Introduction

Over the course of the nineteenth century a succession of secularist movements appeared in Germany. Freethought and Ethical Culture had international origins and found adherents among liberal reformers in Germany, whereas Free Religion and monism were homegrown inventions that spread in the global German diaspora and beyond. Were it possible to ask the adherents of these movements whether they would have consented to being investigated as Germany's "fourth confession" alongside the Protestant and Catholic churches and the Jewish congregations, the answer would almost certainly have been negative. The one thing that all agreed upon was their opposition to "confessionalism." In the language of the day, *Konfessionalismus* was used variously to mean the sectarian division of society and nation, the insistence that the state retain a Christian foundation with privileges for the established churches, and a narrow-minded dogmatism in Christian belief and practice. Secularists supported the separation of church and state as a first step toward solving these ills, and by the 1880s most went even further and argued that traditional religion had become a hindrance to science, education, and true spirituality.

Treating secularism as a confession is nevertheless productive. Confession was the term through which nineteenth-century Germans negotiated religious identities, rights, and conflicts, and it provides, as will become clear in the following pages, a sophisticated framework for understanding secularism's place in society. Unlike anticlericalism or secularization – two terms more commonly associated with secularism in the scholarly literature – confession immediately opens up ways of viewing the relationship of secularism to religion that go beyond mere opposition. This is necessary because, from the very beginning, secularism appeared as a dynamic force operating *within* and *between* Germany's religious communities, as much as *against* them.

The first organizational form of secularism was Free Religion, which emerged in 1844 and 1845, when rising tensions between the ecclesiastical authorities and

fractious rationalists led tens of thousands of Germans, particularly in Prussia, to break away from the established churches and form autonomous Deutschkatholisch (German-Catholic) or Protestant "Free" Congregations. The goal of Free Religion was to erase divisions between Protestants, Catholics, and Jews and prepare the way for a spiritual union of free German citizens. In 1859, the largest Protestant and Catholic dissident congregations joined together to form the Union of Free Religious Congregations.[1]

The secularist thrust of this dissent became quickly apparent when leading Free Religionists abandoned Christian rationalism in favor of pantheism and a belief in the divinity of humanity. Their embrace of an immanent conception of religion reflected the radical conclusions of Left-Hegelian theologians, but it also rested heavily on developments outside of theology in the natural sciences, particularly in efforts by science popularizers to create a holistic and naturalistic worldview.

In the course of the 1850s, radicals in the dissident congregations moved from criticisms within Christianity to increasingly anticlerical, atheistic attacks against Christianity. This led to fierce internal debates about the relationship of the movement to religion, in which critics asked whether Free Religion meant "free *in* religion" or "free *from* religion."[2] Some advocated the abandonment of religion for scientific materialism and anticlericalism. August Specht, a leading Free Religious publicist, argued that the "the eggshells of their church origin still cling too visibly" to the Free Religious,[3] and advocated Freethought as a more appropriate form of secularist organization. In 1881, he joined with Ludwig Büchner, the physician who had achieved international fame with the materialist cannonade *Force and Matter* of 1856, to form the German Union of Freethinkers (Deutscher Freidenkerbund DFB). Despite Specht's rhetorical distancing of Freethought from Free Religion, their relationship was not one of opposition. Free Religious preachers formed the largest professional group within the early leadership of Freethought and entire congregations joined as corporate members. With time, the two movements became even more intertwined; they shared a joint president from 1899 onward, and later fused their national umbrella organizations.

Also in terms of belief, Freethought had not overcome religion. Although they rejected dualistic religions as illusory, most Freethinkers professed a belief in monistic *Weltanschauung*, or worldview, which achieved its most influential

[1] To reduce complexity for the reader, I will use "Free Religion" as a collective designation not only for the members of the Union of Free Religious Congregations, but also for their forerunners in the pre-1859 Deutschkatholisch, Christkatholisch, and Free Congregations.

[2] Eugen Dühring, *Der Werth des Lebens*, 2nd ed. (Fues: Leipzig, 1877), 273; Anon., "Weigelt's Erklärung gegen Dr. Rasch: Von einem abgesetzten schlewigschen Geistlichen," *Norddeutsche Grenzbote*, no. 56 (1862), 449.

