Influenced by Marx, Simmel sometimes described the division of labor as the cause of the growing incongruity between objective and subjective culture. But his formulations also allow the interpretation that the division of labor is only one facet of the broader alienation of subjective mind from its creations. The other is the loss of philosophical coherence and personal mastery associated with scientific specialization. Moreover, Simmel failed to explain why the timeless "tragedy of culture" became particularly acute during his own time. One can only speculate that it was the rapid acceleration in the growth of objective culture that left a relative deficit of subjective culture, or a loss of soul. Reading Simmel, it is hard to imagine that progressive French humanists and social scientists, including the sociologist Emile Durkheim, greeted the decades around 1900 as a promising new age of scientific specialization, cultural vitality, and political reform. But that only confirms that Simmel was a penetrating analyst of German academic culture.

Until the early 1920s, I should add, German sociology was essentially a modernist enterprise. It was therefore furiously attacked by such orthodox historians as Georg von Below. Indeed, Max Weber himself long remained indifferent to or skeptical of the emerging discipline. Even in his posthumous conceptual introduction to *Economy and Society,* the term *sociology* is characterized as "highly ambiguous." Nevertheless, there was a shift in Weber's emphasis sometime around 1909, when he helped to found the German Society for Sociology. From the methodology of the cultural and social sciences, the introduction of the "ideal type," and a predominantly historical approach, Weber moved toward the categorical analysis of "social relationships," even as his work on the sociology of the world religions and the preconditions of modern capitalism took on a nearly universal scope. I believe that this change of emphasis in Weber's work did not alter the foundations of his methodological individualism. But what I mainly want to suggest for the moment is that Weber became the greatest of the German classical sociologists, and that the questions he pursued in his own rigorous fashion were first raised by Ferdinand Tönnies and Georg Simmel.

CHAPTER TWO

Weber's Politics

Throughout his life, Weber was deeply engaged in the political issues of his time. Immediately after the First World War, he came close to taking up the calling of politics; but regional party officials, his health—or his innermost instincts—ultimately prevented that step across the line between political commentator and politician. The early portions of this chapter deal with his political writings from 1892 to the First World War. This was, for him, a particularly distressing phase in German politics. The "new era" announced when William II chose to govern without Bismarck in 1890 was soon followed by a period of political reaction. Two attempts to replace the antisocialist laws by new exceptional legislation against the Social Democratic Party failed to pass the Reichstag, but police and judicial harassment of the workers' organizations continued. At the same time, the last two decades before the war were dominated by a regime of high import duties in support of the East Elbian landowners and of heavy industry. Along with commercial exporters, it was the workers and other consumers who bore the cost of this policy. Indeed, the Agrarian League (1893) and the Conservatives imposed a distortion upon the German economy, retarding commercial and industrial development while artificially maintaining the socially and politically significant tradition of agrarian predominance. One of the consequences was a huge migration of former peasants from the eastern provinces, not only to the western industrial centers, but also to the United States and elsewhere abroad.

Max Weber began to comment upon the pertinent economic and social questions shortly after beginning his academic career at the University of Berlin in 1892. He was asked to participate in a survey of German agrarian

conditions by the Social Policy Association (Verein für Sozialpolitik). As the forum of the German Historical School of Economics, the Association had been chaired, since 1890, by Gustav Schmoller. Its aim was to bring academic expertise to bear upon current social problems, typically by considering draft laws and by directly influencing the leading government officials. The young Max Weber's participation in the agrarian survey was to facilitate his movement from legal to economic and social history, to launch him into a series of protracted political controversies, and ultimately to bring him into conflict with the leadership of the Social Policy Association itself.[1]

THE AGRARIAN QUESTION AND WEBER'S NATIONALISM

In Weber's *Situation of the Agricultural Workers in East Elbian Germany* (1892), he focused upon the most sensitive portion of the nationwide survey, the part that dealt with the great landed estates of the eastern provinces. The survey was based upon two questionnaires sent to all German agricultural *employers,* including the East Elbian estate owners, or *Junkers.* Weber was aware of the one-sided character of the information gathered in this way; but the critical acumen with which he approached the portion of the responses allocated to him effectively disarmed potential critics. Even the *Junkers* found something to praise in Weber's report, since he included an appreciation of their former services to Prussia and Germany. At the 1893 meeting of the Social Policy Association, Weber's report became the main subject of discussion.

Weber's analytical tactic in his report on East Elbian conditions was to distinguish a single dominant trend for the eastern provinces from subordinate local variations that were consistent with his overall thesis, and thus actually reinforced it. He drew upon the most reliable data reported by agrarian employers: land costs, population changes, prices, consumption patterns, and similarly objective statistics. He then constructed a set of subjective attitudes that were both internally coherent and consistent with the quantitative results. In areas where relatively poor soil encouraged cereal production, he found large estates, on which a traditional form of day labor still prevailed. The so-called *Instmann,* a dependent sharecropper who subsisted there, lived in a separate household that was nevertheless still partly integrated into the lord's manor. The lord allocated a garden plot and a small share of agricultural land to his dependent, which he cultivated in the latter's behalf. In return, the *Instmann* and his family worked with the landowner's unmarried domestic servants, occasionally supplemented by auxiliary hands, especially during the summer. In addition, the day laborer threshed out the lord's harvest during the winter months, taking a small fraction of the yield for himself.[2]

Instmann and *Gutsherr* (lord) stood in a dependency relationship that entailed some degree of mutuality. The sharecropper raised his own potatoes, a couple of pigs, and a cow or two. He thus partly sustained himself and his family, but he also enjoyed a fraction of the cereals produced by the estate. He thus shared his lord's interest in adequate harvests and grain prices. He relied upon the competence as well as the good will of the *Gutsherr;* and, as Weber insisted, the patriarchal context was not devoid of "personal feelings of honor and duty." Indeed, the intense relationship involved laid the basis for the Prussian military system, which served Prussia and Germany well, at least until 1871.[3]

But there was a second set of relationships among agricultural employees and workers in the east Elbian provinces, one that predominated in the fertile valleys south of the sandy northern lands, and it was rapidly growing in quantitative significance. Typically associated with the cultivation of sugar beets, it was linked more broadly to the advance of agrarian capitalism. In regions of rich soil, the trend was toward wage labor, which proved more profitable for the proprietor than remuneration in kind. Instead of resembling small homesteads, worker settlements were concentrated, essentially barracks, and poor in garden land. The emerging "free" agricultural laborer was better protected against poor harvests than the traditional *Instmann;* but he was a proletarian, with interests directly opposed to those of his employer, and of course he was highly mobile. Weber traced his situation to excesses committed by the landowners in the distribution of land after the liberation of the serfs in the nineteenth century. Technical improvements in capitalist agriculture seemed less significant to Weber than the erosion of traditional agrarian relationships in the most advanced regions.

The chief symptom of the conditions created by capitalist agriculture was an ever more pressing demand for seasonal labor. The raising of sugar beets was much more labor intensive than the cultivation of cereals on sandy soil. But the relatively self-sufficient *Instmann* system was incompatible with agrarian capitalism. What interested Weber about the results was not the agrarian owners' well-advertised labor shortage, but two related dimensions of population movement. On the one hand, Polish and Russian migrant workers made up an increasing share of the population in such regions as Silesia; on the other hand, the eastern provinces were rapidly losing German workers, not only to the industrial centers of Western Germany, but also to the United States and to other foreign countries. In the 1880s, the eastern borders had

been largely closed against immigrants; but the barriers were lowered again in 1890 to help the landowners. Worse, migrants who came to work in Germany during the summer—for low wages—could be forced back across the border for the winter. Permanent German smallholders found it hard to survive the resulting competition.

When Weber summarized his findings in the conclusion of his report and in his comments before the Social Policy Association, he highlighted three themes. To begin with, he warned against blaming the *Junkers* for the ominous trends in the eastern provinces. The *Junkers* had been a main support of the monarchy, sustaining a crucial service elite of military officers and civil servants. The changes that undermined their economic position were driven by technological and market forces beyond their control, and especially by shifts in the *psychology* of their employees. The most reliable of their workers now sought to escape the relationship of personal dependence they had formerly tolerated. When agrarian spokesmen cited Weber's recognition of the *Junkers'* former role to justify further subsidies, he refused to concede that a former governing elite should be rewarded for services it was no longer able to perform.[4]

The loss of population in the east might have been explained in purely economic terms, but Weber also insisted on "psychological" changes. The *Instmann* was no longer willing to accept his former dependence. "It is the powerful and purely psychological magic of 'freedom'" that causes precisely the best-situated German workers to leave areas in which the *Instmann* relationship still survives. The aspirations of the migrants may be illusionary, as may be their hope for their heirs. Still, "the changes in the psychological needs of human beings are almost greater than the transformations in the material conditions of life." Weber's formulation recalls Simmel on the impact of money on social relationships, for money and social complexity can engender "freedom," along with impersonality and isolation. Above all, there is a great difference between a precisely delimited and "objective" relationship and personal dependence.[5]

What Weber recommended as a result of his survey was the creation of various types of smallholdings in the eastern provinces. Economically threatened Polish or German estates could be bought and divided up, and the Prussian domain administration should take the lead in settling new generations of German farmers in the threatened regions. At the same time, the further immigration of Polish agricultural workers should be prohibited. Weber recommended "inner colonization," arguing for a tough brand of cultural nationalism: "Our cultural standards, the nutritional status of our agrarian populations and their needs are being pushed down to the level of a lower, more

easterly cultural stage . . . We hope to raise (our) domestic Polish proletariat to the level of German culture—but that will become impossible if the continuing influx of . . . eastern nomads . . . destroys this cultural work."[6] Weber here unhesitatingly wrote as an enemy of a "lower eastern" culture.

