



Multicultural and Assimilationist Models of Ethnopolitical Integration in the Context of the German *Nordmark*, 1890-1933

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Introduction

For nearly a century, from the German revolution of 1848 to the collapse of the Third Reich in 1945, there existed in Schleswig-Holstein a daily struggle between Germans and Danes for ethnic and political survival. Dynastically Danish but largely German ethnically, the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein first sought their independence during the European revolutions of 1848-49, only to fail as the nascent Frankfurt Assembly proved incapable of constructing a viable German state. Fifteen years later, motivated by *Realpolitik* and backed by popular support, Prince Bismarck forced Denmark to cede the two 'German' duchies to Prussia and Austria after the first of Germany's three wars of unification. Prussia's six-week victory over Austria in the second of these wars resulted in the annexation of both duchies by Prussia in 1867. And finally, von Moltke's stunning campaign against France in 1870-71 ended with Schleswig-Holstein's official incorporation into the new German Reich. Once the dominant culture, Danish speakers now constituted a small minority of fewer than 100,000 in a German Reich of fifty million. But the presence of this relatively meagre Danish minority initiated a half century of political prodding, cultural persecution and corporal expulsion by Reich authorities, all in the interest of creating an unambiguously German North Schleswig.

Of course, the First World War changed the stakes entirely. Articles 119-124 of the Versailles Peace Treaty guaranteed the inhabitants of North Schleswig two plebiscites, one for each zone of North Schleswig, to determine whether the territory would remain German or Danish (Rietzler 1982: 113). In the first plebiscite of February 1920, 80 per cent of the southern zone opted for Germany. In March, however, more than 75 per cent of the northernmost zone voted to join Denmark. Indeed, while the February plebiscite left 9,000 Danes in German Schleswig-Holstein, 40,000 ethnic Germans were lost to Denmark (Rietzler 116-117). For the next thirteen years a politically weakened and economically depleted Weimar Republic tried to preserve the German character (*Volkstum*) of these North Schleswig Germans. But this state of affairs, like the Republic itself, would not last. Within seven years the Nazis had reoccupied and annexed North Schleswig. It was only in 1945, after a century of ethnopolitical dislocation, that the region finally stabilised along the legal and geographical lines of the 1920 plebiscite, eventually permitting the integration of minorities on both sides of the border.

This article will take Danish-German relations in the antebellum *Nordmark*, and most specifically the period 1890 to 1933, as a case study for examining two competing models of liberal integration, the *assimilationist* and the *multiculturalist*.¹ Contrary to contemporary claims in Europe and elsewhere regarding the intolerance and unfeasibility of an *assimilationist* model - often referred to as *Leitkultur* in Germany - this article will argue that the application of

¹ The author would like to thank two colleagues in the political science department at Stetson University, Gary Maris and Gene Huskey, for their invaluable suggestions in revising an earlier version of this paper. This shorter version was presented at the conference, 'Integration - Fiction or Reality?', held at the University of Greifswald, Greifswald, Germany. December 5-7, 2001.

multiculturalist models can be equally problematic. As we shall see many of Schleswig-Holstein's foremost liberals justified political and cultural autonomy - what we might now call multiculturalism - on ethnically exclusionary, even openly racist grounds. While many liberals defended state-supported assimilation through the constant invocation of tolerant, universalist principles.

Schleswig-Holstein's liberal parties, both German and Danish, provide the focus for this case study for two reasons. First, the German and Danish liberals dominated local elections and regional political culture for the majority of the period in question, at least until the rise of the radical right in the mid-1920's (Lange 1996: 464).² Second and more importantly, the very pluralism of liberal views Schleswig-Holstein indicates the historical contingency of any concept of integration which we might reflexively call liberal (Kurlander 2002). In Central Europe in the period immediately before the First World War, and for some time afterwards, democratic tolerance and universalism were not always central to the liberal platform. Rather, early twentieth century liberalism, particularly in Germany, was best defined by values such as free market capitalism, bourgeois individualism and the occasional *anti-étatisme* (Langewiesche 1988; Sell 1953). Devout "liberals" in a party political sense, members of the left-leaning Progressives (*Fortschrittliche Volkspartei* before 1918; the Democrats or *Deutsche Demokratische Partei* (DDP) after 1918) and more centrist National Liberals (*Nationalliberalen*; later the *Deutsche Volkspartei* or German People's Party/DVP) held views which often had little to do with secular humanism and much in common with messianic *völkisch*-nationalism (Kurlander 2002; Sheehan 1978; Langewiesche 1994; Eley 1996).³ By examining these liberal attitudes towards ethnic integration in the period 1890-1933 this article will suggest that exclusionary political practices might be pursued, not only under conservative, nationalist pretexts but also under the rubric of "multiculturalism". At the same time it will seek to rescue the concept of 'assimilation' from the pejorative connotation to which it has fallen, arguing that an assimilationist policy based on liberal-universalism often represented, at least in the context of this case study, the greatest safeguard for minority rights.

