

STERN PRIZE

COSMOPOLITAN CONSERVATISM: TRANSNATIONAL ELITE POLITICS IN THE GERMAN-AMERICAN ATLANTIC OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND THE DIALECTIC OF COMMERCE AND COMMUNITY

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The end of the Cold War brought the spread of free trade and globalization at the same time that it reinvigorated nationalism.¹ Rather than seeing a universal victory of liberal, Western democracy, we find ourselves bracing for attacks by fundamentalists who advocate an authoritarian social order. In one narrative, this fundamentalist attack is a matter of an anti-modernist rebellion by those who lost in the process of modernization.² From the mountainous heartlands of Afghanistan and Appalachia, Chechnya and Thuringia, self-styled defenders of the authenticity and purity of the people and its beliefs set out to battle the incursions of modernization. In the minds of these crusaders, global commerce is the conduit for the seed of corrosion that threatens a local morality and way of life. In their view, the city and its archetypical representative, the merchant, bear responsibility for the subjection of the simple farmers and workers to the dictates of the market and the subversion of their ethos by a commercial culture devoid of a higher calling.³

The longer we live under these conditions of global strife, however, the clearer it becomes that a fundamentalist critique of Western liberalism is just as attractive to urban professionals as it is to disgruntled provincials. The biographies of recent suicide attackers are replete with university degrees and urban lifestyles. Likewise, a closer look at the presumed backwoodsmen reveals a high degree of participation in global commerce. Whether we consider opiates from Afghanistan or auto parts from Appalachia, we find that even the remotest regions of the world are tied into the world market. There are no authentic places left that have been untouched by the incursions of modernization. Local, particularist traditions that pose as deeply rooted customs are really inventions already suffused with an engagement with the outside world. In either case, global liberalism and fundamentalism appear not as ideologies that respectively promote and oppose modernity, but as ideological poles within modernity.

Since the 1990s, intellectuals in the United States have perceived the newly globalized world as presenting both dangers and opportunities. Transnational history has been one reflex to the epochal changes at the turn of our century. This new branch of historical scholarship has been mining the past for traces of our direct ancestors: men and women who lived through periods of intense changes that affected the entire world, and who went beyond their local origins to craft a world view from the experiences collected in exchanges with other countries. Transnational historians have discovered a variety of such ancestors, mostly in the Progressive Era at the turn of the twentieth century. Here, they found reformers who, knowing that their local intellectual traditions and political institutions inadequately equipped them to respond to rapid industrialization and urbanization, turned abroad to look for better answers. Here, they also found conquerors and colonizers who went to foreign shores as rulers, looking to spread their own local ideas and practices in the guise of a universal civilization, an American empire.⁴

No matter the intent of those who were driven abroad by local concerns, transnational exchange is always a two-way street. In formulating this insight, transnational historians stand in the tradition of scholarship on the Atlantic World of the eighteenth century. The subculture of sailors and merchants who built the European colonial empires of that era, as well as the novel commodities they introduced into the societies along the Atlantic's shores, remade the everyday life and the world view of the colonizers and the colonized, even if neither ever left their homes.⁵

Thanks to Atlantic and transnational history, we know that at the beginning of the modern era, there was a world in which identities were in flux, and that by the end of the nineteenth century it had been replaced by a world of nation-states imagined as self-contained units, albeit one permeated by—friendly and competitive—transnational connections. One hope of transnational history has been to break nation-states' hold on peoples' political imagination. As history is always a narrative that defines the self-image of contemporaries, transnational history has been offering an adequate narrative for an American population that can no longer afford to ignore the rest of the world. It could become an updated national history of America, just as it could become a critique of American imperial ambition, now and in the past.

So far, the historical period that most resembled our own, and in which the persistent dichotomies of our own era were first fully formed, has evaded close attention from transnational historians. The decades between the Congress of Vienna and the Paris Commune were the formative years for the world we know. They saw the rise of industry outside of Britain and the acceleration of global communication by steam power and telegraphs on land and across oceans. By 1871, these processes

had resulted in the creation of a modern, industrial world market and stronger, increasingly unitary territorial states. These states mediated competition and cooperation on the world market, basing their legitimacy on nationality, their fiscal and military might resting on industry.

