

剑桥政治思想史原著系列（影印本）

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

韦伯政治著作选

Weber

Political

Writings

Edited by

PETER LASSMAN

and

RONALD SPEIRS

中国政法大学出版社

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WEBER
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剑桥政治思想史原著系列

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在政治理论领域，“剑桥政治思想史原著系列”作为主要的学生教科丛书，如今已牢固确立了其地位。本丛书旨在使学生能够获得从古希腊到20世纪初期西方政治思想史方面所有最为重要的原著。它囊括了所有著名的经典原著，但与此同时，它又扩展了传统的评价尺度，以便能够纳入范围广泛、不那么出名的作品。而在此之前，这些作品中有许多从未有过现代英文版本可资利用。只要可能，所选原著都会以完整而不删节的形式出版，其中的译作则是专门为本丛书的目的而安排。每一本书都有一个评论性的导言，加上历史年表、生平梗概、进一步阅读指南，以及必要的词汇表和原文注解。本丛书的最终目的是，为西方政治思想的整个发展脉络提供一个清晰的轮廓。

本丛书已出版著作的书目，请查阅书末。

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

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Introduction

Karl Emil Maximilian Weber was born in Erfurt in 1864. His father, Max Weber Sr, was a lawyer and a deputy in the Prussian Chamber of Deputies for the National Liberal Party from 1868 to 1882 and from 1884 to 1897. He was also a member of the Reichstag from 1872 until 1884. Weber's mother, Helene Fallenstein Weber, had an interest in questions of religion and social reform which she did not share with her husband.

The Weber household in Berlin attracted a large number of academics and politicians, including von Bennigsen, Dilthey, Theodor Mommsen and Treitschke. The discussions which took place there must have made a strong impression on the young Weber. In 1882 Weber began his studies at Heidelberg University. His main subject was law but he also attended courses in political economy, history, philosophy and theology. He moved to Strasbourg in 1883 where he combined his year of national service with study at the university. In 1884 Weber continued his studies in Berlin. Here he attended courses in law, including Gierke's course on German legal history. Weber was not impressed by the lectures of Treitschke which, because of their extreme nationalism, he considered to be little more than demagogy and propaganda. After graduation Weber did not find the practice of law sufficiently stimulating and continued his studies in the field of political science (*Staatswissenschaft*) as well as in legal and economic history.

In 1889 Weber submitted a doctoral dissertation with the somewhat lengthy title 'Development of the Principle of Joint Liability and the Separate Fund in the Public Trading Company out of Household

and Trade Communities in the Italian Cities'. This essay then formed a chapter in a longer work entitled 'On the History of Trading Companies in the Middle Ages, based on South-European Sources' and was published in the same year. Weber subsequently published his *Habilitationschrift* (the higher degree necessary to acquire professorial status in a German University) in 1891 on 'Roman Agrarian History and its Importance for Constitutional and Civil Law'. During this period Weber became involved with the activities of the Evangelical-Social Congress, forming a friendship with Friedrich Naumann, a leader of the Christian-Social Movement and founder of the National Social Union (*Nationalsozialer Verein*).

In 1892 Weber published the results of an inquiry sponsored by the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* into 'The Conditions of the Agricultural Workers in the East Elbian regions of Germany'. This bulky study had considerable political significance. Its subject was the highly controversial one of the defence of German culture from Slav, mainly Polish, 'infiltration'. In the same year Weber became a lecturer in Roman and commercial law, and in the following year Althoff, the Prussian Minister of Culture, directed that Weber be made Professor of Commercial and German Law in Berlin. Nevertheless, in 1894 Weber moved to the University of Freiburg where he accepted a Chair of Political Economy (*Nationalökonomie*). The essay published here, 'The Nation State and Economic Policy', is his inaugural lecture. This lecture was highly controversial, as Weber intended it to be. He referred, with pleasure, to the horror aroused by 'the brutality' of his views.