While working on his survey for the Social Policy Association, Weber also helped to launch a supplementary inquiry in collaboration with the Protestant Social Congress. That congress brought together Protestant pastors with lay social reformers. Its program was to ameliorate agrarian as well as industrial working conditions. Its course soon drew criticism from William II and from the orthodox leadership of the Protestant church. As a result, the organization split along ideological lines and relapsed into passivity during the mid-1890s. Between 1892 and 1894, however, the congress sponsored its own survey of agrarian working conditions. With Weber's advice, questionnaires were sent to Protestant pastors all over Germany, with the hope that those in rural posts would consult agricultural workers, rather than employers. Only a modest share of the questionnaires were returned, and the conclusions Weber had drawn from the Social Policy Association's survey were not substantially modified. At the 1894 meeting of the Protestant Social Congress, Weber largely reaffirmed his established position, but he also conveyed a degree of resignation. As a "class-conscious bourgeois," he again argued that the East Elbian landowners had once been an economically secure ruling class, but that the conditions of their ascendancy could not be resurrected. The former relationship between lords and peasants, brutal or not, had been replaced by the impersonality and the "objective hatred" of class antagonism. Once again, Weber underlined the "idealistic" aspirations of the peasants who left their homes, including their partly conscious "thirst for intellectual culture."[7]

Toward the end of his presentation, Weber apparently felt the need to signal the difference between his viewpoint and that of Naumann. A leading champion of Protestant social reform, Naumann had given the welcoming address at the meeting, and Weber registered his dissent.

> In the welcoming address of pastor Naumann yesterday, we heard an infinite yearning for human happiness, which surely moved us all. But precisely from our pessimistic standpoint . . . I believe we must renounce the idea of fostering . . . happiness by means of . . . social legislation. We want something else. . . . That which seems to us of value in human beings, autonomy, the profound drive upward, toward the intellectual and moral goods of mankind, that is what we want to . . . support even . . . in its most primitive form.[8]

The formulation is highly characteristic of Weber in its aversion to charity as a motive of social policy, and in its emphasis upon character formation rather than "happiness."

During the years between 1894 and 1912, Weber continued to pursue the issues raised by his work on eastern agrarian conditions, but he broadened his position. His critique of the status quo became less hopeful and decidedly more bitter. Shortly after presenting his findings to the Social Policy Association, he published an overview of the East Elbian situation in a neutral journal and in terms that echoed Marx. The eastern provinces had once produced a surplus based upon the labor-intensive exploitation of land. This surplus depended more upon personal domination than upon entrepreneurial skill, and it maintained a ruling elite that could afford to supply the state with military officers and high civil servants. But as this system of production faced increasing economic competition from abroad, the political capital accumulated by the agrarian landowners was increasingly used to bargain for domestic economic concessions. The result was a system of high tariffs and export subsidies that barely maintained the lifestyle of the landowners—at the cost of two fundamental transformations. First, the *Junkers* came to play the role and to speak the language of "dissatisfied alms receivers." They claimed to be entitled to surplus incomes that ultimately came out of the pockets of working-class consumers. Second, the continuing threat of economic decline forced the landowners to become agricultural capitalists, to think entrepreneurially about maximizing profits and minimizing costs. The old personal ties to their dependents were dissolved, and farm workers came to prefer money wages to remuneration in kind. Like their urban cousins, they became participants in the capitalist class war. The landowners' chief weapon against them was the employment of cheap migrant laborers, especially Poles.[9]

Weber's animus against Polish immigrants may strike us as unacceptable, but it was not inconsistent with his position on social policy questions. He insisted that Germany did not face a "natural law" of economic development from which there was no escape. He saw no reason to tolerate a situation in which freedom had become synonymous with homelessness for a large segment of the population, and he again insisted on a vigorous program of colonization. But he clearly doubted that his recommendations would be followed under prevailing political conditions.[10]

Apparently, his pessimism was justified, for in 1904 we find him bitterly opposing a proposal that reversed the thrust of his recommendations. A draft law was introduced to establish entailed estates (*Fideikommisse*) to be inherited by male primogeniture, inalienable, and associated with a family council.

The potential owners' "noble conduct of life" was to be guaranteed by a mere ten years of titular aristocratic rank, and the emperor himself was to consider the worthiness of the families thus privileged. The family of entailed estate owners could expect preferred access to the officer corps and the high civil service. Weber anticipated even higher grain tariffs, which under existing arrangements would yield substantial export subsidies as well. The drafters of the proposed law wrote in sentimental terms about future estate owners finding "a home for themselves and their families for all time," but they ignored the impact of the proposal on the makeup of the agrarian population in general and on the fate of agricultural workers in particular.[11]

In his scathing commentary, Weber characterized the draft law as an outright capitulation of the state to agrarian capitalism. Land prices were bound to rise; small farmers would be forced to move to more marginal lands or to leave the region; the "artificial protection of large-scale ownership and production" would deprive thousands of their homes. The proletarianization of the agricultural work force would accelerate, and so would the recourse to migrant labor. But the most devastating effect of the proposed measure would be its seductive effect upon the German bourgeoisie. Entrepreneurial capitalists were in effect offered the chance to become privileged rentiers, while ensuring their families' claims to public employment. Responding to the "contemptible yen for aristocratic titles," they would be "compensated for their minimal political influence" with a "second-class courtier's status." They could be expected to react to their *parvenu* status by pliability toward their superiors and "mandarin haughtiness" toward their "subjects." An arrogant bureaucracy committed to the preservation of the status quo was bound to turn Germany into a "vassal state."[12]

Weber's Freiburg Inaugural Address of 1895 must be understood in the light of his position on the agrarian question and on "social policy" more generally. The empirical focus of his address was on the province of West Prussia. Here too, Weber observed, German day laborers left regions of fertile estates, while Poles actually increased in relatively infertile counties. Once again, Weber wrote of the "primitive idealism" and the "magic of freedom" that drew German laborers away from a world in which traditional working relationships were being replaced by agrarian capitalism. Again he called for the closing of the border and a program of German resettlement.[13]

But Weber's emphasis in the inaugural address was not upon agrarian conditions themselves, but upon two other issues. First, he observed that Germans and Poles had for some time been in economic competition; yet victory in this contest had not gone to the "economically more highly developed or

talented nationality." Instead, the Poles had shown greater "adaptability" to the prevailing "conditions of existence." The "Slavic race" was able to adjust to a lower standard of living and thus to emerge victorious from the "process of selection" that caused Germans to leave the eastern provinces. Weber tried to avoid the issues posed by the variability of a "population's physical and psychological qualities" under changing "conditions of life." Nevertheless, he had certainly introduced the issue of "racial qualities," of "selection" and "adaptability" into the discussion of the agrarian question, and he had identified the Poles as a backward group.[14]

The other main point Weber wanted to make had to do with the role of value judgments in "social policy." He thought there was no escape from economic competition, and he once again repudiated the aim of maximizing human happiness or comfort.

> The question that moves us when we think beyond the grave of our own generation is not whether the human beings of the future will *feel* well, but what sort of human beings they will *be*. . . . Not well-being but the qualities . . . that make up human greatness and the nobility of our nature are what we want to breed into human beings.

Whether explicitly or not, Weber claimed, some have believed that the discipline of economics can find its standards in its own subject matter. They have stressed the pursuit of productivity; or they have sought justice in the distribution of goods. But economics is a "human science," and as such it must ask primarily about the "quality of human beings that are developed by economic and social conditions." Indeed, we "disciples of the German historical school" too easily succumb to the illusion that "we can avoid conscious value judgments altogether." But the consequence is that we are moved by "uncontrolled instincts, sympathies and antipathies." Instead we must be consciously guided by the "power-political interests of the nation." In economics too, our ultimate standard of judgment must be "*reason of state.*"[15]

Turning to the issue of political maturity, Weber warned against the assumption that economic success guarantees a vocation for politics. As an economist and a member of the middle class, Weber insisted that the Prussian landowners could no longer act in behalf of the whole nation, and that neither the bourgeoisie nor the working class was politically mature enough to exercise power. That is why Germans relied on Bismarck's Caesarian rule. The clear and present danger to Germany stemmed not from economic causes or from the much-lamented "interest politics" but from lack of political experience among large segments of the burgher stratum, from their "apolitical past." Neither the illusion of a value-free social policy nor the substitution of "ethical" for political objectives could reverse the drift toward passivity and impotence. A great effort of political education was needed. The suffering of the masses may "weigh upon the political conscience of the new generation; but what weighs upon it even more heavily today is the consciousness of our responsibility before history."[16]

Weber's inaugural address should not be read *only* as an expression of his commitment to power politics or to nationalism. For he also identified the ultimate aims of social policy with "human greatness," the aspiration to "freedom," and the desire to share in the "intellectual and cultural goods of mankind." His purpose was not only to exclude charitable grounds to pursue human well-being, but even more urgently to deny that social policy could be based upon such intra-economic norms as "productivity," or upon such implicit aims as the preservation of rural values or the disarming of radical Social Democrats. There may even have been a tactical element in Weber's choice of nationalism as the ultimate norm of social policy, for the typical use of nationalist rhetoric among agrarian conservatives and members of the educated middle class was directed against the Social Democratic Party, who were explicitly *excluded* from the "national" consensus that took itself to be "apolitical." To say merely that Weber was a nationalist would be to say very little, for almost all European intellectuals before the First World War were nationalists. What requires explanation is that Weber's nationalism was deliberately *inclusive*, and that this was extremely rare, at least in the German political context. It was backed, moreover, by the specific *rationale* he offered for his nationalism. What he really intended, as he insisted, was to foster valued *human qualities.*