Our world, with its dialectic of world market and nation-state, cosmopolitanism and parochialism, universalism and particularism, liberalism and fundamentalism, technological progress and barbarian regression, has its roots in the nineteenth century. It is for this reason that Marx and Engels's account of globalization and creative destruction in the Communist Manifesto rings so contemporary to our ears:

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world-market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. All old-established national industries . . . are dislodged by new industries whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations; . . . industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. . . In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations.⁶

Yet the Communists' hope that "national one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible" has not been borne out. From the outset, this ever-shrinking, ever-accelerating, ever-changing world has bred a wish to recapture the "feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations" Marx and Engels had hoped were forever lost to it.⁷ Modernity has been constantly shadowed by its dark sibling, reactionary anti-modernism. More often than not, its rejection of the political and philosophical foundations of modernity has been accompanied by an enthusiasm for its material blessings. Bin Laden would be impossible to conceive of without his satellite phone.

In the shadow of recent events, the deep historical roots of the dialectic of modern world-society and America's entanglement with this dialectic are more clearly visible than in the spotlight of national history. In America itself, and not just among its enemies, the march of technological progress and the course of empire were from the beginning accompanied by a wish to hold back the clock of democracy, liberalism, and individual rights. Between America and Europe, some of the most active promoters of a capitalist world market were among those most skeptical of its purported companion, liberal-democratic society.

The German merchants who dominated trade between the United States and Germany through much of the nineteenth century—based in

the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, an independent city-republic that today is part of Germany—shared the sense that the boundaries between land and ocean were being blurred by modern commerce.⁸ America and the ocean appeared as metaphors for commodity exchange in the words of Johann Georg Kohl, a merchant from Bremen:

Poseidon is, most of all, a shaker of the Earth. . . . Like mighty springs, America and the Ocean drive and spur the whole great machinery of our modern life. America grows abundantly in all our gardens and fields; and the Ocean pushes with its currents and tides into the most secluded channels of the hinterland.⁹

As a cosmopolitan community equally rooted on both sides of the ocean and equally engaged in the political and economic life of multiple societies, Bremen's merchants allow us to place the antebellum United States in its international context. The history of these merchants illuminates the essential contribution to the making of an industrial-capitalist world market, and of American participation in it, of men and women deeply committed to tradition and fiercely opposed to liberalism and democracy.

Acknowledging the importance of these cosmopolitan conservatives and their American collaborators for tying the United States into the world market means to question the account of America as the undisputed domain of liberalism. Trading with America, these German merchants found in the new world like-minded men and women whose qualms about the dangers of unfettered market relations matched their own, yet with whom they also shared a wish to "improve" the world through the blessings of global communication and commerce.

Together, these German merchants and their American friends represent not an alternative path to capitalism, but its mainstream. If their exertions resulted in a world increasingly characterized by liberal democratic nation-states, it was not what they had envisioned or desired when they set out to improve the older world they knew.

Between the centers of their activities—Bremen, New York, and Baltimore—these Hanseats formed one transatlantic community. They remained linked to each other through trade, intermarriage, friendships, shared religious and political beliefs, and a reliance on the infrastructure of consulates and trade treaties that rested on Bremen's sovereignty. The boundaries that defined this group crossed through cities, nations, and oceans. At the same time, Hanseats helped level boundaries between continents through their trade.

During the middle third of the nineteenth century, when the United States was presumably busy finding its national identity, we find strong traces of both an earlier Atlantic world and of a later transnational world.

The American economy depended on exporting cotton and other staples of slave labor, and on importing immigrants, who provided the manpower and capital for the market revolution and capitalist production. Without an armada of merchant vessels and an army of merchants in the commercial centers, King Cotton would have been about as powerful as your average Polish country squire. These merchants and mariners, however, were largely foreigners.¹⁰

In North America, especially in New York and Baltimore, Hanseats settled to facilitate trade with their home town. By the time the Civil War began, Bremen's merchants were carrying an impressive share of the American export trade and bringing an ever-greater share of European immigrants to New York, Baltimore, New Orleans, and Galveston.¹¹

