,[3] and the SPD exploited this to the best of its ability.[4] However, it is important to point out that Democrat attempts to increase the franchise were not merely cosmetic,[5] nor were they signs of ideological half-heartedness. By 1900, the ideological commitment to social and political progress and reconciliation was directly challenged by the fact that any extension of the franchise would have largely benefited the Democrats' political opponents, the SPD. As Wolfgang Hartwig has pointed out, liberals then, as historians now, could not have it both ways. It is simply impossible to accuse German liberals of a lack of political realism and to expect those liberals who actually were in power, in the cities, to relinquish it for their ideals.[6] If even the Frankfurt Democrats, despite the strength of their convictions, did not

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1 Wolf, Liberalismus, pp. 98-109, Rolling, 'Liberals', pp. 189-200.

2 Rolling, 'Liberals', pp. 210-4.

3 Rößler, 'Die Sozialpolitik in unserem Gemeinwesen', p. 51.

4 See, for example, the summary of left-liberal failures in this respect in Sozialdemokratie und Stadtverwltung (1906), pp. 5-14. The SPD frequently juxtaposed their own steadfastness to this left-liberal inconsistency ('Halbheit', 'Rückhaltlosigkeit'). More importantly, the SPD used particularly the Democrats' failure to realise franchise reform as proof that there was no difference between left- and right-liberals, that they were all blind followers of the conservative Adickes. See, for example, Volksstimme, 17.11.1906, 20.11.1906. Unsurprisingly, at almost every Social Democrat electoral rally, the franchise issue was brought up. See, for example, the report of various rallies in Volksstimme, 20.11.1906 (1. Beilage). See also Volksstimme, 20.11.1906 (Wahlbeilage).

5 Rolling, 'Liberals', p. 200.

6 Hartwig, 'Großstadt und Bürgerlichkeit', p. 64.

pursue their goal of a municipal franchise too vigorously, this is not so much a sign of their inconsequence or weakness as a demonstration of their political maturity.

Therefore, this section disproves at least for Frankfurt that there was a positive link between a restriction of the franchise and municipal social reform, as Langewiesche maintains. Even the most conservative municipal liberals such as Adickes were driven to defend themselves against the charge that both were linked precisely because they accepted the contradictions inherent in social progressiveness and political conservatism. Indeed, in Frankfurt there was a clear negative link between the two issues, as the city's most innovative social reformers on the left were also progressive, and indeed innovative, about electoral reform as they pleaded for universal suffrage and proportional representation. Thus, it is not true that liberals only conducted progressive social policies because they could conduct them in a political vacuum, as they were sheltered from aggressive SPD tactics by a restricted franchise. On the other hand, it would be over-simplistic to argue that social policy was a direct response to a changing political environment and the emergence of the SPD in municipal politics. As this section has pointed out, there were undoubtedly many left-liberal social policies which constituted a direct response to the demands of the SPD. Yet there were also a number of social policies which proved to be deeply divisive, at least in the medium run, and in these instances the limited electoral franchise, as well as the fact that the day-to-day running of these policies was left to the politically more detached Magistrat, was undoubtedly of great advantage for the feasibility of these policies in the long run. Therefore, despite the evidence of considerable left-liberal success in halting the advance of the SPD by 1912, this was not inevitably the outcome of left-liberal social policy in Frankfurt am Main.

## 7.6. Conclusion

This chapter has contradicted much of current historiography in its claim that the growth of municipal socialism is largely attributable to the rise of the bureaucrats from the 1890 onwards, rather than to the liberal politicians in the cities themselves. This crucial role of the municipal bureaucracy has also been attested for Frankfurt, where the leading role of bureaucrats such as Georg Varrentrapp, Alexander Spiess, Karl Flesch, Hermann Luppe, Johannes Miquel and Franz Adickes has been emphasised.[1] Yet at the same time, these names serve as perfect proof that this bureaucracy was, in fact, deeply involved in the local political milieu. Georg Varrentrapp was the city's most prominent National Liberal politician during the 1870s, while Alexander Spiess' appointment as Germany's first municipal physician and the extent to which he was endowed with particular powers were deeply political decisions at the time. As this chapter has shown, Karl Flesch was not only a life-time member of the Democrats, but he bore the most decisive influence over the development of the Democrats' approach to municipal social policy from the 1880s, surpassing even the influence of Sonnemann in this particular aspect. Flesch crucially depended not only on the support of his political colleagues, but also on the opportunity to disseminate his views through, for example, the Frankfurter Zeitung and the Democratic Association. His later deputy, Hermann Luppe, thrived on left-liberal and Social Democrat support which alone saved his career, given the hostility of Franz Adickes.[2] This study has shown how even the First Mayors, usually regarded as the epitome of unpolitical, bureaucratic city government, carried out their social policies in a political context, which is not surprising given that there was little they could do without the support of the citiy's leading liberals, who were influential not just in the city

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1 Roth, Gewerkschaftskartell, pp. 83-91. The inclusion of Georg Varrentrapp in this list seems an odd choice since Varrentrapp was a physician at the local hospital and not directly employed by the city. IfSG S2/796.

2 Luppe, Mein Leben, pp. 19-20, BAK NL 44 n. 8 fos. 126-7. Hermann Luppe, 'Mein Leben'.

council, but also in the most important local charitable societies. Hence, Miquel was happy to adopt innovative left-liberal ideals of social policy which he hoped would provide an answer to the social question, whereas his successor had a firm social policy commitment of his own. In the same vein, to regard Adickes primarily as a bureaucrat or as unpolitical is deeply misplaced, given that Adickes' policies had a crucial political point, that is to crush the SPD. The sheer quantity and the innovative character of the social policies that emanated from Frankfurt show that municipal bureaucrats, important though they were, could only realise their goals if they were supported by a broad political consensus among the politically-active population and in the municipal council itself. As usual, in this as in other observations about social policy in Frankfurt all generalisations are of an essentially speculative nature. Yet even though circumstances were different in every German city, there is no reason why the basic assumptions and goals which lay behind social policy in Frankfurt should have been different in other cities that were similarly self-consciously progressive and innovative in their social policy, such as Mannheim, Strasbourg, Berlin, Munich or Cologne.

This chapter has also sought to question two of the main views of current historical scholarship - that social reform was carried out despite the franchise restriction, and that both were complementary. The former appears to have been stimulated by the concerns of liberals such as Flesch, Rößler and Sonnemann, who saw a clear contradiction between a limited franchise and social reform, but who were powerless to do anything about this contradiction. By contrast, the latter view, put forward by Langewiesche, seems to be based on the observation of a municipal liberal like Adickes, who, even though he was on the defensive over the issue, nevertheless felt that it was perfectly possible to carry out municipal social reform in a system of a restricted municipal franchise. Therefore, based on such observations historians have not allowed for the fact that a restricted franchise and social reform were, in

fact, symptoms of quite distinct liberal approaches to municipal social policy. For the case of Frankfurt am Main demonstrates that it is a gross oversimplification to speak of liberal social policy as a relatively uniform phenomenon. In that city alone there were two separate liberal approaches to municipal social policy with different policy goals, and with contrasting underlying assumptions.