The 'Universalist' and 'Völkisch' Paradigms

Two prominent theoreticians of ethnic integration, Rogers Brubaker and Charles Tilly, understand the practice of ethnopolitical integration as emanating from two very different kinds of political cultures, one inclusive, the other exclusive. Borrowing from the modernisation theories of political scientists like Barrington Moore, but eschewing social class for the category of political culture, Brubaker has argued that there is an essential dichotomy between the French 'assimilationist', or state-centred model of ethnic integration, and the German

² For example, of the 10 available parliamentary seats in the national elections of 1907 and 1912, 7 went to the German liberal parties, and 1 to the Danish liberals. Only one other district in all of Germany, Lower Silesia, ever approached this level of liberal electoral dominance (Lange, 464; Schmädeke 1995).

³ See, for example, the deep-seated racism and anti-Semitism professed by the chairman of the Rhineland's German People's Party (DVP), Paul Moldenhauer, 'As a liberal party, we believed in rejecting racist thinking [*Rassengedanken*] and recognizing the Jews as citizens with fundamentally equal rights. On the other hand, there lived within us a powerful, instinctive dislike for the Jews, particularly in the... destructive form in which they appeared to us in politics, literature and art. We salved our conscience by explaining that we did not want to combat Jews as such, but only the destructive spirit of Jewry. In fact the Jews played no roll in the DVP' (NL Moldenhauer, BAK: N 1019, #19/1 (1936): 119).



'differentialist', or ethnocentric model (Brubaker 1992: 1-17).⁴ In rather more nuanced fashion Charles Tilly suggests that within Brubaker's framework of assimilationist (what he calls 'learned') and differentialist (what he calls 'primordial') states, there persist further discrepancies along lines of ex- and inclusivity societies based on the practical difficulty of becoming a citizen (Tilly 1996: 3-17).⁵ Both models represent useful conceptual frameworks for investigating the problem of ethnic integration in the modern world, and there is much we can learn from social scientific comparisons. But for our purposes, which are as much historical as theoretical, I propose a greater degree of theoretical specificity. What Brubaker calls *assimilationist* and Tilly *learned* I believe is best described in our case by the term *universalist*. I would furthermore argue that what Brubaker calls *differentialist* and Tilly *primordial* is better explained in a *Nordmark* context by the German term *völkisch*.

The *universalist* world view considers its task at once emancipatory and inclusive. It tries to integrate local nationalities into the state at home, while freeing foreign nationalities from oppressive situations abroad. To the *universalist*, political principles and values are far more important than cultivating ethnic sameness. For while aspects of nationality broadly defined, such as language and cultural habits might be desired they are nonetheless secondary to the individual's open acceptance of the constitutional principles that accompany becoming a citizen of a liberal-democratic polity. A universalist will never assume *a priori* that because a population in a contiguous state speaks a similar language or has a similar ethnicity (e.g. Wallonia in the case of France, Canada for the United States) it should automatically be integrated into one larger, ethnically homogenous nation. Moreover, a universalist will support national self-determination - that is political independence from another state - only if that nation is willing to accept the liberal-democratic values that would make it possible for ethnic minorities to become equal citizens. Conversely, in the *völkisch* (racist) world view state boundaries are understood neither in geographic nor political terms, but are meant to encompass as many racial kin as possible.⁶ Hence *völkisch* groups are more intent on integrating ethnic 'brethren' who lie in other states than they are on consolidating a political-constitutional identity for those who already inhabit a given geographical space or polity, whatever their ethnic background. To the *völkisch*-nationalist 'self-determination' means only the agglomeration of similar ethnicities into one nation-state for which liberal-democratic constitutional principles are wholly secondary, if not antithetical, to the preconditions of national unity.

⁴ Although Brubaker has recently revised his stance on this ethnic versus civic divide (Brubaker 1999).

⁵ As examples, Tilly points to Israel and the Ottoman Empire as primordial (differentialist) states and France and the United States as learned (assimilationist). However, given the difficulty of obtaining citizenship, Tilly calls both France and Israel 'exclusive', the Ottoman Empire and United States 'inclusive' (Tilly 1996: 3-17). For more on the debate between inclusionary and exclusionary forms of integration, see also Tamir (1995), Gellner (1983, 1987, 1994, 1997), Breuilly (1992, 1994), Smith (1998, 2000), Chatterjee (1993), Greenfeld (1992), Hanagan and Tilly (1999).

⁶ Needless to say, race has no objective value as a category, historical, scientific, political or otherwise. Insofar as it expresses the values of certain historical actors. However, the word 'racist' remains the most accurate translation of '*völkisch*'. 'Ethnocentric' is simply too benign a translation, and nationalist too unspecific. Moreover, there already exist perfectly good German equivalents for ethnicity (*Volkstum*) and nationalism (*Nationalismus*). *Völkisch* is really more accurate in connoting a virulently essentialist, racist sense of national identity anchored in blood and soil (*Blut und Boden*).