Economically, Hanseats were essential for facilitating the commerce on which the growing nation depended. Politically, they served as conduits for ideas between the old and new worlds. Their engagement with political and cultural ideas across the Atlantic world shows the essentially transnational character of the central political debates of the time. The related challenges of capitalist modernization and democracy were not limited to America. Hence, it is not surprising that here as elsewhere, elites responded to both processes in similar ways. In engaging with Whigs, Democrats, and Republicans, these merchants reveal that elites on all shores of the Atlantic shared political idioms that made possible a recognition of shared interests and concerns. Socially, Hanseats partook in a global, Victorian culture at the same time that they were rooted in local, German traditions, and as they absorbed the aesthetic of romantic nationalism in both its American and German formulations. In all these ways, they resembled their American and German contemporaries, while forming a group self-consciously apart from both.¹²

In reconstructing the world Hanseats made, we can recover the quint-essentially transnational character of the United States during a time in its history that on the surface appears as one of its most inward-looking periods. Consider Emanuel Leutze's monumental history painting, *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1851). An icon of American national identity, the original of this work hung in Bremen's Art Museum (*Kunsthalle*) after it had been bought in 1863 with donations from Bremen's mercantile elite. There it served as a reminder of Bremen's cordial relations with the United States. Ultimately, if we give proper weight to the transnational influences on the United States during the antebellum era, we find that the country looks a lot less exceptional than we might assume, and was tied into the international flow of people, ideas and commodities to a much greater extent than we might have expected.

In Baltimore and New York, Hanseats were part of a larger mercantile class that was characterized by a cosmopolitan composition. Hanseats

resembled that larger mercantile class in many of their business practices. An ethos of honor and credibility was common to all merchants, whether they were from Bremen, the United States, or other foreign countries. A tight cooperation between different firms, often tied to each other by blood relations or intermarriage, was just as common among American or British merchants as it was for Hanseats.¹³

In spite of these many similarities, Bremish merchants formed a distinct group within this broader class. Those qualities that set them apart were also factors contributing to the extraordinary stability and success of their group. First, Hanseats maintained a conservative approach to business, eschewing speculation and putting the welfare of the family and the estate above a logic of pure profit maximization. Second, dense ties of intermarriage, and the financial and ideological commitment they entailed, connected Hanseats in Bremen, Baltimore, and New York with each other, establishing in a transnational space a degree of mutual obligations comparable to those found among elites in "home towns" like Bremen.¹⁴

Third, the political ideology that Hanseats had constructed for themselves in Bremen gave them a shared world view. Their agreement on fundamental political values further bound the members of the network to each other. The content of this ideology, a selective embrace of liberalism paired with an insistence on maintaining social hierarchy and a politics of deference, placed them in a peculiar position on one side of an ideological divide. Running across the Atlantic and the countries that bordered it, it split the proponents of a capitalist social order into two camps: radicals who believed in democracy and the Enlightenment, and modern conservatives who wished to uphold social distinctions and Christian morality.

Fourth, Bremen was an independent state, with a foreign policy of its own. The network of consulates and trade treaties that rested on the city's status formed the groundwork of Hanseats' business enterprise. It further tied their interests to the city, and through it, to each other. The state of Bremen was the agent through which Hanseats shaped the development of world trade by extending the infrastructure that intensified and regularized exchange relations across the ocean.¹⁵

Hence, economically, socially, culturally, and politically, Hanseats had things in common that they did not share with their non-Hanseatic mercantile peers, German or American. At the same time, their engagement in trade and their commitment to conservative religious and political values gave them manifold occasions to cooperate with other groups in the United States and Germany.

The distinctness of Hanseats within the larger, American mercantile class was not a function of ethnicity. The same peculiarities that set

Hanseats apart from American merchants also distinguished them from other German merchants.¹⁶ Hanseats had even less in common with the mass of German immigrants whom they were bringing to America in ever-increasing numbers. Bremen's merchants behaved as the members of a privileged estate, not of a *Volk*. Political refugees from the liberal German middle class became ethnic politicians in the United States.¹⁷ Hanseats, by contrast, maintained an attitude toward the many that demanded deference toward one's social betters. As they did in Bremen, Hanseats in the United States related to the mass of Germans with the same stance of "patronage and protection" that they assumed in the old country.¹⁸

Stubborn Hanseatic traditionalism was not a matter of provinciality. Both in formulating their ideals and in shaping their responses to social changes, Hanseats incorporated what they learned abroad. France, Britain, and America made appearances in Bremish thought not just as abstract examples. Hanseatic merchants had experienced firsthand political and social life in these countries, especially in the United States. Hence their ideas differed from the mainstream of German political life. Before the diffuse political currents of the German middle class had congealed into clearly delimited parties, Bremen's elite had found its voice in a Western conservatism. It had thus found a response to the dual challenges of industrialization and democracy that allowed for a supersession of home-town traditions in a political ideology open to trans-local alliances.