Of course, that still leaves us with the need to account for Weber's hostility to the Poles, and for his introduction of racist language into the debate over agrarian conditions. Here he was guilty of prejudices that we certainly cannot share. As it happens, Weber recognized this flaw in his position, and he made the necessary corrections well before the First World War. Intervening in a debate on "the concepts of race and society" at the 1910 meeting of the Social Policy Association, for example, he challenged a colleague's racial speculations as "mystical." He saw no evidence that racial theory contributed in any way to the analysis of sociohistorical processes. On the contrary, as he pointed out, if "race" played a role at all, "we do not know it and will never know it." But where we have "known and sufficient grounds" for a particular phenomenon, "it conflicts with scientific method to put them aside in favor of an un-

controllable hypothesis." Two years later, he similarly registered his objection to any essentialist definition of "the nation": "A concept of the nation could presumably be constructed only . . . as follows: It is a community of feeling, the adequate expression of which would be a national state, and which thus normally tends to generate such a state. But the causal components that will lead to the emergence of national feeling in this sense may differ radically." Weber cited shared religious beliefs and a common language as possible grounds of experienced national identities, but he also stressed shared political memories or aspirations as sources of national feelings.[17]

In two sections of *Economy and Society,* sections that were written in 1910 or shortly thereafter, Weber came back to the issues of "race," "ethnicity," and "nationalism." His approach was conditioned by his definition of "communal" relationships in terms of the participants' feeling of belonging together. Thus he did not ask what racial or national attributes *were,* but how particular social groups came to *feel* and to *act as if* they shared "racial" or "national" characteristics, for "racial membership" will create a sense of community only "when it is subjectively experienced as a common quality." The "communal actions" that then arise express themselves as contempt or superstitious reserve toward those who are different. But the antipathy involved is "by no means tied only to inherited, but also to other conspicuous differences in the outward *habitus.*" Religious beliefs as well as status differences may limit intermarriage and thus ultimately produce "genuine anthropological differences," as among the Indian castes or among "pariah peoples," who are "despised and yet sought as neighbors, because they have monopolized indispensable techniques." Divergences of language and of custom may encourage the belief in distinctive ethnic identities, which may be associated with certain forms of social honor as well.[18]

Weber simply no longer believed in the reality of "racial qualities."

> All in all, "ethnically" determined communal action subsumes phenomena that would have to be carefully distinguished by a really exact sociological analysis. . . . The actual subjective effect of customs conditioned by heredity on the one hand, and by tradition on the other; the impact of all the various contents of "custom"; the effect of common language, religion and political action, past and present . . . the degree to which such factors engender attraction and repulsion, and especially the belief in affinity or disaffinity of blood; the consequences of this belief for . . . sexual relations (and) for the chances that various forms of communal action will develop . . . all this would have to be separately investigated. In the process, the collective concept "ethnic" would surely be thrown overboard. For it is totally useless for any rigorous analysis.

Weber has here adopted a sociological terminology that highlights the "chance" that the *belief* in common ethnicity will result in "communal action." He took a similar stance with respect to "the nation." The *belief* in a common national identity may but need not be encouraged by a common language, by similar customs, and especially by shared political memories or aspirations. Thus the allegiance of German-speaking Alsatians is reflected in the Colmar museum's collection of tricolored flags and other "relics" of the French Revolutionary regime, which are valued as symbols of the *grande nation*'s destruction of feudalism. It is these political memories that condition the German Alsatians' sense of civic and national identity; neither language nor ethnicity play a comparable role.[19]

In another early section of *Economy and Society,* Weber argued against the Marxist theory of imperialism. He noted that political expansion does not always follow the routes of export trade. The ancient Roman roads served military purposes, and this is true also of modern railroads. The governing objective of "imperialist capitalism," beginning with that of Rome, was the capture of rent-yielding land. The interests that have driven expansionist wars have been those of state creditors and, increasingly, of arms manufacturers. Military conflicts have yielded profits for these groups that have exceeded the earnings derived from rational entrepreneurship and peaceful commerce, and this regardless of the outcome of these conflicts. Moreover, successful aggression has normally enhanced the prestige and domestic power of the status groups that have led the nation in wartime. Weber's theory of imperialism, like his commitment to social reform, in other words, was prototypically *liberal.*[20]

More specifically, Weber pointed out that a "realm of honor" comparable with the "status order" affected the rivalries among the great powers in his own day. Feudal ruling strata, along with officers and officials, were the principal sponsors and beneficiaries of this striving for prestige. They were joined in their sentiments not only by those materially interested in capitalist imperialism, but also by intellectually privileged strata who saw themselves as the "bearers" of a specific national culture. Under their influence, the naked prestige of power became a "cultural mission" in behalf of a distinctive nationality. National identity is not always based upon language, and a shared ethnic background is neither necessary nor sufficient for the emergence of national feeling. Again according to Weber, it is the subjective *belief* in nationhood that really matters.[21]

Weber certainly remained a German nationalist, but he rejected essentialist conceptions of the nation as well as of "race"; he championed an exceptionally inclusive form of nationalism, and he was as committed to the aspirations he associated with "human greatness" as he was to Germany. Fully to understand his political stance, moreover, one must consider it in relation to the broader field of German academic opinion. When the First World War finally came in August 1914, most German academics greeted it with passionate enthusiasm. For the vast majority among them, the obligation "apolitically" to preach the national cause also implied the duty to ensure Germany's future by means of extensive territorial annexations, especially in Western Europe. They characterized the military conflict as a "cultural war" in behalf of German alternatives to such "Western" values as French democratic rationalism and English commercial individualism. In the "ideas of 1914," they tried to articulate distinctively *German* traditions and ways of dealing with the problems of modernity.

Weber shared his colleagues' enthusiasm for the war. Indeed, he believed that the cause of the nation could give meaning to the sacrifice of the individual. In a short popular essay published in 1916, he contrasted the radical pacifism of the Christian ethic with the wartime values of German patriots. While the smaller West European countries could play the role of neutrals, the German Empire had the responsibilities of a great power. Much that was of value in German culture originated at the margins of the German power state. Nevertheless, precisely because we are a great power, Weber argued, it is our duty "before history" to ensure a future *alternative* to "the regulations of Russian officials on the one hand, and the conventions of Anglo-Saxon 'society' on the other." A German defeat in the World War, he suggested, would reduce the diversity of cultural alternatives available to future generations.[22]

It is difficult for us today to reproduce the intensity of Weber's national feelings, but he shared those feeling with most of his colleagues. As an intellectual biographer, I am primarily interested in Weber's *deviation* from the widespread use of nationalist rhetoric to justify extensive annexations and to define a specifically German response to modernity in the "ideas of 1914." Despite the official proclamation of "peace within the fortress" (*Burgfrieden*), a virulent war-aims debate was launched by a right-wing coalition shortly after the war began. The ultra-annexationists subsequently organized the Independent Commission for a German Peace; after the Reichstag peace resolution of 1917, they formed the so-called Fatherland Party. In opposition to them, a minority of "modernists" called for moderation. Thus the German academic community quickly moved from the ostensibly harmonious enthu-

siasm of August 1914 to a confrontation between two hostile camps of unequal size. Weber not only opposed outright territorial acquisitions, trying to construe the war as a defensive one, but he also became one of the most penetrating critics of the ultra-annexationist coalition.[23]

Weber first publicly expressed his position on war aims toward the end of 1915, framing his case as a reconsideration of Bismarck's foreign policy so as not to offend against the *Burgfrieden*. His main point was that Bismarck's diplomacy had been essentially defensive, that he never dreamt of a "greater Germany," and that he resisted colonial expansion. Bismarck understood that Germany could not afford to alienate both England and Russia, given the determination of the French to recover Alsace-Lorraine. While the English long avoided entangling commitments, it was post-Bismarckian Germany's program of naval construction, not German economic competition, that ultimately brought England to the side of France. The "madness" of annexing Belgium, of course, did not occur to a single German politician before 1914. Above all, Bismarck knew that German foreign policy should not be dictated by military leaders. In two important respects, however, events had superseded Bismarck's policy toward the east. The close alliance with Austria-Hungary and Russian support of Pan-Slavism had nullified Bismarck's Reinsurance treaty with Russia, and that set the stage for a redirection of Austro-German policy in Central Europe. It was now possible to envision a Polish-German federation based upon a favored-nation relationship in economics and upon military "guarantees" in favor of Germany. But if such an arrangement could be achieved—with the agreement of Austria-Hungary—it required the acceptance of full Polish cultural autonomy.[24]