Herein lies a paradox. For universalists, despite their frequent embrace of multicultural tendencies are generally less willing to allow a minority to persist in civil society for any significant length of time without being integrated into the state. *Völkisch* groups, however, are less actively concerned with the persistence of ghettoised minorities, provided they remain in the minority and do not seek or achieve the full benefits of inclusion in the *Volksgemeinschaftn* (racial community). Such attitudes are illustrated, for example, in the near impossibility of Jews obtaining government or university positions in Imperial Germany; or in African-Americans' unsuccessful attempts at achieving social equality in the pre-Civil Rights South).⁷ Of course liberal-universalists seek the eventual integration of all minorities, whether or not those liberals accept a multicultural paradigm. But a *völkisch* liberal will actively oppose such integration, even while claiming to support the liberal *Rechtstaat* (a state based on the rule of law) (Moldenhauer 1936: 119; Tilly 1996: 81; Cohen and Bains 1988: 71-72)⁸ As we turn to our case study, it is crucial to keep in mind these theoretical distinctions.

'Völkisch' versus 'Universalist' Multiculturalism

Already before the turn of the last century *völkisch*-inflected liberalism had gained widespread acceptance across Schleswig-Holstein. Opposed to the privileges of the hereditary Junker aristocracy, liberals pitted the democratic preservation of a regional North Germanic ethnicity (*Volkstum*) against conservative, 'East Germanic', Prussian nationalism (Wulf 1969: 148-149; Zimmermann 1978).⁹ In this way, democratic liberalism in Schleswig-Holstein became intertwined with a defence of self-determination essentially democratic and multiculturalist but also racist in tone (Reventlow 1910; Hauser 1936: 35). Indeed, by invoking the virtues and traditions of the regional *Stämme* (racial branches) to defend their own rights, regional liberals found moral justification for maintaining the rights of their neighbours, the Danes, whose ties to blood and soil bore out their membership in the North Germanic *Volksgemeinschaft*. So long as the Danes remained loyal to the German Reich, German liberals argued, the Danes could determine their own cultural and linguistic policies (Langbehn 1922).¹⁰ This liberal toleration of Danish cultural autonomy, in short a 'multiculturalist' defence of Danish rights, seemed universalist enough in practice. But there were theoretical dangers to this ethnopolitical version of multiculturalism. As *völkisch* multiculturalists, many liberals registered altogether different attitudes regarding

⁷ Unless one converted to the Lutheran faith, and often in spite of such conversions, Jews were simply not named Full Professors in Imperial Germany. While some converted Jews can be found in the lower administration, the same was true in government circles.

⁸ As recent studies of citizenship have shown it is possible to have civic equality and yet for class, ethnic and religious inequality to persist (Tilly 1996: 81). Or, to quote Philip Cohen and Harwant Bains, '... racist ideology, however totalising in scope, is not necessarily totalitarian. It becomes so only when hegemony breaks down and racist norms are directly enforced throughout society by the coercive power of the state' (Cohen and Bains 1988: 71-72; Walzer 1997).

⁹ In Schleswig-Holstein, argues the historian Peter Wulf, 'regional particularities... played a special political role in relation to the Reich... This local and racially-conscious thinking worked to create a certain degree of common political views...' (Wulf, 148-149; Zimmermann 1978). The seminal work on *Heimat* as a political, social and cultural artifact is Walker 1998; also see Applegate 1990.

¹⁰ No Schleswig-Holsteiner exemplified this contradiction better than the Hadersleben-born cultural critic, Julius Langbehn, whose most famous work glorified Rembrandt as the ideal exponent of *völkisch* North German culture, while at the same time providing political support for a specifically Pan-German politics of expansion, and consequently the suppression of the oppositional Danish minority (Langbehn, 1922).



non-Germanic minorities such as the Poles. After all, wrote one member of the left liberal Progressives, there exists a 'justification, indeed the duty... to remedy sickly limbs, or even to permit amputations of abnormal growths'. To many *völkisch* liberals, the Poles and Czechs, indeed, the Jews, were just such an abnormal growth which needed to be 'amputated' from the racial body politic (*Fortschritt* 1908: 321-325).¹¹

This peculiar sort of *völkisch* multiculturalism was endemic not only to the radical or conservative right, but also to the progressive liberal camp in Wilhelmine and Weimar Schleswig-Holstein. It is obvious, moreover, that *völkisch* preconceptions which supported Danish ethnic autonomy likewise justified widespread liberal discrimination towards certain 'inferior' minorities such as the Poles. The Danes were 'Germans, like us, a well bred and capable nation... even if they overtake us, it is our own blood'. The Poles, however, were 'depraved, intellectually and bodily inferior'. According to *völkisch* multiculturalists, only racially superior Germanic peoples deserved the right to determine their own pace of integration. The Danes unimpeachable racial character virtually necessitated the right of self-determination. Like any 'honourable nationality' the Danes must 'choose their own way' until such time as they joined their German brethren out of respect for the 'overwhelming greatness' of Germany's 'nation and culture' (*Schleswiger Nachrichten* 1907: 9.01.07; Hanssen 1955).¹² Because the Slavic peoples belonged to a racially inferior culture, the Poles experienced an entirely different response by many liberals to their cultural and linguistic travails, in most cases an increasingly paternalistic and repressive policy of educational and political discrimination (*Itzehoer Nachrichten* 19 August 1908).¹³