By knowing the people who mattered, Hanseats may have had a more enduring influence on American politics than ethnic politicians could have ever hoped for. In Baltimore and New York, Hanseats played leading roles in the local chambers of commerce, which in turn helped shape local and national politics. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney lived next door to Bremish consul Albert Schumacher in Baltimore's upscale Mount Vernon neighborhood.¹⁹ Abraham Lincoln's only visit to a diplomat's residence took place on the eve of his inauguration, when Rudolf Schleiden, Bremen's minister-resident in Washington, hosted a small dinner party for the president-elect.²⁰ Bremen's leading newspaper, the *Weserzeitung*, served as the official organ for notifications by the U.S. federal government in Germany.²¹ And where, if not from the Hanseatic Cities, did Mayor Fernando Wood get the idea to break New York City away from the Union to make it into an independent city-republic?²²

Hanseatic influence depended on a mode of politics that we associate with a pre-democratic era. But even in an age of popular suffrage, when the masses no longer deferred to their social betters in political matters, deals among men of standing did not cease to be important. Hanseats expected their voice to be weighed, not counted. This was the way of

doing politics and business they were used to at home, and they found that it served them well in America.²³

Like Hanseats, American conservatives were engaged in the project of paving the way for capitalist social relations, while attempting to shore up the moral foundations of community eroded by the rise of capitalism. In this approach to modernization, they were located in opposition to democrats on both sides of the ocean, and they were aware that they had a common adversary. Based on this commonality, Hanseats and Whigs embraced steamship technology, which revolutionized international commerce. Unlike Whigs, Hanseats did not promote steamships as a step toward building an industrial-capitalist society. Like their American friends, however, they perceived technological and institutional change as “improvements” upon a fundamentally good social order. Thus it is not surprising to find that the first steamship line subsidized by the U.S. government connected New York with Bremerhaven.²⁴

Elite politics, while relegated to the back of our historical consciousness by three decades of social and cultural history, was not dead in the nineteenth-century United States. In recent years, historians like John Ashworth, Sven Beckert, and Eugene Genovese have shown that anti-democratic sentiment in upper-class circles survived the challenges of Jacksonian Democracy and the Civil War surprisingly intact. If anything, decades of popular participation in politics strengthened conservatives’ disdain for the aspirations of the masses.²⁵

Hanseats listened to their conservative American counterparts and engaged their ideas both in their American homes and in their old home, Bremen. As citizens of a republic, the reactionary politics of Old Regime, legitimist conservatism were distasteful to Hanseats. As notables who reigned in Bremen within a constitutional framework designed to guarantee mercantile dominance, they were just as unwilling to embrace democracy. As global merchants whose capital depended on ever-accelerated circulation, they were eager to embrace technological advances and a legal order that removed just enough of the traditional fetters of privilege to create a free market for commodities and wage-labor, while leaving in place their own privileges. In American conservatism, they found an ideology ideally suited to these specific interests. Thus political ideas flowed both ways across the Atlantic, and Hanseats served as an important conduit.

Thanks to the monumental work of Daniel Rodgers, in present U.S. historiography, transnationality almost has a default association with progressivism in its broadest sense. From the point of view of German postwar historiography, likewise, an “Atlantic orientation” is coterminous with liberal politics in the nineteenth century, or opposition to Fascism in the twentieth. In Hanseats, however, we see the emergence of a

transnational, modern conservatism that is the specific product of a German-American exchange. In the light of this exchange, Whigs begin to look like members of a Conservative International who joined forces with like-minded foreigners in a transnational struggle against the threat of democracy and mob rule, and for an improvement of a fundamentally good social order. Hanseats formed an important link within this trans-Atlantic current of conservative modernizers.