[3] Quoted in Jochen-Christoph Kaiser, *Arbeiterbewegung und organisierte Religionskritik: Proletarische Freidenkerverbände in Kaiserreich und Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981), 83.

articulation in the work of biologist Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919). Haeckel argued that although disproving the existence of a transcendent spirit, mechanistic science had recuperated it in nature, proving that mind and matter were but two modes of a single substance. This form of naturalism, which Haeckel in the 1860s named "monism," had already been broadly accepted at that time by many Free Religious leaders and remained, essentially unchanged, the dominant worldview of secularism well into the twentieth century. Following a further wave of interest in monism around the turn of the century, Haeckel founded the German Monist League (Deutscher Monistenbund DMB) in 1906.

Passionate avowals of the monistic unity of energy and matter or body and spirit were often accompanied by savage anticlericalism, as for example in the following formulation by Max Nordau, the cultural critic and Freethinker who later played a leading role in the emergence of secular Zionism:

> We consider the cosmos a mass of matter [*Stoffmasse*], which has the attribute of movement. Essentially unitary, it reaches our perception in the form of various energies. [. . .] That is our *Weltanschauung*. [. . .] It penetrates us with the air that we breathe. It has become impossible to close oneself off to it. The Pope, who damned it in the encyclicals, stood under its influence. The Jesuit adept, whom they attempt to shield from it by raising him in an artificial atmosphere of medieval theology and scholasticism, rather like one tries to sustain a sea animal in an inland aquarium with seawater brought from far away, even the Jesuit adept is filled by it [the *Weltanschauung*, T.W.].[4]

Whereas Nordau may have believed that he was merely drawing self-evident conclusions from natural science and empirical observation, outside observers saw in such statements proof of the paradoxical relationship that Freethinkers maintained with religion, and they teased the Freethinkers for their unreflected zealotry. When socialist Freethinkers called for an anticlerical campaign at the 1890 Social Democratic Party congress, party leader Wilhelm Liebknecht took the floor to denounce those who "in fighting religion themselves reveal a certain religiosity [. . .] better yet, a residue of papishness [*Pfafferei*]. I have no love for the papists, and just as little for the anti-papists [*Antipfaffen*] as for the real ones."[5] Writing just prior to the First World War, the theologian Ernst Troeltsch took evident pleasure in concluding that the Freethinkers' tendency toward dogmatic scientism reflected an "ecclesiastically orthodox mode of thought, which desiderates a uniform and absolute truth."[6]

Many contemporary observers put the religious qualities of secularism down to a religious or scientific error. However, the combination of anticlericalism with the affirmation of a new worldview is better understood as the movement's

[4] Max Nordau, *Die conventionellen Lügen der Kulturmenschheit*, 14 ed. (Leipzig: B. Elischer Nachf., 1889), 25–27.

[5] Quoted in Sebastian Prüfer, *Sozialismus statt Religion: Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie vor der religiösen Frage 1863–1890* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002), 339.

[6] Ernst Troeltsch, "Free-Thought," in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings; (New York: Scribner and Sons, 1908–1926), vol. 6, 120–124, quotation 122.

chief constitutive factor. The Owenite radical and leader of English Freethinkers, George Holyoake (1817–1906), pointed to this combination when he proposed "Secularism" as a new term to replace "Freethought" around 1851. "Secularism," he wrote, "is a development of freethinking, including its *positive* as well as its *negative* side. Secularists consider freethinking as a double protest – a protest against specific speculative error, and in favour of specific moral truth."[7]

I prefer the term "secularism" over those terms used by its German advocates for collective self-description, because unlike "Freethought" (*Freidenkertum*) and "Free Spirituality" (*Freigeistigkeit*), Holyoake's definition gives his term more analytical precision. By explicitly connecting "negative" anticlericalism and "positive" belief, it helps expose the conceit in the notion cherished by Freethinkers that their worldview was produced by reason and scientific observation and was thus essentially unrelated to the religion it rejected. According to Holyoake, secularism was a "creed," and as a creed it conflicted naturally with religion. The difference between Holyoake's brand of secularism and the materialistic Freethought advocated by the likes of Max Nordau lay less in the nature of the creed than in the acknowledgment of its existence.