Weber left Freiburg in 1896 to become Professor of Political Science at Heidelberg where he succeeded the eminent political economist Karl Knies. Although Weber was highly critical of the work of Knies, his own academic work followed in the same tradition represented by the 'Historical School' of German political economy. Among Weber's colleagues at Heidelberg were Georg Jellinek, Professor of Constitutional Law, whose *Allgemeine Staatslehre* (General Theory of the State) was published in 1900, and Ernst Troeltsch, the theologian and philosopher. Both were highly significant influences upon the direction of Weber's thought. (In passing it may be noted that, while at Heidelberg, Weber supported the introduction of the first female students, one of whom was Else von Richthofen, whose sister, Frieda, married D. H. Lawrence in 1912.)

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Following the death of his father in 1897, Weber entered a period of mental illness marked by periods of deep depression. The antidote for this condition was extensive travel, especially in Italy, as a result of which Weber was eventually able to recover his ability for sustained and wide-ranging reading. Unable to carry out his professional obligations, Weber resigned from Heidelberg in 1903. Nevertheless, at this time he entered into a renewed period of creativity in which he began a series of writings on methodological themes as well as the essays which were later collected and published as *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

In 1904 Weber, with Edgar Jaffé and Werner Sombart, became an editor of the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* (Archive for Social Science and Social Policy). This journal declared that one of its aims was to explore the 'cultural significance of capitalist development'. Weber acquired first-hand knowledge of the cultural and political consequences of rapid industrial development when he visited America in the same year. He had responded to an invitation to deliver a lecture at the World Exhibition in St Louis, but he made use of this trip to travel widely in the United States.

The outbreak of revolution in 1905 focused Weber's attention sharply on Russia. He learnt to read the language in three months and was able to follow the course of events as reported in the Russian language newspapers and journals. In the long essay 'On the Situation of Constitutional Democracy in Russia' (most of which is reprinted here) and in a further essay published in the same year, *Russia's Transition to Sham-Constitutionalism*, he discussed the probable political consequences of the late development of capitalist industry within the Russian social, political and cultural context.

In 1909 Weber became editor of a projected encyclopedia of 'social economics' (*Grundriß der Sozialökonomik*) in which his own contribution, 'The Economy and the Social Orders and Powers', was to be one of the volumes. It was given the title 'Economy and Society' (*Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*), with the original title as subtitle, when published after his death in 1921. During the First World War and in the years immediately preceding it Weber worked both on this project and on the comparative studies which focus on the economic ethics of the major world religions. During these years Weber continued to live in Heidelberg, where his home became a centre for intellectual debate. Among those who were frequent visitors were

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Karl Jaspers, Werner Sombart, Ernst Troeltsch, Georg Jellinek, Georg Simmel and Georg Lukacs.

In 1914 Weber, despite his strong reservations about the direction of German foreign policy, was initially swept along by the general enthusiasm. As the war progressed, he recovered his more characteristic sense of detachment. He argued publicly against the professed war aims of the German government and opposed all suggestions for a policy of territorial annexation in Europe. The irresponsible nature of German policy was, in Weber's opinion, exemplified by the decision to intensify submarine warfare. The most likely effect of this policy would be to draw America into the war and, as a consequence, ensure the defeat of Germany. During this period Weber continued his academic work. He completed and published his essays on the world religions and accepted a Chair of Political Economy at the University of Vienna in 1918.

Returning to Munich in late 1918, Weber observed the revolution in Germany with dismay. The 'bloody carnival', as he called it, simply weakened Germany in its moment of defeat. In 1919 Weber made an unsuccessful entry into the political arena. His nomination as a Democratic Party candidate for the National Assembly was rejected by party officials. Nevertheless, Weber did contribute in an unofficial capacity to the deliberations on the nature of the future constitution and he participated briefly in the peace delegation at Versailles. Plans to make Weber Secretary of the Interior came to nothing. He had reservations about the new republic but, as the essays in this volume show, he was determined that it must be made to work for the sake of the nation's future.