In early 1916, Weber was embittered by a ruthless public campaign in behalf of unrestricted submarine warfare, which was directed against the government of Bethmann Hollweg by the military leaders and the political right. Weber responded with a memorandum sent to the Foreign Office and to nearly twenty parliamentary leaders in early March of 1916. He pointed out that the proposed policy was likely to bring the United States into the war. The English could then draw upon the vast resources of their new ally; they could expect "many hundreds of thousands (of) well-armed and athletically trained American volunteers" to arrive on the Western front. Any realistic estimate of Germany's capacity to produce additional submarines made the total blockade of England "utopian" in any case. Weber was appalled by the moral cowardice of those unable to stand against the hysteria of the warmongers. He could not tolerate the fact that fateful decisions were reached without consideration of the probable consequences. He accordingly insisted that all

pertinent "calculations" be made with great care, and that all those involved in these calculations be formally "documented as responsible." In the face of an irrational outburst that signaled desperation, Weber called for political responsibility.[25]

Weber's most comprehensive critique of the ultra-annexationist program appeared in a late 1916 article entitled "Germany among the European World Powers." Because of its geopolitical situation, he argued, Germany had to avoid policies that alienated all of its neighbors or that drastically reduced its freedom of negotiation with potential allies. Yet precisely such policies were being urged by Pan-Germans and other "national" agitators. German annexations in northern France were bound to be unacceptable to the rest of Europe. The "absurdity" of German suzerainty in Belgium ignored the "dignity and sense of honor of a civilized people." Though currently without friends in Western Europe, Germany did have a close ally in Central Europe. This circumstance, together with the defeat of Pan-Slavism, offered a chance to extend German influence in Eastern Europe. Strengthened ties between Austria-Hungary and Germany might provide the basis for a larger "federation of nationalities," within which an autonomous Poland might enjoy "full self-government." Weber hoped that the Poles would accept German military "guarantees" against Russia. But what he emphasized against the ultra-annexationists was that Germany's eastern policy could not be "German national." The Polish language and Polish cultural autonomy had to be accepted without reservation. The vision of a "greater Germany" had to be abandoned. The German state would become multinational—and could thus act as the champion of the small nations. We may find it hard to imagine the Poles consenting to German suzerainty or a victorious German army making the required concessions. Still, it is worth noting that Weber here envisioned a political entity that encompassed a plurality of autonomous nationalities.[26]

Weber left no doubt that Germany was, and would continue to be, a great power. Therein lay the ultimate cause of the war: "Our honor," not territorial change or economic gain, he wrote, is at stake in it. Our survival is vital, Weber argued, and not only to ourselves. For "the small nations around us live in the shadow of our power." A defeat would force Germany into a "pariah position" that would disastrously affect all segments of society. Weber thus reintroduced the theme of defense to counter the prevalent rhetoric of conquest. He also questioned the motives of the ultra-annexationists. During a visit to Berlin, he reported, he was repeatedly told that a reconciliation with England would "lead to parliamentarianism," or he was challenged to name the domestic political consequences of a German withdrawal from Belgium. Domestic political issues and interests were thus helping to shape the foreign political demands of supposedly "national" politicians.[27] A policy of vanity and hate was stirring up emotions, where cool reflection and a "matter-of-fact" approach in foreign affairs were urgently needed.[28]

WEBER'S LIBERALISM

Reading Weber, one begins to ascribe to him a distinctive intellectual personality. He had a pronounced penchant for heterodoxy and a deep-seated commitment to liberal pluralism. His character was reflected, to begin with, in his choice of friends. He was close to a few senior colleagues, including the political scientist Georg Jellinek. He respected the economist Lujo Brentano, although they certainly had their disagreements. Among valued political allies were Friedrich Naumann and the jurists Gustav Radbruch and Gerhard Anschütz. All of these were "modernists" in my terminology; they voted with the liberal left or, more rarely, with the Social Democrats. But Weber also developed close relationships with many junior faculty and students. These he encouraged and supported with great constancy, almost regardless of their views. As a matter of fact, he typically disagreed with them in important respects, but liked them precisely because they took heterodox positions based on principle or because they were in need of support against orthodox senior colleagues. A good many of them were Jews, but he also appreciated the Russian and Polish students who valued him as a teacher.

His voluminous correspondence testifies to his enduring support, despite occasionally heated debates, for the young sociologist Robert Michels.[29] Michels was a Social Democrat who did not have his children baptized. In Prussia, a law had been passed to ensure that members of the Social Democratic Party could not become university instructors (*Privatdozenten*), even though that rank did not entail the status of a civil servant. When Michels tried to find a place at a non-Prussian university, moreover, he was turned away even in the absence of such a law. He therefore emigrated to Italy, where he joined the faculty at the University of Turin. In 1908, an annual conference of German university teachers (*Hochschullehrertag*) discussed the freedom of learning and teaching, primarily in order to exclude specified religious affiliations for certain positions. In response, Weber reported on Michels' experience to a liberal newspaper and confessed himself unable "to behave as if we possessed anything like 'freedom of teaching'" that someone could threaten to take away. "In the interest of good taste and of *truth* [there should be no further talk] of the "freedom of learning and teaching" in Germany. For the fact is

that . . . the *freedom of learning exists only within the limits of political and confessional acceptability*—not outside it." In a more extended commentary, he further insisted that faculty should not use the classroom to convey their "world views" or to stipulate the ultimate norms of social policy. They should confine themselves to empirical and logical analysis, while announcing their personal commitments only in the public arena, where they were subject to criticism.[30] Many German academics linked academic freedom to the abstract "purity" of learning and to the "apolitical" posture. Weber was not satisfied with that; he demanded the principled *toleration of diversity,* along with a distinction between classroom teaching and public debate.

In 1908, the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Heidelberg had to recommend a candidate for the second senior position in philosophy to the state Ministry. Max Weber wanted to bring Georg Simmel to Heidelberg, but the posture of Wilhelm Windelband, the remaining senior philosopher, was deliberately ambiguous. Moreover, a negative reaction to Simmel reached Karlsruhe from Berlin, where Simmel taught in a junior position. We now know that Professor Dietrich Schäfer of Berlin wrote to Karlsruhe to signal that Simmel was an "Israelite through and through." Schäfer further contrasted "our German-Christian *Bildung*" with Simmel's "world view," which was characterized by "acid and negating" criticism. Windelband too had written of Simmel's "destructive" (*einreissend*) criticism, and these terms were part of a hateful code intended to contrast "Jewish" with "German" modes of thought. Weber did not know about Schäfer's letter; but he was certain that some sort of intervention from Berlin had ruined Simmel's chances, and he found out enough about Windelband's position to feel deeply disappointed and, indeed, disgusted.[31]

The young economist Franz Eulenburg published a solid and courageous report on the difficulties faced by poorly paid instructors (*Privatdozenten*), who made up a rapidly increasing portion of the teaching faculty at German universities. This attracted Weber's attention and caused him repeatedly to recommend Eulenburg for an associate professorship. Since Eulenburg was Jewish, Weber once again ran into the prejudices then faced by Jewish academics at German universities. In a letter to Brentano, he complained of always "having to see the least intelligent 'Arian' preferred to the ablest Jew." This reaction lends credibility to the story told by Paul Honigsheim that Weber once fantasized about teaching a seminar made up entirely of Russians, Poles, and Jews. Honigsheim also recalls Weber's sympathy for the young economist Emil Lederer. Mommsen and Schwentker have collected essays that analyze Weber's relationships not only with Michels, with the Protestant Social Congress, and with Naumann, but also with such pronounced outsiders as Ernst Toller, Ernst Bloch and Georg Lukacs.[32]

I dwell on these particulars, not only to challenge speculations about Weber as an anti-Semite, but also—and mainly—to portray Weber as an instinctive liberal. I mean to point up his *cultural individualism,* which echoes Wilhelm von Humboldt and is recaptured in John Stuart Mill's ideal of an open intellectual community. In such a community, radical differences among a plurality of conflicting beliefs and ways of life are preconditions of intellectual progress. The model suits not only Weber's insistence upon the toleration of heterodoxy, but also his vision of economics as a "human science" that tries to affect the *qualities* of future populations, rather than securing their welfare. Weber admired autonomous individuals who act upon carefully considered principles. He insisted that intellectuals must be capable of swimming against the tide of established opinion, and he despised those whose pliable natures could adjust to almost anything in their environment that would help them succeed.

Another ingredient in Weber's liberal orientation was his commitment to "the rights of man" or "human rights" (*Menschenrechte*). Since he can easily be misunderstood on the subject, we have to trace his views back to the reasoned convictions of Jellinek, which he largely shared. Though a political scientist, Jellinek traced the historical origins of the idea of human rights not to the French Revolution but to declarations attached to the constitutions of several American states at the time of the Continental Congress, beginning with that of Virginia. These in turn were rooted in the principle of the freedom of religion that motivated the English Puritan Levelers, along with such American religious sectarians as Roger Williams. In the American setting, the insistence upon freedom of religion was transformed into the broader doctrine of "subjective" rights, rights that limited the power of the state over the individual. Jellinek distinguished this religiously motivated restriction of state power from the idea of natural law. In any case, he saw the "rights of man" as a product of history—or as a foundational commitment laid down in a constitution, not as an axiom discovered in nature. Moreover, he recognized the contribution of what Weber was to call the "Protestant ethic" to this fundament of modern freedom.[33]

Weber expressed his own view of "human rights" in his 1906 assessment of the prospects for liberalism in Russia. His comments on the Russian Revolution of 1905 were originally intended as notes to a translated draft constitution produced by an alliance of Russian émigré liberals and social revolutionaries (*Befreiungsbund*). These notes became a lengthy essay because of Weber's

passionate interest in the cause of Russian "Semstwo" liberalism. Though the Semstwos themselves were indirectly representative bodies of the estate type, the draft constitution that attracted Weber's attention envisaged a bicameral legislature (duma) with a directly elected lower and an indirectly elected upper house. The intention was to transform the Tsarist regime into a constitutional monarchy. The Russian liberals expressed none of the disdain for parliamentary institutions that had become fashionable in Germany, but the central planks of their agenda were the "four-part" (general, equal, direct, and secret) suffrage, and constitutionally anchored "human rights." The Semstwo liberals took it to be their duty to introduce fully equal suffrage, even though they knew that this was risky, given the cultural backwardness of the Russian peasants. As a social group, the Russian liberals were middle-class intellectuals, not capitalist bourgeois, and they were seconded by the more radical "third element" of officials attached to the Semstwos. Weber thought them comparable in their principled individualism to the members of the Frankfurt Parliament of 1848.