If the linkage of "positive" worldview and "negative" anticlericalism is the central axiom of secularism, its corollaries can be drawn from what Holyoake called the three principles of secularism: "1. The improvement of this life by material means. 2. That science is the available Providence of man. 3. That it is good to do good. Whether there be other good or not, the good of the present life is good, and it is good to seek that good."[8] These points may be restated in the following working definition of secularism to be used in this study:

Nineteenth-century secularism understood itself to possess an immanent and totalizing worldview validated by natural science. Secularism was praxis-oriented and justified its social and political interventions with a eudemonistic ethical system. It not only considered the metaphysical aspects of religion intellectually irrelevant and psychologically harmful – secularism was structurally anticlerical. That is, the forms of its religious community and its political practice were to a large extent structured by an antagonistic relationship to the state churches.[9]

The presence of these three elements – immanent worldview, practical ethics, and anticlericalism – defines secularism as an ideal type. The balance struck

[7] George Holyoake, "The Principles of Secularism," *Reasoner*, Jan. 8, 1854, reprinted in: Edward Royle, *The Infidel Tradition from Paine to Bradlaugh* (London: Macmillan, 1976), 151–152.

[8] George Holyoake, *English Secularism: A Confession of Belief* (Chicago: Open Court, 1896), 35.

[9] For a discussion of the role of anticlericalism in secularist community formation, see Todd Weir, "Towards a History and Sociology of Atheist Vergemeinschaftung: The Berlin Free Religious Congregation 1845–1921," in *The Presence of God in Modern Society: Transcendence and Religious Community in Germany*, ed. Michael Geyer and Lucian Hölscher (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006), 197–229.

among these elements can be used to differentiate the organizational types of secularism. When applied as a measure to the organizations that feature in this study, the German Society for Ethical Culture is revealed to have been marginally secularist, for, at the founding meeting in 1892, its leaders sought to exclude strident advocates of monist worldview and anticlericalism from their ranks. By contrast, the official and unofficial creedal statements of the Freethinkers, Monists, and the Free Religionists often touched on all three elements. For example, the Berlin Free Religious Congregation approved a declaration of principles in 1877 that defined religion "not in any relationship to an extra-terrestrial, supernatural being (God or the Devil) and life (heaven or hell), but rather in the more and more conscious eternal human striving for a harmonious relationship to the world that surrounds us on the basis of our own eternal inner harmony, i.e. our honesty and conscience." Following this immanent definition of the divine, the declaration struck out at "priests and theologians with their myths and mysteries" before calling for ethical education based on the realization that the individual can only find personal well-being in communal well-being.[10]

SECULARISM AS A SOCIAL FORMATION

This book is not intended as an intellectual history of German secularism. If it were, the 1840s would appear as a somewhat arbitrary starting point in medias res. Recent investigations have shown that many of the key tenets of modern secularism had already found expression at the margins of the early Enlightenment. There too, the location of secularism within, outside, and between the religions was crucial. Church historian Winfried Schröder found that whereas pantheist arguments emerged within theological criticism, rougher atheist tracts circulated outside the walls of academic theology. Martin Mulsow pointed out the way in which Christian critics profited from the disputes between Jewish and Christian theologians by taking the perspectives opened up by Jewish apologists in order to deny aspects of revelation.[11] Nineteenth-century secularists were well aware of their early modern antecedents and regularly sought to demonstrate that their worldview had in fact already been clearly articulated by the heretical philosophers Giordano Bruno and Baruch Spinoza.

What was novel in 1845 was that, for the first time, secularist ideas achieved wide social articulation in popular organizations. In that year, tens of thousands turned out to hear Catholic priest Johannes Ronge as he toured German cities

[10] *Grundsätze und Satzungen der Freireligiösen Gemeinde Groß-Berlin e.V.: Kulturgemeinschaft der Freidenker* (Berlin: Amelung, [1924]).

[11] Winfried Schöder, *Ursprünge des Atheismus: Untersuchungen zur Metaphysik- und Religionskritik des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1998); Martin Mulsow, *Moderne aus dem Untergrund: Radikale Frühaufklärung in Deutschland 1680–1720* (Hamburg: Meiner, 2002).

calling for the formation of democratic congregations, thousands of Protestants attended a meeting of the rationalist "Lichtfreunde" in the town of Köthen in Prussian Saxony, and in Berlin a Society for the Reform of Judaism was founded with the aim of ending the "sacrifice of our holy freedom to the despotism of the dead letter" of "old rabbinical Judaism." These movements were not entirely secularist. They contained an admixture of religious rationalism, humanism, and pantheism. However, it was here that the constitutive "double protest" of anticlericalism and (increasingly) immanent worldview became the basis for community formation for many thousands of ordinary Germans, and it was here that a clearly secularist movement would emerge by the 1860s. Secularist thought, which had long been available to intellectuals within the republic of letters, now became a social fact that thrust new questions about religion into public debates over constitutional law, civic rights, and national identity.