One approach - that developed by Adickes, but in fact usually supported by the National Liberals[1] - saw social policy in the Bismarckian tradition as the best way of combating the SPD. Hence, although this implied that Adickes' ultimate aim, like that of the left-liberals, was to reconcile the different sections of society, this was only good enough as long as that entailed the defeat of the SPD. Adickes' comprehensive concept of municipal socialism therefore tried to avoid anything that could have strengthened the labour movement and to concentrate on dealing with the social problems of urbanisation and industrialisation as they affected the community as a whole.[2] Thus, Adickes' social policies were intended to be of direct benefit as much to the wealthy citizens of Frankfurt and the Mittelstand as to the poorer sections of the community. The left-liberals, too, wanted a reconciliation of all the social groups and recognised that ultimately this was in the interests of the entire community. Yet the crucial difference is that they accepted that the SPD was there to stay as the political representative of the city's industrial workers, and they also accepted that social policy had to be conducted primarily for the benefit of the poor through a redistribution of wealth. Left-liberals were happy to intervene in the labour market through the improvement of an employee's legal position as well as through seeking to supplement real income.

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[1] Their political opponents, the Democrats, liked to mock the National Liberals about the odd member who was sometimes caught by a brief social political urge ('ein sozialpolitischer Raptus'), and might even be serious about social policy, but who would never go further than Uncle Adickes would allow. Councillor Zirndorfer in Frankfurter Zeitung, 1.11.1902 (3. Morgenblatt).

[2] Thus, Adickes was hostile to incorporations which extended to pedominantly industrial areas, as he feared an increase in the SPD electorate. For example, compare his desire to incorporate Schwanheim with his refusal to contemplate the incorporation of neighbouring Griesheim and Nied, in BAK, NL 44 n. 8 fos. 218-20. Hermann Luppe, 'Mein Leben'.

The direct political impact of these liberal social policies is difficult to judge, particularly as many social policies such as many aspects of Adickes' Bodenpolitik or the Democrats' labour exchanges met with considerable hostility at the time of their introduction, and they are unlikely to have generated much liberal political support from the working classes at first. And yet, the liberal optimism at being able to stem the political advance of the SPD and the concurrent realisation that liberals could also win votes from the working classes which has been described in chapter three came at precisely the time when trade union resistance to liberal policies of social reform, and the labour exchange in particular, ran out of steam.[1] Equally important is the fact that left-liberal social policy in Frankfurt was undoubtedly a fundamental factor in buttressing the increasing co-operation between left-liberals and the SPD inside the city council in the years leading up to the First World War.[2] By contrast, the SPD never softened their hostility to Franz Adickes and his social policies.[3] Again, this demonstrates the need to distinguish carefully between the different liberal approaches to social policy. It is not true that liberal social policy, and Adickes' Bodenpolitik in particular, encouraged the SPD to become more reformist.[4] This was achieved alone through left-liberal co-operation with the SPD, for example in the organisation of public lectures or the provision of cheap housing.

This study's emphasis on the existence of two distinct liberal social policies in Frankfurt am Main should not cloud the fact that was is precisely this diversity in approaches which was responsible for the extraordinary scale of liberal social policies in this city. Even though this study has outlined the contrasting concepts of left and right-liberal social policy in Frankfurt, it

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1 Roth, Gewerkschaftskartell, pp. 198-215, esp. p. 210.

2 See chapter three.

3 This is nicely illustrated by the socialist Volksstimme's comment on Adickes' retirement, in Volksstimme, 1.4.1912. See also Adickes' obituary in Volksstimme, 10.2.1915. Both articles are in IfSG S2/649.ii.

4 Koch, 'Liberalismus und soziale Frage', p. 29.

is nonetheless the case that in the immediate aim to reduce class tension the supporters of each liberal approach tolerated the other. Thus, Flesch and Adickes may have had contrasting views about the nature of social policy, but what is remarkable is that despite these fundamental disagreements they did little to hinder each other in practice. Also, despite the fact that this chapter has concentrated on the political aspects of social policy, it was also the case that both political approaches could count on a third, strictly non-political approach to social policy, sponsored by the philanthropist William Merton, whose central aim was to create a better understanding of the problem itself by conducting inquiries and research into the social question. For this purpose Merton founded the Institut für Gemeinwohl (Institute for Common Welfare), which in 1892 became responsible for editing the 'Blätter für Soziale Praxis', which from 1897 was edited in Berlin as the nationally influential 'Soziale Praxis'.[1] In conjunction with other social organisations, the institute was also willing to sponsor practical social policy initiatives. These organisations were enthusiastic supporters of Adickes' policies of town planning, but unlike Adickes they were also happy to support initiatives based on the concept of equal co-operation with the SPD. The institute's endorsement of both left- and right-liberal social policies was possible because Merton and other philanthropists saw this private commitment to social welfare as complementary to, but nonetheless separate from, municipal or state social policy.[2] The institute's support was vital to the social policy efforts of both, as it offered a good way of pursuing the policies which could not find a majority inside the city council. This also had the effect of making the left-liberals' social policies less dependent on the support of Adickes and the National Liberals, and vice versa. This renders any description of 'bourgeois liberal' reform meaningless, as there were not only different liberal approaches to social policy, but there was also a conscious difference between private,

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1 H. Achinger, Wilhelm Merton in seiner Zeit (Frankfurt, 1965), p. 128.

2 Nathanael Brückner, Die öffentliche und private Fürsorge. Gemeinnützige Thätigkeit und Armenwesen mit besonderer Beziehung auf Frankfurt am Main (Frankfurt, 1892), i. viii. According to Merton's biographer, this anonymous introduction to the institute's first publication was from William Merton himself.

'bourgeois' efforts at social reform and those of the liberals engaged in municipal government. At the same time, none of the different 'parties' of social reform could be successful if its policies were boycotted by the others. Therefore, Frankfurt's position as a centre of municipal liberal reform was achieved precisely because of the variety of approaches to social reform, which were separate, distinct and even opposed to each other in nature but which nonetheless tolerated and even encouraged each other in practice.

This allows some insight into why, if liberals could be so successful in developing and carrying out not one, but several coherent approaches to social policy, such approaches to social policy did not simply translate to the state or national level. It has already been pointed out in this chapter that the reason why Miquel could be happy to co-operate with the left-liberals in the politically sensitive area of social policy while at the same time shifting his National Liberal party further to the right, away from the left-liberals, was because as an astute politician Miquel had to adapt his policies to the different political constituencies within which he operated. Indeed, this chapter has shown how, despite the fact that municipal social policy was intensely political, it was based on entirely different parameters from social policy at a national level. For example, Flesch's concept of parity, of realising social reform in partnership with representatives of labour, was much easier to carry out at the local level, where the leading socialist representatives were known, and sometimes even trusted, by the Democrats on a personal level. Frankfurt Democrats were in a position to know that the socialist leaders like Quarck, Hüttmann or Zielowski were not interested in revolution. Yet at a national level, it was much more important for liberals to respond to the economic and social pressures in the countryside, in other words to find a social policy for the farmers and artisans in small towns, as it was mostly in these areas that the liberals had any real chance of winning seats for the Reichstag.[1] It is telling that the proposal that Flesch's labour tribunal be introduced nationwide

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[1] G. Eley, 'Notable Politics', pp. 195, 207. For evidence of liberal presence in agricultural areas, see the German electoral map of 1912 in Ritter and Niehuss, Wahlgeschichtliches Arbeitsbuch, pp. 46-7.

found its most committed proponents in Miquel on the one hand and the representatives of the SPD on the other.[1] The former had pioneered the system himself through his support for Flesch, whilst the latter were acting on behalf of their municipal constituencies. More importantly, liberals in the cities were concerned first and foremost with reducing social tension in the cities, even if they were keen to realise their ideas at the national level. As a result, they devised institutions of social policy which were peculiarly suited to the particular municipality in which they operated in the first instance, and then to other German cities in general. For such measures, the best liberals could do in the Empire or in the individual states was to create the legal framework in which the liberals in the cities were able to carry out their measures in Bodenpolitik or labour relations. Therefore, as the practical measures of municipal social policy, as well as their underlying assumptions, were particularly suited to the city, it was extremely difficult to translate municipal social policy into a coherent and effective liberal policy at the national or state level.