Past and present anti-modernists and others who bemoan the loss of community and its "feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations" might find Hanseats kindred spirits.²⁶ Their life as a mercantile estate represented the ideal of an organic whole resting on the mutual dependence of families, firms, and faith. Inconveniently, however, Hanseats were also merchants, and their community was itself cosmopolitan in its geographical extent and in its prevalent ideology. Thus Wilhelm Kießelbach, an organic intellectual of Bremen's elite, gave voice to a corporatist vision of social order while at the same time promoting capitalist exchange relations.²⁷ Indeed, a moral economy based on reciprocity and exchange relations embedded in a Calvinist ethos supported by mutual social control characterized the *internal* life of the Hanseatic community but less and less of its *external* interactions.

Unlike Kießelbach and other theorists of organicism, Ferdinand Tönnies was aware that trade and industry, while evolving from within traditional community, carry with them the seeds of that community's dissolution or its evolution into a liberal *Gesellschaft*.²⁸ Hanseatic community life gave Bremen's merchants the impulse to engage in global commerce. But global commerce came with an imperative of competitiveness, eventually forcing Hanseats to adapt their business practices, their values, and the social and political order of their home town, thus undermining the foundations of community life. While these seeds of dissolution were sown, they did not begin to reduce Hanseats' ability to practice their accustomed ways of a cosmopolitan community engaged in trans-Atlantic commerce until the 1860s. Until then, they were able to use their very rootedness in a stable network as a resource for furthering their political and social interests.

To understand the role of merchants in the world economy, we can benefit from the work of Karl Marx.²⁹ While in many ways merchant capital paved the way for modern capitalism, its former role differed decisively from its modern one. Yet, Marx observed, the notion that *capital as such* lived off fraud and plunder had survived into modern times. This notion he wished to dispel, mainly by emphasizing that modern, industrial capitalism relies on the exchange of *equivalents* at all stages of

circulation and production. Having embraced production, and drawing on the surplus value generated by labor, modern industrial capital no longer has to “buy cheap to sell dear.” As a consequence, merchant capital loses its independent economic function.³⁰

Over the course of the nineteenth century, in becoming agents of a specialized, commodity-trading branch of industrial capital, Hanseats lost much of what had made them cosmopolitan, or even transnational, in the past. Their ability to maintain a separate community across the Atlantic also ran up against powerful, external obstacles: the modern nation-state with its armed forces and its reliance on popular politics, and the dynamism of industrial capitalism. Hanseats’ traditionalism had been resilient enough to allow them to continue far into the nineteenth century a way of life more typical of the eighteenth. To continue this way of life, with its insistence on a limited scale of business, antiquated economic practices, and a reliance on the household and the family as the end and starting point of profit, would have meant certain ruin in the global economy of the last third of the nineteenth century.

Hanseats’ aloofness from popular politics likewise proved increasingly unsustainable. In Bremen and New York, they had to contend with an invigorated population that insisted on having their say in matters of big politics and enjoyed the support of central governments in many of their claims. If Hanseats wanted their voice to be heard under these conditions, they had to ask for the trust of the public. The currency of the club and the counting-house, character and reputation, were no longer sufficient for political purchase. The discourse of popular politics in the new nation-states was increasingly characterized by nationalism and geopolitics. The days were over when a global class of merchants could believe—with some reason—that they were building a cosmopolitan world beyond war-making states.

The American Civil War and the German wars of unification of the 1860s accelerated, and eventually sealed, the demise of all that had made Hanseats into a distinct, cosmopolitan community. Guns and warships made by modern industry, not mercantile diplomacy, decided the domestic conflicts in the two societies that were most important to Hanseats. The search for a response to their loss of political leeway divided Hanseats. In America, Hanseats-turned-Unionists and their Confederate counterparts dissolved partnerships that had rested on decades-long ties between old families. In Germany, some Hanseats became enthusiastic supporters of a Prussian-led unification of the country, while others continued to detest both the authoritarian Prussian state and the democratic national movement with which it was allying itself. As the masses mobilized themselves to decide political questions with guns and ballots, a fractured elite that faced existential economic changes on top of these

political challenges found it increasingly impossible politically to shape its own destiny. Within a few years, Hanseatic politics had ceased to be what Bremen's longtime Burgomaster Johann Smidt had described as "an extended family life." The hope for an improved society under the careful guardianship of local elites had vanished.³¹

What was left of this cosmopolitan community after the 1860s was a rudimentary family network, stripped of the essential economic and political functions it had fulfilled in the past and reduced by those who had dropped out over political differences or under economic duress. Many old Hanseatic families still exist today, but the essential features of what had made them a community, the organic intertwining of their economic, domestic, and political existence based on a shared moral economy, do not. The memory of the golden age of Hanseatic, transatlantic trade of the 1830s through the 1850s survives but as an ideology in the self-image of present descendants of the great merchant-capitalists of the nineteenth century.