The public nature of secularist dissent acted as a lightning rod for the nascent partisan formations of the left. Vormärz liberals welcomed the opportunity to take a stand against opponents in church and state, while radical republicans were attracted to the communitarian ethos of the congregations. Generations of Social Democratic leaders received secularist education, and in 1908 socialists formed an independent "proletarian" Freethought alliance. Secularist dissent was also a laboratory for cultural and social innovation. Utopian thought found practical expression in new forms of devotional practices and democratic structures. Free Religious associational life served as a crystal around which groups formed that were dedicated to women's emancipation, workers' education, and pacifism. Sustained by a shared commitment to a secular ethics, naturalistic worldview, and opposition to clerical authorities, patterns of cooperation were replicated over generations. Key figures in the early women's movement, such as Louise Otto and Malwida von Meysenbug, cooperated in the 1840s in the women's support associations of the Deutschkatholiken, while the founders of Berlin's first socialist women's organizations, such as Emma Ihrer, Ottilie Baader, and Agnes Wabnitz, were first active in the Free Religious Congregation in the 1870s and 1880s.[12] Wilhelmine sexual reformers such as Helene Stoecker and Greta Meisel-Hess were, by contrast, speakers for the German Monist League. Similar patterns were manifested by the German peace movement. Julius Rupp, the preacher of the Königsberg Free Congregation, founded Germany's first pacifist associations in 1850, while the Bund Neues Vaterland, the most important "bourgeois" organization to emerge in opposition to the First World War, was formed out of the Berlin chapter of the Monist League.[13]

[12] Catherine M. Prelinger, "Religious Dissent, Women's Rights, and the Hamburger Hochschule für das weibliche Geschlecht in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Germany," *Church History*, vol. 45, no. 1 (1976): 42–55; Emma Ihrer, *Die Organisationen der Arbeiterinnen Deutschlands, ihre Entstehung und Entwickelung* (Berlin: author's edition, 1893).

[13] Roger Chickering, *Imperial Germany and a World without War: The Peace Movement and German Society, 1892–1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 40, 45, 126,

The formative influence of organized secularism also extended to its enemies. The encounter with organized secularism helped shape how conservative Christians responded to the successive challenges of Jewish emancipation, revolution, liberalism, and socialism, as well as science and secularization. The Prussian confessional state responded to the rise of rationalist dissent by altering the laws governing religion in 1847, the same year in which Friedrich Julius Stahl, an influential legal scholar in the coterie of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV, redefined the notion of the "Christian State" upon an explicitly antisecularist foundation.

Guided by the conviction that the key to understanding modern secularism lies in its social articulation, this book focuses on the four main associational types of secularism: Free Religion, Freethought, Ethical Culture, and Monism. These associations provide the anchor for studying the interactions of secularism with friendly and hostile institutions, religious competitors, and state structures. By moving from the texts produced within the four associations to these many contexts, the book seeks to come to a better understanding of each. Its aims are thus at once modest (to provide a synthetic history of a number of somewhat marginal social movements) – and ambitious (to demonstrate how secularism shaped broader developments in German history). To prepare the latter case, this introductory chapter now turns a critical eye on the treatment of secularism in contemporary historical writing.

SECULARISM IN THE RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL HISTORY OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY GERMANY

Reflecting on recent trends in international scholarship, historian Jürgen Osterhammel has proposed placing religion "at the *center* of a global history of the nineteenth century."[14] This certainly characterizes developments in the study of nineteenth-century Germany, where, over the past three decades, scholars have been integrating the once ghettoized field of religious history into the broader sweep of German culture and politics. Noticeably absent from these studies, however, has been a substantive engagement with the history of organized secularism.

This absence appears in the comparative context. There have been numerous studies of the role of secularism in the formation of the political cultures of nineteenth-century Spain, France, Italy, and Britain. Anticlericalism and positivism were central elements in the culture of Spanish republicanism, and they shaped the national project of many of Giuseppe Garibaldi's followers during the Italian Risorgimento. After French radicals secured power in 1877, *laïcité* became a cornerstone of the Third Republic and contributed to the separation

129, 131; Annette Kuhn, *Theorie und Praxis historischer Friedensforschung* (Stuttgart and Munich: Klett and Kösel, 1971).