As a result, liberal kommunale Daseinsfürsorge, that is liberal social policy in Germany, was neither the German answer, nor was it the alternative model, to social liberalism as it occurred in liberal movements at the national level, most notably in England.[2] Liberal social reform in the city as conducted in the city of Frankfurt and elsewhere was progressive, innovative and comprehensive, but overall it hardly constituted a great advance over liberal social policy initiatives in that archetypal country of comparison, England.[3] After all, even the term with which contemporaries, starting with the conservative liberal Adickes, and historians have commonly described these policies, namely 'municipal socialism', was invented in England. In

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1 Weitensteiner, 'Karl Flesch', pp. 127-39.

2 This speculation is present in the work of Langewiesche. See, for example, D. Langewiesche, 'The nature of German Liberalism', in G. Martell (ed.), Modern Germany reconsidered, 1870-1945 (London, 1992), pp. 96-116, here p. 106. Langewiesche, 'German Liberalism in the Second Empire', p. 230.

3 For a contemporary outline of municipal social reform in England, see Hugo Lindemann (C. Hugo), Städteverwaltung und Munizipal-Sozialismus in England (Stuttgart, 1897). For more recent studies, see Waller, Town, pp. 298-316. Asa Briggs, History of Birmingham, vol. ii (Oxford, 1952). Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities (Harmondsworth, reprint 1990). Derek Fraser (ed.), Municipal Reform and the Industrial City (Leicester, 1982).

both countries, it was equally difficult to transform local liberal social policies such as town-planning or labour exchanges into liberal policies at a national level, simply because these policies were naturally most effective at the local level. Yet the difference remains, as in Britain social liberalism developed over and above liberal social reform at the local level, whereas in Germany it appears that this process did not occur.

Therefore, the occurrence of innovative and diverse liberal social policies in the municipality, which is unlikely to have been restricted to Frankfurt, by no means indicates that German liberals in general were socially more aware, or had made greater moves to develop a peculiar German form of social liberalism, than had previously been thought. What this does show is how innovative and progressive German liberals were in response to the social challenges with which they were presented when they actually were in government, at the local level. The example of Frankfurt highlights, therefore, not only the diversity of liberal assumptions which resulted in a considerable variety and number of liberal measures of social reform, but it also points to the central reasons why municipal social reform could not be translated to liberal policies at the national level. Only at the local level were liberals actually in a position to carry out their policies which were tailored to a particular urban constituency, through trying to solve problems that were particular to a rapidly urbanising and industrialising community. Hence, it was difficult for any liberal municipal social reform to influence national liberal approaches to social policy, but this was made almost impossible in the case of Germany, where in addition urban liberals' attitudes towards social reform had to transcend and be applicable to three peculiarly distinct levels of government.

# CONCLUSION

In contrast to the current assumptions of urban historians who emphasise the 'unpolitical' nature of local government until the end of the nineteenth century, this thesis has shown for the case of Frankfurt am Main that local government became effectively politicised from the start of the German Empire. During the period of the foundation of the Empire, a political culture was established whose beginnings date back to the decade before Frankfurt's annexation, but which was given its definite and distinctive shape through a new group of left-liberals who came to the political fore after 1866. This new group, which consisted largely of newspaper editors headed by the owner of the Frankfurter Zeitung, Leopold Sonnemann, created a popular political sphere through the promotion of popular ward meetings and the creation of a popular party organisation, though fostering political debate about local politics in their newspapers, and through the creation of a peculiar and particularist, 'popular' political rhetoric which was suited to exploiting initial resentment of the city's annexation by Prussia. In this way, Democrats managed to adapt to and thus politicise the local cultural milieu, which was the foundation of their political success. To be successful, other liberals had to adapt at least partially to this organisational and political advance of the Democrats, which explains the failure of those political groups like the Conservatives and, for most of the period, political Catholicism, which were unable to respond either to the political milieu thus established or to the organisational advances of the Democrats. And it is telling that, even though there was little which the Democrats could tell the SPD about organisation, to be successful in local politics even the SPD found it necessary to sell themselves as the 'true' Democrats. The strength of the Frankfurt Democrats in particular lay not only in their creation of a political culture in the first place, but also in their sophistication at changing and

adapting it to take account of changes in the cultural and political climate such as the reconciliation of Frankfurters with the Empire, or the diversification of politics from the 1880s onwards. The flexibility and the astuteness with which not just Democratic liberals dealt with the growth of the Bürgervereine in the 1880s, and the Mittelstand during the 1890s, gave them the necessary experience to cope successfully with the Social Democrats as they emerged in local politics from the mid-1890s onwards. In Frankfurt, the election of the first SPD councillor in 1900 did not form a watershed in municipal politics: it simply marked another stage in the diversification of local politics. After all, left-liberals felt themselves intrinsically closer to the SPD than to the 'reactionary' Mittelstand, and the increasing co-operation between a growing SPD and the left-liberals during the first decade of the twentieth century actually increased the power of left-liberal councillors as they were less dependent on co-operation with the National Liberals.

It would be possible to claim that the political sophistication of Frankfurt liberals is merely the exception that proves the rule of, first, local government by notables and, second, the growth of a non-political local bureaucracy which moderated the politicisation of local government after the advent of the SPD around 1900. Yet left-liberals in Frankfurt had no notion of being particularly exceptional in the way they conducted municipal politics. While there are undoubtedly plenty of examples where local government was less politicised than in Frankfurt, there are many cities where it is likely that municipal government was at least as politicised in Frankfurt, for example cities with a less restrictive franchise such as Berlin, or cities with a strong Roman Catholic population which may have become politicised during the era of the Kulturkampf during the 1870s. The exact process of politicisation will have been unique in Frankfurt as in any other city with its peculiar ethnic, religious, social and cultural background. Yet it is likely that many of the general trends of politicisation witnessed in Frankfurt, for example the importance of newspapers in the process of politicisation or the harnessing of

civic pride by a political rhetoric, were far from unique to the city. The example of Frankfurt suggests that urban historians have come to the conclusion of the 'unpolitical' local government because they have primarily looked at social élites and the social milieu in which they operated. A study conducted with those parameters would conclude for Frankfurt, too, that its social élite was still very much in charge in 1900 and even in 1914. However, a study of the political environment reveals that the power of these élites was very much defined through politics in the first instance.

The failure of current historiography to ask the relevant questions about the nature of local government is best illustrated through the study of the two mayors of Frankfurt who have so far been held up as beacons of unpolitical, purely professional local administration. For example, contemporaries and historians alike have been so impressed by Miquel's inaugural speech in which he emphasised his desire to be above party and confession and to dedicate himself not to politics, but to administration,[1] that they have completely overlooked the fact that Miquel's actions in local politics reveal the same self-confessed political priorities which he displayed as Prussian minister of finance, that is close co-operation with the elected chamber, sound and careful financial policies, and social reconciliation between all sections of society.[2] As Miquel himself admitted, his actions as minister of finance would be based upon the same principles as his dealings as First Mayor.[3] In other words, as a Prussian minister Miquel was no more, but also no less 'political' than as First Mayor. Similarly, the actions of the autocratic Adickes, his outstanding ability to strike deals with changing majorities inside the city council necessary for the implementation of his policies, the admiration he enjoyed even from his left-liberal opponents, and his phobia of the SPD are all more reminiscent of a Bismarck than of a technocrat beyond politics whose only connection with councillors was through the chambers of the élite social clubs. To ask, therefore, to what extent mayors tried

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1 Langewiesche, Liberalismus, p. 209.
2 See Miquel's farewell address to the council and the Magistrat in Kleine Presse, 28.6.1890.
3 See Miquel's speech in Kleine Presse, 1.7.1890.

to contribute to the party-political life of the city is both irrelevant and misses the point. Notwithstanding the ideal of the 'unpolitical', mayors everywhere were likely to be as 'political' as their local political environment required them to be.