The main point of Weber's commentary was that the fight for individual freedom in Russia faced very heavy odds, since the extended historical developments that allowed individual rights to emerge in Western Europe had not had time to do their work in Russia. The problem of differences among nationality groups had not been resolved, and the separation of church and state had not been achieved. More important, the Russian peasants were interested primarily in land redistribution, which in itself posed formidable problems. The belated advent of capitalism, moreover, awakened class conflicts that might well foster revolutionary violence and bureaucratic centralization, rather than middle-class liberalism and gradualist social reform. The Leninists explicitly rejected the thesis that the development of capitalism—and of its contradictions—had to be complete before the proletarian revolution could take place. Weber even detected an affinity between the bureaucratic centralism of the anarcho-syndicalists and that of the Tsarist regime. "The political 'individualism' of the West European 'rights of man'. . . was created partly by former religious convictions . . . and (partly by) the optimistic faith in a natural harmony of interests among free individuals that has now been destroyed forever by capitalism." The old middle-class individualism, having been abandoned by the propertied and educated strata, was unlikely to convert the lower middle class, not to mention the revolutionary masses.[34]

In the last six pages of his essay on the revolution of 1905, Weber brought his themes together in an extraordinary sequence of tension-ridden paragraphs. Once again, he insisted upon the unique historical conditions that

gave rise to modern freedom: the expansion of Europe, the distinctive economic and social structure of the early capitalist epoch in Western Europe, the rise of modern science, and especially religious ideas that interacted with specific political constellations and material preconditions to form the cultural values of modern man. Current developments, unfortunately, were pointing away from "democracy" and individualism, not only in Russia, but elsewhere as well. Weber was thinking mainly of bureaucratization: "*Everywhere, the steel housing (Gehaüse) for the new bondage stands ready.*" The slowing down of technical and economic "progress," the victory of "rent" over "profit," and the exhaustion of the remaining "free soil and free markets" might well make the masses pliable enough to enter that housing. Certainly if everything depended only upon the "interest constellations" created by material conditions, then all the signs pointed toward "unfreedom": "It is ridiculous to ascribe to high capitalism . . . an elective affinity with 'democracy' or 'freedom.' The question can only be: under its domination, how are these things 'possible' at all in the long run?"[35] This, for Weber, was the burning question of his time.

The pessimistic tone of Weber's analysis, however, must not be interpreted as resignation. While acknowledging that Semstwo liberalism faced great obstacles in the short run, he thought, it might ultimately play the role of an inspiring memory, much as the Frankfurt Parliament did in Germany. Indeed, Weber expected liberalism to retain its power as an ideal, and this for quite specific reasons: The current estrangement between the upper-middle-class intellectuals and their "proletarian" cousins could be overcome. The influence of "populist romanticism" was bound to be undermined by the further development of capitalism. It might be replaced by Marxism, but the "immense and fundamental agrarian problem" could not be mastered by the "intellectual means" embodied in Marxism. On the contrary, it could be solved only by the organs of self-government. This, indeed, could eventually bring the two wings of the intelligentsia back together again. "Thus it seems a life-and-death question that liberalism continue to find its vocation in fighting against bureaucratic as well Jacobin centralism, and to try to infuse the masses with the old individualistic principle of the inalienable rights of man, which has become as 'trivial' to us West Europeans as rye bread is to those who have enough to eat." Liberals must act while there is time. The "much-maligned 'anarchy' of production and the equally maligned 'subjectivism'" may offer a last chance to "construct 'free' cultures from the ground up," in America as in Russia. And that is why we must regard the "Russian war of liberation" with profound sympathy, regardless of national differences and even of national interests.[36]

National interests were important to Weber, but so was the "freedom" of the autonomous "personality." This is clear also from Weber's interventions in debates at meetings of the Social Policy Association during the decade before the First World War. In a 1905 session on working relationships in large-scale industry, for example, he explicitly identified his "value perspective" as a "characterological" one; he wanted to know what "becomes of the human beings" who are placed in specific conditions of existence. He called attention to the language used in the disciplinary rules set down for workers in German factories. These spelled out punishments for various kinds of transgressions in what Weber termed "police jargon." The less "German citizens have to say in political matters," Weber concluded, the more they will insist upon their right to rule in their own enterprises. But this "philistine yen to dominate" has not only been costly for Germany; it has also "distorted the character of our working population." Seconding Brentano, Weber then protested the one-sidedness of German labor law, which elaborately protected strikebreakers, while allowing employers to threaten workers with dismissal if they joined unions. For labor, however, unions were valuable in themselves, whether or not they achieved much in their conflict with management. For they alone fostered and sustained the "comradely honor" and "idealism" of the working class. One is reminded of Tönnies's sense that the trade unions represented a rare new source of "community" in the modern world. The Social Democratic Party, though less desirable than the trade unions, was nonetheless indispensable as a shield in the "petty war against the Prussian state and its police."[37]

In another session of the 1905 meeting, Weber confronted Gustav Schmoller on the question whether government representatives should be added to the boards of large combines and cartels. Schmoller had apparently spoken deprecatingly of "parliamentary chatter." In an admittedly exaggerated simplification, Weber answered that Germany's "pseudo-constitutional" regime had none of the advantages but all the disadvantages of the parliamentary system, including party patronage. He therefore suspected that state positions on corporate boards would not attract "altruists," as Schmoller had suggested. Instead, they would serve as "benefices" for the clients of the dominant parties. Weber further believed that an alliance between heavy industry and the Prussian civil service would simply reinforce the stultifying effects of bureaucratization. Indeed, he asked whether the industrialists were not actually *interested* in the survival of the Social Democratic Party (as a threat to the middle class), just as the Social Democrats were *interested* in the repression that strengthened their following among the workers.[38]

In a 1907 debate on German municipal government, Weber challenged Adolf Wagner, another senior member of the association. Wagner had urged modifications of universal suffrage in municipal elections that would prevent the Social Democrats from taking control. Weber countered that the time was long past when tinkering with universal suffrage was politically acceptable. Besides, who had more to fear from Social Democratic access to local government: "bourgeois society or Social Democracy," particularly "those elements within it that are the bearers of revolutionary ideologies"? Like other mass organizations, the Social Democratic Party was undergoing bureaucratization. Visible tensions between the interests of party functionaries and the aspirations of revolutionary ideologues within the party were bound to be aggravated if allowed to develop. Certainly if Social Democrats were admitted to veterans' organizations and the like, their revolutionary sentiments would be seriously threatened.

> I would have liked to take our German princes to the Mannheim (Congress of the Social Democratic Party) and show them [how the delegates behaved]. . . . The Russian Socialists . . . threw their hands up at . . . this party, which they . . . worshiped as the bearer of a grand revolutionary future . . . and in which the . . . lower-middle-class physiognomy emerged so plainly: a lame . . . carping . . . in place of the revolutionary energy of belief to which they were accustomed from their own assemblies.

In control of a municipal government, the Social Democrats might at first do some posturing. But in the interests of their constituents, they would ultimately pursue neo-mercantilist policies, offering inducements to attract employers to their towns. The commune of Catania in Sicily, currently in the hands of the Social Democrats, was one of the most flourishing towns on the island. Policies inspired by middle-class fear of Social Democracy, Weber suggested, were more damaging to German politics than Social Democracy itself. Certainly nothing impaired German prestige abroad as much as the withholding of domestic freedoms that other nations had achieved.[39]

In 1909, the Social Policy Association discussed the public enterprises of municipalities. In his comment, Weber again opposed Wagner in particular, but he also charged many of the senior members with an excess of enthusiasm for bureaucracy. Indeed, he referred to the younger generation as "we who think differently." He could not agree that private entrepreneurs should be replaced, where possible, with public officials. He repeated that to add state

representatives to the boards of large corporations would tend to adjust social policy to the needs of employers. He fully acknowledged the "technical superiority of the bureaucratic mechanism" and the high moral standards of the German civil service. He also pointed out, however, that France, the United States, and even Britain did very well without reliable officials, especially in foreign affairs. But many of us, as Weber insisted, take the power of the nation to be our ultimate value.[40]

Weber thus at least partly reinvoked the standpoint of his Freiburg Inaugural Address. Yet his formulations seem to highlight another, equally salient concern. He called up a dark vision of the ancient Egyptian bureaucracy, which might be reincarnated in a technically perfected form.