Certainly not all multiculturalists were *völkisch*. Many true universalist liberals supported a principled multicultural policy of cultural and linguistic autonomy for all minorities, the Poles as well as Danes. Ardently opposed to racial or any other essentialist criteria, these universalist liberals refused to 'sacrifice all liberal principles... in disdain of the universal applicability of the idea of nationality, viewing any oppression of other nationalities within or without the state borders as a patriotic deed and thereby betraying a basically false conception of patriotism'. Indeed, many liberals were allergic to all forms of *völkisch* bias, arguing that framing the nationality struggle in such a way would 'lead [only] to war and cannon cults on the one side, and to the disenfranchisement of foreign-speaking citizens on the other' (*Fortschritt* 1908: 321-325).¹⁴ Rather, the

11 'Where, however, national consciousness infringes upon the equal rights of other nations in representing the true or ostensible rights of one's own nation, they undermine their own principles in their total disregard for the commonality of the ideal of nationality' (*Fortschritt* 1908: 321-325).

12 'Do they want to institute German schools and the dispersion of the German language where it is not desired, no matter what? Nothing could be more unpleasant...'. (*Schleswiger Nachrichten* 1907: 9.01.07). The Danes themselves did not necessarily see this kinship that Germans of all *national* parties often rhapsodized, as H.P. Hanssen remarked, referring to the linguistic and educational debate 'Wir sind Dänen, wir wollen Dänen bleiben und wir fordern als Dänen behalten zu werden' (LAS: Abt. 301, #59. Police Literary Bureau 10.09.06; Hanssen 1955).

13 When accused by the Danes of exacerbating the North Schleswig question with their intransigent policies and open campaign coffers, one National Liberal article answered that it would be even more important for Danish-German relations if 'the Danes would just once close their mouth by uttering an intelligible German word' (*Itzehoer Nachrichten* 19 August 1908).

14 Some progressives reasoned, for example, that 'patriotism and nationalism' were 'quite dissimilar concepts', and that 'love of country and national feeling stand starkly opposed'. Certainly ethnic

universalists argued that integration into the German Reich would come about through a long-term policy that practised patience, tolerance and promoted political democratisation. Even if it slackened the pace of integration in the short-term cultural and linguistic tolerance was to be accorded all foreign nationalities, whether Danish or Polish.

Thus we find a wide range of Schleswig-Holstein liberals united in practice - in granting considerable cultural and linguistic autonomy to the Danes - but diametrically opposed in world view. For *völkisch* multiculturalists, though seemingly tolerant of difference, adhered to an ideology of 'blood and soil' which prepared the way for the exclusionary racial policy (if not necessarily the genocidal outcomes) of the Third Reich. Conversely, universalist multiculturalists supported the general application of cultural and linguistic self-determination to all ethnicities in the ultimate interest of integration. This remarkable dichotomy in the liberal position was exemplified by the Peace Association for North Schleswig (*Friedensverein für das nördliche Schleswig*), a predominantly liberal organisation in defence of Danish rights in the *Nordmark*. Founded by the liberal pastor, Johannes Schmidt-Wodder, the Peace Association sought reconciliation between Germans and Danes through mutual acknowledgement of each others cultural, linguistic and religious rights. Many universalist liberals, for example, the Jewish Progressive Felix Waldstein and the Nobel Peace Prize winner Ludwig Quidde, endorsed this policy. Both felt that Poles as well as Danes should be permitted to attend church services and take classes in their native language, so long as they took German as well. But the Peace Association's core constituency in Schleswig-Holstein included a great number of *völkisch* liberals, individuals like the blood and soil mystic Christian Tränckner and the future *Gauleiter* (provincial governor under the Nazi regime) for the Baltic provinces Hinrich Lohse, both of whom would later join the Nazi Party.

'Völkisch' versus 'Universalist' Assimilation

Not all liberals agreed with the Peace Association's defence of Danish cultural freedoms. After all, the persistence of any *Volksplitter*, (fragmenters of the unity of the *Volk*), however racially 'pure', constituted an invitation to cultural chaos and political dissent. Hence liberal assimilationists on both sides of the race debate promoted a program of cultural and political integration in North Schleswig little different from the Germanization policies practised in Polish Silesia or Alsace-Lorraine (Hagen 1980; Igersheim 1981; Hiery 1986). Importantly, however, a great many of these assimilationists cited universalist reasons for state-supported assimilation policies. Germanisation policy, they argued, would promote 'egalitarian tendencies peculiar not only to liberalism, but the essence of our entire state'. For those who could not 'read, write or speak German' could never fully integrate, and therefore could 'not make use' of their rights (*Schleswiger Nachrichten* 1907: 1.09.07). Liberal assimilationists thus reminded their multiculturalist colleagues that 'the Prussian constitution recognises no Pole as such... only Germans' and this 'describes our North Schleswig relations perfectly' (*Berliner Tageblatt* 1901: 7.02.01 as quoted in *Die Nordmark* 1901: 8.15.01).

similarities existed among Germans. This had created a national community of individuals who possessed a common 'feeling of survival [*Selbsterhaltungsgefühl*]'. But 'nationalism' was dangerous because it privileged one 'nationality' over all others, while 'patriotism [*Patriotismus*]' was acceptable because it represented the innocuous expression of regional particularism, 'no different than one's love of one's own mother ...love of Heimat... the true love of fatherland' (*Fortschritt* 1908: 321-325).