[14] Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Beck, 2009), 1239.

law of 1905. British historians have paid significant attention to Freethought because of its important role in left-wing politics in the half-century between the demise of the Chartist movement and the rise of the Labour Party.[15] In Germany, too, secularism was allied to the radical republicanism that went by the name *Demokratie*. A central actor in the 1848 revolution, the Democratic movement was subsequently eviscerated by the struggle between moderate liberalism and the early rise of radical socialism in Germany. This weakness of its chief political ally is thus one reason that historians of Germany have paid little attention to secularism.

A second reason can be found in the fragmentary way that the existing studies of German secularism have framed the subject. The best have focused on the brief period between the emergence of Free Religion in the rationalist Christian sects of 1845 and its precipitous decline in the early 1850s in the wake of the failed Revolution of 1848. Given the time span under consideration, these studies have, with few exceptions, adapted an implicit rise-and-fall narrative to the short tale they have told. The older analyses by Hans Rosenberg and Friedrich Wilhelm Graf maintained that as dissidents translated religious impulses into the language of political revolution, they found less need for religion, thereby falling victim to the very forces of secularization they promoted.[16] More recent studies have instead drawn attention to the role of fierce governmental repression in the movement's contraction. However, by failing to connect the dissent of the Vormärz to the secularism that later flourished in Imperial

[15] Julio de la Cueva and Feliciano Montero, eds., *La secularización conflictiva: España (1898–1931)* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2007); Guido Verucci, *L'Italia laica prima e dopo l'Unita* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1996); Philip Nord, *The Republican Moment: Struggles for Democracy in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998); Jacqueline Lalouette, *La Libre Pensée en France, 1848–1940* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1997); Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Edward Royle, *Victorian Infidels: The Origins of the British Secularist Movement, 1791–1866* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974).

[16] Hans Rosenberg, "Theologischer Rationalismus und vormärzlicher Vulgärliberalismus," in idem., *Politische Denkströmungen im deutschen Vormärz* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972 [1930]), 18–50; Wolfgang Leesch, *Die Geschichte des Deutschkatholizismus in Schlesien (1844–1852) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner politischen Haltung* (Breslau: Priebatsch, 1938); Günter Kolbe, "Demokratische Opposition in religiösem Gewande und antikirchliche Bewegung im Königreich Sachsen. Zur Geschichte der deutsch-katholiken und freien Gemeinden sowie freireligiösen Vereinigungen von den 40er Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts bis um 1900 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ihres Verhältnisses zur kleinbürgerlich-demokratischen und Arbeiterbewegung" (Leipzig: PhD. Diss., 1964); Jörn Brederlow, *"Lichtfreunde" und "Freie Gemeinden": Religiöser Protest und Freiheitsbewegung im Vormärz und in der Revolution von 1848–49* (Munich, Vienna: Oldenbourg, 1976); Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, *Die Politisierung des religiösen Bewußtseins. Die bürgerlichen Religionsparteien im deutschen Vormärz: Das Beispiel des Deutschkatholizismus* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog 1978); Dagmar Herzog, *Intimacy and Exclusion: Religious Politics in Pre-Revolutionary Baden* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

Germany, they too have depicted Free Religion as a movement of only fleeting historical importance.[17] There have been numerous studies of Wilhelminian reform movements that touch on secularist positions,[18] and Horst Groschopp and Frank Simon-Ritz have gone far to demonstrate that the myriad of secularist organizations in fact formed a broad movement held together by a coherent set of common premises and by practical cooperation.[19] However, these intellectual and organizational histories have focused more on the connections within the secularist scene than on the place of secularism in the wider context of German social and political history.[20]

If the lack of a long-term synthetic history of German secularism provides a second reason secularism has appeared only at the margins of the new histories of religion in modern Germany, we must also consider a third, namely blind spots that inhere in the interpretative models that have emerged following the crisis of modernization theory and its corollary, the secularization thesis. In German history, this crisis lay at the center of the so-called Sonderweg debate, sparked off in the early 1980s when Geoff Eley and David Blackbourn challenged the notion held by many social historians that the failure of nineteenth-century liberals to dominate the workers' movement and the monarchical state led to incomplete political modernization in Germany. Eley and Blackbourn argued by contrast that German liberals compensated their political weakness with dominance in civil society, making the German case more similar to liberal states such as France and Britain than previously believed.[21]

The Sonderweg debate fed directly into reevaluations of the role of religion in the "Kulturkampf" or "culture war" that was fought between the Prussian state and its political allies, and the Catholic Church after national unification in 1871. To social historians who assumed that secularization was a necessary and value-neutral macrohistorical process, the Kulturkampf had appeared as an inevitable conflict brought on by recidivist traditional institutions, who opposed the modern separation of politics and religion. Indeed, the doyen of the German

[17] Andreas Holzem, *Kirchenreform und Sektenstiftung. Deutschkatholiken, Reformkatholiken und Ultramontane am Oberrhein (1844–1856)* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1994). Sylvia Paletschek, *Frauen und Dissens: Frauen im Deutschkatholizismus und in den freien Gemeinden 1841–1852* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990).