Following an invitation from the students of Munich University, Weber delivered his two famous lectures 'Wissenschaft als Beruf' (usually translated as 'Science as a Vocation') in November 1917 and 'Politik als Beruf' (translated here as 'The Profession and Vocation of Politics') in January 1919. His lectures at the university were the object of demonstrations by organisations of right-wing students. In the summer of 1920 Weber died from pneumonia.

Max Weber once wrote that 'the political' was his 'secret love'. He was concerned with political affairs throughout his life. Weber himself often felt torn by the conflicting demands of scholarship and political involvement. It can be argued that political concerns run through all his academic work and that these concerns alone endow

it with the unifying theme so many interpreters have sought in vain. The importance and originality of Weber's political thought have at times been obscured by commentaries which have presented his work as a relatively straightforward contribution to a version of modern social science which eschews political controversy.

The essays and lectures collected here possess a dual character. Although they were occasioned by current events and problems, they also point beyond their immediate context towards much wider considerations. The political writings are essential reading for anyone who wishes to understand Weber's vision of the modern world. Concern with the political fate of Germany is a reference point for all of these essays. Even the discussion of the situation in Russia is shaped by an implicit comparison with the state of affairs in Germany. Conversely, Weber's discussion of the fate of politics in Germany, however intense its immediate engagement, always has implications for our fundamental understanding of the politics of the modern western state.

As Weber's political writings span a period of some twenty-five years, it is only to be expected that they show some development and change of ideas. For example, the references to racial differences made in his inaugural lecture were abandoned in his later work, where he made it clear that the concept of race had no explanatory value. On the other hand, the central point of that lecture, the inescapability of politics as conflict (*Kampf*), remains a constant theme in all his work.

The important question for Weber is not the material wellbeing of the people, but the quality of human being in any given economic and social order. All work in political economy, he argues, aims at producing 'those characteristics which we think of as constituting the human greatness and nobility of our nature' (p. 15). We must not lose sight of the fact that the central question of political economy is concerned with *human beings* and the quality of their existence. Weber's forceful manner of expression shows that the discipline of political economy, in his view, is a political science in the classical sense: 'It is a servant of politics, not the day-to-day politics of the persons and classes who happen to be ruling at any given time, but the enduring power-political interests of the nation' (p. 16). Weber's thought and expression combines, distinctively, elements of Darwin, Nietzsche and Marx to stress the inescapability and necessity of con-

flict and selection between states, peoples and classes. Although Weber shows here that he can be as 'materialistic' in his analysis as any Marxist, the decisive difference between Weber and Marx is that for him there is no future utopia where this struggle can come to an end. Endless struggle is fate, and our strength of character is measured in terms of our ability to face up to this fact without consoling illusions.

Weber's view of political life is deeply pessimistic. 'We do not have peace and happiness to hand down to our descendants, but rather the *eternal struggle* to preserve and raise the quality of our national species' (p. 16). Weber had immersed himself in the study of political economy in order to carry out the academic duties associated with his Chair at Freiburg which was in a discipline of which he had in 1895 only a limited knowledge. He accepted the prevailing view of the economic arena as one of unending struggle against scarcity. But, as Weber sees it, economic competition is also '*power struggle*'. The state is the 'worldly organisation of the nation's power' (p. 17) and the preservation of the nation's power provides the ultimate criterion for economic policy.

Weber is reported (how accurately, one cannot tell) to have said that Marx and Nietzsche were the key intellectual figures of the modern age. While Weber was neither a disciple of Nietzsche nor of Marx, he was impressed by both thinkers. The originality of his own thought emerges from dialogue with these contending voices, from a combination of intense engagement with and critical distancing from them. Although they were certainly not the only influences on his thinking (the philosophical work of Dilthey, Rickert and Simmel on the nature of historical and cultural knowledge is of central importance, while the presence of Luther's Bible is palpable), many of his central themes would have been unthinkable without their influence. The problem of the late and extraordinarily rapid industrialisation of a recently united Germany put questions about the nature of the capitalist economy at the centre of concern for Weber's generation. The emergence of socialism as a political movement forced society at large and the academic world in particular to take stock, not only of 'the social problem' but also of the intellectual claims of Marxism. Simultaneously, the radical elitism of Nietzsche was felt as the 'earthquake of the epoch' by many of Weber's genera-

tion. Nietzsche was the most important of those thinkers who saw the transformation of European society and culture in terms of decline and decadence. Seen in this perspective, socialism was a symptom rather than a cure for the modern malaise and its commitment to an idea of progress no more than a delusion on the part of a debilitated civilisation.