The experience of Hanseats in their interactions with America provides us with an argument against anti-commercialism, against reifying the market, and especially the *world* market, as an *agens* without actors. But it also cautions us against a certain voluntarism that explains market relations as completely reducible to the intentions, interests, and strategies of actors. The whole of the market and its logic adds up to more than the sum of its parts.

Contrary to the anti-commercialist imagination that sees merchants as the conscious agents of exploitation and dissolution, these Hanseatic champions of global commerce were at the same time among the most ardent supporters of preserving traditional values and a communal ethos. Not classical merchant capital, represented by Hanseats, but modern industrial capital and its commodity-trading and money-trading branches, together with its political complement, the nation-state, were the main agents of the dissolution and subversion of community. Hence in the last third of the nineteenth century, the wish of anti-commercialists in both America and Germany to use monetary and trade policies to end exploitative economic relations by subjecting merchants and other agents of the market to the discipline of a national economy, enforced by the nation-state, did not come true. Capital and the state continue to play their role as levelers in spite of their fundamentalist and anti-commercialist fans.

In following interests that arose from within their existence as a *community*, Hanseats helped transform Germany and the United States into industrial capitalist *societies*. The new economy of industrial capitalism undermined the economic independence of classical merchant-capital. In the transition to this new economy, Hanseatic merchant-capital appears

not as an exploiter preying upon local communities, but as a transnational community undone by its own success.

Notes

In this essay, I present a summary of the argument of my dissertation: Lars Maischak, "A Cosmopolitan Community—Hanseatic Merchants in the German-American Atlantic of the Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2005).

¹ See, for example, Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld—How Globalism and Tribalism are Reshaping the World* (New York, 1995).

² I use this term to describe the political program of actors who perceived a need for their respective societies to "catch up" to the leading industrial and commercial powers. Following the argument made by Geoff Eley and David Blackbourn in *The Peculiarities of German History* (Oxford, UK and New York, 1984), we should be aware that democratization, or even a liberal political stance, are not necessarily contained in a "package" of modernization. For example, Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital* (London, 1975), has shown that modernizers' political and social views varied, in a continuum ranging from a full embrace of "Western freedom" to authoritarianism.

³ See, for example, Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations* (New York, 1996); Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: The West in the Eyes of its Enemies* (New York, 2004); and Ziauddin Sardar, *Postmodernism and the Other: The New Imperialism of Western Culture* (London and Chicago, Ill., 1998). The latter is an example of the views criticized here.

⁴ Thomas Bender, *A Nation Among Nations: America's Place in World History* (New York, 2006); Daniel Rogers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1998); Daniel W. Howe, *American History in an Atlantic Context: An Inaugural Lecture delivered before the University of Oxford on June 3, 1993* (Oxford, UK, 1993); Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2006); Ian Tyrrell, "American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History" (1031–1055) and "Ian Tyrrell Responds" (1068–1072), and Michael McGerr, "The Price of the 'New Transnational History'" (1056–1067), *American Historical Review* 96:4 (1991), pages as given in parentheses.

⁵ Marcus B. Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, 2000); Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA, 1993); Idem, *There ain't no Black in the Union Jack. The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London, 1987); W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1997); Robin D. G. Kelly, "How the West Was One: The African Diaspora and the Re-Mapping of U.S. History," in *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, ed. Thomas Bender (Berkeley, CA, 2002), 123–147; Catherine Molineux, "The Peripheries Within: Race, Slavery, and Empire in Early Modern England" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2005).

⁶ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York and London, 1978), 473–500, here 476.

⁷ Marx and Engels, "Manifesto," 475, 477.

⁸ Herbert Schwarzwälder, *Geschichte der Freien Hansestadt Bremen*, 4 vols. (Hamburg, 1987), is the standard general history of Bremen. For the legal conditions of inclusion in the mercantile estate of Bremen, see Peter Marschalek, "Der Erwerb des bremischen Bürgerrechts und die Zuwanderung nach Bremen um die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 66 (1988): 295–305. The Hanseatic League received international recognition as a state-like entity with the Peace of Westphalia, at a moment when its economic and political importance was all but gone. Bremen, Hamburg, and Lübeck served as the Hansa's collective guardians after the demise of the League, and continued to do so in the nineteenth

century. As I am dealing exclusively with Bremish merchants, I use the term “Hanseat” synonymously with “Bremish merchant,” unless specifically noted.