This study has not only shown the nature and extent of liberal involvement in the process of politicisation at the grass roots: it has also demonstrated for the case of Frankfurt what liberals did when they actually were in power, a phenomenon that can only be observed at the local level. Such a focus reveals the overwhelming importance for liberals at least in Frankfurt of the issue of education, an issue that was strong enough to unite and rally all liberals in defence of the system of non-denominational primary education, an issue which was given its impact through the dominant influence of Frankfurt Jewry not only over the liberal parties' finances, but also over their policies on issues of Jewish concern. To Frankfurt liberals, all aspects of education were a matter of local pride, though liberal enthusiasm for non-denominationalism, secondary and tertiary education contrasted sharply with their rather average concern about the quality of primary education. The Frankfurt liberals' policies of education are very revealing about the liberals' self-understanding, as it is primarily through education that municipal liberals (not just in Frankfurt) hoped to realise a 'liberal', meritocratic society distinguished by mutual tolerance and scientific endeavour. This aim was not just restricted to Frankfurt liberals who were worried about the incidence of anti-Semitism and conservatism around them, but it was a central concern for most liberals. In his attempt to define and describe the nature of German liberalism, Friedrich Naumann noted that the most fundamental shortcoming of German society in comparison with society in England or the United States was a fundamental lack of popular appreciation for individual freedom and a traditional tendency to welcome authority. Hence, what was needed most was a comprehensive education of society in liberal values.[1] At the same time, the case of Frankfurt demonstrates

[1] BAP 90 Na 3 n. 193 fos. 1-3. Friedrich Naumann, 'Deutscher Liberalismus'. Naumann was not the only prominent left-liberal to believe in the power of education to renew German society. Right until the end of the war, for example, Hugo Preuß held up education as an effective antidote to the virtual military

that the liberals' trust in changing society 'from the bottom up', through education, was misplaced. Whereas throughout the imperial period anti-Semitism remained politically unacceptable in Frankfurt, there is no indication that after more than forty years in power, liberals had been successful in creating a more tolerant local society. Similarly, the political effects of liberal education were ambiguous. Their resolution in their fight for non-denominational education gave them something in common with the SPD, but their discrimination against denominational schools also offended many parents and led to the foundation of political Catholicism in the city.

In other areas of government, liberals responded remarkably well to the challenges with which they were confronted. In the important area of municipal finance, Frankfurt's left-liberals even managed to conduct a policy that was heavily biased towards their Mittelstand constituency without having to compromise their self-image of a party ever more aware of social policy and the need to reconcile the working classes to the existing order. The investigation into social policy has demonstrated that the comprehensive and innovative nature of liberal municipal socialism in Frankfurt derives from the fact that it was not a monolithic concept, but that different groups of liberals had separate and distinct visions of social policy. And yet, the study of liberal economic and social policy demonstrates the ambiguous political benefits of municipal socialism. The most ambitious right-liberal project, Adickes' Bodenpolitik, not only brought the city close to financial ruin, but was in many ways unsuccessful as a social policy and unpopular with many voters. By contrast, left-liberal projects designed to improve the labour and housing markets were a comparatively minor strain on the municipal budget, but as policies they were much more successful, and whereas even some of these policies yielded little or no political benefit in the medium run, in the long run they were much more successful politically. Therefore, as much as it is important to distinguish between different and distinct

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dictatorship in place by 1917. C. Applegate, 'Democracy or Reaction? The Political Implications of Localist Ideas in Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany', in Jones and Retallack, Elections, Mass Politics, and Social Change, p. 257.

political as well as non-political approaches to municipal socialism for a full appreciation of its nature and effect, it is necessary to realise that there is no unilinear relationship between the quality and the quantity of municipal socialism. In other words, since not all social policy was successful or popular, and since in the realm of social policy the liberals could usually be outsmarted by the SPD, it is not the case that liberals in that city were politically more successful simply because there was 'more' municipal socialism in Frankfurt than in most other cities. Yet ultimately this study suggests that what determined liberal fortunes much more decisively than municipal socialism or any other determination of municipal spending were policies of taxation. Political ruptures such as the growth of the Mittelstand parties were caused by increases or shifts in taxation rather than, for example, the introduction of the Erbbaurecht. Nonetheless, the readiness of Frankfurt left-liberals in particular to address the social question, despite the immediate political impact, was highly indicative at least of their willingness to engage in the theoretical and practical discourse of how to solve the social problems of their time. In a more general sense, the innovative social and financial policies of Frankfurt liberals are indicative of the agility and the 'modernity' of which German liberals were capable given half a chance of being in government, but they also demonstrate the limitations and the problems of even the most responsive and flexible liberal movement when trying to compete against a well-organised political labour movement with a much more clearly-defined constituency.

This thesis has shown how liberalism could remain a vibrant and popular political force throughout the Empire, as a particular result of the left-liberals' awareness of the importance of changing and improving party organisation, their evolving popular political rhetoric, innovative and popular policies designed to appeal to specific groups such as low taxation of the Mittelstand or generous employment conditions for teachers and tramway workers, and their ability to form coalitions especially during run-off elections against their biggest political

challengers. Furthermore, the case of Frankfurt gives credence to the view expressed recently that there occurred a left-liberal revival in Germany in the last decade or so before the First World War.

Only further research can show to what extent this conclusion can be generalised for municipal liberalism in Germany. Nevertheless, this study's findings suffice to conclude that liberal involvement and success in local government were more than just a liberal 'Indian summer', as has been recently asserted for Breslau.[1] The hope for a rebirth of a German nation through urban reform was not restricted to the liberal academic Preuß alone;[2] it was shared in full by Frankfurt liberals at the grass roots. There occurred a shift of emphasis which implied the failure of the nineteenth-century view that local government was a mediator between state and society. The traditional argument that local government was merely a good preparation (or for some liberals on the right a good substitute) for bourgeois participation in and liberalisation of state and national politics was clearly outdated.[3] In other words, the example of Frankfurt confirms that the old debate about whether the state or the locality should be the focus of the body politic was over.[4] By the turn of the 1890s, it was clear that the bourgeoisie had not become more self-conscious or influential, but rather the contrary. According to Frankfurt liberals, the bourgeoisie was lacking in self-confidence and self-assurance, so that it became the primary function of local government to lift up the bourgeoisie and infuse it with liberal values.[5] Hence the city became important in its own right. It is too easy to conclude that this was a defensive liberal move, that local government became important to liberals as they were marginalised at other levels of government. This argument cannot be discounted, and yet there were good, positive reasons why the cities became so much more important to

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1 Hettling, 'Von der Hochburg zur Wagenburg', p. 271.

2 Preuß, Entwicklung des deutschen Städtewesens, pp. 378-9.

3 The Frankfurter Zeitung, too, had subscribed to the view that local government was a 'preparatory school' for state government. Frankfurter Zeitung, 8.7.1867 (1. Blatt).

