



German History in Documents and Images

Volume 4. Forging an Empire: Bismarckian Germany, 1866-1890

Franz Perrot's "Era Articles" Attacking Bismarck's Ministry, Liberals, and the Jews
(June 29 - July 1, 1875)

Franz Perrot (1833-1891) was an antisemitic conservative writer who published a series of blockbuster essays in his party's leading newspaper, the *Neue Preussische (Kreuz-) Zeitung*. They were written in reaction to the scandals of the "Founding Era" (1871-1873) and the apparent triumph of liberal views in German government policy. As Otto Glagau (1834-1892) had done a few months earlier – in another document included in this collection – Perrot blames the Jews for Germany's economic crisis; he attacks the government's economic policy; and he names leading individuals among Bismarck's inner circle of advisors. These include Gerson Bleichröder (1822-1893), Bismarck's Jewish banker; Otto Camphausen (1812-1896), a former president of the Prussian Maritime Bank and liberal Minister of Finance; and Rudolf Delbrück (1817-1903), one of Prussia's most able administrative and economic experts and Bismarck's deputy in the Reich Chancellery. These articles contributed to Bismarck's tempestuous but short-lived break with his former conservative allies in 1875-1876.

Era Articles

Dated June 29, 1875.

I.

Rarely, perhaps never in the history of the world, has there been a time period more favorable for a grandly designed national economic policy than the period in Germany after the war of 1870/71.

Perhaps never before in German history was there a point in time more conducive to making great creative contributions to the lasting welfare of the nation than the past four years – and perhaps never before was a great moment for state economics frustrated more pathetically, wasted more regrettably, botched more completely than the period of French indemnity payments in Germany.

The immortal credit for these outstanding contributions to recent German national economic policy can be ascribed, mind you, to Messrs Delbrück and Camphausen.

In the recent 77th session of the Prussian Chamber of Deputies, however, Herr Camphausen replied to Herr von Kardorff that “out of respect for his friend Delbrück,” he would renounce any claim to being recognized as the “intellectual author of our entire economic policy.” We are not entirely sure, though, whether a time might come when Mr. Delbrück will also want to turn down the honor of this “intellectual authorship.” And indeed, according to our knowledge of the situation, Mr. Delbrück might not be entirely guilty of the honor of “intellectual authorship,” probably not even mostly guilty – ultimately, this honor must be claimed by the great “financial-national economic” *spiritus familiaris*, the good spirit of the New German Empire – Mr. G. von Bleichröder. It definitely seems necessary to enlighten the German public in the most comprehensive manner about the enormous contributions of Mr. G. v. Bleichröder, since his very properly calculated modesty allows him to carefully prevent the public from learning of his extraordinary contributions to the new German national economy and his role in helping billions evaporate with as few traces as possible. And since the great, so-called “national liberal” press is primarily in the hands of his co-religionists, or at least under the control of people more or less directly or indirectly dependent on them, his intended modesty has definitely been crowned with success thus far.

You see, Mr. G. v. Bleichröder is, as we add in parenthesis, of the Jewish faith and a ruling banker, with the former, incidentally, following almost automatically from the latter, since, for example, in 1861, only 92 of Prussia’s 642 bankers were Christian; 550, on the other hand, were Jewish. This, however, is only a parenthetical reference.

[. . .]

At the same time, if the monetary and economic policy of the German Reich always gave the impression of being Jewish policy (i.e. of policy and legislation made by and for Jews), then this is also easily explicable, since the spiritual father of this policy, Herr G. v. Bleichröder, is a Jew himself and the minority of banking businesses operated by Christian owners only carries out, and is able to carry out, the policy of the banking majority; likewise every aspect of management and leadership in this area rests entirely with our fellow citizens of the Jewish faith. On top of that, at the same time, our fellow citizens of the Semitic race and the Jewish faith have taken over the intellectual leadership of the legislative activity in our representative bodies – with the exception, of course, of the Upper House. After all, Messrs Lasker, Bamberger, and their close friend, Mr. H. B. Oppenheim (who, admittedly, has only recently made it into the Reichstag) are Jews, and they are the actual leaders of the “national liberal” majority in the Reichstag. In this scenario, Mr. Miquel represents the Christian minority of banker’s liberalism, which goes through thick and thin with the Semitic leadership. The new German legislation favoring our German banking businesses – which, as mentioned, are mostly in the hands of Jews – is desired and planned by the ruling circle of bankers, with support from the Jewish leaders of our parliamentary politics in the manner described above, and is supported, propagated, and promoted with untiring zeal and often with great skill by the so-called national liberal press, [allowing it to] echo with a thousand voices throughout Germany . This press is, at least

regarding most of its leading organs, partly dependent on and partly influenced by our fellow citizens of the Jewish faith.

The term “Jewish policy” that we used earlier is not familiar to the German public and even appears inadmissible to the majority. This has very obvious reasons. After all, currently, we are actually ruled by the Jews. In a proper appreciation of the circumstances, they do not want the German public of the Christian faith, whom they rule, to notice the golden strings being pulled behind the scenes, the means by which the skillfully designed mechanism of the existing monetary governance is controlled. At any rate, the public of Christian faith and German nationality is not supposed to recognize and become familiar with that governance for as long as possible. For at the very moment when the Christian German population realizes that the Jews in Germany, as everywhere else, are systematically advancing a very skillful and comprehensively designed policy that is geared almost exclusively toward the benefit of our fellow citizens of the Jewish faith and Jewish nationality – at that very moment, we say, when the Christian German population realizes this fact, there will certainly have to be a reaction against the very subtly and cleverly combined stock market policy. Moreover, the position of the Jews in our political affairs cannot thereafter remain untouched by this event.

However, our so-called national liberal press, which is basically thoroughly Jewish and stock market-oriented, does as much as it can to prevent the German public from acquiring such insight. Consequently, in order not to be regarded as ignorant zealots on the one hand or un-Christian, intolerant antisemitic agitators on the other, we will probably have to use facts to drive home the point more clearly than these brief suggestions allow.

Source: *Neue Preußische (Kreuz-) Zeitung* (Berlin), June 29-July 1, 1875.

Original German text reprinted in Franz Perrot, *Bismarck und die Juden. "Papierpest" und "Aera-Artikel von 1875"* [*Bismarck and the Jews. "Paper Pestilence" and "Era Articles" from 1875*]. Supplemented by Karl Perrot. New edition with an introduction and a postscript by L. Feldmüller-Perrot. Berlin: Max Galle, 1931, pp. 271-80, here pp. 271-72.

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