Predictably enough, a number of assimilationists maintained a *völkisch* agenda as well, best expressed rather succinctly by Schleswig-Holstein's *Deutscher Verein für das nördliche Schleswig* (DV) or German Association (*Die Nordmark* 1898: 2.15.1898).¹⁵ The DV's official purpose was to purchase books, build libraries, and sponsor wide-ranging *Kulturarbeit* among the Danish-speaking population in North Schleswig, whose racial character it considered impeccable (Lange 1996: 477-479). But realistically, the DV wished to eradicate the pro-Danish opposition, led by politicians like Hans-Peter Hanssen and Jes Jessen (*Die Nordmark* 15 November 1902). Racial purity after all meant little if one failed to recognise a Pan-German community of interests. As far as the DV was concerned, in any case, a Danish speaker who 'thought' German was better than a fluent German speaker who nevertheless 'thought' Danish (*Die Nordmark* 1901: 2.15.01). If the Poles remained an unassimilable, alien presence in the Reich, the Danes were prodigal sons, always capable of returning to the ancestral Germanic fold (*Fortschritt* 1907: 97-101).

Hence liberal views on Danish integration were defined by two peculiar paradoxes. The first paradox is that some liberal Germanisers justified their more paternalistic integration policies by invoking universalist principles. How could one become a full member of the state, these liberals reasoned, if they refused to learn the language or imbibe the culture? Of course, there are many problematic policies associated with this kind of assimilationist logic. But insofar as liberal assimilationists assumed that *all* ethnicities, whether Danish, Polish or Jewish, might be assimilated by a simple process of mass acculturation, their creed reflected universalist values. The second paradox is that while many liberal multiculturalists supported Danish cultural autonomy, their motivations were often *völkisch* in origin (Lange 1996: 478-479; *Schleswiger Grenzpost* 1912: 26.01.12; *Sonderburger Zeitung* 1912: 24.12.12). Tolerant of Danish cultural pride, but antagonistic towards Poles and Jews, this racist version of multiculturalism, although liberal in origin, lacked the universal applicability of classical liberalism. In this regard, it contrasted greatly with the position of Danish liberals vis-à-vis minority integration in the *Nordmark*.

Danish Universalism

In the northernmost regions of Schleswig-Holstein, the cultural and linguistic gulf between Danes and Germans was not terribly vast. A large number of ethnic Germans spoke or at least understood some Danish, and many more Danes spoke German. While staunch German nationalists like Otto Scheel often descended from old Danish families, the surnames of some Danish leaders indicated a German ancestor or two in the not so distant past. As one German nationalist, himself probably of part-Danish descent, explained, a Danish speaker who 'thought German' was better than a German speaker who 'thought Danish' - not that such scenarios were common (*Die Nordmark* 1902: 11.15.02). Yet this close ethnic brotherhood did not breed political fraternity. Danish liberals were, much like German liberals, divided into multiculturalist and assimilationist camps. However, virtually all Danes opposed the Pan-Germanic designs of the German *völkisch*-nationalists. The majority of Danes behind H.P. Hanssen felt that Danes and Germans could coexist in a German North Schleswig so long as Danish cultural and linguistic rights were respected. Hence they were inclined towards a

¹⁵ The goals were simple, as summarized in the first Copy of *Die Nordmark*: 1. To make Danish feeling Schleswigers more German. 2. To avoid attacking individuals 3. To combat anti-German feeling and propaganda wherever it was found (*Die Nordmark* 1898: 15.02.98).

'multicultural' solution to the North Schleswig question. Admittedly, a more assimilationist Danish minority insisted that North Schleswig must rejoin Denmark if there was to be lasting ethnopolitical peace. Yet both Danish liberal wings put forth a universalist program which eschewed the language of race. This was particularly true in the case of Hanssen's Danish Party, by far the dominant political force in North Schleswig. Hanssen always protested that the Danes were loyal to the *Reich* - he even went so far as to call himself a German - while emphasising just as strongly that in constructing any national political and cultural community it is more important to foster liberal-democratic principles than to nurture a homogeneous ethnic community (*Fortschritt* 1907: 71-74, 216).

Not surprisingly, Hanssen and the Danes were appalled by the *völkisch* tenor of German liberal politics after the outbreak of the First World War. While continuing to protest loyalty to the German state, Hanssen voted alongside the German Socialist, Polish, Czech and Alsatian deputies in the *Reichstag* in opposing war-time annexations. Particularly sensitive to racial and religious intolerance, in his memoirs Hanssen made it a point to recount his surprise and dismay when a Jewish Socialist took the *Reichstag* podium to deliver a pacifist-inclined speech, and a respected leader of the left liberal Progressive Party, Julius Kopsch, shouted him down with cries of "Again a Jew! A Jew! What do the Jews want here?" (Hanssen 1955: 134).