> The question that concerns us is not: How can one change anything in this development?—For one cannot do that. Rather: what follows from it? . . . We recognize . . . that, in spite of all exceptions, [honorable and able] people do have a chance to rise in the hierarchy of officialdom, just as the universities . . . claim that they [offer] a chance . . . for the gifted. But awful as the thought may seem that the world will some day be made up of nothing but professors . . . even more dreadful is the thought that it will be inhabited only by those little cogwheels, those human beings . . . glued to a little post and striving for a little bigger one—a condition you will find, just as in the papyri, so increasingly in the spirit of today's civil service, and above all among its *heirs, our students.*
>
> [It is as if we were] human beings who need "order" and nothing but order, who become nervous and cowardly when that order is weakened for a moment. . . . That the world should know nothing but such men of order—that is the development in which we are involved . . . and the central question is not how we are to support . . . it, but what we have to set against [it] . . . to preserve a remainder of humanity . . . from this total domination of bureaucratic ideals.[41]

This vision of the human cost of bureaucratization is surely more passionate than anything Weber wrote about the primacy of the national cause.

Weber's 1909 response to Wagner was a symptom of increasing tensions among divergent policy preferences within the Social Policy Association. By 1909, after all, Weber had challenged all of the prominent senior members of the association except Brentano, who shared his commitment to trade union rights. Weber was worried about the impact of internal dissensus upon the public influence of the association—and upon the cause of social policy itself. It did not help that influential industrialists and employers' associations became increasingly vocal in their complaints about the "Socialists of the Lectern"—and in demanding that their viewpoint be represented among academic economists. In the so-called "Bernhard Case" of 1908, Weber publicly objected to the Prussian Ministry of Culture's "imposition" of a pro-entrepreneurial economist upon the University of Berlin. Shortly thereafter, he chose not to attend the celebration of Gustav Schmoller's seventieth birthday, but wrote a letter instead. Early in 1912, he tried to organize a meeting in which younger members of the organization were to express their continued support for the overall objectives of their elders—and thus to stem the tide of public sentiment against reform. But Brentano refused to go to Berlin, and Schmoller cited reasons of health to excuse himself. Weber then attempted to launch a less formal demonstration by middle-class supporters of socially progressive policies, but substantive and personal differences caused this initiative to fail as well. In fact, Weber broke off relations with Brentano during the negotiations, which must have increased his sense of isolation.[42] It was as if the whole tradition of academic social policy was now at risk, even as Germany moved toward the First World War.[43]

TOWARD A DEMOCRATIC COALITION

In 1917, Weber's political commentary entered a new phase as he began to outline reforms that were to be completed before the end of the World War. He published two brief articles on the democratization of the Prussian electoral system as well as a series of essays for the liberal *Frankfurter Zeitung* that he subsequently revised and expanded into a treatise on "Parliament and Government in Germany under a New Political Order." Published before the collapse of the old regime, this treatise will be our main source in the following pages. In the preface to "Parliament and Government," Weber announced that his arguments would not be confined to the realm of science but would encompass value judgments, as would his attacks upon the reactionary speculations of the "academically educated." "We . . . who have stayed at home," he wrote, "have no business distinguishing 'German' political forms from 'Western' alternatives, as if we had no liberal traditions of our own. We certainly should not tell our men at the front that they will have bled in vain unless extensive new territories are annexed. Instead, we must transform our political institutions, so that the returning soldiers will be able to participate in shaping

the nation's future. To that end, we must be willing to deal with 'sober civic' issues of political technique that may not satisfy the cultural pretensions of our 'literati.'"[44]

Weber began a systematic critique of the Wilhelmian sociopolitical system with an attack on the "Bismarck legend" that had been created by politically immature publicists. According to the current "literati's fashion," Bismarck's liberal collaborators and rivals in the construction of the German Empire were people without talent, political instinct, or vision; they were unrepresentative of the "German spirit." In the face of this orthodoxy, Weber conceded the limitations inherent in the laissez-faire economics of the old liberal leaders, but he identified with their determination to create a politically liberal framework that could endure beyond the era of Bismarck's personal dominance. The fact that they failed was due not to their lack of leadership but to Bismarck's profound contempt for mankind and to his inability to tolerate men of independent views among his competitors. To defeat his liberal rivals, Bismarck engaged in the worst sort of demagogic tactics, using the seven-year military budget and the anti-Socialist law not only to obtain the concessions he needed, but also to impose illiberal solutions that destroyed his principled opposition. In an analogous way, he refused to accept the trade unions' right to represent the interests of the workers, while unsuccessfully wooing the working class with social insurance payments from a state in which they played no role. The police and judicial harassment institutionalized by the anti-Socialist law virtually forced the Social Democratic Party into the fruitless posture of unconditional opposition, while the dramatized threat of revolution kept the middle class pliant from sheer cowardice. A state that based its military system on honor and comradeship deprived the proletariat of comradely honor, the only possible source of working-class idealism. Thus Bismarck's heritage left (1) a huge deficit in the political education of the nation, (2) a powerless Parliament unable to attract political talents, and (3) the unchecked rule of the government bureaucracy (437–50).[45]

According to Weber, the modern world is characterized in any case by the steady advance of bureaucracy. Just as economic modernization is equivalent with progress toward capitalism, so the modernization of the state entails the emergence of a bureaucracy based upon specialized training, secure salaries, pensions and promotions, designated spheres of competence, systematic record keeping, and a clearly defined hierarchy of ranks. Municipal government, the modern army, and private capitalist enterprise too are characterized by bureaucratic organization and thus by the separation of the official, the officer, and the employee from the means of administration, warfare, and production. The parallel development of capitalism and bureaucracy is no accident, for modern Western capitalism rests upon rational calculation; it therefore needs a system of public administration and justice whose workings are predictable, like the operations of a machine (450–54).

Modern political parties too are increasingly bureaucratic in structure. They have always been voluntary organizations, dependent upon solicitation to increase their membership and influence. In recent times, however, they have evolved from associations of notables to mass organizations administered by salaried officials. The parties must still compete for votes, but the ordinary voter and party member has played a decreasing role in determining party programs. Notables have continued to be important, whether as financial patrons or as figureheads, but much of their former influence has passed to party secretaries, publicists, and other professionals (454–55). Modern parties have been of two main types: Some have primarily pursued the patronage of offices captured by a victory at the polls. Particularly in the United States, such patronage parties have adjusted their platforms to attract as many votes as possible; party "bosses" have traded in patronage to deliver elections. But even in the United States, as resources become scarcer, the efficiency of specialized training is pointing the way toward bureaucratization. The second type of party has been more characteristic of Germany; it has been committed to a "worldview," and has accordingly pursued fixed *substantive* ends. The Catholic Center is an example, and so is the Social Democratic Party; yet particularly the latter, the largest and most democratic party in the German political system, also illustrates the increasing convergence between the patronage and the "worldview" types of modern political parties (457–58).

Against this background sketch of bureaucratization, Weber developed a penetrating critique of the existing German political system. The fatal flaw of that system, he thought, lay in the absence of responsible political leadership. Ever since Bismarck's time, the German state had been governed by honorable civil servants, who tried to stand "above" the political parties in the Reichstag rather than taking responsibility for a deliberate political course. Emperor William II's misguided determination to govern in person led to offensive and pointless gestures rather than to reflected policies, for the monarch was surrounded only by an interested courtly clique and by men who ignored their elementary duty to *resign* when egregious mistakes were made. In short, there were no responsible political leaders, no one to restrain the administrative rule of the bureaucracy, and no genuine intermediary between the government and the Reichstag. In England, by contrast, a monarch retained a measure of political influence precisely by withdrawing from day-

to-day political decisions; a working Parliament represented the citizens in the face of officialdom, and genuine political leaders guided a state that was able to attract the largely voluntary submission of much of the globe. Yet this polity was denigrated as a "night watchman's state" by the German "literati" (467–72).

Article 9 of the German Constitution of 1871 forbade leading statesmen, who had to be members of the Federal Council, from holding or retaining their seats in the Reichstag. Thoughtlessly adapted from the English separation of Lords and Commons, this disastrous provision prevented party leaders from taking ministerial positions without severing their parliamentary roots—and thus condemning themselves to impotence. As a result, young aspirants for political leadership were shunted away from the Reichstag, which really became a recruiting ground for civil servants. This seemed a "German" solution of the parliamentary problem to the academic "literati," who "examine officials, and feel themselves to be officials and the fathers of officials," and who sneer at "West European" and "democratic" place hunting (476–77). Weber countered that the conventions of the civil service hierarchy do not favor personal independence and the talent for politics, which requires conflict and the ability to recruit allies and followers. Of course there are flaws in the selection of leaders by the parties, as there are in any human arrangement. The rule of the parties may force us to accept imperfect individuals, but the authoritarian regime leaves us no choice; it simply gives us functionaries to obey (481–82, 484). "Philistine moralists" harp upon the obvious fact that the "will to power" motivates aspirants to political leadership, while the "egotistic striving for office" moves their followers. Candidates for civil service posts, by contrast, are presumably never conformist "climbers" *(Streber)*—or hungry for salaries. The truth is that we must create a framework in which such all-too-human traits will help to select political talents. That is why party leaders must have a real chance at power and responsibility. That too, Weber wrote, is why we need a *working* Parliament, in which service on commissions and acquired expertise will be as important as good speeches. We need true political leaders, not mere demagogues. Politically neutral officials can never take their place (485–87).