⁹ Cited by Rolf Engelsing, “England und die USA in der bremischen Sicht des 19. Jahrhunderts,” *Jahrbuch der Wittheit zu Bremen* 1 (1957): 33–65, here 55–56 (1861).

¹⁰ Sven Beckert has found that in mid-1850s New York, 26 percent of the elite were foreign-born. By 1870, this share had risen to 44 percent. The share of Germans was 6 percent in 1855 and 23 percent in 1870. Beckert included in his samples taxpayers assessed on real and personal wealth of \$10,000 or more in 1855, and of \$15,000 or more in 1870. Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850–1896* (Cambridge, MA et. al., 2001), 31 and 147.

¹¹ Ludwig Beutin, *Bremen und Amerika: Zur Geschichte der Weltwirtschaft und der Beziehungen Deutschlands zu den Vereinigten Staaten* (Bremen, 1953); Rolf Engelsing, *Bremen als Auswandererhafen, 1683–1880, Veröffentlichungen aus dem Staatsarchiv der Freien Hansestadt Bremen* 29, ed. Karl H. Schwebel (Bremen, 1961); Sam A. Mustafa, *Merchants and Migrations: Germans and Americans in Connection, 1776–1835*, Modern Economic and Social History Series, unnumbered vol., ed. Derek H. Aldcroft (Aldershot, UK et al., 2001); Walter Struve, *Germans & Texans: Commerce, Migration and Culture in the Days of the Lone Star Republic* (Austin, TX, 1996).

¹² For parallels to the English world of merchant capitalists, cf. Stanley D. Chapman, *The Rise of Merchant Banking* (London et al., 1984); Chapman, *Merchant Enterprise in Britain From the Industrial Revolution to World War I* (Cambridge, UK, et al., 1992).

¹³ Beckert, *Monied Metropolis* (see note 10); Idem, “Merchants and Manufacturers in the Antebellum North,” in *Ruling America: A History of Wealth and Power in a Democracy*, ed. Gary Gerstle and Steve Fraser (Cambridge, MA, 2005), 92–122; Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital, 1848–1875* (London, 1975), 241. The latter lists examples of family- and clan-based businesses in both the industrial and mercantile sectors. See also note 12. The broader, emerging middle class took many cultural clues from the mercantile elite of the Atlantic World. Hence, it is not surprising to find that both groups shared many features. See, for example, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850*, Revised Edition (London and New York, 2002).

¹⁴ Mack Walker, *German Home Towns: Community, State, and General Estate, 1648–1871* (Ithaca, NY and London, 1971).

¹⁵ Following the definition of the term by Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Petersson, Hanseats formed a *network*. Osterhammel and Petersson list as criteria for considering a social formation a network: 1. the “social interaction between more than two people,” 2. the “longevity” of these interactions, and 3. their reinforcement by institutions. The availability of “new information technology” lends to networks “the same stability [that characterizes] hierarchical organizations.” Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Petersson, *Globalization: A Short History* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford, UK, 2005), especially 21–27; quotes, 22–23. Hanseats met these criteria. The specific, shared ideologies they held added a further dimension to their interactions and gave an additional source of stability to their network.

¹⁶ The spoken languages among many Hanseats seem to have been English and Lower German, while merchants from the Rhineland or Southern Germany would have spoken in different dialects of German. While educated Germans would have been able to communicate in High German, modulations owed to the habits of speaking dialect, or, as in the case of Lower German, a different language altogether, can render smooth conversation among Germans of different regional backgrounds hard to achieve, even today. See Rolf Engelsing, “Bremisches Unternehmertum: Sozialgeschichte 1780/1870,” *Jahrbuch der Wittheit zu Bremen* 2 (1958): 7–112; Engelsing, “England und die USA” (see note 9), for the social distance between Bremen’s merchants and German hinterland elites.