[18] Diethart Kerbs and Jürgen Reulecke, eds., *Handbuch der deutschen Reformbewegungen: 1880–1933* (Wuppertal: Hammer, 1998); Kevin Repp, *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity: Antipolitics and the Search for Alternatives, 1890–1914* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

[19] Horst Groschopp, *Dissidenten: Freidenkerei und Kultur in Deutschland* (Berlin: Dietz, 1997); Frank Simon-Ritz, *Die Organisation einer Weltanschauung: Die freigeistige Bewegung im Wilhelminischen Deutschland* (Gütersloh: Kaiser, 1997).

[20] An exception: Tracie Matysik, *Reforming the Moral Subject: Ethics and Sexuality in Central Europe, 1890–1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

[21] David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 87.

social-historical school, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, claimed that the "true significance" of the Kulturkampf was "a greater secularization of German society."[22] Today, such a conclusion appears dated.

The crisis of the secularization paradigm has opened the ears of historians to the voices of nineteenth-century participants in religious struggles. Although the resultant studies resist easy typology, we can nonetheless elucidate two new interpretive models for understanding religious conflict. Whereas some historians have characterized the period following the 1830s as an "Age of Culture Wars," others have dubbed it as an "Age of Confessionalism."[23]

Secularism and Liberal Hegemony

In the influential volume *Culture Wars*, Wolfram Kaiser proposed taking the conflicts over religion in the nineteenth century quite literally as manifestations of a struggle between two cultures, secular liberalism and Christian conservatism, particularly in the form of ultramontane Catholicism.[24] Although some historians of Germany, such as David Blackbourn and Margaret Anderson, retained both cultures in their horizons of inquiry,[25] many have focused on the liberal protagonists and interpreted the Kulturkampf as the self-interested strategy of liberal elites to exert cultural hegemony over the entire nation. The best studies of the intellectuals, institutions, and discourses of nineteenth-century German liberalism, such Georg Bollenbeck's investigation of *Kultur* and *Bildung* or Gangolf Hübinger's work on cultural Protestantism, have carefully chosen to speak of the "hegemonic claims" of liberals, indicating thereby that claims did not necessarily translate into actual hegemony.[26]

[22] Hans Wehler, *The German Empire, 1871–1918* (Leamington Spa: Berg Publishers, 1985), 116–117.

[23] See discussions in: Benjamin Ziemann, "Säkularisierung, Konfessionalisierung, Organisationsbildung: Dimensionen der Sozialgeschichte der Religion im langen 19. Jahrhundert," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 47 (2007), 485–508; and Olaf Blaschke, "Germany in the Age of Culture Wars," in *Imperial Germany Revisited: Continuing Debates and New Perspectives*, ed. Sven Oliver Müller and Cornelius Torp (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2011), 125–140.

[24] Wolfram Kaiser, "Clericalism: That's Our Enemy!," in *Culture Wars: Secular–Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 47–76, esp. 47–50.

[25] Margaret L. Anderson, "The Kulturkampf and the Course of German History," *CEH* 19 (1986): 82–115; David Blackbourn, *Volksfrömmigkeit und Fortschrittsglaube im Kulturkampf* (Wiesbaden, 1988); idem, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994).

[26] Georg Bollenbeck, *Bildung und Kultur: Glanz und Elend eines deutschen Deutungsmusters* (Frankfurt am Main Suhrkamp, 1996); Gangolf Hübinger, *Kulturprotestantismus und Politik: Zum Verhältnis von Liberalismus und Protestantismus im wilhelminischen Deutschland* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1994); Konrad Jarausch and Larry Eugene Jones, "German Liberalism Reconsidered: Inevitable Decline, Bourgeois Hegemony or Partial Achievement?," in *In Search of a Liberal Germany: Studies in the History of German Liberalism from 1789 to the Present*, ed. Konrad Jarausch and Larry Eugene Jones (New York: Berg, 1990), 1–23.