Weber contrasted the parliamentary system that made England a "democracy" (*Volksstaat*), with the "negative politics" of Germany's "authoritarian state." Since the Reichstag could only grant or refuse budgetary provisions, and accept or reject policies proposed to it, it was bound to confront the government as a hostile force. It could express the dissatisfaction of its constituents, but it was never asked to participate in the formulation of political

programs. The highest places in the monarchical regime were occupied by successful civil servants or courtiers. Neither the struggles for power nor patronage ceased under these circumstances. But they took covert and subaltern forms, and they consistently favored policies acceptable at court. The political parties consequently developed a "will to powerlessness," while extra-parliamentary forces were encouraged to intervene in the decision-making process (473–76). In this "pseudo-constitutional" context, it was taken for granted that Prussian officials and district administrators (*Landräte*) must be politically conservative, for that was what the claim to "stand above the parties" really meant (500–501). The Social Democratic Party actually collaborated in "negative politics." Its members cultivated their class solidarity and the antipolitical vision of "brotherliness." Its leaders were given no incentive to break out of the "ghetto existence" that was thus perpetuated. "Negative politics" was perfectly consistent, moreover, with blatant concessions to the material interests of government supporters. That is why the representatives of big capital stood united behind a regime that obviously benefited them (503–5).

Weber's account of English parliamentary government was highly specific. The leading statesmen needed the confidence of the strongest political party or of a parliamentary majority. The members of the government had to answer critical questions put to them by the opposition and to control the administrative apparatus in the sense desired by the people's representatives. To help them in that task, they had the right of parliamentary inquiry (*Enqueterecht*); they could compel civil servants to testify before them under oath. They could thus partly match the specialized knowledge and penetrate the administrative records of the bureaucracy, overriding the official secrecy invoked by administrators to protect their prerogatives. The proceedings of the Parliament and of its commissions were public, so that they contributed to the political education of the citizens. To Weber, it was ludicrous that German literati looked down upon the proceedings of the British parliament from the height of their impotence (488–91).

The key question for the German polity, according to Weber, was how to make the Reichstag fit to exercise power. Article 9 and various procedural rules must be altered to meet this objective. But above all, Germany needed parliamentarians who could make politics their full-time occupation. This is the context in which Weber introduced the distinction between living *from* and living *for* politics. The employees of political parties and pressure groups earn their living *from* their positions. Among people in nonpolitical occupations, some are more "available" (*abkömmlich*) than others, in that they can free

themselves from their ordinary duties to take on political work; lawyers are the outstanding example. Party officials can no longer be dispensed with, but they can make it difficult for independent leaders to reach high office, and that difficulty must be overcome. The notion that the winners of political contests are typically unscrupulous "demagogues" is almost certainly exaggerated, but some sort of demagogic solicitation of voters really is indispensable. Nevertheless, the exposure of candidates during elections is no worse a means of selection than the collegial assessment of candidates for academic appointments, for example (533–37). In modern mass democracies, the selection of leaders is likely to take on a plebiscitary character. Yet unlike pure Caesarism, plebiscitary leadership is relatively stable and controllable, limited by legally guaranteed civil rights, and by the leader's apprenticeship in the usages of parliamentary work. Besides, the plebiscitary leader whose *program* fails can be peacefully replaced (539–40).

My reading of Weber here conflicts with that of Wolfgang Mommsen. Stressing Weber's commitment to plebiscitary leadership democracy, Mommsen claims that he did not believe in the sovereignty of the people: "Political leaders create for themselves a majority in parliament as well as amongst the people at large . . . not so much on the basis of a positive program, but by displaying their charismatic power of persuasion and positive demagogy. . . . Hence decisions arrived at by debate and rational deliberation [are] gradually superseded by plebiscitarian decisions." Mommsen's case, I believe, is based upon an incomplete understanding of the relationship between the charismatic leader and his followers, in which the claim to obedience seems unconditional, and the role of the political program is ignored. But one has to remember Weber's insistence upon an *active* Parliament, one that can play a controlling role, and a politically educative one. I am sympathetic to the view that liberalism implies rational deliberation and debate, rather than the de facto buying of votes, for example. But I cannot agree that the chief threat to such deliberation in the contemporary world stems from the plebiscitarian element in such institutions as the American presidency. And the American presidency was Weber's main example of plebiscitarian democracy. More important, I would point to Weber's clear distinction between Caesarism and plebiscitary leadership, which lies in the role of the Parliament, its committees, its norms and usages. Finally, I want to stress Weber's commitment to *constitutional* democracy and, in that context, to "human rights" as well.[46]

In part 1 of *Economy and Society,* which was written *after* part 2, Weber referred to the "division of power" as a means of limiting, reducing, or "minimizing" domination. He was particularly interested in the *constitutional* division of power, in which there is a functional subdivision and distribution of powers among governing individuals and bodies that force them to reach a "compromise" before issuing legitimate directives. In such small-scale polities as Swiss cantonal governments and American "town meetings," he saw an opportunity for "direct democracy," and he called attention to the more or less consensual rule of "notables" as well. He reserved his most intensive analysis, however, for uninstructed or "free" parliamentary representation in large polities, which cannot really function without the active intervention of voluntary political parties, whose "candidates" and "programs" are presented to "politically passive" citizens. In mass polities, this is the only viable means of establishing and articulating the political preferences of the electorate. In "constitutional" government, according to Weber, a traditional ruler participates in a regime based upon the division of power. The other alternatives are "plebiscitary-representative government," in which a plebiscitary president shares power with a parliament, and "purely representative government," in which the political leader is chosen by a parliament, as in England. The several organs of representative government can be further "limited" and "legitimized" by means of referenda. Free representation combined with parliamentary institutions as a political form, Weber added, is unique to the "West."[47]

When Weber asked himself why there were *democratic* opponents of parliamentary government, he pointed to the *voluntary* character of party politics. The popular leader does not emerge directly from a mass constituency. Rather, he seeks power and responsibility to "realize specific political ideas," and he begins by seeking party support *for his program.* Thus the leader *proposes* both policy ends and political means, and the voters dispose of his recommendation by accepting or rejecting it (547). The safeguard against merely demagogic leaders lies in their prior political work and in their commitment to the norms of their political system. The "masses," regardless of their social status, are too easily led by transitory emotions. But the setting of a political course demands cool heads, which is why it should be left to leaders clearly designated as responsible for the programs they recommend. Weber expected the First World War to be followed by years of economic and political crisis, and he was prepared for syndicalist uprisings. But he hoped that the response would not be dictated by the social fear of the propertied. While violence would have to be met with violence, the "proud traditions" and sound "nerves" of a mature people demanded that the underlying issues be addressed and the civil guarantees of a free political order quickly restored (549–51).

Weber also called for a variety of particular measures that reflected the conditions of 1917 and interest us less than the principles he laid down. The Germany of the future, he believed, should be a federally structured constitutional monarchy. Parliamentary governments should continue to be headed by a Prussian chancellor; but the elected representatives of the other German states should participate more actively in the parliamentary leadership (583–87). Still, the foremost task of 1917 was to replace the three-class suffrage in Prussia with the universal suffrage introduced by Bismarck for the Reichstag. This would put an end to the anomalies arising from the disproportionate weight of the Prussian landowners and industrialists in German politics. It would make room for a genuine parliamentary democracy, in which soldiers returning from the front could not be outvoted by people who prospered while staying at home. This seemed to Weber a moral imperative. "Politics may not be an ethical business," he wrote. But there is a "minimal feeling of shame" and a "duty of common decency" that cannot be disregarded, even in politics.[48]

Max Weber's 1917 political essays can only be understood as challenges to orthodoxies he meant to contest. We have to remember that the harmonious mood of August 1914 had been quickly dissipated by what Weber considered a class war from the right. The campaigns in behalf of expansionist policies and unlimited submarine warfare deeply embittered Weber and some of his colleagues. The division between an orthodox majority and a "modernist" minority among German academics deepened to the point of undisguised hostility. Weber could not help but feel that the "apolitical" rhetoric of his conservative and "national" opponents was designed to preserve the status quo at home through conquest abroad. He was not surprised that the beneficiaries of the distorted domestic balance of power should press for the total victory of a distinctively "German" polity. What really angered him was the complicity of many German university professors in this disastrous course. Tensions ran so high within the German academic world that false rumors described the liberal *Frankfurter Zeitung* and Weber himself as recipients of English funds. Weber in turn increasingly portrayed his orthodox colleagues as either empty-headed or mendacious (532).

One of the public political speculations that provoked Weber's anger was the plan to privilege advanced education in the assignment of individuals to the Prussian voting classes. Weber saw higher education as a major source of *status* advantages, as against the economic roots of *class* positions. "Differences of *Bildung*, much as one may regret it, are today one of the very strongest inner barriers in society. Especially in Germany, where almost all

privileged positions within and without the civil service are tied not only to specialized knowledge, but also to 'general *Bildung*.' . . . All our examination diplomas also and primarily certify this important *status* quality." But Weber insisted that German "doctoral factories" had no more to offer their students than "specialized knowledge" (*Fachwissen*). Their graduates might be suitable as counselors to political leaders or as members of an advisory upper house of the legislature. Beyond that, however, Weber could not imagine a politically less qualified stratum. The lack of measure demonstrated by university professors during the war left no doubt about that. The steadily increasing demand for certified professional qualifications was nothing but a quest for prebends, for secure salaries and pensions appropriate to the status of the diploma holders. Weber was not kind in his comments upon the social pretensions of the highly educated, who habitually looked down upon modern entrepreneurs, labor leaders, politicians, and journalists. He could not think of a group less eligible for electoral privileges.[49]

In some of the darkest passages of his 1917 essay on "Parliament and Government," Weber traced the links between (1) the interests and ideological propensities of German university faculty, (2) the stubborn resistance to parliamentary democracy, and (3) the advance of bureaucracy. In what was clearly an attack on his colleagues, he wrote again of the "academic literati," their resentment of anyone not examined and certified by them, and their "fear for the prestige of their own stratum." Such attitudes, he thought, were behind their repeated diatribes against democracy and "parliamentary dilettantism." Their "instincts" blinded "the mass" of them to political realities. Their "typical snobbism" caused them to dismiss the "subaltern" problems of political reform in favor of more elevated speculations about "the ideas of 1914," "true socialism," and the like. But a people that is ruled by an uncontrolled bureaucracy, that is not master of its own fate at home, should certainly not try to play the master abroad. The "will to powerlessness" in domestic matters is incompatible with the "will to power" in foreign affairs (591–95).