Of course, the Danish Party's increasingly critical stance did little to improve the prospects of Danish cultural autonomy in the Nordmark.¹⁶ In the crucible of the First World War, many German liberals insisted that all Germanic peoples should be fighting side-by-side against the Slavic and Roman peoples. When the Danes refused to accept this covenant of race liberal leaders threatened them with figurative banishment from 'Odin's tribe' and literal expulsion from North Schleswig. Both Karl Strackerjan, a 'right' liberal leader of the German Association, and Johannes Tiedje, a 'left' liberal founder of the Peace Association, attacked Hanssen and the Danish Party for committing 'racial miscegenation' (*Rassenschande*) in allying with the Poles in order to push for the Danish rights (Strackerjan 1916: Vorwort, i., 40, 59-60, 78-89, 102-107).¹⁷ Invoking the Danes own Nordic mythology, Strackerjan now compared German supporters of the Danes to Hödur, the blind gatekeeper to Asgard's rainbow bridge, and the Danes themselves to Loki, the traitorous stepson of Odin who secretly sought Asgard's ruin (Strackerjan 1915: 89, 102-103). Unwilling to recognise these *völkisch* precepts, the Danes came under increasing persecution and arrest (Naumann 1913, 1915: BAB: N 3001, #229; *Kieler Zeitung* 1918: 31.10.18; *Kieler Zeitung* 2 November 1913, 3 November 1913; *Itzehoer Nachrichten* 6 November 1918).

Integration in the Interwar Period, 1918-1933

In the wake of the First World War *völkisch* ideologies found an even greater reception among Schleswig-Holstein liberals. This included Weimar's two great

¹⁶ Hanssen to Naumann, 9 August 1914; Naumann to Hanssen, 14 August 1914, 19 August 1914, 12 September 1914, 4 November 1914; Christiansen to Naumann, 7 September 1914; Naumann to Rade, 19 May 1915 (NL Naumann, BAB: N 3001, #229).

¹⁷ Karl Strackerjan accused the Danes of colluding with the French, 'taking up the matters of oppressed nations' like Serbia, and thereby bringing about the World War. Invoking Nordic mythology, Strackerjan compared Naumann to Hödur, the loyal but blind gatekeeper of Asgard, and Naumann's colleague Erich Schläijker to Loki, the traitorous stepson of Odin who secretly sought Asgard's ruin (Strackerjan 1916: Vorwort, i., 40, 59-60, 78-89, 102-107).



liberal parties, Friedrich Naumann's DDP and Gustav Stresemann's DVP. The Democrat Christian Tränckner, for example, demanded a 'rebirth of German *Volkstum*' and a 'quickening of Schleswig-Holstein's racial character [*Stammestum*]' (Schwensen 1993: 186-188).¹⁸ An erstwhile supporter of the left liberal Peace Association, Tränckner acknowledged the Danes' 'Nordic character', their 'roots of soil and race fixed deep in the earth'. But he worried about their loyalty to a Greater German *Reich* (Rietzler 1982: 307-308). Tränckner's colleague in the rival liberal DVP, Johannes Tonneson, also demanded that the Danes recognise the German '*Volkstum* and the powers slumbering within it... must... be surrounded by a shimmer of mystical reverence, in which we witness with respect the life forces which will lead us into our new future' (Schwensen 1993: 191-192; Rietzler 1982: 308).¹⁹

Though representing itself as more self-consciously 'republican' and 'democratic' than its mainstream liberal brethren, Schleswig-Holstein's smallest liberal party, the *Liberale Landespartei*, was even more virulently racist and anti-semitic. Already in 1919, the *Landespartei* had allied with other particularist groups in the Weimar National Assembly in order to sponsor a federalist constitution, which permitted extensive self-administration and ethnic autonomy (Rietzler 1982: 94).²⁰ By 1921, the *Landespartei* openly supported the creation of a racial democracy based on the mutual constitutional affirmation and protection of all Germanic *Stämme*, whether Bavarian or Saxon, Danish or Friesian. Having imbibed racialist theories of natural selection to the hilt, the *Landespartei* insisted upon the superiority of North Germans over all other Germans, and of the Germanic race over all other races, a 'liberal' principle which the party's chairman, Hinrich Lohse, would later apply with great vigour in his capacity as Nazi *Gauleiter* for the Baltic provinces (Heberle 1970: 46-47, 53; Rietzler 1982: 306).²¹

The point here is not to argue that all German liberals were *völkisch*, but that many *völkisch*-nationalists were members of the liberal parties. Custodians of the national soul, devastated by the potential loss of blood (ethnic Germans) and soil (North Schleswig, Upper Silesia, Alsace-Lorraine, etc.) which the Versailles Treaty

¹⁸ Tränckner's racialist sentiments often found expression in frequent attacks on the city, 'the greenhouse of non-culture... filth and kitsch' and in the idealization of North Schleswig's Germanic character (Schwensen 1993: 186-188).

¹⁹ He called on his flock to carry forth the 'instinct of the blood', to hearken the 'pulse of the *Volk*', and to bring forth a leader 'out of the silent *Volkstum*' who would make Germany great (Schwensen, 191-192). Though 'congruent with National Socialist ideas', they represented the *Weltanschauung* of many of Schleswig-Holstein's liberal elite (Rietzler, 308).

²⁰ 'Hand in hand with the popularization of race and 'border'-ideology came a reactivation of those irrational images of *völkisch* cultural pessimism' which influenced 'public consciousness' widely before the War, and which now 'found a political organizational framework in the *Landespartei*' (Rietzler, 94).