4 R. Koch, 'Staat oder Gemeinde? Zu einem politischen Zielkonflikt in der bürgerlichen Bewegung des 19. Jahrhunderts', HZ, ccxxxvi (1983), 73-96.

5 See especially Karl Funck's speech in Frankfurter Zeitung, 16.11.1906 (3. Morgenblatt).

liberals towards the end of the Empire. It was during this period that the idea of local self-government gained added impetus through a new generation of left-liberal writers like Josef Redlich and Hugo Preuß, who broke with the consensus established by Gneist and Gierke a generation earlier that local government, important though it was, was subordinate to the state.[1] The revival of the academic academic liberal debate about the nature and the value of local self-government was matched by a growing liberal consciousness of the importance of the city at the level of practical politics. For liberals who considered themselves to be essentially bourgeois, it was natural for them to turn to where the Bürgertum was, the cities. Similarly, if education was so important to them, then local government was the only way for liberals to gain any influence in the way primary and secondary schools were run, or in the way that education was expanded, for example, to the creation of compulsory technical schools. Thus, to prove their political ability the left-liberals in Prussia were eager to point away from their negative role in the Prussian chamber of deputies to their positive achievements in municipal government, such as the 'beautiful and well-equipped' schools as well as the general quality of education in many large cities which they considered to be the pride of progressive Liberal city government.[2] Moreover, this study has demonstrated that the increasing financial weight of local government vis-à-vis the state, and the spiralling local government expenditure, affected all walks of life. Given the reluctance of the Empire and the states to respond adequately to the social question during the 1890s and 1900s, it was liberals in local government who took up the challenge, however imperfectly, with ingenuity, zeal and conviction. Therefore, considering the steadily growing importance of local government to

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[1] Apart from the works by Preuß which have been cited already, see J. Redlich and F. W. Hirst, Local Government in England, 2 vols. (London, 1903), a book which corrected many of the false notions of English local government current in Germany since they had been established by Rudolf Gneist. The argument that an emphasis in local government did not necessarily entail backwardness and being old-fashioned has been made in Applegate, 'Democracy or Raction?', esp. pp. 247-57.

[2] P. Scheven, Die Nationalsozialen und die volkstümlichen Parteien. i. Der Freisinn und die Nationalsozialen, in BAP 90 Na 3 n. 285.

German public life, by 1914 the 'futility' of liberal confidence in the growing importance of local government was by no means clear.

Furthermore, the example of Frankfurt highlights the fact that liberals were not just focusing on local government because they had given up on state and national politics. Indeed, Frankfurt left-liberals in particular used their acquired local political strength not just to carry out their policies in Frankfurt itself, but also as a springboard for national and state politics. The Frankfurter Zeitung, with which almost all Democratic liberal representatives in Berlin were connected, was one of the main German newspapers to lead the extra-parliamentary opposition to any repressive legislation, militarism and anti-Semitism.[1] Yet the Frankfurt Democrats also used the newspaper to criticise or influence the German People's Party. This use of the party's biggest organ caused particular consternation in the Württemberg wing which was always mindful of Frankfurt's disproportionate influence within the party, especially when Frankfurt was also the seat of the party's headquarters.[2]

The importance of Frankfurt left-liberalism for its respective national political movements was further underlined and increased by their pivotal role in the process of left-liberal unification from about 1903 to 1910.[3] This influence rested on the close relationship which the left-liberal leaders, particularly the Progressive Liberal Funck and the Democrat Rößler, had developed in the sphere of local politics, where both had been active for two decades. Also, it rested on the

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[1] A. Eigenbrodt, Berliner Tageblatt und Frankfurter Zeitung in ihrem Verhalten zu den nationalen Fragen 1887-1914. Ein geschichtlicher Rückblick (Berlin-Schöneberg, 1917).

[2] For example, Württemberg Democrats were constantly irritated by the Frankfurter Zeitung's hostility to their left-liberal 'sister party', the Progressive Liberals, which was the direct result of Sonnemann's personal feud against the Progressive Liberal leader Eugen Richter. BAK NL 20 n. 4 fo. 174. Payer to Sonnemann, 13.6.1891.

The fact that Frankfurt was the seat of the party headquarters for most of the period is in itself a demonstration of the vitality of Frankfurt liberalism, as the duties of the party executive were extremely burdensome and thus unpopular. BArchK NL 20 n. 3 fos. 261-4. Württemberg party secretary to Dr. Prior (Frankfurt), 3.7.1889 and 17.8.1889.

[3] For a general account of the moves towards left-liberal unity in 1910, see Theiner, Sozialer Liberalismus und deutsche Weltpolitik, pp. 140-55. K. Simon, Die württembergischen Demokraten. Ihre Stellung und Arbeit im Parteien- und Verfassunssystem in Württemberg und im Deutschen Reich 1890-1920 (Stuttgart, 1969), pp. 81-92.

close relations which the Frankfurt representative to the Prussian chamber of deputies, Funck,[1] and Democrats such as Rößler and Rudolf Oeser had upon their colleagues in state and national politics.[2] Indeed, Frankfurt left-liberals were on good terms not only with the two larger left-liberal parties, the Deutsche Volkspartei and the Freisinnige Volkspartei, but also with Theodor Barth and Friedrich Naumann of the Freisinnige Vereinigung, with whose programmes of social and political reform they largely agreed.[3] Indeed, in 1908 the Democrats offered Barth the chance to become a Prussian deputy for the safe seat of Frankfurt, though Barth declined and Karl Flesch went to Berlin instead.[4] Finally, the Frankfurt left-liberal philanthropist Charles Hallgarten was perhaps the single largest financial benefactor of Friedrich Naumann's activities.[5] Given the additional benefit that as a meeting-point Frankfurt was an ideal compromise for the predominantly Prussian Freisinnige Volkspartei and the People's Party with its electoral base south and west of the Main, it is questionable whether the left-liberal unification of 1910 could have occurred without the energy and the unique position of Frankfurt left-liberals.[6] The ability of Frankfurt liberals to 'pull the cart of left-liberal unity', as Barth put it in a letter to Naumann,[7] was primarily based on their personalities, their back-up by the Frankfurter Zeitung (whose offices served as an important meeting place for the various liberal representatives), and their individual

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1 Karl Funck was Frankfurt's Progressive Liberal deputy from 1892-3, and 1898-1913. From 1906-10 he was deputy leader of the central committee of the Progressive People's Party.

2 It was vital that Funck enjoyed not only the trust and friendship of the German People's Party's leaders Friedrich Payer and Konrad Haußmann, but, in contrast to other Frankfurt left-liberals, he was also on good terms with the difficult Progressive leader, Eugen Richter. Ludwig Heilbrunn, 'Einführung', in Funck, Lebenserinnerungen, pp. 5-34, esp. pp. 23-5.

3 The close relationship which the left liberal leaders Rößler, Oeser and Funck had with Barth and Naumann is evident from BAP 90 Na 3 n. 211.

4 Rößler's offer to Barth is in BAP 90 Na 3 n. 211 fos. 63-4. Rößler to Barth, 12.3.1908.

5 Naumann's relationship with Hallgarten is evident from BAP 90 Na 3 n. 147. For the relative importance of Hallgarten's donations to Naumann's political activities, see, for example, BAP 90 Na 3 n. 147, fos. 15-6. Naumann to Hallgarten, 29.10.1903. See also BAP 60 Vo 3 n. 5/1 fos. 21-3. Minutes of the Progressive People Party's executive meeting, 27.2.1906.