More than other people, Weber thought, the Germans have displayed a talent for rational administration in every kind of organization. They have applauded bureaucratization as a "form of life," and again the prebends and status claims of the highly educated have been their real objectives. "The fact of *universal bureaucratization* is really hidden behind the so-called ideas of 1914, behind what the literati euphemistically term the 'socialism of the future,' behind the slogan about 'organization,' the 'communal economy,' and . . . behind all similar contemporary turns of phrase." In a double-edged analogy, Weber claimed that "the old Chinese mandarin was not a specialized offi-

cial, but . . . a humanistically educated gentleman." The modern official, by contrast, is increasingly dependent upon specialized training, and thus not really a man of *Bildung*. There are literati who believe that private capitalism could be domesticated through state control. But instead of weakening the "steel housing" of modern industrial work, this would leave the bureaucracy in sole command. A bureaucracy is a human machine, Weber wrote. Together, the animate and inanimate machines are constructing "the housing for the new bondage," to which "future human beings . . . may have to submit, *if a technically good, and that means: rational bureaucratic administration is the ultimate value that will guide the regulation of their affairs*" (461–64).

But if that is the fate that awaits mankind, Weber added, one has to "smile at the fear of our literati" that we might have too much "individualism" or democracy, and at their belief that "true freedom" will arise only when the "anarchy" of contemporary production and the parliamentary jostling of our parties will have been replaced by social order and "organic stratification." Given the advance of bureaucratization, the questions about our political future could only be put as follows:

> 1. How is it . . . *still possible* . . . *to salvage* . . . individualistic freedom of movement? For it is . . . crude self-deception to believe that we could nowadays bear to live . . . without the achievements of the age of the "rights of man."
> 2. How, in view of the increasing . . . dominance of . . . state officialdom . . . will there be powers to keep . . . this growing stratum . . . under effective control?
> 3. A third issue, the most important of all, emerges from a consideration of what bureaucracy as such does *not* achieve . . . The guiding spirit: the entrepreneur here, the politician there, after all, is something other than an official. (465–66)

These formulations have much in common with Weber's outwardly pessimistic reflections on the problems of liberalism in Russia. Again, the image of the "housing for the new bondage" functions as a prophecy of doom that cries out, against the tide of history, for whatever sources of human vitality may yet be mobilized. Weber's emphasis upon the technical training of the official was meant to contribute to his image of the bureaucracy as a machine, which underscored the need to mobilize residual sources of individualism and of liberty.

In the summer of 1918, while briefly at the University of Vienna, Weber

agreed to give a "political education" lecture to Austro-Hungarian army officers. His analysis of "socialism" drew upon the critique of orthodox Marxism by Eduard Bernstein and other Social Democratic "revisionists." The Communist Manifesto of 1848, Weber argued, had proved both theoretically stimulating and emotionally powerful as the prophecy that capitalism would in time be replaced by a temporary dictatorship of the proletariat and ultimately by the end of "man's domination over man." But Marx was wrong in his predictions: The bourgeoisie failed to shrink, and economic crises failed to deepen. Instead, finance and monopoly created new forms of capitalist organization; small producers survived, including in agriculture; joint stock companies created substantial numbers of new rentiers; and the expanding white-collar hierarchy separated itself from the working class. At the same time, a system of collaboration between private enterprise and public authority, far from controlling big industry, greatly increased the political power of capital. Finally, the advance of bureaucratization in government, in the economy, and even in party politics, transformed the landscape of early entrepreneurial capitalism.[50]

The lessons Weber distilled from his presentation were essentially reformist. He explicitly sympathized with the labor unions, which sought to improve the workers' lot *within* the capitalist framework, although he believed that employers could demonstrate that there were limits to the concessions they could make. What Weber really approved about the unions was their sense of "comradely honor." As a political party, he thought, the Social Democrats should sponsor social reform and democracy through parliamentary means. His sharpest criticism was directed against radical *syndicalism*, its exclusivist (*ouvrierist*) animus against politics, and its idea of the general strike as the ultimate weapon. Paradoxically, in Weber's view, the syndicalist movement attracted the support of radical intellectuals, who were inspired by the romantic vision of revolutionary transformation, and perhaps by the temptations of power as well. What worried Weber, clearly, was the possibility of pacifist and syndicalist sympathies among exhausted soldiers, who yearned primarily for peace.[51] He was deeply concerned about the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

The months that followed upon the November Revolution in Germany, from late 1918 through March 1919, saw Weber more actively engaged in current politics than ever before. It looked for a time as if he might be elected a representative of the new German Democratic Party. But after party officials had undercut that possibility—and Weber had failed to fight for a mandate—he continued to campaign energetically for the new party, to sit on constitu-

tional commissions, and to travel to the peace conference at Versailles. In substance, he favored a constitutional monarchy until the behavior of William II made that impossible. He was dismayed by the revolutionary disorders of November 1918 and appalled at German pacifists who seconded the Allied claim that Germany was solely responsible for the war. He preached "dignity" in defeat. As the terms of the Versailles settlement began to emerge, his outrage and his pessimism deepened. Yet he soon recovered his characteristic sense of reality. He recommended a program of cooperation between the revisionist Social Democrats and the progressive elements within the German middle class. For a while, he even gave lip service to limited forms of "socialization."[52]

If we leave Weber's famous lecture "Politics as a Vocation" aside for the moment, we can find his postwar political views in a sequence of short articles he wrote for the liberal *Frankfurter Zeitung* in late 1918 that was republished as a pamphlet in January 1919 and supplemented by a note entitled "*Der Reichspräsident*" two months later. His main purpose in these writings was to prepare the ground for a democratically elected National Assembly that would reestablish the authority of the German central government and lay the constitutional foundations for a Republic. The legitimacy of the new regime, according to Weber, could only be based upon the "natural law" conception of popular sovereignty. More specifically, Weber's political plan extended the institutions of the old empire, including its federal structure, though with significant modifications. The hegemony of Prussia within Germany, which perpetuated the disproportionate influence of the agrarian magnates and heavy industrialists, was to be reduced. The chancellor of the German Republic would no longer be identical with the Prussian prime minister, and Prussian control of the military and of the Federal Council would be tempered as well. The state of Prussia would not be subdivided, but due weight would be given to the rights of the other large states, including Bavaria and possibly German Austria. Yet Weber eventually modified his initially federalist emphasis in a unitary direction. He excluded anything like the autonomy of the American states, partly in view of the need for an active social policy. With respect to primary and secondary education, moreover, Weber intended the national legislature to stipulate "norms" for the policies of the several states.[53]

The president of the German Republic, Weber believed, should be directly elected by the voters, rather than by the Reichstag. Like the president of the United States, he would have an independent political mandate, based upon the plebiscitary principle of popular sovereignty. He was also to be equipped with a suspensive veto, and with the right to dissolve the Reichstag and call for new elections, particularly if no prime minister or chancellor succeeded in

forming a governing majority. Weber's long-standing interest in the selection of political leaders culminated in this call for a plebiscitary presidency. Yet Weber was not alone in recommending either a strong president or a partly federal structure. Moreover, his views were not decisive for the constitution of the Weimar Republic as drafted by Hugo Preuss and others. More interesting for us are Weber's insistence upon the control of the bureaucracy by means of a parliamentary right of inquiry and his call for a set of fundamental "human rights" (*Grundrechte*) to be anchored in the Constitution. . .

Tactically, Weber insisted upon the need for political cooperation between the moderate working class and middle-class progressives. Since a Social Democratic majority could not be expected in elections to a National Assembly, he argued, the new regime required the support of the German bourgeoisie or of genuinely democratic elements within it. A purely socialist government was impossible in any case, since Germany needed economic credits that would not be granted unless expropriation was formally excluded. This was no time to listen to radical intellectuals, who lived "from" and not "for" the revolution, or to flirt with the fantasies of "academic literati" about a "communal economy" and the like. Above all, the German middle class had to do without the "security" it had enjoyed under the authoritarian regime, and it had to abandon its fear of innovation and its "will to powerlessness." For broad segments of the German population, sound administration and material welfare had provided a "framework" (*Gehäuse*) that had suppressed the "pride of citizenship, without which even the freest institutions are mere shadows." The Republic would put an end to this security. The middle class would have to learn to fend for itself, as the working class has always done. New political parties would need to be formed, without the politicians who had campaigned against Western democracy, for extensive annexations, and for unlimited submarine warfare. Indeed, Germany would have to abandon its imperialist dreams, so as peacefully to cultivate its national traditions within a League of Nations.[54] Here again, Weber's position was plainly liberal.[55]