²¹ 'We of the *Landespartei* claim to be the representatives of the old Schleswig-Holstein liberalism. Democracy as conceived in Schleswig-Holstein is something entirely different from democracy as for instance represented by the *Berliner Tageblatt* or the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. The Schleswig-Holstein democracy... is a green democracy in contrast to the golden democracy... Any predominance of the Jews in business and government we shall fight with all our energy'. 'Autonomistic-federalistic and equally... national, it propagated a specifically 'Schleswig-Holstein liberalism... It is further important that some of the leading National Socialists began their political career in the '*Landespartei*'" (Heberle 1979: 46-47, 53, 58).

entailed, a great many Schleswig-Holstein liberals banded together in the Schleswig-Holstein Association (the *Schleswig-Holsteiner Bund* or SHB) in order to promote a policy of (namely German) self-determination in post-war Europe. There were conservative and National Socialist members, but the association's leadership, with few exceptions, was composed of prominent members of the three main liberal parties (Rietzler 1982: 93, 300-308; Schwensen 1993: 55, 69-72, 129, 179; Stoltenberg 1962: 19-21, 32-34, 84; Heberle 1979: 140; Lehmann 1969: 30-39).²² Ideological differences existed among the *Bündler*, largely reflecting the pre-war divisions between the Peace Association and the German Association. But the group's declared purpose to defend 'German' interests in North Schleswig increasingly drowned out dissenting voices, as only a minority of multiculturalists continued to stress the need to preserve Schleswig-Holstein's independence from both Denmark and Prussia, themselves motivated by an excessively parochial view of racial purity (Schmidt-Wodder 1919: 3-6; Schwensen 1993: 16-17, 46-55, 69-72, 331-332; Lehmann 1969: 26-28; Rietzler 1982: 300-308; Heile in *Die Hilfe* 13 November 1919).

Virtually all such differences dissipated after the 1920 plebiscite in favour of Denmark. Almost immediately both multiculturalist and the assimilationist wings within the *völkisch*-inclined SHB began to invoke even more strongly Wilson's ideals of self-determination in order to justify Weimar's support for 'languishing' German minorities in Denmark, Poland, France, Czechoslovakia, Belgium and Italy. Motivated by common goals, the erstwhile 'multiculturalist', Hjalmar Schacht, a member of the left liberal Democrats, hosted the assimilationist, Anton Schifferer, the former chairman of the DVP, at a 1925 *Bierabend* celebrating two thousand years of German racial purity in Schleswig-Holstein. Schifferer gave the keynote address, titled 'German Cultural Work in Schleswig-Holstein'. Received with rousing applause, Schifferer argued that the *Nordmark* was different from the Rhineland or *Ostmark* because there persisted in the latter two areas a conflict between the Germans on the one hand, and the Latin and Slavic races on the other. In the *Nordmark*, however, there prevailed a '1000 year exchange between West Germanic and North Germanic culture' which was only made untenable by the 'political consequences' attendant to this dispute. Schifferer hoped to reconcile the Danes to the German *völkisch* element on the basis of Schleswig-Holstein's 'geographic position, history and nationality in the framework of great German culture' (Schifferer 1925: 3-16; Schifferer 1928: 18-21).

Thus by the advent of the Third Reich in 1933 a wide-ranging coalition of Schleswig-Holstein liberals demanded the return of 'lost territories' and the preservation of Germans abroad. Yet their motivations were a far cry from the universalism which motivated Western leaders like Woodrow Wilson and Aristide Briand. As the historian Bruce Frye notes, liberal support for German self-determination was, at the very least, 'ironic, given the indifference of [even] left liberals to such questions before 1919' (Frye 1985: 129-131). Simply put, self-determination could be employed by a multiplicity of actors, from Theodor Heuß to Adolf Hitler, in ways both universalist and racist. This conceptual malleability made it more than a little difficult to discern what sort of politics lay behind the

²² Willy Iversen, chairman of the Landespartei in 1921 and a DVP leader after 1924; the DDP's Christian Tränckner; the antebellum Progressive and Landespartei leader, Karl Alnor; the DVP publicist, Jacob Bödewadt; the DVP chairman, Anton Schifferer; the progressive pastors and DDP-affiliates, Schmidt-Wodder and Johannes Tiedje; the DVP Reichstag representative Dr. Jane Voigt; the Kiel professors Otto Baumgarten (DDP) and Otto Scheel (DVP); Ludwig Ahlmann, owner of the *Kieler Zeitung*, was also a member.



invocation of self-determination in the Nordmark (*Deutsch-Demokratische Beiträge* 1921: 4.02.21). When leading liberals put forth policies seeking 'stronger self-administration for all German tribes', this suggested a kind of democratic federalism, but it was a privilege which could only be granted to racial branches of Germanic peoples. And if many assimilationists moderated their rhetoric on the Danish Question it was because they recognised the Danes, unlike the Poles, as a kindred Nordic race whose sympathy was needed to preserve German *Volkstum* in North Schleswig. This was precisely the line taken by the provincial Nazi Party (Schmidt 1929: LAS: Abt. 309, #35298; Schwensen, 370-373, 403-404).²³ Thus many *völkisch* and universalist liberals - indeed, even Nazis - agreed that Danish North Schleswigers had a right to assimilate on their own terms, all the while preserving their culture and language, without being persecuted by the state. The logic behind this 'multiculturalist' policy, however, could not have been more disparate.