'The Nation State and Economic Policy' contains many of the themes which will recur throughout Weber's later work. Here, as so often, Weber begins with a consideration of the 'dry facts'. He then enlarges the scope of his discussion so that his topic reveals implications which lead far beyond the immediate occasion of his reflections. The lecture begins with a summary of the findings of surveys recently conducted on the situation of agricultural labour in the eastern provinces of Prussia during the years 1892 to 1895. The agrarian problem carried a high political charge and Weber did not hesitate to throw himself into the debate. The result was immediate and intense controversy. Weber portrays Germany as a nation state which is faced by other nation states in an 'economic struggle for life' in which 'there is no peace to be had' (p. 14). The conditions and migration of German and Polish agricultural labourers in the eastern provinces is the immediate problem. Weber argues that economic problems of this kind must be viewed in political terms. If, as Weber sees it, there is a blatant contradiction between the economic class interests of the Prussian landed aristocracy, (the *Junker*), and the political interests of the nation in the eastern provinces, these latter interests must unequivocally take precedence.

To appreciate Weber's argument, one must see it in relation to contemporary debates on the question of Germany's future as an industrial state. Weber accepts that there is no alternative path for Germany's future development other than industrialisation. Yet the industrial future carries certain costs. It means that the character of social relations will be transformed, especially, at first, in the countryside. They will shift away from the more personal and patriarchal towards the impersonal relations of production organised on the basis of capitalist principles. Weber neither joins the ranks of the opponents of industrialisation, nor does he welcome unreservedly the development of a capitalist economy. His point is that the future of Germany as a 'world power' requires that it embrace industrialisation

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without nostalgic longings for a lost 'communal' past. Furthermore, and more fundamentally, everything depends on the nation's ability to feed its rapidly growing population.

Neither agricultural policy as such nor the details of the economic situation are Weber's prime concern, however. The focus of his interest is on the consequences of these developments for the interests of the nation. Yet it would be wrong to see Weber as merely putting forward the conventional nationalist ideas of the time. His concern is not with the power of the state as an end in itself but rather with the fate of the nation. The central question for Weber is one of political leadership. Which class or stratum (*Schicht*) could provide national leadership? Weber was pessimistic. At this stage, it appeared that none of the classes in Germany possessed the political maturity to take on this role.

In his inaugural lecture Weber describes a relentless process of selection at work between nations. Most worryingly, however, there is no guarantee that the economically most developed nations nor the most highly developed 'form of human being' will emerge as the victors from this process. In presenting this argument, Weber, who had been appointed to a Chair of Political Economy, was also participating in a debate about the nature and limits of economic thinking which had divided the Historical School of Political Economy in Germany. The question of the nature and value of the economic explanation of human affairs had become a central preoccupation of contemporary German historiography. Weber attacks what he terms the 'vulgar conception of political economy' which devises 'recipes for universal happiness'. While recognising the general value of economic concepts to explain human conduct, Weber also insists on their limitations. Politics must not be reduced to economics. The sphere of the political is autonomous.

Weber's account of the nature of politics is bound up with his view of the place of Germany in a world of *Machtstaaten*. In his earlier writings Weber shared the view common at the time among political economists that the world of industrial states was entering a phase of brutal struggle for resources and markets. Although he moderated his nationalism in later years, Weber continued to argue that the modern state cannot be defined in terms of 'the content of its activities'. It is 'in the last analysis' to be defined in terms of the specific means it employs. The means specific to the state and to all other

forms of political association is, ultimately, physical violence. The specific character of the modern state is that it and it alone 'lays claim to the *monopoly of legitimate physical violence* within a certain territory' (pp. 300-311). Politics, according to this account, is to be defined in terms of the struggle for 'a share of power or for influence on the distribution of power, whether it be between states or between the groups of people contained within a single state' (p. 311).