6 There is also an extremely valuable (handwritten) account of the negotiations between the representatives of the various parties, written by Heinrich Rößler in 1909 in IfGS, S1/6.

7 Commenting on the recent Munich party congress of the People's Party, Barth wrote 'Wir müssen, wie ich meine, jetzt unsere Frankfurter Kompagnons vor den Einigungswagen spannen, unsere Wahlrechtspläne darauf packen [sic!] und den Versuch machen, das Gefährt mitsamt der Ladung in Bewegung zu setzten'. BAP 90 Na 3 n. 211 fo. 27. Barth to Naumann, 3.10.1906.

enthusiasm for their cause. Yet there is no doubt that the foundation of their influence lay in their experience and their success in local politics which provided them with the necessary support and authority. Otherwise, the role of someone like Heinrich Rößler would be incomprehensible, as the highest political position he ever occupied was that of a deputy chairman of the Frankfurt city council - he was never a member of either the Prussian chamber of deputies or the Reichstag. Furthermore, it was in co-operation in local politics that individual Progressive Liberals such as Funck gained the trust and the friendship of the Democratic leadership which subsequently became indispensable to the single-minded pursuit of liberal unity by Frankfurt left-liberals. This is not to deflect from perhaps the central reason why left-liberal unity became possible, which was the death of Eugen Richter in 1906 who had obstinately refused to compromise on social policy issues and attitudes towards the state.[1] Nonetheless, the importance of Frankfurt left-liberalism particularly in this process of left-liberal unification deserves to be emphasised. After all, during the 1880s and early 1890s it was the Frankfurt Democrats who, as a result of their strong commitment to social policy and because of their sometimes rocky relationships with the local Progressive liberals, vetoed any attempt made by the German People's party as a whole to move closer to Richter's Progressive liberals.[2] Put more poignantly, not the least of the reasons why German left-liberal unification could not happen one or two decades earlier was that the older

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[1] B. Heckart, From Bassermann to Bebel. The Grand Bloc's Quest for Reform in the Kaiserreich, 1900-1914 (New Haven, 1974), pp. 26-33.

[2] In 1885, the Frankfurt Democrats' insistence on extending the German People's Party to northern Germany in direct opposition to the Progressive Liberals threatened a split within the party, though ultimately the Württemberg section of the party, which was more interested in maintaining good relations with Richter, prevailed. Hunt, The People's Party, pp. 37-8. In 1891, Friedrich Payer was forced to decline an invitation issued by Karl Funck to address the national party conference of the Progressive Party in Frankfurt that year as a result of the Frankfurt Democrats' outrage. The latter objected to Payer thus supporing their political opponents, as they had been let down too often by the Frankfurt Progressives in the city council to consider them political friends, despite their frequent co-operation in municipal elections. BAK NL 20 n. 4 fos. 167-9. Louis Hamburger for the Frankfurt Democratic Association to the Committee of the German People's Party in Stuttgart, 11.5.1891. See also the interesting letter from Payer to Funck of 12.5.1891, in which he declines Funck's offer. It is marked by a warmth which is conspicuously absent in the correspondence between Payer and Sonnemann during these years and until Sonnemann's death. BAK NL 20 n. 4 fo. 171.

generation of Frankfurt left-liberal leaders, the Progressive Berthold Geiger and the Democrat Leopold Sonnemann, detested each other.[1]

As a result of their position during the process of left-liberal unity, Frankfurt left-liberals were in an unusually influential position within the new party from 1910 onwards. As the Frankfurt Democrats had done with the German People's Party before, the first chairman of the central committee of the new Progressive People's Party, Funck, and the committee's other influential member from Frankfurt, Rößler, continually tried to raise the party's awareness of social questions. In particular, they tried to muster up official party support for the Imperial Insurance Law (1910/11) as well as Flesch's ideas for a reformulation of employment contracts.[2] Therefore, the last decade before the Great War marked the zenith of Frankfurt left-liberal influence not only in local politics, but in state and national politics through their position in progressive party politics as well.

Whereas this study has maintained that its central conclusions about the nature of urban liberalism, the problems and challenges it faced, and the way in which it could be successful through the creation of a peculiar local milieu, were far from unique to the city of Frankfurt, the position of Frankfurt Democrats and later of Frankfurt liberals more generally in their respective national parties really was quite extraordinary. The strong links between Frankfurt left-liberals and the various German left-liberal parties constituted, perhaps, the central peculiarity of Frankfurt liberalism during the Empire. Yet despite the inventiveness and the energy with which Frankfurt liberals pursued policies that mattered to them, and social policy in particular, what is most striking is how little success they had in actually influencing state or national party politics. Indeed, in a larger national party after 1910 it was more difficult for Frankfurt to pull its weight, particularly as the Frankfurter Zeitung now had to share its

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[1] Sonnemann's strong dislike not only of the locally prominent Geiger, but also of Eugen Richter, was one of the causes of the Democrats' strong aversion to the Progressive Liberal Party, much to the dismay of his southern German party colleagues.

[2] See the Frankfurt Petition for social policy from November 1910 in BAP 60 Vo 3 n. 37 fos. 184-90.

position as the leading left-liberal party newspaper with the formerly Progressive Liberal Vossische Zeitung and the Berliner Tageblatt.[1] It was remarkable that the left-liberal attempt to form links with the working classes through the Reichsverein der liberalen Arbeiter und Angestellten was based upon the central demand first formulated by Karl Flesch that the relationship between employer and employee be transformed from a relationship ruled by force to one determined by the law.[2] Yet this counted for little given the reluctance of leading left-liberals from outside Frankfurt to take any notice of this organisation or its aims.[3] And even before 1910, despite the disproportionate influence of Frankfurt Democrats within the German People's Party, there were severe constraints to Frankfurt left-liberal influence. After bitter struggles, Sonnemann and the Frankfurt Democrats did largely get their way in emphasising the party's commitment to social policy. Nonetheless, the practical effect of this was minimal, as from about 1890 national policy was practically determined by the group of German People's Party's members of the Reichstag, and by their leaders Payer and Haußmann in particular. Furthermore, in Württemberg, the state which was home to two thirds of the party's total membership and whose state parliament was the one national or state assembly in which the party did exercise considerable political influence, the People's Party continued to be largely ignorant of the social question as it affected the working classes.[4] In other words, while Sonnemann may have won the commitment of his party on paper, it is doubtful that by his tactics, and through the implicit threat of using the Frankfurter Zeitung for his ends, he won over the hearts of his Württemberg party friends.

Therefore, even though this study has demonstrated that municipal social reform by its very nature did not translate very well into state or national social reform, this does not mean that urban liberal social reformers did not try. However, the failure of Frankfurt left-liberal urban

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1 Nipperdey, Deutsche Geschichte 1866-1914, i. 799-803.

2 BAP 60 Vo 3 n. 52 fo. 300. Reichsverein der liberalen Arbeiter und Angestellten, Leipzig 1912.

3 For the relationship between the Reichsverein and the central committee of the Progressive People's Party, see BAP 60 Vo 3 n. 52.