¹⁷ Stanley Nadel, *Little Germany: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in New York City, 1845–80* (Urbana, IL, 1990); Carl F. Wittke, *Refugees of Revolution: The German Forty-Eighters in America* (Philadelphia, 1952); Bruce Levine, *The Spirit of 1848: German Immigrants, Labor Conflict, and*

the Coming of the Civil War (Urbana, IL, 1992); Hans L. Trefousse, *Carl Schurz, a Biography* (Knoxville, TN, 1982).

¹⁸ Andreas Schulz, *Vormundschaft und Protektion: Eliten und Bürger in Bremen, 1750–1880*, (Munich, 2002).

¹⁹ Justice John A. Campbell, later the Confederate States of America's assistant secretary of war, in his concurring opinion to Taney's majority opinion in the *Dred Scott* case pointed specifically to Bremen in stressing the contrast between German law that confers freedom to a person by virtue of his presence in a specific territory and the American legal situation. See *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, U.S. Supreme Court, Mr. Justice Campbell concurring, in: <http://www.tourolaw.edu/patch/Scott/Campbell.asp>. (Touro College Law Center, Project P.A.T.C.H.).

²⁰ Ralph Haswell Lutz, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und den Vereinigten Staaten während des Sezessionskrieges* (Heidelberg, 1911), 30–31; Hermann Wätjen, "Dr. Rudolf Schleiden als Diplomat in Bremischen Diensten, 1853–1866," *Bremisches Jahrbuch* 34 (1933): 262–276; "The State of the Nation," *New York Evening Post*, March 4, 1861, 2.

²¹ Engelsing, "England und die USA" (see note 9), 53.

²² Tyler G. Anbinder, "Fernando Wood and New York City's Secession from the Union: A Political Reappraisal," *New York History* 68 (January 1987): 67–92, explains the secession plan as a response to a long history of attempts by New York State politicians to gain control over crucial municipal institutions. Still, if Wood contemplated in earnest the founding of a new city-republic, he would not have found many modern examples besides the Hanseatic Cities.

²³ Engelsing, "England und die USA" (see note 9), 45; Beckert, *Monied Metropolis* (see note 10), 65; Wätjen, *Frühzeit des Nordatlantikverkehrs* (see note 24), 180–181.

²⁴ John G. B. Hutchins, *The American Maritime Industry and Public Policy, 1789–1914: An Economic History*, Harvard Economic Studies 71 (London and Cambridge, MA, 1941); Beutin, *Bremen und Amerika* (see note 11); Hermann Wätjen, *Aus der Frühzeit des Nordatlantikverkehrs: Studien zur Geschichte der deutschen Schifffahrt und deutschen Auswanderung nach den Vereinigten Staaten bis zum Ende des amerikanischen Bürgerkrieges* (Leipzig, 1932).

²⁵ Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846* (New York and Oxford, UK, 1991); John Ashworth, 'Agrarians' and 'Aristocrats': Party Political Ideology in the United States, 1837–1846 (London and Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1983); Ashworth, *Slavery, Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic*, 2 vols., vol. 1: *Commerce and Compromise, 1820–1850* (Cambridge, UK, 1995); Eugene Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made* (New York, 1969); Beckert, *Metropolis* (see note 10).

²⁶ Quote from Marx and Engels, "Manifesto" (see note 6), 475.

²⁷ "Kiesselbach, Wilhelm," NDB, vol. 11, 599–600. Wilhelm Kiesselbach, *Der amerikanische Federalist: Politische Studien für die deutsche Gegenwart*, 2 vol. (Bremen, London, and New York, 1864); Idem, *Socialpolitische Studien, nach den in der Deutschen Vierteljahrsschrift veröffentlichten Aufsätzen des Verfassers zusammengestellt und neu durchgearbeitet* (Stuttgart, 1862). See also Engelsing, "England und die USA" (see note 9), 57.

²⁸ Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, trans. José Harris and Margaret Hollis, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, unnumbered vol. (Cambridge, UK 2001 [1887]).

²⁹ Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, 3 vols., MEW 23–25 (Berlin, 1979), vol. 1, 61–170, vol. 2, 151–153, and vol. 3, 335–349.

³⁰ Marx, *Kapital*, vol. 1 (see previous note), 161–178.

³¹ Johann Smidt, *Denkschrift über die Judenfrage in Bremen*, as paraphrased by Salo W. Baron, *Die Judenfrage auf dem Wiener Kongress* (Vienna and Berlin, 1920), 105.