Conclusion

We live in a world where a new metaphor of integration, multiculturalism, has replaced the assimilationist model exemplified by the classical American conception of the assimilationist 'melting pot'. Inspired by trends in modern ethnology and literary studies, politicians, particularly liberal politicians, have shown in recent years a welcome sensitivity to subaltern cultures. This post-colonial consciousness has freed classical liberalism from many of the nagging prejudices which it once perpetuated in an attempt to emancipate the second and third worlds, overrunning their cultures and societies with 'modernisation theories' and 'western' models. The new multicultural paradigm has worked to strip away the veneer of altruistic universalism and reveals its subjective core values. In this way, multiculturalism has attempted to reduce social reality to its organic components, to return agency and voice to those marginalised ethnic, cultural and social groups which have heretofore been overshadowed by a dominant *Leitkultur*. Indeed, a multiculturalism tempered by universalism may lead to a more diverse, cohesive European polity; it would be absurd to argue, in any case, that members of the European Union should consciously discard their cultural specificity in the name of one, uniform all-encompassing *Leitkultur*.

Nevertheless, there is the danger that a multiculturalism unqualified by some kind of overarching universalist consensus will perpetuate the same intolerance as an ethnocentric, state-sponsored, assimilationist *Leitkultur*. For multiculturalism, as our examination of the *Nordmark* has shown, can devolve into any number of ethnic particularisms, with racial and religious essentialism being two of the most prominent manifestations. An assimilationist model of integration may tend towards intolerance in the interests of inclusion. But a multiculturalist society may eventually fracture or turn upon itself as the most powerful social group excludes those groups that are most different from itself. Having for many years extolled the virtues of a federalised *Volksgemeinschaft* inclusive of Austrians, Danes, Frisians and the Dutch, but exclusive of Slavs or Jews, is it any surprise that so many Schleswig-Holstein liberals would go on to join the Nazi Party? If one takes this *Nordmark* debate seriously, it is clear that an ethnocentric multiculturalism can preserve disintegration, even prejudice and xenophobia, under the rubric of liberalism.

²³ The DVP's Wilhelm Iversen seconded Schmidt, calling for a 'national organism' awakening the forces which 'slumbered in the race'. A majority of Nazi members 'swore' themselves to Iversen because he possessed impeccable *völkisch* credentials, *Führer* qualities and 'Nordic-Germanic' views (Schwensen, 370-373, 403-404).

Differences between liberal assimilationists and liberal multiculturalists are anyway less great in practice than they are in theory. The ideological disparities between the two are often purely definitional, depending upon the national context and the correlating criteria for inclusion or exclusion. Let us take, for example, a policy that requires minority recognition of the state constitution and a good faith effort to learn the language, but permits minorities full linguistic, religious and cultural freedoms, perhaps even promoting minority cultures through state or local initiative. In historically universalist but ardently assimilationist France such a policy, in its laissez-faire attitude towards creating a uniquely French national identity, might smack of multiculturalism. However, in the American context there are many 'multiculturalists' who would consider this policy of minimal state interference in, and perhaps even the promotion of minority cultures to be assimilationist because such a policy would lead to the gradual co-optation of minority cultures in the interest of producing a national consensus. Certainly there are any number of academics who now consider the American 'melting pot' model shallow, culturally oppressive and overtly assimilationist. Whether one professes to support assimilation or multiculturalism, however, it is important to search for some kind of 'overlapping consensus' on a universalist basis, to borrow a term from John Rawls (Rawls 1993: 1-15, 134-147). For a state which eschews universalism in the name of multiculturalism might end up promoting the same abuses as a state which promotes an essentialist *Leitkultur*.

If nothing else, this case study should remind us not to accept certain versions of integration at face value. Just as liberal claims regarding multiculturalism can be used to support illiberal solutions to minority integration, *Leitkultur* appears, in historical perspective, to be less ethnically essentialist and more inherently inclusive than many of its critics will admit. It may be hard to take Germany's Christian Democratic leadership at their word (*Der Spiegel-Online* 11 April 2000). Much like George W. Bush's calls for compassionate conservatism, there is a cynical edge to the doctrine *Leitkultur* in the Federal Republic, the thinly-veiled conviction that certain ethnicities - at one time the Poles, and now the Turks - will simply be unwilling or unable to achieve the cultural niveau set for their full integration. In denying dual citizenship and demanding language fluency exams, conservatives across Europe might hope to decrease immigrant access to full citizenship, all the while citing classical liberal goals of universal inclusion. But there is no reason to presume such bad intentions. If the concept of *Leitkultur*, of establishing an overarching political and cultural consensus, remains problematic in many respects, so too does a multicultural paradigm which, rather than seeking pluralist integration on a universal basis, promotes the maintenance of one's own ethnic purity by paying lip-service to the sanctity of others.

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