4 Simon, Die württembergischen Demokraten, pp. 39-42, 47.

social reformers, despite their tremendous and unusual influence over the left-liberals at national level, illustrates very neatly the extraordinary difficulty of translating policies from one level of government to another. The social question was naturally a burning issue for liberals in the city of Frankfurt, but it was an issue with entirely different connotations for the national political aspirations of the German People's Party, which depended crucially on the rural and small-town constituencies of southern Germany for the election of their representatives to the Reichstag.[1] The same was true for the stronghold of left-liberalism, Prussia, where, despite the fact that left-liberals derived a great proportion of their support from urban voters, by 1912 left-liberal strength in the Reichstag was crucially dependent on rural and small-town votes, as a result of the overwhelming urban support for the SPD.[2] The liberals' overwhelming reliance on the countryside for electoral support in state and national elections, then, points to the most important shortcoming of urban liberalism. For however much contemporary urban liberals put their hope in a liberal revival of German politics and society in the cities, based on the vitality, the sophistication and the innovative nature of urban liberal policy and organisation, this hope would necessarily be futile as long as the liberals' political survival outside the level of urban government depended on the countryside. As this study has argued, Miquel's extraordinary political success was based on the fact that he fully appreciated this problem, as he was one of the few liberals who managed successfully to tailor his policies to the needs of the different political constituencies in which he operated. For the most part and for most liberals, however, these needs were more and more incompatible. The best

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1 See the results of the 1898 Imperial elections in Württemberg where average support for the People's Party diminished roughly in proportion to the size of the locality. Ritter and Niehuss, Wahlgeschichtliches Arbeitsbuch, p. 113. Simon, Die württembergischen Demokraten, pp. 25-36, 42.

2 In 1912, the Progressive People's Party gained one seat in Berlin, whereas Berlin's other five seats went to the SPD. By contrast, the left-liberals fared much better in the districts of Liegnitz (5 out of 10 seats), Schleswig-Holstein (7 out of 10) and Stralsund (2 out of 2). Ritter and Niehuss, Wahlgeschichtliches Arbeitsbuch, pp. 67-83. For the example of Schleswig-Holstein, see especially Thompson, 'Left-liberals', pp. 347-402. The dependence on the countryside was not unique to left-liberals, as the strength of the SPD or the Centre parties in the cities increased the importance of the countryside to the National Liberals, too. For the most recent study of National Liberal politics in one of their most important rural strongholds, see John, 'Kultur, Klasse und regionaler Liberalismus', pp. 161-93. The need for National Liberals to respond differently to different types of constituencies has been highlighted in Eley, 'Notable Politics', pp. 187-216.

illustration of this is the 1906 School Bill, which, as this study has demonstrated, urban liberals throughout Prussia opposed with one voice. And yet, this was a bill which had originated not with the government, which would have been content to leave the issue of denominational education well alone, but with the National Liberal (and Conservative) representatives in the Prussian chamber of deputies, in their concern for the tremendous burden which financing the rural primary school placed upon the poorer agricultural and small-town areas.[1]

This study has demonstrated for the case of Frankfurt am Main that Germany was not an inherently illiberal society, and neither were the cities bastions of 'the unpolitical German', if he ever existed. German liberals were neither intrinsically possessed by dogmatic rigidity, nor were they political amateurs who in their naivety completely failed to recognise the growing complexities of German politics and society. A study of liberal politics at the local level of government, which was, after all, the only level of government at which liberals had any real political power in the Empire, shows how sophisticated, dynamic and pragmatic German liberals could be, given half a chance of being in power. This study's findings about how liberals coped when they were actually in control of the executive confirms the arguments advanced by German historians more recently that the central 'peculiarity' of German liberalism as opposed to liberal movements in other countries was the lack of parliamentary government in Germany.

Moreover, this problem cannot be seen in isolation of the challenge which the federal nature of Germany presented to the liberals. Unlike the Centre or the SPD, German liberals could not count on the solid support of narrowly-defined confessional or social groups respectively. Hence, their central problem was how to find a consistent appeal to the electorate in at least three different polities which differed vastly in the number and social composition of the electorate, their political traditions and the function of their legislative bodies. In a country so

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[1] Loening, 'Die Unterhaltung der öffentlichen Volksschulen', pp. 90-1.

recently united, it is not surprising that a precondition for liberal success at a local or regional level was the ability to appeal to and then shape the current political and cultural milieu.[1] In Frankfurt, liberals constantly needed to appeal to the local peculiarities in the city's culture and history. Yet if liberals recognised this basic fact of German political life, then their responsiveness to regional peculiarities made the achievement of consistent and unambiguous policies which satisfied every regional liberal movement almost impossible. This may not be the least of reasons why liberal unity proved impossible to achieve during the Empire. Moreover, the need to operate in vastly different political environments in federal Germany made it so difficult for municipal liberalism to transmit some of its experience of being in the executive, its energy and its innovative character to liberals at the national level, and made urban liberal hopes at a liberalisation of German society 'from the grass roots' so unrealistic. By 1914, despite the urbanisation of German society, the political future of German left- and right-liberalism at the state and national level rested largely with the countryside. Therefore, German liberals were not 'peculiar', for the example of Frankfurt shows that they could be as pragmatic and sophisticated as any liberal movement in late nineteenth-century Europe. What was peculiar, and what presented German liberalism with almost insurmountable difficulties, was the constitutional environment in which it operated.

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[1] This is in striking contrast to Eugenio Biagini's conclusion for liberalism in Britain that despite the regional and local diversity in which liberals operated there, too, there was a remarkable cultural homogeneity which was conducive to the development of a popular, united liberal movement, at least until the 1880s. E. F. Biagini, Liberty, Retrenchment and Reform. Popular Liberalism in the Age of Gladstone, 1860-1880 (Cambridge, 1992).

# APPENDIX ONE: DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS IN THE FRANKFURT CITY COUNCIL, 1875-1913

The main sources for the following table are the reports in the Frankfurter Zeitung of each council election result. The difficulty is that the party of the individual councillor is only stated a few times. More often, party strengths are given for each party coalition, which does not allow for a discrimination between, say, the Democrats and the Progressive Liberals. Unfortunately, the most common practice for the paper was to reveal the success of party lists, which is a nice rhetorical way of hiding the real results of the election as they included members of all parties. In this way, for example, the Democrats could claim victory for 'their' list during almost every election in the fourth electoral district, even though the candidates were almost always National Liberals. Once the ice of the newspaper's rhetoric has been cut, it is possible to determine the party composition of the city council with reasonable accuracy from 1881 onwards. The party strengths given here differ slightly from the Frankfurter Zeitung's own statements in that the paper was fond of counting as its own candidates who had run as independents but whom it considered to be on the left of the political spectrum.
It should be noted that for the figures given for the party composition of the council from 1875-1879 there is a small margin of error. This is essentially because the Frankfurter Zeitung could not make up its mind whether to include a handful of councillors as Democrats or not. For example, in the 1877 council the paper reported that the Democrats had 33 seats, whereas the National Liberals and the Progressive Liberals together could muster only 21 seats. In 1878, however, the newspaper was involved in a bizarre row with the National Liberal newspaper Neue Frankfurter Presse, as it tried to defend the Democrats over 'allegations' that they had had the majority in the city council throughout most of the 1870s. The Frankfurter Zeitung tried to show that from 1876 to 1878 it had never possessed a majority in the council, and that individual councillors like Eduard Fay or Christian Sauerwein were Democrats (which they clearly were). For the period 1875 to 1881, therefore, the party composition is an approximation of party strength, as the party allegiance of up to four members of each council could not be determined with absolute certainty.

The party allegiance of individual members has been compiled from party membership lists (which were of little help), petition signatures, signatures under election manifestos, appearances in election meetings, and listings in the Frankfurter Zeitung. The most important sources are:

E. Dannenberg, Haupt-Register zu den Mittheilungen aus den Protokollen der Stadtverordneten-Versammlung der Stadt Frankfurt a.M..