If Germany was to be a powerful nation state, a *Machtstaat*, then, inevitably, it would experience what Burckhardt had called the 'diabolical character of power'. The possession and use of such power entailed decisions and actions which would be evil or immoral. Yet it is an essential component of Weber's tragic vision of politics and of history that, unless we withdraw from the world completely, into pacifism, for example, such actions are unavoidable. As a result of the facts of European history and geography, it was Germany's fate to have no choice other than to accept its '*responsibility before history*'. In Weber's view the position of Germany was entirely different from that of small states such as Switzerland or Denmark. Nevertheless, Weber did not resolve the Nietzschean problem of the relation between the nation state and national culture. Unlike the 'vulgar' nationalists, Weber does not agree that political greatness and cultural achievements necessarily go hand in hand. He rejects the view that smaller states must in any sense be 'less valuable' from a cultural point of view. Indeed, he is thankful that there are German communities outside the Reich. In such small states (Switzerland is an example here), 'other virtues may flourish: not only the simple, bourgeois virtues (*Bürgertugenden*) of citizenship and true democracy' but 'much more intimate and yet eternal values' (p. 76). It seems inevitable that Germany, as a *Machtstaat*, cannot provide the best ground for the flourishing of culture within its own borders, although the prestige of that culture may well depend upon such national power. Germany has a national responsibility to defend the culture of Central Europe against the dual threat of future Russian and Anglo-American hegemony. Writing during the First World War, it seems obvious to Weber that a powerless German state would be useless in the defence not only of German culture both within and outside the Reich, but also of the cultural autonomy of Central Europe.

The 1905 revolution in Russia provided Weber with the occasion to look at a state other than Germany where the liberal tradition was

fragile. Although Weber accepted that Marx had made an important contribution to the understanding of social and political issues, he was not prepared to endorse his claims to scientific status. Marxian ideas, as far as Weber was concerned, were suggestive 'ideal types', no more and no less. Thus, he makes use of ideas derived in part from Marx both in the essay on the situation in Russia and in other writings. He discusses the class basis of the various parties and movements and attempts to assess the overall balance of conflicting interests, material and ideal. Furthermore, he includes an analysis of the role of Marx's ideas and of Marxist parties. However, the limits of Marx's philosophy of history are clear for Weber. We cannot count upon the 'laws of economic development' to produce conditions favourable either to democracy or to individualist values. Politics can never be a mere 'superstructural' reflection of the underlying material base. Economic or material development can just as clearly point in the opposite direction. The future is more likely to be one of cultural stagnation in which mankind is imprisoned in the '*housing for the new serfdom*' (p. 68). Weber's image of the bleak future of 'a polar night of icy darkness and hardness' (p. 368) is not simply one in which a bureaucratic 'benevolent feudalism' (p. 68) would limit the sphere of human freedom and sap the will to pursue it. This vision is also supported by contemporary political economic theory which argued that there was a definite propensity for industrial capitalism to lose its entrepreneurial dynamism and degenerate into a rentier state as markets and land were exhausted: the 'victory of "dividends" (*Rente*) over "profits" (*Gewinn*)' (p. 68). The 'anarchy of production' described by Marx and Engels was being supplanted by a bureaucratically administered regime comparable to the static empires of the ancient Mediterranean. Socialism would complete this development by strengthening the bureaucratic apparatus which would come to rule in all spheres of life. The alienation of every type of producer in the modern economy would be complete. The socialist project was inherently self-destructive.

In his lecture on socialism Weber considers various versions of this doctrine but takes the *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels as his paradigm text. He does so because it reveals clearly a central contradiction in Marxist theory. This resides in its claim to be a science that reveals the determining laws of historical development while simultaneously prophesying the emancipation and renewal of