Patricia Tratnik, 'Mitglieder der Frankfurter Stadtverordnetenversammlung 1867 bis 1933'.

Geschichte der Frankfurter Zeitung 1856-1906, p. 566.

Frankfurter Zeitung, 5.12.1876 (Morgenblatt), 22.11.1878 (Abendblatt), 24.11.1878 (Morgenblatt), 29.11.1878 (Morgenblatt), 29.9.1879 (Morgenblatt), 28.11.1882 (Morgenblatt), 5.12.1882 (Morgenblatt), 28.11.1884 (Morgenblatt), 5.12.1884 (Morgenblatt), 26.11.1886 (2. Morgenblatt), 3.12.1886 (2. Morgenblatt), 29.11.1888 (2. Morgenblatt), 25.11.1890 (2. Morgenblatt), 1.12.1892 (Abendblatt), 23.11.1894 (2. Morgenblatt), 27.11.1894 (Abendblatt), 13.11.1896 (3. Morgenblatt), 20.11.1896 (3. Morgenblatt), 18.11.1898 (3. Morgenblatt), 25.11.1898 (3. Morgenblatt).

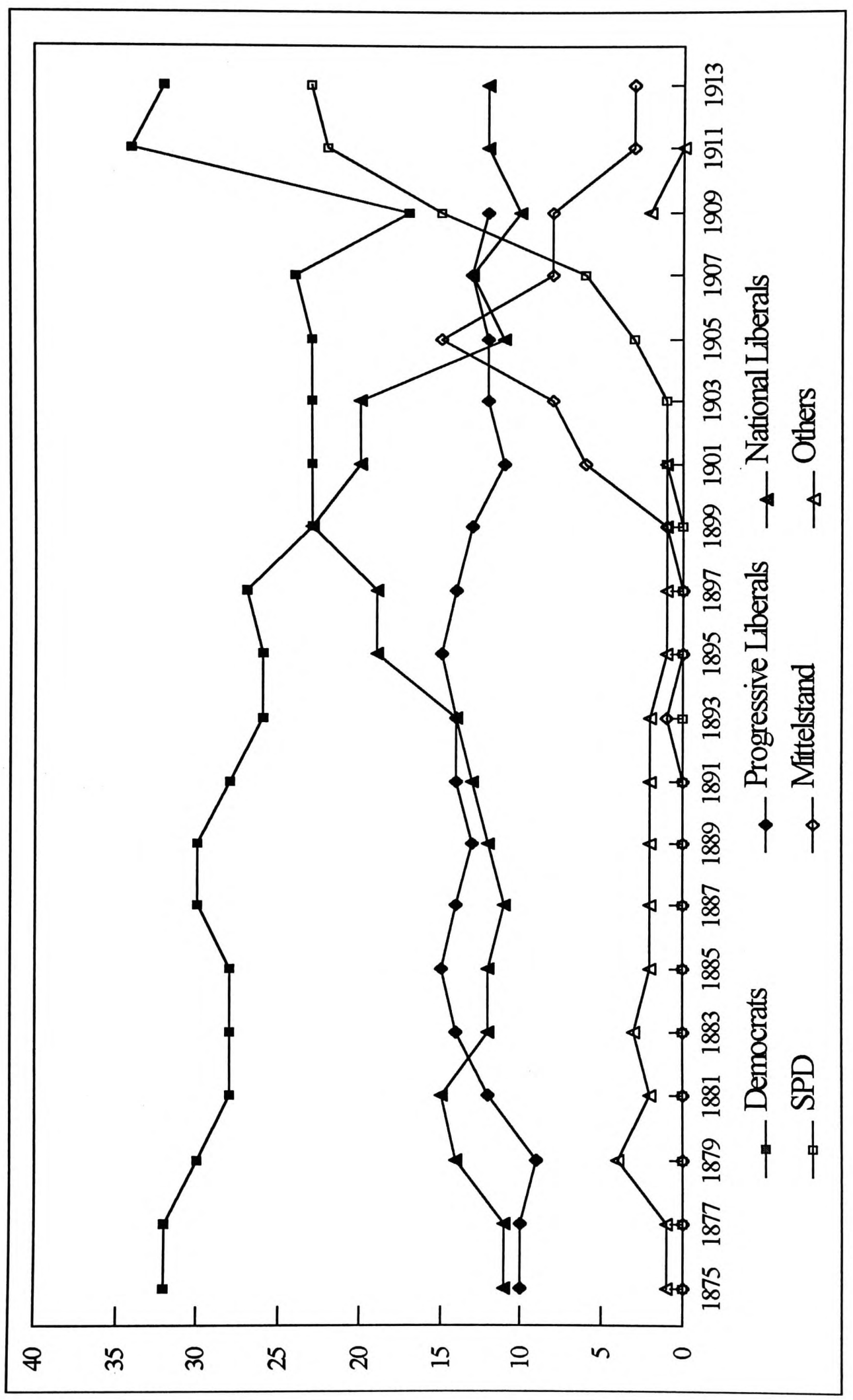
The party composition from 1900 is well-known and is given in Patricia Tratnick's study as well as in John Rolling, 'Liberals', 180. However, the table starts at 1898. For this, see Kleine Presse 24.11.1900 (This gives the party composition for 1900 and for 1898, and its 1898 figure contradicts that given by Rolling. The 1898 composition given in this table is based on the Kleine Presse).

## DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS IN THE FRANKFURT CITY COUNCIL, 1873-1913

| | 1875 | 1877 | 1879 | 1881 | 1883 | 1885 | 1887 | 1889 | 1891 | 1893 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Democrats | 32 | 32 | 30 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 30 | 30 | 28 | 26 |
| Progressive Liberal Association | 10 | 10 | 9 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 14 | 13 | 14 | 14 |
| National Liberal Association | 11 | 11 | 14 | 15 | 12 | 12 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| SPD | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mittelstand | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| Centre Party | | | | | | | | | | |
| Others | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Total number of Seats | 54 | 54 | 57 | 57 | 57 | 57 | 57 | 57 | 57 | 57 |

| | 1895 | 1897 | 1899 | 1901 | 1903 | 1905 | 1907 | 1909 | 1911 | 1913 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Democrats | 26 | 27 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 17 | 34 | 32 |
| Progressive Liberal Association | 15 | 14 | 13 | 11 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 12 | | |
| National Liberal Association | 19 | 19 | 23 | 20 | 20 | 11 | 13 | 10 | 12 | 12 |
| SPD | | | | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 15 | 22 | 23 |
| Mittelstand | | | 1 | 6 | 8 | 15 | 8 | 8 | 3 | 3 |
| Centre Party | | | | 2 | | | | | | 1 |
| Others | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | 2 | | |
| Total number of Seats | 61 | 61 | 61 | 64 | 64 | 64 | 64 | 64 | 71 | 71 |

**DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS IN THE FRANKFURT CITY COUNCIL, 1875-1913**



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S2 - Personen

S3 - Ereignisse, Parteien, Vereine, etc.

AS - Akten der Stadtverordnetenversammlung

AS P - Protokolle der Stadtverordnetenversammlung

ASA- Acten des Statistischen Amtes der Stadt Frankfurt am Main

MA - Akten des Magistrats

Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Wiesbaden (HStAW)

Abt. 405 - Regierungspräsidium Wiesbaden (Zeitungsberichte)

Abt. 407 - Polizeipräsident Frankfurt am Main

Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BAK)

NL 22 - Nachlaß Friedrich Payer

NL 44 - Hermann Luppe

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